

The role of non-elected actors in community power structure in Poland: results of a survey experiment¹

Abstract

From classic elitist and pluralist theories of community power to urban regime and network governance concepts academic studies tell us that several institutional and individual actors with no electoral democratic legitimacy may have significant impact on local government decision-making. In our paper we ask question who they are in contemporary Polish cities? And are there any systematic regularities in this respect concerning e.g. how they differ depending on the size of local community? In this paper we look at the phenomenon through the lenses of citizens' perception.

Data is collected through the survey experiment conducted on the representative sample of 2000 Polish citizens who are asked about their perception of the impact of various business and societal actors. The study uses the survey experiment method in which various formulations of the question are randomly assigned to individual respondents, which allows us to measure the perceived influence of individual types of actors. Referring to the recent debate on limitation of applicability of regime theory to large cities only, we place a special attention to the impact of city size on the role of big and small businesses as well as various societal organizations.

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