Motivations of local leaders from Polish, Italian and Slovenian municipalities for running for office. Does Evidence-Based Public Policy Making Matter?

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is a crucial determinant of a municipality's development direction through the lens of its people – the leaders and local leaders who lead it. Both categories – motivation and local leadership – are therefore intertwined. The local decision-making process will depend on the type of motivation of a local government candidate. Development will proceed differently in a municipality where most mayors and councilors applied for office for altruistic reasons or to be part of a community than in those where local government officials were motivated by a desire to gain local power or to fulfill individual ambitions. Local leaders who view local government from a human perspective will make different decisions than those who view it through the lens of investments or the natural environment. The type of motivation is important, firstly, for pragmatic reasons, related to the implementation of public policies, i.e., what decisions will be made in the municipality? How will they be implemented? Secondly, for personal reasons, which influence the decision-making climate, increase competition and frustration, and consequently eliminate local leaders who avoid conflict. The motivation to run for a position in local government influences leadership style, especially in the context of caring for the municipality and its residents, as well as innovative social, economic, and, above all, ecological solutions.

The primary goal of this paper will be to identify the types of motivations of local government officials – local leaders from municipalities in Poland, Italy, and Slovenia – to run for office. The presentation will address research questions, including: What categories can local leaders' motivations be divided into? Are there visible differences in the motivations of local government officials from the countries selected for the study? How often is motivation consistent with Evidence-Based Public Policy Making a reason for running for office? The presented study utilized quantitative (online survey technique) and comparative methods. Empirical research was conducted among mayors, board members, and councilors from municipal governments in Poland, Italy, and Slovenia. The aim of the survey was, among other things, to obtain opinions and determine local government officials' attitudes towards environmental protection and ecology in the context of all activities undertaken in the studied municipalities. The survey was conducted at the turn of 2022 and 2023 in Poland, Italy, and Slovenia. In each country, the survey was sent to at least 10 purposefully selected municipalities. Based on availability, it was planned to receive 100 completed questionnaires (300 in total) – 113 were returned in Poland, 109 in Italy, and 104 in Slovenia. The survey questionnaire contained 20 questions (closed, semi-open, and open).

Keywords
municipality, motivation, ecology, local leadership, comparative studies

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is an essential determinant of the direction of development of a municipality through the prism of people - leaders and local leaders who manage it. Both categories - motivation and local leadership are therefore interconnected. The local decision-making process will depend on the type of motivation of a candidate for a local government official. The development of a unit in which the majority of mayors and councillors applied for the position for altruistic reasons or to be part of the community will proceed differently than in those where local government officials were motivated by the desire to gain local power or to fulfil individual ambitions. Local leaders looking at the reality of local government from a human perspective will make different decisions than those who see it through the prism of a problem or investment. The type of motivation is essential, first of all, for pragmatic reasons, in connection with the implementation of public policies, i.e., what decisions will be made in the municipality, what investments and how they will be implemented as a consequence (Wasil, 2023, pp. 434-470). Secondly, for personal grounds that affect the decision-making climate, increase competition, conflict, and frustration, and consequently eliminate local leaders who avoid escalating the situation and who, in more favourable conditions, could have a positive impact on the development of the municipality (Sidor, Kuć-Czajkowska, Wasil 2017, pp. 191-201). The motivation to apply for a position in local government influences the leadership style, especially in caring for the municipality and its inhabitants and innovative social, economic, and ecological solutions (Swianiewicz, Klimska, 2003, pp. 24-25).

The research problem is the motivation to serve as a local government official, which influences the public activity of local leaders related to ecology and environmental protection. The aim of this article is to determine the types of motivations of local government officials – local leaders (mayors, board members, councilors) from municipalities in Poland, Italy, and Slovenia – to run for office and perform functions with an environmental focus. Exploring the challenging question posed in the title of the article, "Does Evidence-Based Public Policy Making Matter?", the analysis was conducted using the issue of ecology as an example and posed the following research questions: What categories can local leaders' motivations be divided into? Are there visible differences in the motivations of local government officials from the countries selected for the study? How often is motivation consistent with Evidence-Based Public Policy Making a reason for running for office? To clarify the research problem and achieve the article's objective, the results of a survey (an online questionnaire) conducted among local government officials (mayors and councilors) from Polish, Italian, and Slovenian municipalities between autumn 2022 and winter 2023 were used.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

The paper is embedded in the theories of local leadership and motivation. Local leadership is one of the key categories determining the development of a municipality, the implementation of local government tasks, the implementation of public policies, local politics, and the building of a civil society (Kotras, 2009; Drzonek, 2013; Wasil, 2023; Piasecki, 2006; Kuć-Czajkowska, Michałowski, 2008; Swianiewicz, Kurowska, 2018; Berg, Rao, 2005; Sullivan, Downe, Entwistle, Sweeting, 2006; Goldsmith, Larsen 2004; Wollmann, 2005). It is strongly related to political leadership (Wiatr, 2008; Pierzchalski, 2013; Żukiewicz, 2011, 2012, 2016; Hartliński, 2012; Kasińska-Metryka, 2012; Marciniak, Szczupaczyński 2018; Bodio, 2001; Mouritzen, Svara 2002; Chemers, 1997; Burns, 2003; Willner, Willner, 1965; Blondal, 1987), which can be interpreted as the ability of an individual to influence an individual or group to achieve specific effects (in the public sphere) (Morrell, Hartley, 2006, pp. 483-

501; Burns, 1977, pp. 266-275; Blondel, 1987, p. 321). M. Weber states that leadership is based on tradition, charisma, and legality (Żukiewicz, 2012, p. 25). Considering account personality traits, P. John distinguished four leadership styles: caretaker, consensus facilitator, city boss, and visionary (Swianiewicz, Klimska, 2003, pp. 24-25), which can help analyse local leadership and the subject matter discussed in the paper. Motivation and its categories are essential determinants for the direction of the development of a municipality through the prism of the people who lead it. Of the many definitions of motivation for the discussed issue, the one formulated by J.A.F. Freeman and D.R. Gilbert Jr. (2011) is essential. “Motivation is a psychological state that contributes to the extent to which a person engages in something. It includes factors that cause, determine, and sustain human behaviour heading in a specific direction” (Piechota, 2014, p. 87). According to classical theories, e.g., A.H. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, motivation can be described by the needs of belonging and love, recognition and esteem, and self-actualisation, which are at the top of the pyramid. According to C.P. Alderfer's ERG (existence, relatedness, growth) theory of needs (1969, pp. 142–175), it is not necessary to satisfy lower-order needs as a condition for the emergence of higher-order needs, and the needs of contact/belonging and development deserve special attention.

Motivation can be described in two ways: 1) Attributive, considering the individual's state and inner strength; 2) functional, related to a sufficiently strong and long-term influence on people’s behaviour; 2) (Piechota, 2014, p. 87). According to J.J. Wiatr (2008, pp. 82–83), in practice, three basic types of motivation of a political leader can be identified: egocentric and autotelic motivation (running for leadership is caused by gaining satisfaction from the political game or satisfaction from dominating others); egocentric and instrumental motivation (while performing the function, one expects other benefits, e.g. financial, prestige, sexual); socio-centric and instrumental motivation (leadership is treated as public service). In times of peace, the first two motivations occur, often together, and the third one is revealed during crises. For the paper, an essential type of motivation is H.A. Murray's achievement motivation (1938). It can be defined as "the tendency to achieve and exceed standards of excellence, associated with experiencing positive emotions in task situations perceived as a challenge", which is associated with a high assessment of one's effectiveness, and people motivated in this way are focused on making an effort and are persistent in their actions (Łukaszewski, 2000, p. 461). The model of "risky decisions" created on this basis reveals human tendencies to focus on distant and specific goals, prefer complex tasks that bring risk but also increase the probability of achieving a goal understood by the general public in the category of success (Klinkosz, Sękowski, 2006, p. 254).

In the motivation process, there are two types of stimuli – external and internal. Internal stimuli support the realisation of a person's internal values. As a result, the achieved goal brings a non-material reward, such as satisfaction, self-fulfilment, development, gratitude, recognition, and prestige. External stimuli also support the realisation of internal values and may have a material character: earnings, promotion, and social benefits (Piechota, 2014, p. 89). According to Z. Kinowska (2015, pp. 196–209), motivation for social and civic activity can be analysed using the typology: predominance of external, internal, and balance of stimuli (mixed motivation). A lack of a uniform pattern of motivation is also observed due to the co-occurrence of many reasons for undertaking activities in the public sphere. This phenomenon is called poly-motivation.

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

A behavioural approach was used to achieve the goal and answer the questions; this is important in the empirical material analysis collected during the study using the online survey technique (quantitative research)[1]. The goal of the survey was to obtain opinions and determine the local government officials' attitudes towards the issue of environmental protection and ecology in the context of all activities undertaken in the surveyed municipalities. The survey was conducted among municipal authorities (mayors, board members, councillors) in rural, urban-rural, and urban municipalities in Poland, Italy, and Slovenia between 2022 and 2023. The survey was sent to at least ten purposefully selected municipalities (4 small-rural, three small and medium-sized towns, and three large cities) in each country. It was planned to obtain 100 completed questionnaires (300 total) – 113 were returned in Poland, 109 in Italy, and 104 in Slovenia. The response rate calculated in the context of people who opened the link with the form was 15% in Slovenia, 25% in Italy, and 24% in Poland. The survey questionnaire contained 20 questions (closed, semi-open, and open). The paper uses part of the author's research on the respondents' motivation to run for the mandate of the executive and legislative body. Based on the answers to the open question, the respondents' declarations were assigned to a specific type of motivation using four (selected) of the mentioned' classifications in the theoretical part. The number of local government officials who entered their motivation to hold the mandate was 304 (Poland 104, Italy 101, Slovenia 99).

Local government officials from Poland, Italy, and Slovenia – parliamentary republics and unitary states – were selected for the study (Table 1). These countries share European Union membership, which obliges them to adapt to the principles and goals (including climate goals, e.g., "ready for 55") of the Union. Therefore, these countries, including at the local government level, can benefit from European Structural Funds. At the same time, the actions of central government and local government administration are deeply rooted in the specificity of a given country and region (from geographic location and the resulting climatic aspects, through tourist, economic, and industrial attractiveness, to civic activity and political culture) (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016, pp. 1–11; Kukovič, 2014, p. 21; Rakar, Kozjek, & Bencina, 2016, pp. 297–310; Vandelli, 2012, pp. 341, 345).

Table 1. Basic information about local government in Poland, Italy and Slovenia

Analyzed category	Poland	Italy	Slovenia
EU membership	Since 2004	Since the beginning of integration processes (1952)	Since 2004
System of government	Parliamentary republic (unitary state)	Parliamentary republic (unitary state)	Parliamentary republic (unitary state)
Number of levels of local government	3	3	2 (in practice only municipalities operate)
Basic administrative unit and their number	Municipality (approx. 2.5 thousand)	Municipality (*comune*) (slightly under 8 thousand)	Municipality (*občina*) (212)
Legislative-supervisory authorities	Municipal council	Municipal council	Municipal council
Executive authorities	Mayor (village mayor, town mayor, city president)	Mayor (*sindaco*) and executive board (*giunta*)	Mayor (*župan*)
Term length	5	5	4
Type of elections for both bodies	Direct	Direct (executive board elected indirectly)	Direct

[1] Survey questionnaires were in Polish, Italian, and Slovenian.

Source: own study based on: Z. Bukowski, T. Jędrzejewski, P. Rączka, *Ustrój samorządu terytorialnego*, Toruń 2013, s. 383–384, 391–393; B. Dolnicki, *Samorząd terytorialny*, Warszawa 2019, p. 89–119; K. Koźbiał, *Historia integracji europejskiej*, in: T. Graff (red.), *Święty Jan Paweł II i Robert Schuman. Patroni zjednoczonej Europy*, Kraków 2024, p. 55.

In terms of their political systems, local governments in the countries covered by the study share two bodies of local government: the council and the mayor, both directly elected, which is crucial to the study. Poland and Italy have three-tier local government with a five-year term, while Slovenia de facto only has municipalities, with a four-year term. Differences exist in the functioning of the executive body: in Poland and Slovenia, it is the mayor with deputies, while in Italy, the mayor is supported by a board in the local executive (Table 1). Among the tasks of local government officials in the countries selected for analysis, particularly from an ecological perspective, the following should be considered important: creating, approving, and implementing the budget, strategic and spatial planning, and environmental protection (Bokszczanin, 2010, pp. 49–89; Radzik-Maruszak, 2019, pp. 124–129).

Among those surveyed, 35% were local government officials from Poland, 33% from Italy and 32% from Slovenia. Almost 69% were councillors (in Poland as much as 82%, in Italy 48%, in Slovenia 75%), 18% were the executive body (mayor) (in Poland 18%, in Italy 22%, in Slovenia 14%). They mainly represented rural municipalities 55% (in Poland 62%, in Italy 24%, in Slovenia 78%), urban-rural 2% (all from Poland), urban 43% (in Poland 31%, in Italy 76%, in Slovenia 22%) (table 1).

Table 1. Basic information about the respondents

Category		Poland [%]	Italy [%]	Slovenia [%]	Total [%]*
Gender	Female	31	24	38	30
	Male	66	74	58	67
	No gender declaration	3	2	4	3
Type of municipality	Rural	62	24	78	55
	Urban	31	76	22	43
	Urban-rural	7	-	-	2
Function	Councillor	82	48	75	69
	Mayor	18	22	14	18
	Other function	-	30	11	13
Term of office	First	41	49	51	47
	Second	27	32	28	30
	Third and more	32	19	21	23

* Total [%] of the category for respondents from three countries.
* 13% of respondents in the category "other function" include board members in Italy, mayoral deputies in Slovenia, and several officials in all three countries.
Source: Own research.

Among the respondents, 67% were men (in Italy, 74%; in Poland, 66%; in Slovenia, 58%); 30% were women (in Slovenia, 38%; in Poland, 31%; in Italy, 24%). The most significant number of respondents, 56%, had higher education; a large group were local government officials with a scientific degree, 19%[2]. Local government officials with secondary education 22%, of vocational education 3%, and less than 1% with primary education were in the minority[3]. For 47% of the respondents, the term of office they took part in the study was the first; for 30%, the

[2] The highest number was recorded in Italy, which was related to the significant representation of municipal board members among the respondents and was positively correlated with higher education.
[3] Results of the author's survey.

second; and 24%, the third or more. The most significant number of local government officials holding office for the first time came from Slovenia 51%, the second from Italy 32%, and the third or more from Poland 32% (Table 1).

MOTIVATION OF RESPONDENTS TO APPLY FOR A MANDATE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACCORDING TO VARIOUS CLASSIFICATIONS

1. Classification of motivations: internal, axiological, external, rational, frustration, altruistic, power

In the most extensive typology, the most frequently encountered motivation tape among local government officials was axiological 32%. In Italy, it was as much as 35% of respondents, in Slovenia 32%, and the least in Poland, only 29%. The second most frequent type of motivation was rational, declared by 21% of respondents. It was most common among local government officials from Slovenia, 30%, much less frequently in Poland, 19%, and in Italy, 14%. Intrinsic motivation was indicated by 17% of respondents. The analysis of the respondents' answers shows that altruistic motivation (10%) occurred as often as related to power gain (10%), which was most often recorded in Poland (12%), then in Italy 9%, and relatively rarely in Slovenia 8%. The fewest respondents applied for the mandate due to frustration 5% (comparable in Poland 6%, Italy 5% and Slovenia 6%), and external motivation 5% (in Slovenia 8%, compared to Italy 4% and Poland 2%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Classification of motivations: internal, axiological, external, rational, frustration, altruistic, power

Classification	Types of motivation	Poland [%]	Italy [%]	Slovenia [%]	Total [%]*
	Internal	19	24	10	17
	Axiological	29	35	30	32
	External	2	4	8	5
	Rational	19	14	30	21
	Frustration	6	5	6	5
	Altruism	13	9	7	10
	Power	12	9	8	10
Total		100	100	100	100

* Total [%] of the category for respondents from three countries.
Source: Own research.

The quantitative data from Table 2 are illustrated with examples. The respondents, describing their motivation to perform the function of a local government official in an axiological approach, indicated concerning responsibility: *social responsibility* (S50WYM); honour: *idealism* (L22WYC); mission: *supporting the country I have lived in since I was born* (S45WYA); most often, however, to serve the community: *the good of the inhabitants of my village* (A5WYC); *concern for social issues* (A21WXC); *local good* (L51WYC); *spirit of service* (S27MYC); *interest in the community and the common good* (S108MYC). Rational motivation in the study group mainly referred to public benefit with an indication of a specific area of future actions: *improving residents' quality by using historical and tourist attractions of our town. Retaining young people in rural areas* (A25WXC*); my contribution to fire protection and improving the quality of life* (L3WYC); *development of the local community in the field of culture* (L38WXC); *development of the city where I live, I want to help with social problems and improve older city residents' quality* L58MXC). The described type of motivation included reasons related to ecology and the natural environment, which also referred to the acquisition of skills and knowledge and new

cognitive experiences: *the desire to broaden one's horizons in terms of planning various municipal undertakings, solving problems faced by residents, planning short-term and long-term investments in the municipality, solving or optimising environmental and ecological solutions in the municipality and the desire to bring the municipality closer to residents* (L39MBC); *acting for the sake of ecology and the development of the municipality* (A55WYC). Most local government officials were motivated by issues of values within the local community and public benefit. The internal motivation includes the following aspects, e.g., achievements: *the desire to change the environment for the better, and this is my passion* (A14MYC); *the desire to co-create the municipality* (L103WYC), self-esteem: *the willingness to act for the benefit of the inhabitants of my municipality, I also wanted to use in practice my knowledge gained during my law studies* (A57WYC), as well as satisfaction: *optimism, everyday enjoyment, awareness that we influence our lives, the ability to find positive sides even under challenging situations* (A67WYM), and self-fulfilment: *I wanted to get involved personally* (S37MXA); *passion for my municipality, art and culture* (S42WYM). The respondents who demonstrated altruistic motivation indicated: *a passion for social work and dedication to society* (A54WYM); *I have been actively involved in the life of the municipality for many years, I am a member of associations in the municipality, and for many years I worked on the Parents' Council in our town. Residents' problems are my priority and help to solve them* (A87WXC); *civic involvement, willingness to make myself available to my community. Local politics is a form of civic volunteering* (S78MYA). The motivation analysed included compassion and selfless love for one's neighbour: *I wanted to deal with the issue of the disabled and the poor, education, and city development* (A8MXC); *I want the voice of seniors to be heard at the local level. Older people have specific environmental problems and requirements, especially in long-term care* (L54WXC); *love for one's neighbour, and my municipality* (S35MXC). In the analysis of the material, statements that referred to influence, including on the local decision-making process, were assigned to power-oriented motivation: *the desire for change, the desire to influence local decisions* (A46MYC); *deciding on progress in one's village* (L96WYC); *the desire to personally introduce change* (S46WYA); *influencing decision-making processes and improving the urban social environment* (S59MYA). In the context of achieving or maintaining social status, career, and prestige, e.g., was noted: *I was a city councillor for social policy for two terms. I decided to continue my work as mayor* (S106MYM). The motivation related to exercising power (achieving or maintaining social status, instrumental reasons, career, prestige, reputation) was challenging to diagnose because the respondents tended to present themselves on a positive side and to hide other, less civic reasons for running for office.

The extrinsically motivated respondents most often indicated friendship and sociability, as well as the social aspect of their behaviour, and the three declared elements were mutually intertwined: *I have always done voluntary work. I was motivated by my friends and the effects of my actions* (A13MXC); *persuasion from friends* (L20WXC); *passion for public affairs, and friendship with other members of the administration* (S11WYC); *voters expected it. I win every election by a large vote number - this is the confirmation* (A106MXC). The study also identified a small group of respondents motivated by frustration. However, this was not internal frustration - in all cases, it resulted from dissatisfaction: *changes, dissatisfaction* (L29WXC), *lack of acceptance of the authorities' actions by the respondents: for changes in the municipality, poor action of the mayor, who had already served his fifth term* (L46WYC); *I wanted to work for society, to try to eliminate some corroded mechanisms that are a consequence of many years of the same administration/same management style* (S18MYC), opposition to pathology: *curbing mafia-like, even thieving activities* (A4MYC); *monopoly* (S75MXA), and general observations of the local situation: *willingness to introduce radical changes, because our town is in decline* (S103MYC). In the

discussed classification, the most frequently indicated external reasons were persuasions from others and negative phenomena occurring in the municipality space in the context of frustration.

2. Classification of motivation: extrinsic, intrinsic, mixed, poly-motivation

Moving on to the typology of slightly simplified motivations, external and internal motivation were indicated by almost equal percentages of the surveyed group. The first type was noted in 45% of the surveyed. Differences between countries are noteworthy. The external motivation was most frequently characterised by respondents from Slovenia, as much as 60%, Italy 41%, and Poland only 31%. Based on the collected research material, internal motivation was noted in 44% of the surveyed. There were significant differences between countries. It was most frequently demonstrated by local government officials from Poland 55%, then from Italy 43%, and least by those from Slovenia 32%. Poly-motivation (several complementary external and/or internal reasons) and mixed internal and external motivation (one reason each), indicating significant experience and high level of education of the respondents' considerable degree of orientation in local government issues, occurred less frequently. Based on the collected research material, internal motivation was noted in 44% of the surveyed. There were significant differences between countries. It was most frequently demonstrated by local government officials from Poland 55%, then from Italy 43%, and least by those from Slovenia 32%. The first case was found in 8% of the examined, including 11% in Poland and 7% in Italy and Slovenia. The second case is only 3%, the highest in Italy at 7%, Poland at 3%, and Slovenia at only 1% (Table 3).

Table 3. Classification of motivation: extrinsic, intrinsic, mixed, poly-motivation

Classification	Types of motivation	Poland [%]	Italy [%]	Slovenia [%]	Total [%]*
	External	31	43	60	45
	Internal	55	43	32	44
	Mixed	3	7	1	3
	Poly-motivation	11	7	7	8
Total		100	100	100	100

* Total [%] of the category for respondents from three countries.
Source: Own research.

The respondents who demonstrated external motivation in the presented typology indicated stimuli related to information about the situation in the municipality or local community, and thus, based on external premises, they made a kind of diagnosis of the state of the local government unit. Examples of this type of motivation include answers: *need for change* (A12MXC); *solving local problems* (A83WYC), and with a specific issue: *construction of a bypass* (L41MYC); *I want to help rebuild the modern identity of my city* (S101MYA). The external motivation again included stimuli from people from the respondent's environment: *the opportunity to work with the best team and actively participate in the implementation of ambitious goals aimed at the highest quality of life for the city's residents* (L2MXI); *mayor* (L19WXC); *persuasion from friends* (L20WXC). Additionally, elements related to experience and education were qualified: *using 10 years of experience in the opposition* (S94MYA); *ideas included in the Act on Local Government edited by professors Regulski and Kulesza* (A19MYC). In the discussed classification, internal motivation is characterised by a high degree of generality of the signalled stimulus in the context of the common good: *concern for social issues* (A21WXC); *passion for social work, and dedication to society* (A54WYM); *love for the city* (S36MXB), or one's perspective: *the possibility of my self-development* (A23WYC); *I wanted to get involved personally* (S37MXA). The external motivation of the respondents based on

persuasion proves a lack of faith in their strengths and is more common in women (Wasil, 2023, pp. 286-296). It also indicates a tendency to be susceptible to various external impulses (social problems, bypass construction).

In the case of mixed motivation, there are both external and internal stimuli: *passion for public affairs and friendship with other members of the administration* (S11WYC); *passion for politics, and the desire to improve the condition of the city in which I live* (S71MYA). In the case of poly-motivation, the respondents indicated more than two reasons for running for the mandate of a local government official, both within the scope of only external or internal motivation and in their combination: *the desire to work for the local community. Improving the standard of living, working, studying, recreation, and leisure conditions of residents, solving their current needs and problems* (A60WYM); *active involvement in local politics. Access to first-hand information. Control over the use of public funds and the possibility of co-deciding on the development of the local community* (L23WXC). Mixed motivation and poly-motivation characterise local government officials with a broad view of the local situation, often rich experience, and knowledge, and demonstrate their commitment to working for the local government and reflection in designing the municipality's development.

3. Classification of motivations: need for achievement, affiliation, power

Using the typology of motivation based on three types of needs: achievement, affiliation, and power, the most frequently articulated need by respondents was the need for power 40%. The collected research material analysis noted significant differences between local government officials from selected countries. The need for power was most frequent among respondents from Italy 56%,[4] Slovenia 42%, and the least frequent among respondents from Poland 24%. The need for affiliation was demonstrated by 37% of respondents, with a significant variation depending on the country. The largest number of local government officials demonstrating this type of motivation was noted in Poland at 56%[5], significantly fewer in Slovenia at 30%, and especially in Italy at only 24%. Answers falling within the need for achievement constituted 23%. There was no significant variation in the division into countries where local government officials resided: in Slovenia, 28% and in Poland and Italy, 20% each (Table 4).

Table 4. Classification of motivations: the need for achievement, affiliation, and power

Classification	Types of motivation	Poland [%]	Italy [%]	Slovenia [%]	Total [%]*
	Achieve	20	20	28	23
	Affiliation	56	24	30	37
	Power	24	56	42	40
Total		100	100	100	100

* Total [%] of the category for respondents from three countries.
Source: Own research.

Examples of the need for affiliation include: *social activity for the local community. I have been an activist since 2001* (A11MXC); *I have the opportunity to work for the local community* (A33WYC); *I can contribute to solving the problems of fellow citizens* (L9WXC); *support the candidate for mayor* (L18MXC); *helping with work in the area* (L33WYC); *love for the municipality in which I was born* (S40MYC); *I wanted to do something for the municipality of which I am a part* (S85MYC); *a sense of community, a spirit of service* (S93MYM). The need for

[4] Because the executive body members dominated among the respondents in Italy.
[5] Because councillors dominated among those surveyed in Poland.

belonging, being part of a group, and a sense of bond with the community – was clearly outlined among the respondents, who at the same time often combined the need with altruism.

The need for power was manifested in the collected empirical material in various ways, e.g. direct declaration: *the desire to influence the functioning of the city, represent the residents, suggest reasonable solutions and activate the residents* (A18MYC); *the possibility of deciding on problems and their solutions in all spheres of human life in the local community, of which I am a part* (L16WXC); *the desire personally changes to introduce* (S46WYA), *or as a means to achieve goals and projects: the willingness to help in making decisions concerning the natural environment* (A44MYC); *the desire to strive for modern and transparent management of the municipality resulting from the real needs of the residents of the municipality* (A95WYM); *There, I learned that nothing could have been done for my village without the municipality council. That was the reason why I got involved in the municipal council* (L8WXC); *the possibility of a real influence on the quality of life of the residents and the fight against nepotism and corruption* (A29WYC); *an attempt to consciously govern and solve more problems of the territory and citizens* (S39WXM). Based on the analysis of empirical material, it can be stated that the need for power accompanies local government officials regardless of whether it is clearly articulated or remains unconscious.

4. Classification of motivation: objective, subjective, mixed

The last typology, created for the paper's purposes, considers objective motivation (through the prism of a specific problem or local government unit), subjective motivation (through the prism of a person) and mixed motivation. More than half of the respondents (52%) demonstrated objective motivation. In this group, local government officials from Italy (63%) and Slovenia (55%) dominate; in Poland, this motivation was less frequent and characterised only 41% of respondents. The grounds for applying for a local government mandate of a subjective nature were noted in 30% of the respondents, most frequently in Poland 41%, much less frequently in Slovenia 29%, and in Italy only 19%. Mixed motivation occurred in 18% of the respondents, to a similar extent in all countries studied: Poland and Italy 19%, and Slovenia 16% (Table 5).

Table 5. Classification of motivations: objective, subjective, mixed

* Total [%] of the category for respondents from three countries.
Source: Own research.

Classification	Types of motivation	Poland [%]	Italy [%]	Slovenia [%]	Total [%]*
	Objective	41	63	55	52
	Subjective	41	19	29	30
	Mixed	18	19	16	18
Total		100	100	100	100

In the objective approach, the respondents indicated reasons of a high degree of generality as motivation to take up work for the local government: *the desire to act for the benefit of my town and municipality* (A70WYC); *work for the benefit of local government* (A111MWYC); *active planning and co-creation of development* (L24WYM); *cooperation for more advanced and faster growth of the municipality* (L87WXC); *love for my town* (S41WYM). *They gave specific reasons less frequently: development of sports* (L63WYC); *interest in the history of our town* (S77WXC); *implementation of municipal infrastructure, and modernisation of the estate boiler room* (A89MYC).

In the objective approach, the respondents referred to the categories: local government, municipality, town, development, history, tourism, ecology, and infrastructure.

Subjective motivation, i.e. through the prism of a human being, was often connected with the common good and altruism: *the good of the inhabitants of my village* (A5WYC); *social and volunteering zeal, working with the Youth Council* (A15MXC); *helping residents in their complex matters (it is not easy)* (A108MBC); *the willingness to do something useful for the future of my son and my community* (S83MYC); *I wanted the community to live better. Managing the "Res Publica"* (S91MYC). Subjective motivation also includes several responses from respondents, who indicate various types of persuasion (quoted earlier). Sometimes, subjective motivation has a negative connotation: *disagreement with the direction in which the current president (in office since 2006) is managing the city* (A34MXC). Subjective motivation was much more often based on positive and altruistic premises. Some local government officials were also motivated negatively by others perceived as "difficult opponents" or enemies.

In the mixed motivation, several reasons appeared, both subjective and objective: *improving the quality of local law and increasing the participation of the so-called "middle class" in managing the affairs of the local government community* (A7MYC); *above all, improving the living conditions of residents through the development of road infrastructure* (A66WXC); *the desire to develop the municipality and represent the interests of fellow citizens (mainly the desire to represent the interests of members of the fire brigade)* (L25WYC); *friends and the desire to do something for the community and learn about the work of administrative bodies* (L102WYC). Local government officials characterised by mixed motivation were well versed in the local situation and had a specific goal to achieve, around which they focused their plans and actions.

CONCLUSION

The paper aimed to determine the motivation of local government officials from Poland, Italy, and Slovenia to apply for a mandate and perform their functions. A literature review was conducted to find a theory that could be used for local government issues. Three classifications were selected for the analysis of data from the survey questionnaires (1. internal, axiological, external, rational, frustration, altruistic, power; 2. external, internal, mixed, poly-motivation; 3. achievements, affiliations, and power) and a fourth one was created based on the literature (objective, subjective and mixed motivation). According to the first classification, local government officials most often declared reasons classified as axiological motivation due to respondents from Italy and rational motivation, which local government officials from Slovenia declared almost twice as often as those from Poland and Italy. After analysing the respondents' responses in the context of the second, narrowed classification, similarly sized groups of local government officials were motivated by external and internal reasons. In the first case, this was most visible in the case of respondents from Slovenia, and in the second – internal motivation in the case of respondents from Poland. Mixed motivation and poly-motivation were noted relatively rarely. Using the typology of motivation based on three types of needs: achievement, affiliation and power, the differences between countries in all cases are worth noting. The most frequently articulated by the respondents was the need for power. It was stated much more often in the case of local government officials from Italy than in the case of respondents from Slovenia and twice as often as in the case of respondents from Poland.

The situation was the opposite regarding the need for affiliation: respondents from Poland most frequently articulated it as the reason for undertaking activities for the commune, followed by those from Slovenia and Italy.

Local government officials from Slovenia most frequently expressed the need for achievements and then followed to the same extent by those from Poland and Italy. The last typology, created for the paper's purposes, considers objective motivation (through the prism of a specific problem or local government unit), subjective motivation (through the prism of a person) and mixed motivation. Local government officials most often declared reasons that could be classified as objective motivation, slightly over half of the respondents. In this group, respondents from Italy and Slovenia dominated; in Poland, the indicated motivation was much rarer. Reasons for applying for a local government mandate of a subjective nature were noted in 1/3 of the respondents, most often in Poland, much less frequently in Slovenia, and the least often in Italy. Mixed motivation occurred in less than 1/5 of the respondents, to a similar extent in all countries studied.

To sum up, the respondents from Poland are local government officials motivated by axiological premises, internally, subjectively and by the need for affiliation. In contrast, the respondents from Italy applied for the mandate because of axiological, external, objective premises and the need for power. Similarly, the respondents from Slovenia were motivated by axiological premises, less often rational, external, objective premises, and the need for power. However, this was not as clearly outlined as in the case of the respondents from Italy. In Italy, "lofty" declarations were observed in the context of the reasons for applying for the mandate of a local government official, as evidenced by the frequent use of the words "love" and "service" concerning the municipality, town, and local community. Slovenian local government officials, compared to the general population, are pragmatic and are most interested in the natural environment. More often than the Slovenian and Italian respondents, the respondents from Poland emphasise people in their motivation.

The analysis shows that the evidence-based motivations for applying for a position as a local government official in a municipality include: mixed/poly-motivation, rational, the need for achievement, objective, frustration. Other motivations are weakly linked to evidence-based policy, including motivations such as power, affiliation, and axiological. The motivation to run for office influences the leadership style, which is observed in caretaker and visionary leadership. The type of motivation, goal-oriented or frustration-based, may result in cohabitation at the municipal level (Sidor, Kuć-Czajkowska, Wasil 2017). Most local leaders can be attributed to poly-motivation, in which the part related to civic duty is articulated, and the other – related to individual, material benefits – is sometimes unarticulated. Motivation corresponding to the desire to make a career appeared rarely, while financial motivation did not appear[6].

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[6] In Theory, this type of motivation should occur because executive bodies and councillors in Poland receive remuneration or per diem for their work for the local government.

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