

II Ethnic diversity and quality of governance. Conceptualization and measurement at the commune level

Before we focus on the issue of the conceptualization and operationalization of the notions of “ethnic diversity” and “quality of governance”, it is necessary to present a general description of the specific character of the administrative level that is being surveyed and compared. This is because the legal and political status of the Polish commune and its social and demographic specificity can have an effect on the directions and possibilities of the quality of governance in the commune. Consequently, these characteristic features should be taken into consideration in the interpretation of research results.

1 Commune in the Polish political system

Since 1999 Poland has had a three-level territorial division system within which two local government segments have been shaped: the local system covering communes and districts and the regional system based on provinces. These changes of 1999 have occurred as a part of democratization process of post-Soviet Poland (which had started already in 1989), with the objectives, like: strengthening of local self-government, decentralization and deconcentration of political power (Yoder 2003).

Relations among these three segments of regional and local government are based on a combination of partnership in most cases, however antagonisms over conflicting jurisdictions happen as well. It should be noted that at present the district is regarded as the weakest local government link with a weak financial base, while the commune constitutes the center of local power (Wojciechowski et al. 2014: 19–20). According to the typology of local government systems in Eastern Europe proposed by Paweł Swianiewicz, the Polish system, together with those of Slovakia and Hungary, was classified as »champions of decentralization«. It means that local government assumes responsibility for a wide range of tasks; is characterized by a directly elected mayor (in Poland since 2002, earlier major was elected by a commune council) and a majority voting system for decision making bodies (in communes with up to 20,000 inhabitants). Additionally, local government is characterized by a considerable scope of financial autonomy, which manifests itself in the right to determine the level of local taxes, the transparent criteria for receiving transfers from the central budget, and the right to incur

debt and credit without external approval of other jurisdictional levels. Among the five types of local government in Eastern Europe proposed by Swianiewicz⁵, the Polish system represents the highest level of decentralization, showing similarities to the so-called Northern model characteristic of the Western European democracies (Swianiewicz 2014: 303–307). Thus, a Polish commune can be justifiably regarded as an autonomous political space since, by way of cyclical and democratic elections, voters appoint decision making authorities and executive authorities are responsible for fulfilling the needs of their self-governing community. Communes also pursue autonomous financial policies and make use of symbols expressing the identity of a local community (an emblem, local feasts, monuments of nature).

Nevertheless, the specific character of this local political system comprises rules of electing authorities, making decisions, and enforcing political responsibility that are determined at the center rather than local level. It means that in communes there exist structural barriers to the possibility of shaping the principles of good governance (Antoszewski 2014: 21–22).

The position of a commune in Poland's political system is defined in Chapter VII of the Constitution of Poland, which guarantees its political and financial autonomy. A commune constitutes a basic local government unit, has the status of a legal person, and its autonomy is protected by courts. It executes all tasks of local government which are not reserved for the competence of the other local government units, i.e. districts and provinces. Its funds comprise its own revenues as well as grants and subsidies from the central budget. A commune's activities are subject to supervision with respect to legality by central government bodies. Such supervision is exercised by the President of the Council of Ministers and provincial governors, while financial matters are monitored by regional accounting chambers ('Constitution' 1997). The range of public tasks carried out by a commune and the principles of the functioning of commune authorities are determined in the Commune Government Act of 8 March 1990. The Act sets forth 20 tasks for which a commune is responsible, among which are real property management, environmental protection, water supply and sewage disposal, municipal waste management, local roads maintenance, social assistance, public education, health care, cultural development, promotional activities, cooperation with and support for local government organizations. A commune's basic

5 Besides "champions of decentralization", the other four types are considered: relatively decentralized, Balkan, high territorial consolidation, and territorial fragmentation with a high level of centralization (Swianiewicz 2014: 303–306).

governing bodies are a commune council and a commune leader (a mayor or a president, depending on a commune's size). A commune council is a decision making and controlling body. Since 2018 councils have been elected for a five years' term of office (previously for a four years' term of office). The number of councillors in a commune depends on the number of its inhabitants, with the minimum number of 15 councillors in communes with up to 20,000 inhabitants. Since 2018 also elected for a five years' term of office, commune leaders (mayors or presidents) constitute executive bodies of communes. With respect to the performance of public tasks, they are controlled by commune councils. The commune leader implements resolutions passed by the commune council, manages the commune's affairs on an ongoing basis, and represents the commune externally. The commune leader performs their tasks through the commune office and is simultaneously the head of this office.

The above description is just a general and simplified outline of the position, structure, and competences of commune authorities. An analysis of governance at the commune level should also take into consideration the sociological and demographic specificity of communes in Poland, in particular the fact of their considerable diversity. Polish communes are divided into rural, urban-rural, and urban. According to the data for 2016, there were 2478 communes, including 1559 rural ones, 616 urban-rural ones, and 303 urban ones. The average number of inhabitants in one commune was 15,500 (Kaczmarek 2016: 72–74). In comparison to the average size of communes in the other EU Member States, which was 5,600 people in 2010, communes in Poland are medium-sized units (Kachniarz, Babczuk 2014: 2). It should be noted, however, that a considerable number of them are small rural communes with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. Because of demographic processes, the number of such communes is increasing: in 1992 there were 540 communes with up to 5,000 inhabitants, while in 2013 their number already rose to 618 (Swianiewicz 2014a: 10). It has been argued that the local government reform, particularly the commune government reform of 1990, is one of the most successful aspects of the Polish transformation. Public opinion surveys indicate that local government authorities continuously enjoy a high level of trust exceeding 50 %, which is much higher than the result achieved by the central government (Trutkowski 2016: 13–18; Swianiewicz 2017: 1).

Before 1998 local government elections had been regarded as much less important as parliamentary or presidential elections. However, what has been observed since 2008 is a continual growth in the assessments of the importance of local government (and all other) elections, with local government elections regarded as more significant than parliamentary or presidential ones since 2012 (Gendźwiłł, Żerkowska-Balas 2018: 5). Nevertheless, the local government

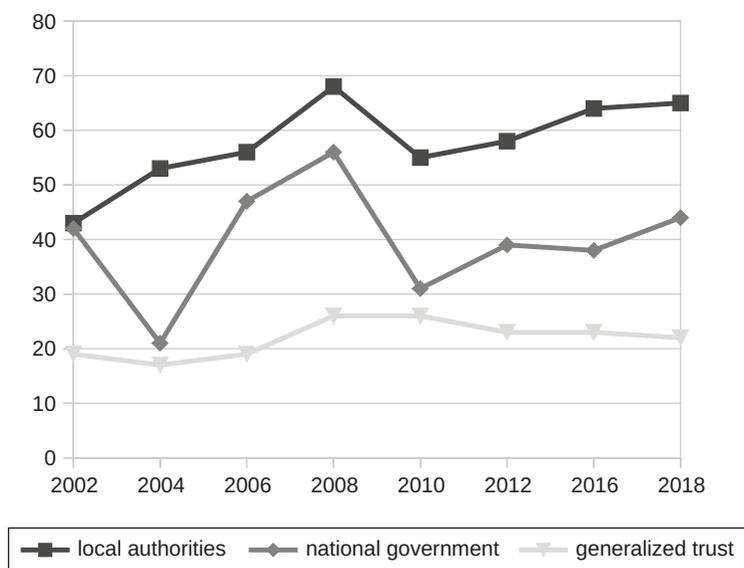


Fig. 1: Level of trust towards local authorities, national government and generalized trust in Poland 2002–2018. Source: Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS)

election turnout in the years 2006–2014 was a little bit lower than in the parliamentary elections held in that period, which was the effect of a relatively low turnout in large cities. There is a clear correlation between the size of a commune and an election turnout: the smaller the commune, the higher the turnout in local government elections (Flis 2018: 3).

Local government elections, in which voters elect their representatives to commune, district and provincial authorities, are dominated by choices made at the level of individual communes. According to the data for 2014, 78 % of Poles were of the opinion that the election of commune authorities was the most important decision made during local government elections (Gendźwiłł, Żerkowska-Balas 2018: 9). Local government at the commune level is the closest to Poles, but high opinions of its importance result also from the scope of its competencies and the amount of public funds remaining at its disposal. In 2016 the expenditures of commune governments constituted 85 % of all local government expenditures. The research conducted in 2018 shows that 60 % of Poles are of the opinion that they influence matters in their own communes, while only 40 % believe that they have any impact on matters at the national level (Gendźwiłł, Żerkowska-Balas

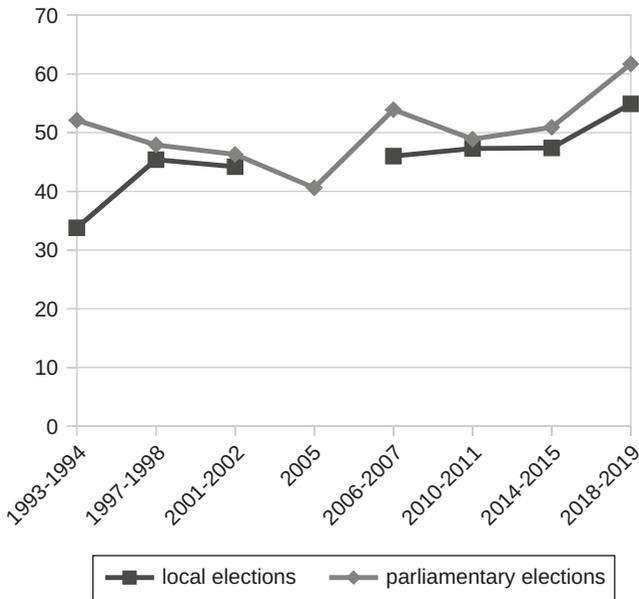


Fig. 2: Election turnout to the local and parliamentary elections in Poland 1993–2019*. Source: National Electoral Commission of Poland (PKW).

*In 2005 there were only parliamentary elections

2018: 9). As it has been noted above, the size of a commune is also of some significance. Small Polish communes are characterized by more interest in local politics, better knowledge of the functioning of local government authorities, and a higher level of trust in such authorities (Swianiewicz 2010: 12–16). Politics at the commune level is also characterized by low party dependency, with the lowest dependency in the smallest communes. The data for local government elections in the years 2006 and 2010 indicate that the highest level of independence of party affiliation occurred in communes with from 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants (communes with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants were in the second place). In such communes, candidates put forward by non-party committees won 81.5 % (2006) and 80 % (2010) votes, respectively. As far as commune leaders and mayors characterized by the so-called double non-partyism (i.e. those not being members of any party and simultaneously elected from non-party committees) are concerned, they constituted 73 % (2006) and 71 % (2010) of representatives elected in such communes (Gendźwił, Żółtak 2012: 108–109).

Finishing this description of the Polish local government at the commune level, we should mention the main problems it has been coping with since its establishment 25 years ago. They include excessive encumbrances resulting from the execution of public tasks in the conditions of the lack of funds necessary for it, as the subsequent extensions of the list of public tasks have not been accompanied by the strengthening of communes' financial positions. Commune authorities are also burdened by the central government with delegated tasks without being provided with sufficient funds or sovereign competencies, which reduces local government units to the role of the passive executors of the central government's policies. Another issue is defective laws passed at the central government level which fail to take into consideration local conditions and excessive regulatory burden preventing local governments from making and implementing decisions effectively. There is also a visible lack of consistency in the national development policy, for example in the area of regional development strategies or the central government's readiness for trust-based cooperation with local government associations. The weaknesses of the strategic approach concern also commune authorities as many communes have failed to adopt a local development strategy and many of the adopted strategies do not result from dialogues and cooperation with local communities. There are also many doubts concerning the structure of the local government system. For example, its division into very many small units raises questions about the possibility of the effective and efficient provision of public services. The existence of three government levels whose tasks sometimes tend to overlap results in conflicts about the ranges of competencies, for example with respect to road maintenance. There is also a lack of cooperation among communes which if solved could lead to the strengthening of their potential. There occur also problems with the implementation of particular public policies, in particular those related to education and regional planning for which local governments are responsible, although their competencies in these areas are restricted by the central government administration and the national legislation. Some local governments are also fraught with internal conflicts between the council and the executive body or within the council itself. Such conflicts may lead to deliberation and greater representative policy or compromises yet as well may hinder effective governance and exert a negative impact on the perception of local government activities by local communities. The additional problems that communes have to deal with are a weakness of the local civil society and many people's ignorance of the role of democratic participatory procedures introduced on matters important for the local community (Trutkowski 2016: 19–39).

2 Ethnic diversity

In our research, ethnic diversity is an independent variable. Although in many researches this category is regarded as a primary concept, it seems justifiable to ask how ethnic diversity should be defined, especially at the operational level, and what its effects are in different situations. We start with the assumption that ethnic diversity is difficult to perceive as a state instead of as a moving target due to, among other things, the dynamics of migration, changes in legal regulations, or changes of ethnic and cultural self-identifications. Therefore, it is necessary to pose questions concerning both the manner of measuring diversity and the method of identifying “fractions” within an internally diversified community. Additional difficulties are caused by the fact that the category of ethnicity does not have one generally accepted scientific definition.

Ethnic diversity is understood as “the acknowledged co-occurrence, in the same space (or in the immediate proximity without a clear delimitation, or in the situation of aspiring to occupy the same space), of two or more social groups with relatively different cultural features” (Golka 2010: 64–65). The fragment quoted above is a part of the definition of multiculturalism put forward by Marian Golka. The very category of multiculturalism in the Polish scientific discourse is exceptionally broad-ranging and functions in social sciences with at least the following four meanings: (1) a factual state of ethnic diversity in a given space⁶, (2) a policy aimed at the institutionalization of ethnic diversity, (3) a political program promoting multiculturalism as a desired feature of modern democratic societies, (4) a marketing strategy referring to the promotion of the folklore of minorities as a value increasing the tourist attractiveness of ethnically diversified areas (cf. Dolińska 2016).

In this research, the authors are interested in not only the fact of the occurrence of ethnically diversified local communities but also measurement of the degree of such diversity. Consequently, analyzing the communities inhabiting the Opolskie province, we should pose and answer the following questions:

- How many culturally/ethnically diversified groups should be distinguished?
- What data should constitute a basis for recognizing a given person as a member of an ethnic group?
- What data should constitute a basis for calculating the ratios of the members of every group?

6 This meaning of multiculturalism as a factual state of ethnic diversity is the closest to our definition of ethnic diversity.

- How should dynamic changes taking place in the ethnic groups be taken into consideration?
- Should the cultural distance among the ethnic groups be taken into consideration? If so, in what way?

These questions result from adopting the diversity measurement method used generally in sciences and they also refer to the debate on methodological dilemmas related to various methods of measurement. An examination of ethnic and ethnolinguistic fractionalization is the most commonly used method of measuring ethnic diversity (Alesina et al. 2003, Fearon 2003, Posner 2004). This method takes into consideration the number of ethnic groups and, to some extent, the ratios among the numbers of the members of every group in the population, but it disregards the cultural distance (or differences in income) separating particular groups and the consequent possibility of social polarization. The polarization index (Chakravarty and Maharaj 2011; Esteban and Ray 1994; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2002; 2005) is an attempt to address this issue. It was developed mainly as a means of measuring the probability of the occurrence of conflicts and civil wars in ethnically diversified societies. Thus, for our purposes, we have adopted the ethnic fractionalization index as a basis for the assessment of ethnic diversity. This measurement method is explained in more detail in the further part of the chapter.

The number of groups

The research conducted on the population of the inhabitants of the Opolskie province is characterized by a relatively high degree of diversification with respect to the number of culturally different groups identified for the research purposes. Both the number and character of these groups were changing in parallel to changes in the dynamics of relocation processes, migration, demographic changes, as well as changes in self-identification. Before World War II the basic criterion of dividing the population was language: people spoke either Polish or German. After the war, four groups were usually distinguished: the so-called Polish native population, Germans, people displaced from the territories of the Soviet Union (the former territories of the second Republic of Poland), and settlers from Poland (see Map 3 in chapter 3). After 1989, in consequence of the “emergence” and institutionalization of the German minority, the population was divided culturally and ethnically into Poles and Germans, and in the subsequent years into Poles, Germans, and Silesians (cf. e.g. Berlińska 1999; Kowalski 1972; Kwiatek 2018; Rauziński 1982; 1986; 1998; Szmeja 1997; 2000). The detailed information on this division is presented in Tab. 1.

Tab. 1: The cultural and ethnic diversity of the Opolskie province⁷ in the years 1948–1993: the number of inhabitants, nomenclature, data sources

Year	Population identified with Polishness	Population identified with Germanness	Population identified with nativeness/Silesianness	Others	Source	Data acquisition method
1948	Displaced persons – approx. 144,000; Repatriates – approx. 169,000	Germans – approx. 2000	Native inhabitants – approx. 440,000	Reemigrants – approx. 27,000 Others – < 1000	Rauziński 1998	no data
1948	Polish native population – 420,800; Repatriates – 179,900; Displaced persons – 161,100	-	-	Reemigrants – 29,800	Kowalski 1972	Situational reports of district offices; delivery and acceptance reports; the population census in the Regained Territories of 31 December 1948
1950	Displaced persons from the East – 188,300 Settlers from within Poland – 158,100	-	Silesians – 436,000	-	Szmeja 1997	The national census of 1950
1950	Incoming population from Poland (settlers) – 211,000 Incoming population from abroad (repatriates) – 180,200	-	Native (indigenous) population – 418,300	-	Rauziński 1986	no data

(continued on next page)

7 Although the Opolskie province has been a unit of the administrative division of Poland since 1950, its boundaries were changed in every territorial organization reform. In the years 1950–1975 it included the Raciborski and Oleski districts; in the years 1975–1998 these two districts belonged to other provinces, while the 1998 reform returned the Oleski district and the communes of Praszka and Rudniki to the Opolskie province. Besides, some data sources refer to still other territorial units. The research conducted by Danuta Berlińska (1999) in 1990 covered the area of the historical region of Opole comprising also the cities of Zabrze, Bytom, and Gliwice.

Tab. 1: Continued

Year	Population identified with Polishness	Population identified with Germanness	Population identified with nativeness/Silesianness	Others	Source	Data acquisition method
1977	Incoming population – 601,800	-	Population of local origin – 371,200	-	Rauziński 1982; the authors' own calculations	The authors' own calculations, a study by J. Balarzyn; a cumulative dataset on emigration
1990	Poles – 58 %;	Germans – 7.2 %;	Silesians – 34.8 %;	-	Berlińska 1999	Questionnaire survey (N=486)
1993	Poles – 66.9 %;	Germans – 5.2 %;	Silesians – 27.5 %;	-	Berlińska 1999	Questionnaire survey (N=496)

Source: the authors' own work based on scientific literature.

For the research purposes, we decided to distinguish the following three groups: Poles, Germans, and Silesians. This choice reflects the best the current demographic position of the province and the numerical strength of these groups is the easiest to establish⁸.

A group differentiation basis

Either objective or subjective data may be used as a basis for differentiating ethnic, cultural or national groups. The former data include the legal status, i.e. citizenship, recognition as a member of a minority ethnic or national group, or the language used by a given person at home. The latter data comprise ethnic or national self-identification expressed in a census. In the case under analysis, we decided to rely on subjective data. There were a few reasons for this decision. First of all, the decisive majority of the inhabitants of the Opolskie province are Polish

8 The latest statistics indicate also a large number of Ukrainians (more than 60,000 persons, according to the data of the Provincial Labour Office). However, Ukrainian citizens (mainly construction or industrial workers and students) live first of all in district towns, which are not the subject matter of our research.

citizens; there is also a certain group of people with two citizenships, Polish and German. This fact ruled out using citizenship as a measure of group differentiation. Secondly, we aimed to distinguish three groups: Poles, Germans, and Silesians. It should be noted that, in the light of Polish regulations concerning national minorities and regional languages, Silesians are not recognized as a separate group. Therefore, there was no possibility of using data concerning officially recognized ethnic, national, and regional minorities. It turned out that the most adequate measure was the subjective national self-identification expressed in a census. Determining the degree of ethnic diversity, we first took into consideration the censuses carried out in 2002 and 2011. However, during the preliminary data analysis it turned out that in 2011 not all census participants had been asked openly and directly about their nationality. Therefore, the data from the 2011 census are to some extent of an approximate character (cf. Barwiński 2014). Consequently, it was the data collected in the 2002 census that constituted the basic source of information on minorities.

Group size ratios

The distribution of the sizes of the groups in the population is a significant measure of the degree of ethnic diversity. According to the adopted EFI index, a commune inhabited by three separate groups with each of them comprising 1/3 of the total members of the population is more ethnically diversified than a commune inhabited by ten groups with one dominant majority group (90 % of the population) and the remaining nine ethnic groups comprising 10 % of the members of the population. This is a hypothetical example which did not occur in the communes under examination. Nevertheless, the information on the numbers of the members of the particular groups was important in the light of the province's demography. The province includes communes where Poles constitute the majority of inhabitants (over 95 %) and the minority is a socially and culturally insignificant group, as well as communes with less than 50 % of Polish inhabitants. At the same time, all studied communes were inhabited by the same ethnic groups: Poles, Germans, and Silesians (some larger towns are inhabited by the Romany minority; however, most of them are district towns, which were not included in the research, and the number of Romany people is statistically irrelevant). The measurement of the ratios and the interest in including Silesians in the research as a separate important group was an additional factor determining the adoption of census-based self-identification as a measure of the groups' size.

For verification purposes, we examined the correlation between ethnolinguistic diversity and ethnic diversity (on the basis of the 2002 census data) in

people declaring German nationality and people declaring the use of the German language in the household environment. At 0.98, this is a very strong correlation. Unfortunately, because of the lack of data at the commune level on the number of people using the Silesian language at home, a comparable analysis could not be carried out for the Silesian minority. The lack of such data was also one of the reasons for not using ethnolinguistic diversity as a measure.

Dynamics of changes

Ethnic diversity is subject to change over time. This is influenced by such factors as migration, reproductiveness and mortality (as well as reproduction strategies, which may be specific with respect to ethnic affiliation), and also the process of developing collective identities. As our research was an analysis of the situation at a particular point in time (most of the research was conducted in 2018 and was based on the data for the period 2015–2017), we were able to disregard the impact of changes in the social, demographic, and cultural spheres.

Nevertheless, the dynamics of changes in the ethnic structure was important for us in one aspect, namely the temporal distance between the data on ethnic diversity used in the research (the year 2002) and the time of conducting the research. The distance of 15 years is a period that needs to be taken into consideration, at least in order to make stipulations which may to some degree influence the explanation of data obtained at the further stages of the research. We identified three processes that had been taking place in the recent years and had had the potential to influence the ethnic structure of the communes in the Opolskie province:

- Poland's accession to the European Union and consequently the Schengen area, which had a considerable impact on the character of economic migration in the region. Before 2004 it had been Germans and Silesians who had acquired German citizenship (it had been possible since 1993) that were able to move freely and look for employment in the countries of the European Union. Therefore, there had been clear differences between Silesians and Germans on the one side and Poles on the other side with respect to employment in Poland and abroad. What was observed after 2004 was both an increase in the number of people of Polish nationality taking up employment abroad and a decrease in the number of people with two citizenships working outside Poland. More and more people with two citizenships managed to find jobs in their home country (Jończy, Rokita-Poskart 2013b; 2014).
- a decrease in the number of people of German nationality resulting first of all from the more regressive age pyramid in that ethnic group. This observation

was based on a comparison of self-identification declarations made in the censuses in 2002 and 2011 as well as changes in the number of members of the Social and Cultural Association of Germans in Opole Silesia. According to the census, in the year 2002 104,399 people living in the Opolskie province declared to be of German nationality, while in the year 2011 this number fell to 78,595⁹. In the case of the Social and Cultural Association of Germans, the number of its members decreased from 36,170 in 2013 to 29,464 in 2017¹⁰.

- an increase in the number of people of Silesian nationality resulting from the formation of a new identity. The first decade of the 21st century witnessed a dynamic increase in the separate regional (or national) awareness of Silesians, which was reflected, among other things, in the conducted censuses. While in 2002 Silesian nationality was declared by 24,000 inhabitants of the Opolskie province, in 2011 this number rose to 105,000¹¹.

Cultural distance

The last aspect of ethnic diversity that needs to be taken into consideration is cultural distance. Cultural distance refers to differences in values, behaviors, and systems of symbols which can be analyzed in a few dimensions. The most complete analysis of the dimensions of national cultures was carried out by Geert Hofstede within the scope of a couple of research projects executed since the 1960s (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov 2011). Hofstede (in the subsequent years together with associates) distinguished six dimensions of cultural differences (power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation, indulgence) and, equally importantly, quantified a value of each of the dimensions for a few dozen national cultures. The academic community is continuing the discussion whether ethnic diversity is the most adequate indicator (independent variable) in comparative studies. Some researchers, e.g. James Fearon (2003), Jose Montalvo and Marta Reynal-Querol (2002; 2005) are of the opinion that differences, for example, in the quality of life, well-being, or

9 <http://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/narodowe-spisy-powszechne/narodowy-spis-powszechny-2002/> i <http://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/nsp-2011/nsp-2011-wyniki/struktura-narodowo-etniczna-jezykowa-i-wyznaniowa-ludnosci-polski-nsp-2011,22,1.html> (Accessed 21 February 2019).

10 <http://skgd.pl/sprawozdania/#2017> (Accessed 21 February 2019).

11 It should be noted that such a big difference results partly also from the different method of obtaining data on nationality and the differently formulated questions and proposed answers (cf. Barwiński 2014).

the level of democracy are explained better by ethnic polarization than by diversity itself. In other words, what is of key importance is polarization among separate groups inhabiting the same area rather than the number of minorities and their status. This issue is elaborated in more detail in chapter one.

In our research, we distinguish the following three groups: Poles, Germans, and Silesians. Simultaneously since there are no communities participating in the research where it would be possible to distinguish another fourth group numerous enough to influence the research results. Since all three groups are present in each of the examined communes and since the communes have different group size ratios, we decided to disregard cultural distance because, concerning the same groups, it is the same in each commune.

The other doubts deserving consideration are the following: To what extent are Silesians culturally different from Germans? Taking into consideration the history of immigration to Silesia, should the group of Poles be regarded as culturally homogeneous? As far as the first doubt is concerned, we did not ascertain any significant correlations between the Silesian and German populations. What is more, during the 2011 census it was observed that in the case of declaring a double national identity, the number of people declaring the possession of the joint Silesian and Polish identity was over ten times larger than those declaring the joint Silesian and German identity¹². Simultaneously, the clear and mass motivation to express self-identification with Silesian nationality does not allow the researcher to regard the Silesian population as culturally identical with the Polish population. As far as the other doubt is concerned, it was concluded that the period of 70 years since the largest movements of people in Opole Silesia resulted in a situation where the differences between people displaced from the East and settlers from central Poland were no longer of any great importance.

Method of measurement

Taking into consideration the aforementioned reservations, we adopted the ethnic fractionalization index as an ethnic diversity index (EFI; Alesina et al. 2003). The ethnic fractionalization index is a measure of both the number of ethnic groups and the ratios of their sizes. It is calculated according to the following formula:

$$EFI = 1 - (a^2 + b^2 + c^2 \dots + n^2)$$

12 <http://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/nsp-2011/nsp-2011-wyniki/struktura-narodowo-etniczna-jezykowa-i-wyznaniowa-ludnosci-polski-nsp-2011,22,1.html> (Accessed 4 March 2019).

where a, b, c, \dots, n , is the percentage share of each ethnic group in the population of every commune (expressed as a fraction of unity). For example, in the commune X where the population of group a would be 45 %, the population of group b – 35 %, and the population of group c – 20 %, the ethnic fractionalization index would be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} EFI_x &= 1 - (0.45^2 + 0.35^2 + 0.2^2) = 1 - (0.2025 + 0.1225 + 0.04) \\ &= 1 - 0.365 = 0.635 \end{aligned}$$

The ethnic fractionalization index can range in value from 0 to 1, where 0 signifies an ethnically homogeneous population (all members of the population belong to one ethnic group), and 1 stands for a perfectly diversified population (every member of the population belongs to a different ethnic group).

Tab. 2 presents EFI values for all communes in the Opolskie province. The data constituting the basis for the calculation of the index come first of all from the census carried out in 2002. The number of the members of the Silesian minority was estimated by comparing nationality declarations made in the years 2002 and 2011 at the level of districts.

3 Quality of governance

As was noticed in the introduction, we deal with the situation in which the discourse on good governance is dominated by thinking in general state categories, while methodological and axiological considerations call for a greater focus on the local level. Therefore, in this part of the book, the concept of good governance is transferred to the level of the Polish commune, which will be followed by the conceptualization and operationalization of the criteria of good governance used in this study. We will first present a general outline of the basic sources for the concept of good governance, including the most important principles/criteria (we use the notions of the principles or criteria of good governance interchangeably) making it possible to determine when governance is good. We will also distinguish the main directions in the research on good governance at the local level. As it has already been mentioned, good governance is first of all the subject of research focused on the national scale, but it does not mean that it has not been studied at the local level. International experiences in this area were synthesized in “A Practical Guide to Measuring Governance at the Local Level” issued by the Oslo Governance Centre at the United Nations Development Programme. It contains a review of 22 initiatives/tools used to measure the quality of local governance in various parts of the world (Wilde et al. 2009). As far as Polish experiences in researching good governance at the commune level are concerned, one of few examples of a comprehensive application of this concept is

Tab. 2: Ethnic fractionalization in the communes of the Opolskie province¹³

Name of commune/ district	Percentage of Polish population	Percentage of Silesian population	Percentage of German population	EFI
Opole	0.89	0.07	0.02	0.19
Brzeski District:				
Brzeg	0.97	0.01	0.00	0.04
Grodków	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.04
Lewin Brzeski	0.97	0.02	0.00	0.05
Lubsza	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.03
Olszanka	0.99	0.01	0.00	0.03
Skarbimierz	0.99	0.01	0.00	0.03
Głubczycki District				
Baborów	0.87	0.04	0.09	0.23
Głubczyce	0.97	0.03	0.00	0.07
Kietrz	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.04
Branice	0.94	0.05	0.01	0.11
Kędzierzyńsko-Kozielski District				
Kędzierzyn-Koźle	0.87	0.08	0.04	0.23
Bierawa	0.66	0.07	0.26	0.49
Cisek	0.42	0.15	0.43	0.62
Pawłowiczki	0.61	0.18	0.21	0.55
Polska Cerekiew	0.60	0.18	0.22	0.56
Reńska Wieś	0.38	0.27	0.35	0.66
Kluczborski District:				
Byczyna	0.96	0.03	0.01	0.07
Kluczbork	0.83	0.07	0.10	0.30
Wołczyn	0.96	0.02	0.02	0.08
Lasowice Wielkie	0.48	0.14	0.38	0.61
Krapkowicki District:				
Gogolin	0.58	0.24	0.17	0.57
Krapkowice	0.74	0.11	0.15	0.42
Zdzieszowice	0.71	0.19	0.10	0.45

13 The population percentages do not add up to 100 % because some communes are inhabited by representatives of other minorities. Furthermore, in the case of data aggregated at the level of the province, double national identifications were taken into consideration.

Tab. 2: Continued

Name of commune/ district	Percentage of Polish population	Percentage of Silesian population	Percentage of German population	EFI
Strzeleczyki	0.41	0.17	0.42	0.63
Walce	0.39	0.29	0.32	0.66
Namysłowski District:				
Namysłów	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.04
Domaszowice	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.05
Pokój	0.85	0.07	0.08	0.26
Świerczów	0.99	0.00	0.01	0.02
Wilków	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.04
Nyski District:				
Głucholazy	0.97	0.02	0.00	0.05
Korfantów	0.86	0.07	0.07	0.26
Nysa	0.95	0.04	0.00	0.10
Otmuchów	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.04
Paczków	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.04
Kamiennik	0.97	0.03	0.00	0.06
Łambinowice	0.91	0.07	0.01	0.16
Pakosławice	0.99	0.01	0.00	0.02
Skoroszyce	0.99	0.01	0.00	0.03
Oleski District:				
Dobrodzień	0.58	0.17	0.25	0.57
Gorzów Śląski	0.74	0.09	0.17	0.42
Olesno	0.65	0.11	0.24	0.51
Praszka	0.99	0.01	0.00	0.02
Radłów	0.48	0.24	0.28	0.64
Rudniki	0.99	0.01	0.00	0.01
Zębowice	0.39	0.17	0.44	0.63
Opolski District:				
Niemodlin	0.98	0.01	0.00	0.03
Ozimek	0.70	0.11	0.19	0.46
Prószków	0.57	0.12	0.31	0.57
Chrzastowice	0.54	0.19	0.27	0.60
Dąbrowa	0.72	0.11	0.17	0.44
Dobrzeń Wielki	0.58	0.21	0.21	0.58

(continued on next page)

Tab. 2: Continued

Name of commune/ district	Percentage of Polish population	Percentage of Silesian population	Percentage of German population	EFI
Komprachcice	0.56	0.13	0.31	0.57
Łubniany	0.45	0.27	0.28	0.65
Murów	0.61	0.07	0.32	0.52
Popielów	0.64	0.16	0.20	0.53
Tarnów Opolski	0.53	0.21	0.24	0.61
Tułowice	0.96	0.03	0.01	0.08
Turawa	0.59	0.20	0.21	0.57
Prudnicki District:				
Biała	0.48	0.09	0.43	0.58
Głogówek	0.69	0.06	0.25	0.46
Prudnik	0.97	0.02	0.01	0.07
Lubrza	0.92	0.01	0.06	0.14
Strzelecki District:				
Kolonowskie	0.51	0.06	0.43	0.55
Leśnica	0.55	0.17	0.28	0.59
Strzelce Opolskie	0.74	0.13	0.14	0.42
Ujazd	0.62	0.13	0.25	0.54
Zawadzkie	0.67	0.14	0.19	0.49
Izbicko	0.53	0.19	0.28	0.61
Jemielnica	0.53	0.22	0.24	0.61
Total Opolskie province:	0.88	0.13	0.08	0.20

The authors' own work based on: Struktura narodowo-etniczna, językowa i wyznaniowa ludności Polski - NSP 2011 (Accessed 5 March 2019 at: <http://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechn/nsp-2011/nsp-2011-wyniki/struktura-narodowo-etniczna-jezykowa-i-wyznaniowa-ludnosci-polski-nsp-2011,22,1.html>); Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2002 w zakresie deklarowanej narodowości oraz języka używanego w domu (Accessed 5 March 2019 at: <http://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechn/narodowe-spisy-powszechn/narodowy-spis-powszechny-2002/wyniki-narodowego-spisu-powszechnego-2002-narodowosci-oraz-jezyka/>); Barwiński 2014.

the project entitled *Good Governance in the Micro Scale – an Innovative System for the Analysis of Public Tasks Executed by Small Communes*, whose result was two books (Lisowska, Kobielska 2013; Lisowska, Kobielska 2014). On the basis of international standards and previous research experiences, the authors will select the good governance principles that were applied in the presented research.

A definition of good governance requires that first the very category of governance be referred to. In his critical analysis of the notion of governance, Claus Offe indicates that “the contemporary proliferation of this term stands in sharp contrast to its informative content; to say governance does not mean to express a lot because of the term’s ambiguity” (Offe 2016: 342). Offe is of the opinion that the category of governance belongs to so-called empty signifiers and its popularity results from normative demands hidden in it and reconciling the issue of the state’s intervention and efficiency with the need for social autonomy (Ibidem: 344). Taking into consideration these comments, we should, however, depict the most characteristic features of this notion, and hence the way in which it is understood by the authors, because the objective scope of the assessment of the quality of governance in the communes of the Opolskie province should be interpreted on this basis.

According to Francis Fukuyama, governance is “the government’s ability to create and enforce rules and to provide services, irrespective of whether the government is democratic or not” (Fukuyama 2013: 3). In Fukuyama’s opinion, governance concerns the state’s executive apparatus and its ability to implement efficiently priorities determined outside this apparatus, i.e. by politicians, therefore, also “an authoritarian regime can be governed well” (Ibidem: 4). A broader definition of governance is provided by the World Bank, which defines governance as “traditions and institutions by means of which power is exercised in the state” (Kaufman et al. 2010: 4). Next, World Bank researchers distinguish the following three aspects of governance (Ibidem):

- a) processes within which governments are elected, supervised, and replaced,
- b) a government’s ability to formulate and implement reasonable policies effectively,
- c) citizens’ and the state’s respect for institutions responsible for the regulation of social and economic interactions.

Thus, governance concerns processes and rules through which power is exercised as well as the results of the exercise of power. Already mentioned above, Offe writes that the notion of governance “is used in order to grasp, on the one hand, institutions (...), and on the other – the process (of steering) taking place within such institutions” (Offe 2016: 337). However, if we take a close look at the third component of governance distinguished by the World Bank, what we can also see there is a place for citizens as participants of governance. Bob Jessop emphasizes that the growing popularity of this term is connected with the necessity to distinguish between co-management and governance – the former would refer to various methods of governance, while the latter to a government and its

institutions equipped with the possibility to govern. The need for such a distinction is connected with the previous paradigms' inability to explain the changing organization and distribution of power – the traditional dichotomies such as market vs. hierarchy in the economy or private vs. public in politics appear to be simplifications which do not fit contemporary reality (Jessop 2016: 13).

In this context, it should be noted that the translation of the English notion of governance in the Polish academic discourse often functions as co-governing or co-management because the word governance does not refer only to the state and its institutions, being in fact a negation of the Weberian tradition of thinking about the role of the state (Hausner, Mazur 2016: 354). The concept of governance understood as co-governing assumes that the state is only one of the many subjects of governance oriented towards acting jointly with other centers of power possessing resources ensuring subjectivity; additionally, their subjectivity is accepted by the state apparatus and included in the process of co-management. Thus, the state functions in the conditions of the decentralization of power, and its competencies are limited for the benefit of networks of interests existing at various levels of social organization and bottom-up initiatives (Hausner, Mazur 2016: 354–355). Therefore, the notion of governance is of a relational and processual character because it takes into consideration the role of all entities which are the most important in a given context and potentially involved in the process of making decisions about public matters as well interactions among them. The essence of this understanding of governance is conveyed in the definition proposed by Transparency International according to which governance goes “beyond the traditional notion of government and focuses on relations among political leaders, public institutions, and citizens as well as processes through which they make and implement decisions” (Transparency International 2009: 22). Governance understood in this way means that the objects of governance quality assessments at the commune level are not only formalized governing bodies but also other entities which could play the co-governing role in the local setting. Applying the concept of governance to communes, Sigmund Barczyk writes that “local government, as a sovereign constitutional body, factually takes advantage of particular institutional attributes in matters of key importance for the functioning and development of communes, but it simultaneously seeks an arrangement of joint decision making relations with other partners of the commune game that would be the most advantageous for communes” (Barczyk 2010: 160). Thus, a general assessment concerns the condition of a whole local community consisting of many more or less institutionalized actors. Additionally, official governing bodies play obviously a key role as the administrators of important public resources. This scope of assessment is reflected in the principles and indicators of

the quality of governance selected for the purposes of this study many of which consist in assessing the condition of a local community rather than the condition of local political institutions. Obviously, between these two dimensions there exist interactions and relationships which the authors attempt to present in more detail in the descriptions of the particular indicators. At this point, the authors want only to emphasize that the final governance quality assessment to be scored by the particular communes on the basis of the measurement methodology proposed here should be interpreted with respect to the comments above.

Measuring the quality of governance requires an answer to the fundamental question, namely: When can governance be referred to as good? Contrary to the stand taken by Fukuyama, a governance quality assessment is rooted in the axiology of the Western democracies, which formulates objectives to be pursued by those who govern (Wilkin 2013: 32–34). It is possible to distinguish international and national sources of criteria of good governance which constitute a normative point of reference for the assessment of the quality of governance in concrete political units. Tab. 3 presents four such sources. It should be kept in mind that they are just a few of many examples, although more representative ones¹⁴. A comparison of these sources indicates similarities with respect to the criteria of good governance¹⁵ – the principles of accountability, efficiency, participation, or openness belong to the repertoire of good governance functioning in the global discourse on the quality

of governance¹⁶. Among the standards above, what is a source of particular importance because of its dedication to the local level is The Strategy for

14 A review of the criteria and indicators of good governance in various approaches cf. (Wojciechowski, Podgórnjak -Krzykacz 2008; Łopaciuk-Gonczaryk 2013; Borys 2014).

15 This similarity is particularly visible in the case of EU and Polish sources, which appears to be an effect of the implementation of these principles in Poland in consequence of its accession to the European Union. The fulfilment of the so-called Copenhagen criteria, the prerequisite for joining the EU, meant the necessity to build a system of the rule of law and institutions guaranteeing stable democracy. Subsequently the concept of good governance appeared in the so-called first programming period in the 2007–2013 national strategic reference framework and later became a foundation for priority V in the Human Capital Operational Programme.

16 The notion of “the global discourse on the quality of governance” may be understood as referring to the major international organizations whose aims include the improvement of the quality of governance, governments cooperating with such institutions, non-governmental organizations, and researchers that jointly create objectivized knowledge and values (standards, recommendations, research reports, commentaries, seminars, conferences) rooted in the ideal of a well-arranged state. Here the inspiration was the notion of a global anti-corruption industry proposed by Stephen Sampson (Sampson 2010).

Tab. 3: Selected sources of the principles of good governance

international sources		domestic sources	
World Bank (1996)	European Union (2001)	Council of Europe (2007)	Poland's Ministry of Regional Development (2008)
1. Accountability and participation	1. Openness	The 12 principles of good governance at the local level such as fair elections, participation, responsiveness, efficiency, transparency, accountability	1. Openness
2. Political stability and absence of violence	2. Participation		2. Partnership
3. Government's effectiveness	3. Accountability		3. Accountability
4. Quality of regulations	4. Effectiveness		4. Efficiency
5. Rule of law	5. Cohesion		5. Effectiveness and cohesion
6. Fight with corruption			

Source: the authors' own work based on: D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay, M. Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996–2006*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4280, 2007; *European governance: a white paper*, European Commission, COM(2001) 428, Brussels, 25.7.2001; *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level - Extract from the Valencia Declaration 15th Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Local and Regional Government (2007)*, Appendix I, Council of Europe, Valencia, 15–16 October; *Konsepja good governance – refleksje do dyskusji*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego, Warszawa 2008.

Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level adopted by the Council of Europe, which, according to its fragment, is also based on the experiences of other international organizations ('Strategy' 2007). This strategy includes twelve principles of good governance at the local level:

1. Fair elections, representation and participation in order to provide all citizens with opportunities to express their opinions on local public matters.
2. Responsiveness in order to ensure that local authorities address citizens' legal expectations and needs.
3. Efficiency and effectiveness in order to ensure the achievement of formulated objectives based on the best possible use of resources.
4. Openness and transparency in order to ensure public access and information and facilitate addressing and dealing with local public matters.
5. The rule of law in order to ensure fairness, impartiality, and predictability.
6. Ethical behavior in order to ensure the priority of public interests over private ones.
7. Competencies and talents in order to ensure the proper fulfilment of duties by local officers and representatives.

8. Innovation and openness to change in order to ensure the advantageous use of new solutions and good practices.
9. Sustainable development and long term orientation in order to take into consideration the interests of future generations.
10. Prudent financial management in order to ensure the sagacious and productive use of public funds.
11. Human rights, cultural diversity, and social cohesion in order to ensure that all citizens can enjoy safety and respect and that nobody is discriminated against or excluded.
12. Accountability in order to ensure that local officers and representatives assume responsibility and may be brought to justice for their actions.

The set of principles proposed by the Council of Europe shows the multidimensional character and complexity of the assessment of local politics, but also a wide range of possible directions of research on its quality. This is reflected in international research experiences. In *A Practical Guide to Measuring Governance at the Local Level* mentioned above, we can read that research on the quality of local governance focuses the most often on the following four topics (Wilde et al. 2009: 8):

1. decentralization – what is studied in this case is the degree and forms of decentralization (e.g. devolution, delegation), taking into consideration the fiscal, administrative and political dimensions of decentralization, as well as the national decentralization environment, i.e. institutions, acts of parliament, and policies at the central level.
2. local governance – in this case, the subject matter of research is the basic dimensions and determinants of local governance such as a local political system (the rule of law, elections, civil liberties, access to information, the strength of the civil society), elected institutions and their functioning (public procurement, financial policy, corruption), social issues (gender equality, environmental protection, ensuring tax revenues), and a business environment.
3. local democracy – in this case, research focuses on the procedure of electing local authorities, the role of civic organizations, and the influence of minority and opposition groups on the process of governance; the subject matter of analysis is formal mechanisms guaranteeing the transparency, representativeness, and accountability of authorities, as well as the practical functioning of these mechanisms from the point of view of citizens.
4. local authorities and their achievements – in this case, researchers concentrate on the results of local politics expressed in the quality of goods and services provided to the self-governing community; the subject matter of analysis

is the quality of services in one or more selected sectors of local authorities' activities (such research is often accompanied by an analysis of financial, institutional, and human resources aimed at assessing local authorities' abilities to carry out particular programs and tasks).

Tab. 4 presents examples of tools developed to assess the quality of governance at the local level together with their normative orientation, that is dimensions constituting the subject matter of analysis. The repertoire of evaluation criteria is very similar to the standards developed for the national level; additionally, at the local level there appears an additional dimension referred to as "equity". A more thorough analysis of such tools shows that the dimension of "equity" is understood to a large extent as the existence of institutional solutions preventing the exclusion of certain social categories or a state of relative equality within a local community¹⁷. In view of the fact that it is a certain additional dimension which appears to be diversifying slightly the axiology of measuring the quality of governance at the local and national levels, the authors decided to choose it as one of the good governance criteria at the commune level. They also decided to use the notion of "equality" instead of the notion of "equity" since the former appears to be a category that is less encumbered axiologically.

On the basis of the analyses above, the authors decided to distinguish the following five principles of good governance: equality, effectiveness, accountability, openness, and participation. Each of the principles was assigned 5 indicators allowing an assessment of the quality of governance with respect to compliance with a given principle. The indicators are of a diversified character because they are so-called focused indicators related to input, output, and processes in contrast to perception-focused indicators (Wilde et al 2009) for which no relevant data

17 In the case of the Municipal Governance Index, the principle of equity was operationalized by means of the following indicators: 1. The existence of a civil rights charter guaranteeing the right of access to basic public services 2. The percentage of women in the municipal council 3. The percentage of women in key positions 4. The pursuit of a special water fee policy targeted at people living in poverty 5. The use of a system of incentives to undertake informal business activities. According to the Local Governance Barometer, equity consists of the following elements: 1. Legal guarantees of protection for civil rights 2. A degree of access to participation in the exercise of power 3. A degree of access to work and income 4. A degree of access to health care and education 5. A degree of exposure to the risk of domestic violence. On the other hand, in the case of the Good Governance Index for Local Development, equity comprises the following elements: 1. Conducting affirmative actions for those living in poverty 2. Conducting affirmative actions for women (Wilde et al. 2009: 56–75).

Tab. 4: Selected tools used to measure the quality of governance at the local level

name of tool	Local Democracy Assessment Guide	Local Level Democratic Governance Indicators	Local Governance Barometer	Good Governance Index for Local Development	Municipal Governance Index
institution which created tool and time of creation	International IDEA (2001) – an international institute supporting democracy and free elections based in Stockholm, Sweden	Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative (2000) – an organization established within the Hungarian Open Society Institute	Impact Alliance (2005) – a coalition of three organizations: PACT (an international organization for development based in Washington, USA), Institute for Democracy in South Africa, Netherlands Organization for Development	Independent Directorate for Local Governance (2007) – a unit responsible for the quality of governance at the local level established in the Afghan Ministry of Internal Affairs	UN Habitat's Global Campaign on Urban Governance (2000) – a UN agenda dealing with urbanization and sustainable urban development
areas where tool was used	municipal governments in Africa and Arab countries	local governments in Central and East European Countries such as Hungary, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia	local and regional governments in Africa (e.g. Cameroon, Botswana)	regional (provincial) governments in Afghanistan	cities all over the world, e.g. Dakar (Africa), Colombo (Asia), Pristina (Europe), Montreal (North America)
dimensions of governance quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A municipal government and its spatial, demographic, and socio-economic contexts 2. Representative democracy 3. Participatory democracy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exercise of local power: quality of coordination and decision making based on knowledge 2. Strength of democracy: openness and fairness 3. Policy implementation effectiveness 4. Responsiveness: citizens' satisfaction and consistency of policies with their expectations 5. Service provision level 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectiveness 2. Transparency and rule of law 3. Accountability 4. Participation and active citizenship 5. Equity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representation 2. Accountability 3. Effectiveness 4. Participation 5. Transparency 6. Security 7. Equity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectiveness 2. Participation 3. Equity 4. Accountability

Source: the authors' own work based on: A Wilde, S. Narang, M. Laberge, L. Moretto, A Users' Guide to Measuring Local Governance, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre 2009, pp. 56–75.

are available. Efforts were made to ensure that the indicators met certain basic requirements indicated by Tadeusz Borys. According to Borys, the indicator of the quality of governance at the commune level should be characterized by the following features: a) it should constitute a substantive reflection of a given dimension of governance, b) it should be easy to interpret, c) it should allow the monitoring of changes in time, d) it should allow comparisons among communes, e) it has to have a referential value, f) its validity should be based on a consensus, g) it should be formulated in a manner facilitating its use in information systems, h) it should be measurable, that is based on available, documented, reliable, and updated data (Borys 2014: 64–65). A detailed description (essence, data sources, period, weaknesses) of each of the selected indicators is presented in the annex. At this point it should be noted that the selected indicators range in value from 0 to 1, therefore, the maximum number of points to be scored by a commune in the assessment of the particular principles of good governance was 25. This was the basis for creating the commune-level governance quality index consisting of five sub-indexes of the same weight (cf. Tab. 5). The subsequent paragraphs present the authors' understanding of each of the principles and the resultant selection of indicators.

Under the notion of equality, the authors understand a degree to which groups traditionally exposed to exclusion are represented in a commune's public life. This definition causes the need to look for the indicators of such equality to be found at the commune level. On the basis of these characteristic features, the authors selected equality indicators concerning the following four social groups exposed to the risk of exclusion: women, the elderly, the youth, the poor¹⁸. It should be noted that some of the selected equality indicators may be also regarded as participation indicators because, for example, a senior citizens council is simultaneously a participatory body. It is one of the problems related to the measurement of the particular governance quality principles resulting from the fact of substantive connections among the particular principles. For example, participation may simultaneously fulfil the role of an accountability mechanism and increase equality in a local public space. It seems that deciding about assigning a particular indicator to a given principle of good governance, the researcher has to exercise some degree of discretion.

18 The authors are aware that social categories are not disjunctive, i.e. those exposed to the risk of poverty are simultaneously elderly women or young people in long term unemployment. Thus, in practice, a particular indicator comprises a few social categories. For example, an active senior citizens council may represent the interest of not only elderly people but also women living in poverty.

The notion of effectiveness should be understood as the degree to which the local authorities perform their obligations to the self-governing community with respect to the fulfilment of their needs and reasonable management of the commune's property. Let us focus on the problems related to the assessment of effectiveness. From the perspective of assessment-related procedures in local government units, effectiveness is "a relation among products, results and (especially financial) resources allocated for their achievement" (Grzywa 2008: 15). Thus, effectiveness is an economic category and its essence is achieving formulated objectives by reasonably managing available resources – effective means achieving the best possible results with the least possible expenditures. In order to ensure such effectiveness in the functioning of public administration units management processes need to be based on strategic planning, control of expenses, policies oriented towards savings, simplification of procedures, and improvement of the quality of provided services (Żołnierczyk, Szumowski 2014: 122–124). With respect to measurement, a literal treatment of effectiveness constitutes a challenge because it requires that expenditures and expected results be defined precisely. Even if such a relation can be determined, there appears a problem with allocating particular values to expenditures and especially to results as well as assessing such values with respect to the optimal utilization of available resources. While it is possible to determine a commune's expenditures on primary education or promotional activities, it is rather difficult to assess the value of the effects of incurring such expenditures, particularly if such effects are postponed in time and are influenced by other factors. Therefore, the selected effectiveness indicators are only partly compatible with this abstract category. On the one hand, these indicators refer to the economic results of a commune's policy concerning the acquisition of financial resources (its own revenues) and the use of such resources for development purposes (capital expenditures and fight with chronic poverty). On the other hand, two indicators refer to the functioning of a commune's administration in terms of applied procedures aimed at increasing effectiveness and expenditures on administration.

Accountability should be understood as mechanisms and competences allowing the enforcement of local political decision makers' liability for their decisions. The principle of accountability creates special difficulties with finding relevant indicators allowing its measurement as well as comparison among communes. As Mark Bovans writes, accountability is a social relation between an actor and a forum within which the actor is obliged to explain and justify their actions, the forum may ask questions and make judgements, and the actor may take the consequences of their actions. Obligations to provide explanations may have an either formal or informal character, similarly to the consequences taken by the

Tab. 5: The Local Level Governance Quality Index (25 points)

equality sub-index 5 (points)	efficiency sub-index 5 (points)	accountability sub-index 5 (points)	openness sub-index 5 (points)	participation sub-index 5 (points)
To what degree are the groups typically exposed to social exclusion represented in local public life?	To what degree do the local authorities perform their obligations to the self-governing community with respect to the fulfilment of their needs and reasonable management of the commune's property?	To what degree are the mechanism and competences allowing the enforcement of the local political decision makers' liability for their decisions functional and effective?	To what degree is information on the actions of the local authorities made publicly available? To what degree do the local authorities cooperate with the local social environment?	To what degree is the local community involved in local public life?
1. The percentage of women in the commune council.	1. Investment expenditures from the commune budget per capita.	1. The existence of a local media organization that is not controlled by the commune authorities.	1. The commune's responding to the questionnaire by the set deadline.	1. The number of non-governmental organizations in the commune per 10,000 inhabitants.
2. The percentage of women holding key positions in the commune office.	2. The commune's own revenues per capita.	2. The publication of internal inspection reports in the Public Information Bulletin.	2. Easy access to and availability of a valid annual programme of cooperation with non-governmental organization in the Public Information Bulletin or on the commune office's website.	2. The number of library members per 1000 inhabitants.

Tab. 5: Continued

equality sub-index 5 (points)	efficiency sub-index 5 (points)	accountability sub-index 5 (points)	openness sub-index 5 (points)	participation sub-index 5 (points)
3. The activities of the youth council.	3. The percentage of people using social assistance services on a long-term basis in relation to all people receiving social benefits.	3. The number of candidates for the position of commune leader/ mayor in the 2014 local government elections.	3. The passing of a resolution determining the rules and procedures of social consultations.	3. The average mark in the junior secondary school examination in the knowledge of society and history.
4. The activities of the senior citizens council.	4. Expenditures on the public administration per 1 inhabitant.	4. The publication of the councillors' and the commune leader's property statements in the Public Information Bulletin before 2 June 2017.	4. The number of non-governmental organizations which have submitted comments on the programme of cooperation with non-governmental organizations.	4. Funds from the 1 % mechanism acquired by the commune's public benefit organizations per capita.
5. The degree of the poverty risk.	5. The commune's usage of one of the three quality management systems.	5. The percentage of the councillors with higher education.	5. The publication of commune council session minutes in the Public Information Bulletin.	5. The percentage of votes cast for voters' election committees in relation to the total number of votes cast in the commune council elections.

Source: the authors' own work.

actor for their actions before the forum. Additionally, the very risk of the occurrence of particular consequences may be regarded as an accountability mechanism (Bovans 2006: 9). Looking for fora before which local political actors are accountable for their actions, we should first of all mention external institutions responsible for supervision over the local government system and specified in Article 171 of the constitution, that is the President of the Council of Ministers, provincial governors, regional accounting chambers, and the Sejm, which has the authority to dissolve a commune council ('Constitution' 1997). Supervision over the activities of local governments is also exercised by the Supreme Chamber of Control or the Central Anti-corruption Bureau¹⁹. These are external bodies exercising the controlling function, but there are also internal control mechanism such as managerial control obligatory under the Public Finances Act and the related secondary legislation (Małecka-Lyszczek 2015: 243–250). It is also possible to indicate social control that is exercised in the course of local government elections, local referenda, and local media, as well as by means of complaints and requests submitted under the Code of Administrative Proceedings.

However, from the perspective of this research, there appears a certain major problem because the existing accountability mechanisms have been designed as a part of the position of the commune and supervision over the commune within the structure of the political system and are applicable to all communes. Therefore, in order to differentiate among the communes with respect to the degree of accountability, we should compare the communes of the province with respect to the frequency of using such mechanisms in each commune. It is not only a problem of access to data, but rather a problem of their interpretation as measures of a degree of accountability. If the provincial governor or the regional accounting chamber issues a negative opinion on commune A and commune B does not receive any such opinion, does it allow us to conclude that commune A has a higher level of accountability (irregularities have been identified) than that of commune B? After all, commune B may be subject to equally strict inspections as commune A, but there are no irregularities in commune B, while they are detected in commune A. In such cases, negative opinions should be regarded rather as a measure of the legality of activities or bad financial management in commune A in comparison to commune B or possibly a

19 Article 1 of the Act on the Central Anti-corruption Bureau declares that it is an institution responsible for fighting corruption, "particularly in state and local government institutions". The Central Anti-corruption Bureau Act of 9 June 2006 (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 1310).

measure of the effectiveness of external control institutions. But such inspections cannot be used to compare the degrees of accountability among communes as they are connected with the functioning of supra-communal mechanisms. The cases of irregularities or corruption ascertained by the Supreme Chamber of Control or the Central Anti-corruption Bureau concern a few communes only and are rather a measure of the quality of commune governance²⁰. There is also a lack of access to data concerning managerial control, which would make it possible to compare communes on a regular basis (e.g. reports on the status of managerial control which are to be drawn up by managers of particular organizational units are rarely published in Public Information Bulletins). On the other hand, there are so few cases of dismissing a commune leader/mayor or commune/town council in the Opolskie province that no systematic qualitative comparisons are possible²¹. Complaints and requests submitted by commune inhabitants could constitute a source of comparable knowledge on accountability in the communes, but also in this case we face the problem of access to data and their interpretation. Not all communes answered the questionnaire, in which the authors asked, among other things, about citizens' complaints and requests, and the Public Information Bulletin did not suffice to complement the missing information. Furthermore, the number of complaints and requests may be interpreted on the one hand as a measure of commune inhabitants' readiness to control the authorities by means of this instrument, but on the other hand a large number of complaints and requests may be a measure of a low effectiveness of the local bureaucracy (and hence a lower quality of governance). Thus, a larger number of complaints and requests cannot be regarded as a positive phenomenon²². An election turnout could be used as one of the indicators of

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- 20 Nevertheless, post-inspection data may be used in developing a commune accountability indicator, which is discussed in more detail in the annex.
 - 21 According to the data of the State Electoral Commission, since 1993 17 dismissal referenda have been held in the Opolskie province (status as at 20 August 2017) (there have been two simultaneous referenda concerning the dismissal of both a council and a mayor): 3 have concerned district councils, 9 – town councils, 2 – commune councils, 1 – a town president, 3 – mayors, and 1 – a commune leader. Among these referenda there was only one successful dismissal of town council – in Niemodlin in 2001. Cf. http://opole.kbw.gov.pl/352_Wybory_i_referenda.
 - 22 Nevertheless, it seems that the institution of a request submitted by a citizen under the Code of Administrative Proceedings may be a better measure of social accountability in comparison to the instrument of a complaint because of the differences between these two instruments. A complaint concerns actions that have already taken place or

accountability at the commune level, but, for reasons described in the following sections, the authors decided not to use the data concerning participation in elections. Consequently, the selected indicators and their pertinence should be assessed taking into consideration the difficulties outlined above. The authors tried to identify such mechanisms and competencies that function strictly at the local level, can occur in all communes, adopting various values, and can be assessed quantitatively on the basis of reliable data.

The notion of openness should be understood as regularly publishing information on the activities of local authorities and the active cooperation of such authorities with the social/institutional environment. Openness is a quite wide-ranging category as it combines such qualities as transparency, readiness/ability of authorities to cooperate with other social life actors, and readiness/ability to undertake innovative actions (Lisowska 2014: 79–85). It seems that the central features of openness are transparency, partnership and cooperation with the social environment. Understood in this way, openness is an important supplement to and a condition for accountability because without the knowledge of authorities' actions and the rules of their functioning ensured by transparency, it is difficult to bring them to account²³. On the other hand, cooperation between authorities and the social environment results in the necessity to accept assessments given by partners, to take into consideration their needs and expectations, and to justify made decisions. Openness is also close to equality because it requires the acknowledgement of the subjectivity of various social stakeholders – to some extent, these two principles overlap as the degree to which groups exposed to social exclusion are represented in the social space is also a measure of the openness of the system of power to the interests of such groups.

The notion of participation should be understood as the degree to which a local community is involved in the local public life. Understood in this way, participation is to a considerable extent identical to the strength of the local civil society whose primary feature is the involvement of private entities in the pursuit of public objectives (Szacki 1997). Research on social participation at the

are being performed and cause negative opinions of stakeholders, while a request is a demand to eliminate certain irregularities in the future. Thus, a request is of a preventive character and, unlike a complaint, is often submitted in the social interest (Kurzawa 2015: 235).

- 23 Therefore, transparency itself is only one of the conditions for preventing corruption and its anti-corruption potential is unlocked only when information on the actions of authorities reaches the public in a system including accountability mechanisms (Naurin, Lindstedt 2005: 6–10).

local level usually focuses on various manifestations of civic activity and is used to assess the quality of the civil society – in such research, the notion of social participation is used interchangeably with the notion of civic participation or civil society (Skrzypiec 2002: 12; Pietraszko-Furmanek 2012: 62–65). Civic participation is regarded as one of the integral principles of good governance, which results from the very idea of joint governing included in the notion of governance, although it should be noted that there are studies in which participation is also regarded in the category of social capital and is then distinguished as a separate dimension interacting with the quality of governance (Łopaciuk-Gonczonek 2013). In the presented study, an assessment of civic participation is an assessment of one of the dimensions of the quality of governance since the authors assume that the presented definition of governance obliges the researcher to assess the condition of a whole self-governing community together with its infrastructure of social and political institutions, and not just the state of the institutions of local political representation. Therefore, in their research, the authors took into consideration broadly understood civic participation, i.e. both individual and collective actions which need not be of a purely political character (e.g. voting for candidates from inhabitants' election committees), but may be interpreted as a manifestation of a sense of responsibility for the public good and the possession of relevant resources making it possible to pursue the public good (e.g. civic competencies or the strength of a local non-governmental sector).

It should be noted that in this study, the authors did not use the data concerning the election turnout as an indicator of civic participation or accountability, although such data are often used as one of the indicators of the quality of governance as they are easily available. This results from the unique character of the Opolskie province, where the problem of election data reliability occurs because of so-called suspended migration. Romuald Jończy, one of the leading authorities in the field of research on migration in the Opolskie province, has estimated that in 2006, 25 % (approximately 80,000–85,000 people) of the Germans living in the region were people who had emigrated permanently, but were still officially registered as residing in the Opolskie province. This constitutes 8 % of the province's population; however, if the geographical distribution of this group is taken into consideration, it becomes evident that suspended emigration is typical primarily of the communes examined in this research, that is rural communes with a high percentage of Silesian and German populations (Jończy, Łukaniszyn-Domaszewska 2014: 19–21). Therefore, the authors decided not to use the data concerning the election turnout because the possibly lower turnout in these communes may be the effect of suspended migration.

As it has been mentioned above, a detailed description of each of the indicators is included in the annex. What should be indicated at this point are general problems with which the authors had to cope while looking for governance quality indicators at the commune level. Firstly, a particular indicator may be assigned to different principles of good governance, because these principles overlap. As a result the researcher faces the problem of discretionary assigning a particular indicator to a given principle of good governance. Secondly, the indicators provide information about the current state only, while conclusions concerning the conditions and consequences of such a state (that is about the governance processes whose measurement constitutes the core of the research) are, in a sense, a theoretical speculation that would require an in-depth empirical verification at the level of each commune. Thirdly, some indicators are the basis for evaluating communes in the area which, although included in the range of communes' own tasks, is also influenced by external influences that are rather difficult to assess. Consequently, a commune may be assessed for something over which it has a limited control. The last problem concerns data on the local reality. In Poland, a lot of quantitative data allowing comparisons among territorial units concern districts and provinces (e.g. the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office)²⁴. Therefore, the selection of the governance quality indicators at the local level is determined rather by the availability of relevant data. Thus, sometimes what is researched is not what the researcher finds interesting, but what can be researched thanks to available data. Assessing the relevance and reliability of the methodology of measuring the quality of governance proposed in this study, one should take into consideration the aforementioned problems.

24 Aldona Podgórnjak-Krzykacz observed that the problem with the availability of statistical data allowing the measurement of good governance occurs already at the level of provinces (Podgórnjak-Krzykacz 2013: 173).