

Sheet XIX: Voting patterns of the inhabitants of Łódź: 1998 Łódź assembly elections

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This sheet consists of four maps at a scale of 1:150 000: map 1. Turnout map 2. Election winners map 3. Support for Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD (Democratic Left Alliance - a centre-left social -democratic alliance) map 4. Support for Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność – AWS (Solidarity Electoral Action - liberal, conservative and Christian democratic alliance). The foregoing maps show the spatial diversity of electoral behaviours demonstrated by the citizens of Łódź during the Łódź Assembly elections in 1998. The results of these elections had a fundamental significance for the administration of the city and its development strategy, and had an impact on the social processes of urban space formation .

The maps are structured so as to accurately illustrate the spatial diversification of the election results through the use of the smallest spatial electoral data aggregation polling units available – polling wards. However, it was difficult to digitalise the exact cartographic underlay showing the boundaries of the 388 individual polling wards (as defined under the Łódź Assembly’s Resolution No. 2450/347/98 of 10th September, 1998). Polling ward boundaries were finally delimited based on the spatial distribution of ‘geo-coded address points’, utilizing a modernized electronic database prepared by the Łódź City Council. The database defines their current formal and legal status and is essentially a complete file of real properties in Łódź. This database is an extraordinarily valuable and indispensable source of information, but it is not complete and contains several errors, however, given the scale of the maps, these limitations bear no significance .

The maps show the Łódź Assembly election results as registered in the open polling wards. The closed polling wards were omitted, since given the scale of the maps they would typically have a spot-like character. Open polling wards are much more diversified both in terms of the number of eligible voters and their area. It needs to be emphasised that the size of the polling ward radially increases from the centre, predominantly as a product of the decreasing spatial housing development ratio. Since the access to some polling stations in large peripheral districts was difficult, their size alone could have had an unfavourable impact on the electoral turnout .

This Sheet 19 was prepared based on fully credible information from the polling stations, including details of the election results in each polling ward. The descriptive part of this Sheet 19 partially draws on the information concerning the voting behaviours across the ten electoral districts identified within Łódź.

The total number of eligible voters in Łódź in 1998 was 642 378 (tab. 1), however, only 37.4% of those eligible took part in these elections. The overall turnout in the city should therefore be considered rather low, however, it is not unusual for local elections.

Table 1. Voter turnout in electoral districts of Łódź during the local government elections in 1998

Electoral district	Number of polling wards	Electoral roll	Votes cast	Electoral turnout (in percentages)	Valid votes	‘Political culture’ index
1	37	61 719	25 735	41.70	25 289	98.27
2	41	69 988	27 098	38.72	26 643	98.32
3	40	57 083	22 223	38.93	21 798	98.09
4	39	72 757	26 919	37.00	26 265	97.57
5	48	77 277	27 892	36.09	27 342	98.03
6	36	55 603	18 550	33.36	18 056	97.34
7	37	67 460	27 513	40.78	27 099	98.50
8	41	69 987	23 986	34.27	23 539	98.14
9	42	71 018	27 042	38.08	26 527	98.10
10	27	39 486	13 189	33.40	12 818	97.19
Total	388	642 378	240 147	37.38	235 376	98.01

* Ratio of valid votes to number of votes cast (in percentages)

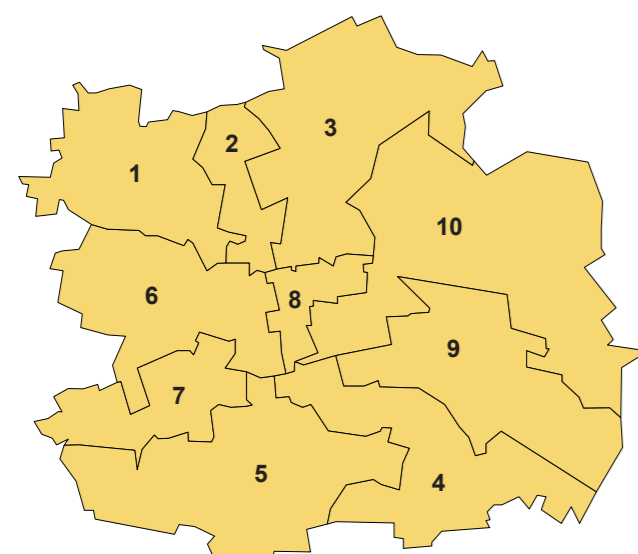
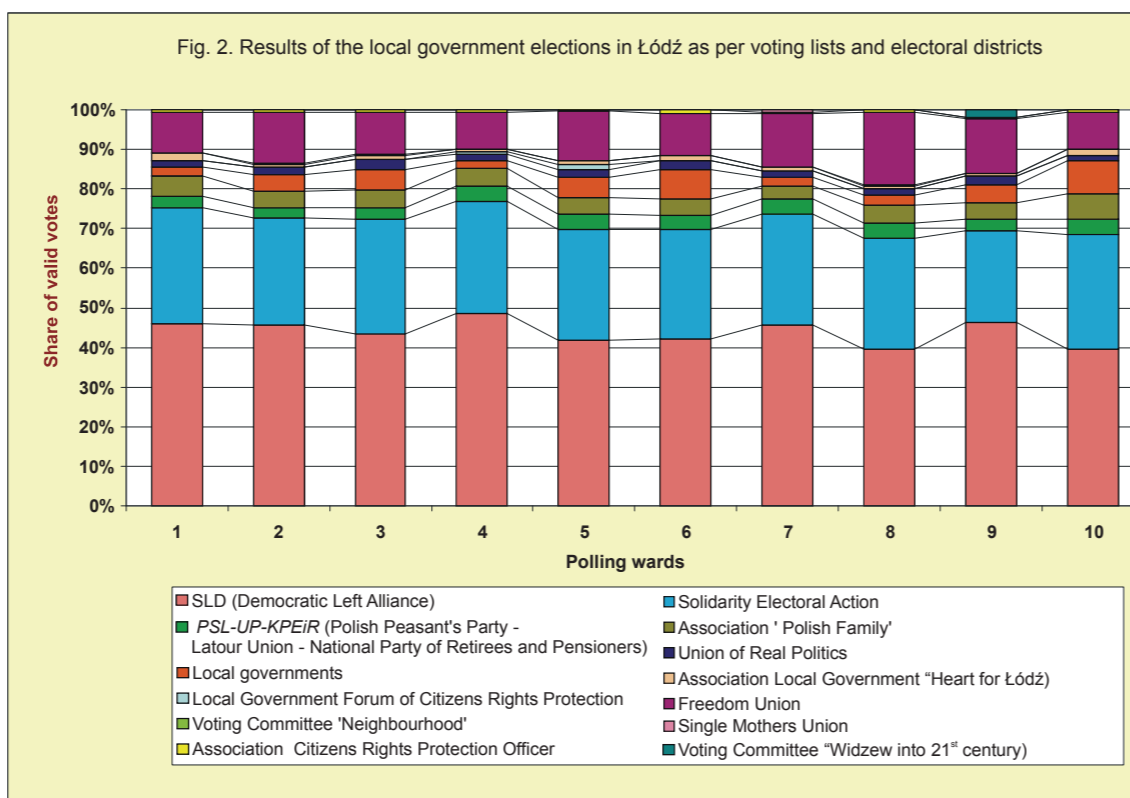


Fig. 1. Borders of polling wards in the 1998 Łódź Assembly Elections.

The low electoral turnout contrasts with the high level of ‘political culture’ of the voters measured by the percentage of valid votes to the total votes cast, reaching as high as 98.01%. The electoral turnout index differential in each electoral ward seemed rather large: from 13.96% to 56.30%. Its spatial distribution, however, clearly indicates specific zonality.

During the elections under study (fig. 1), only 13 ‘electoral lists’ were registered in all electoral districts. This relatively small number is the result of a tendency, observed during the previous elections, for smaller political groups to merge into coalitions usually built around stronger political parties. The map of political victories only shows the distribution of those groups which in the given electoral wards gained the highest number of votes. It is noteworthy that only 5: AWS, Samorządy Łódzkie (‘Local Governments of Łódź’ – a local initiative), SLD, UPR (‘Union of Real Politics’ – conservative - libertarian), and UW (‘Freedom Union’ - centrist) out of the 13 registered electoral committees managed to gain an absolute majority of votes in at least one polling ward. The spatial diversification of electoral success is particularly small due to the overwhelming prevalence of the polling wards where the Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej gained a majority of the votes.



In the elections under study, the Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (SLD) gained 44.3% of valid votes, the second place was taken by Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność (AWS) - 27%, and the Unia Wolności (UW) took the third position, which only gained 12.4% of the votes. In aggregate, these three groupings, most preferred by the electorate, gained 84.2% of the votes. The outstanding votes were dispersed among the ten remaining electoral lists. Map 3 , map 4 show completely different spatial patterns of voter support for SLD and AWS is shown.

The system of allocating the votes under the electoral regulations, which preferred groups with the highest electoral support, gave the SLD coalition 44 councillors, AWS - 26 and UW - 10. Consequently, the other parties have no representation.

Sources

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Łódź Assembly’s Resolution No. 2450/347/98 of 10 September, 1998 on establishing electoral wards in Łódź.
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