



## MODELS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE: CASE OF POLAND

### MODELE ZARZĄDZANIA NA POZIOMIE DZIELNIC: PRZYPADEK POLSKI

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#### — ABSTRACT —

The paper proposes new models of neighbourhood governance and their typology, which enable to understand, categorise and compare the neighbourhood governance structures in the urban areas. The models were based on the institutional and functional setting, in which the bodies created, their competences and instruments for their implementation, along with the amount of financial means at their disposal define the character of the model. As a result, three alternative models were created (administrative, intermediate, and participative). The second part contains the results of research conducted in 66 Polish county cities. Their neighbourhood governance systems were categorized and put into the frames of the proposed models. It was proved that only Warsaw implemented the administrative model, and most of the cities practice the intermediate and participative models.

**Keywords:** Poland; cities; neighbourhoods; sub-municipal units; neighbourhood governance

#### — ABSTRAKT —

W artykule zaproponowano nowe modele zarządzania na poziomie dzielnic i ich typologię, które pozwalają zrozumieć, skategoryzować i porównać struktury zarządzania dzielnicowego na obszarach miejskich. Modele oparto na układzie instytucjonalnym i funkcjonalnym, w którym charakter modelu określają tworzone organy, ich kompetencje i instrumenty ich realizacji wraz z wielkością środków finansowych, którymi dysponują. W rezultacie powstały trzy alternatywne modele (administracyjny, pośredni i partycypacyjny). Druga część artykułu zawiera wyniki badań przeprowadzonych w 66 polskich miastach na prawach powiatu. Ich systemy zarządzania dzielnicami zostały skategoryzowane i umieszczone w ramach proponowanych modeli. Wykazano, że tylko Warszawa wdrożyła model administracyjny, a w większości miast funkcjonuje model pośredni i partycypacyjny.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Polska; miasta; osiedla; jednostki pomocnicze; zarządzanie dzielnicowe

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## INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood governance is implemented with various objectives and in different contexts of local government. Formation of additional entities at a sub-municipal level in most countries is facultative, and usually the municipalities decide on this matter. Their idea is to bring the local governance and democratic representation closer to the residents. It is usually practiced in countries with bigger municipalities in rural areas, municipalities after amalgamation reforms and in big cities (Hlepas, Swianiewicz, & Kersting, 2018b, pp. 249–252). The national legal regulations give only very general solutions, leaving the final form of the sub-municipal units to the decision of local authorities. As a result, the shape of the units and their organs at the neighbourhood level varies significantly, in some cases the not-permanently functioning bodies are formed, e.g., consultative bodies active within the renewal projects, which gather city councillors, residents, experts and members of local associations (Blakeley, 2010, p. 137; Durose & Lowndes, 2010, pp. 345–346; Keil, 2006, p. 354).

Neighbourhoods gain on importance in cities' governance, on the one hand within the realisation of the concept of city which is a good place to live (Montgomery, 2013). On the other hand, they have a unique potential in activation and empowerment of residents, community development, urban forms of citizenship and implementing social innovations in order to improve their most proximate surrounding (Swyngedouw & Moulaert, 2010; García, 2006, p. 754), or make the life in the cities more sustainable, providing the most important services at a close distance (Barton, 2000). Neighbourhood governance with engagement of its citizens gains a crucial role in shaping the city, renewing it and developing its parts (Barton, Grant, & Guise, 2021).

The neighbourhood entities should have territorial jurisdiction, be multi-purpose in their tasks (although single-purpose bodies, e.g., within services' oversight, may also be possible). They should have ancillary function to the municipality's competences though and should not be independent (this would mean a new tier of local government), but with some sort of accountability and with the representation of residents (Hlepas et al., 2018a, pp. 4–5). As the cities have wide range of autonomy in designing their sub-divisions and to shape bodies inside them, their system of neighbourhood governance vary, both in the structures, shape of their organs, modes of electing them, their tasks and competences and finally in the amount of financial means they can decide on.

In the European perspective, the neighbourhood governance in the form of permanently functioning entities is rather rare and on limited scale. In Belgium and Czech Republic, they are formed only in the cities, in England, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain – both in the cities and in the rural areas. Additionally to that also the bodies are formed within the renewal projects with a clearly defined objective (e.g., support of neighbourhood regeneration), in the English case also bodies for service oversight are created (Hlepas et al., 2018a, pp. 16–20; Copus, 2018, pp. 76–77).

In the Polish case, the sub-municipal devolution plays the most important role in rural areas, where it has also a long historical tradition. Polish municipalities are relatively big in size and the function of village (*sołectwo*) is to represent the residents of single villages. Village head (*sołtys*) can have competences in administering the local property and tax collection. Municipalities implement the village fund (*fundusz sołeczki*), as financial mechanism in which the residents can decide on minor investments and integratory activities. It is partially refinanced from the state budget, which is an important incentive for the municipalities to implement it. Contrary to this, the cities' districts (*dzielnica*) and neighbourhoods (*osiedle*) have a rather marginal role, their tasks are of little importance and tools for their realization are very limited. The legal regulations allow the municipalities to subdivide, the Act on Municipal Self-Government describes very generally the possible entities and their authorities, leaving the shape of the bodies, mode of their elections, but more importantly their tasks, competences and amount of financial means at their disposal, to the decision of municipal, or city councils (Swianiewicz, 2018; Madej, 2022). As a result, the cities in Poland implemented variety of neighbourhood governance models, which will be explored in the further part of the paper.

The main objective of this paper is to create the universal models of the neighbourhood governance, focused on the their institutional and functional setting, and to provide their typology. This will provide a theoretical instrument to compare the neighbourhood governance systems implemented in different cities around the world. The presented models will be based on the applied solutions, i.e., how the neighbourhood bodies are designed and appointed, what is the catalogue of their tasks and competences, what instruments they are given to realise them and what amount of financial means lays at their disposal. These factors will enable researching the character of the neighbourhood governance in the cities and proposed models will help to define the role of neighbourhood governance in the management and administration of a city. Modelling the

neighbourhood governance will provide better understanding of the range of the inner-city devolution, its character, scope, and purposes. It will also make the categorization of different types of sub-municipal entities possible. The secondary objective is to analyse empirically the neighbourhood governance in Polish cities, using the proposed models, and to answer how it is designed and what structures are created. This will give answers to the approach of the cities to the issue of neighbourhood governance and will seek for the trends in different categories of cities.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE AS AN ELEMENT OF CITY DEVOLUTION

Neighbourhood can be defined in many dimensions, it is multi-faceted and dynamic concept, due to changes and development of cities and different views towards it. In geographic terms, it is a place with built environment with institutions like schools, shops, healthcare, or recreation facilities and limited by physical boundaries, like main roads, railway lines or natural barriers (e.g., hill, river, forest) (Blokland, 2003, p. 213). From the point of view of residents, it is a place where the family, social networks and the facilities of everyday use are located. It can also be interpreted as a social group with strong ties, building the local community, or home area where people live and use basic services. The neighbourhood is also the foundation of local identities, place of interactions, connections and encounters with others, where the local society functions in the geographic boundaries. It is a place where people are most likely to engage with services and policy-making (Taylor & Wilson, 2006, p. 5; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2008, p. 56; Durose & Lowndes, 2010, p. 343). The neighbourhood is where new forms of citizenship, solidarity, cohesion and of integration appear and in this way where the “re-politicisation of the city” happens (Kennett & Forrest, 2006, p. 713).

Neighbourhood approach is also becoming an important issue within the concept of governance which is structured less hierarchically, and the cooperation and negotiation between various actors – public and private – is becoming of key importance. Neighbourhood and its actors become the element of the network of governance and the part of the multi-level approach in which they are able to facilitate better services provision and improve the level of participation (Rhodes, 1997, p. 46; Kooiman, 2005; van Assche & Dierickx, 2007, pp. 28–29; Keil, 2006, pp. 336–337).

Neighbourhood governance can be defined as the capacity to shape the neighbourhood, represent it through organizations and institutions established for this objective. It can also be realised in the unplanned way through the cooperation of residents with the responsible persons and institutions, or through the actions of residents in relation to the neighbourhood environment (Somerville, van Beckhoven, & van Kempen, 2009, p. 27). Neighbourhood governance is realised in social, economic and technical way with additional focus on housing (Prak & Priemus, 1986; Ahlbrandt, 1984, p. 123).

The objectives of neighbourhood policies are the development of social capital and cohesion, renewal and improvement of quality of life, public participation and representation, and better quality and accountability of public services (Benington, 2006, p. 9). Through neighbourhood governance the residents can be involved in decision-making and the government can be more responsive in implementing policies and delivering the services, which can result in co-governance with involvement of local community. The key question that can be asked is what forms of engagement this cooperation should have, and what practical role should the community play in it (Pill & Bailey, 2012, p. 735; Johnson & Osborne, 2003, p. 147).

The neighbourhood bodies can have many functions at the same time. They can animate the activities of local community, in which they can organize the events by itself, and coordinate the activities of other actors. These activities should contribute to community building, integration of residents and organizing joint initiatives. Neighbourhoods can also inform the residents about city policies and be a step in political career and school of democratic procedures for local activists. More important though is the representative function, in realization of which they can make decisions on selected elements of policies, decide on spending the cities' financial means, or lobby for different solutions (Swianiewicz et al., 2013, pp. 19–22).

Thus the scope and range of neighbourhood governance depend on the level of devolved powers. The position of neighbourhoods is defined not only by the catalogue of tasks, but also by the instruments their bodies have at hand. Even if the range of tasks involves many fields, but the neighbourhood councils can only give opinions and consult the matters, their position will remain rather weak. The tasks devolved to the neighbourhood level can include wide range of different issues from hard infrastructural elements, like roads, street lighting, banks, services, waste collection, public transport, or playfields for children, to soft issues, like education, or organizing actions and events for the local community (Madej,

2022, pp. 143–145). Barton et al. (2021, p. 65), referring to the ladder of public participation, conceptualised by Arnstein (1969), place the democratically elected councils with substantial powers and financial independence as the highest level of civic engagement in the neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood governance in the form of elected councils and bodies is also a mean of democratic control. Even if the competences are limited, in each city there are dozens, if not hundreds of additional representatives legitimized by the citizens who become part of the system. This way they can approve and support, but on the other hand, demand, review, criticize, or even protest against the projects and activities of the city authorities. Neighbourhood entities are also the form of institutionalised participation, in which the local activists can be involved in the decision-making process on the regular basis in the long-term perspective, both as consultants, assistants in consulting the public and to some extent as decision-makers (Callanan, 2005, p. 917).

## MODELLING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE

Neighbourhood governance can be realised in four different modes (Barton et al., 2021, p. 65):

- through directly elected councils, with tasks and competences delegated by the local authority or specified by government;
- neighbourhood committees of the local authority, delivering the local public services;
- neighbourhood forums, with members from various sectors and backgrounds, with limited powers;
- Community Development Trusts, with participation of business actors and representants of residents, able to make investments and development projects.

Realising the neighbourhood governance, the cities can be divided in two ways:

- symmetrically – additional entities on the whole municipal territory;
- asymmetrically – additional entities in the parts of municipal territory (Lysek, 2018, p. 47).

Lowndes and Sullivan (2008, pp. 57–62) define four rationales of neighbourhood governance: the civic, which embodies citizen participation and active communities, making direct participation easier to implement, the social is

focused on citizen well-being and stakeholder collaboration, where the services can be delivered in accordance with citizens' needs and including them in the services' provision. The political rationale is an outcome of easier possibility to access the local politics, due to proximity and small scale, political leaders are more likely to respond to citizens' expectations and citizens can supervise and verify the political promises and deliberations, thanks to personal contact. The economic rationale draws attention to more efficient use of resources thanks to better allocation, responding to the citizen needs and directed services' provision. Basing on this, they formulated the four ideal types of neighbourhood governance. Neighbourhood empowerment refers to civic rationale and objectives are to activate citizens, give them the voice to speak, with forums and way of co-production. Neighbourhood partnership bases on social rationale and aims at citizen well-being, where stakeholders are the main focus, institutionalized by service boards. Neighbourhood government is related to political rationale and it allows to accountable decision making. It is based on the representative democracy, in which citizens elect their representatives to neighbourhood councils. The last type is the neighbourhood management, which aims at more effective local service delivery. Its rationale is economic and institutionalisation forms are contracts and charters, related to market democracy, where citizens are consumers of services who pay for services through taxation.

Griggs and Roberts (2012, pp. 189–190), referring to Mintzberg (1983), developed the three models of neighbourhood governance. In the first one, the centralized machine authority, the power strategy is organised in a top-down way. The second one is the decentralized professional authority in which majority of powers is devolved, individual clerks and councillors have a high level of autonomy and work close to local communities, while the centre retains the supervisory functions. The third type is the decentralized divisional authority in which the semi-autonomous entities in parts of the city are given limited scope of autonomy, and are responsible for service delivery. Each entity becomes a mini centre, but the central administration controls the strategic issues and finances.

As the variation of forms and created bodies in different cities is very high, the author of this paper decided to propose a new typology of neighbourhood governance, which was highlighted in Table 1. The cities can decide by themselves what types of bodies and form of governing their neighbourhoods they will implement and on the level of local devolution. Basing on that, four models of neighbourhood governance can be defined.



The first differentiation is related to time range of their work. The first category is short-term non-permanent bodies, in which neighbourhood forums, project-related bodies, or trusts can be involved. They gather members of city council, clerks, experts, citizens, activists of local NGOs, and businessmen. Their main focus is on realizing a single project (e.g., renewal of a neighbourhood), single task (e.g., extension of transit line), or problem-solving (e.g., service provision). Usually when the objective is realised they dissolve and will eventually be re-established when a new issue arises. They work only in selected parts of the city, where the issues appear. Very common is the financial support from the government, EU-funds, or from the city budget.

The second category is long-term permanent bodies, which embrace the neighbourhood councils, boards, forums and committees of the city council. They are multitasking and their competences involve wide range of issues, also they base on the sub-division of the city. Participative model is focused on engaging the citizens and assume consulting, giving opinions, applying, but does not allow to make binding decisions. The members of such councils either work voluntarily, or get symbolic diets for their work. The financial means in disposal of such councils are in very little amount (strong version), restricted to particular types of tasks (e.g., organization of events), or there are no means at disposal of neighbourhood bodies (weak version).

Intermediary model is focused on advanced engagement of citizens, in which the councils give opinion, consult and apply, but there are also limited scopes of tasks in which they can decide, they can be assisted by the delegated administrative units (district offices) and there is either a special financial tool (e.g., neighbourhood fund), or financial means that allow the local investments. In the strong version, the amount of financial means and decisive powers are well developed and in the weak version, one of these elements is underdeveloped.

Administrative model is based on the professional administration devoted to each part of the city, wider catalogue of tasks and issues on which the neighbourhood can decide on its own, as well as the public service provision. This is supported with significant amount of financial means, which are at the disposal of the council and the board. This institutional and functional setting builds a devolved local government on the neighbourhood scale.



**Table 1.** Models of Neighbourhood Governance

	Non-permanent	Permanent		
	Project-related	Participative	Intermediary	Administrative
Bodies	forums, trusts	forums, councils, boards	councils, boards	councils, boards, neighbourhood committees
Members	appointed	residents' assembly/elected	elected	elected
Professional administration	NO	NO	NO	YES
Functional setting	Single/Multipurpose	Single/Multipurpose	Multipurpose	Multipurpose
Decision-making	NO	NO	Limited	YES
Opinion, consultation, applying	YES	YES	YES	YES
Financial means	YES	NO/Limited	YES	YES
Service provision	NO	NO	NO	YES

**Source:** Author's own research.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The empirical part of this research has been conducted in 66 Polish county cities, which have the special role in the Polish local government system, as they realize the powers of municipality and the county. Among these cities are the biggest metropolises and medium-sized cities. The main source of research were the cities' documents – resolutions containing the statutes of neighbourhood councils and rules of their elections (58 documents). Additionally, also the survey was conducted, in which the offices responsible for the coordination of work of neighbourhood councils were asked about the financial means delegated to the neighbourhoods (in 46 cities that implemented the system of neighbourhood governance). The offices were asked on how much financial means is delegated to the neighbourhoods, what are the criteria of that division, and with what purposes they can be used. The response was 91%, the missing data was found in the cities' documents published in the Internet sources.

The main focus of the research was to examine the created structures and to test them with the created models of neighbourhood governance. In the first

stage, it was examined how the cities were divided, into what kind of entities, and if they function on the whole area of city or only in its parts (symmetrical or asymmetrical division). The second step was the examination of their structures and bodies, the third was to work on their competences and tools for realizing them. The fourth part was to examine the amount of financial means they have at their disposal. After that, the gathered data was contextualised and categorized with the proposed models of neighbourhood governance.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE IN POLAND

In Poland, the non-permanent models of neighbourhood governance are not practiced. Within the renewal programmes cities usually organize the consultations, or create bodies responsible for this issue in the whole city, not for particular neighbourhood. According to the Polish legal regulations, the sub-municipal divisions are not mandatory, therefore the neighbourhood governance is organized either in the form of permanently working councils and boards, or the cities are governed without additional entities created in particular parts of a city. Among 66 county cities, 46 implemented the sub-division of their territory. The rationale for the sub-divisions in the cities was improving the public participation and empowering the citizens (civic rationale). It has to be noted though that the system in many cities did not manage to improve the public participation, due to lack of decision-making powers, and in several cases (e.g., Gdańsk, Opole, Toruń, Wrocław) different kinds of reforms were implemented with an objective to raise the significance of the neighbourhood bodies and to empower them. In the capital city of Warsaw the division into districts is obligatory and is regulated with the special law: Act of March 15, 2002 on the administrative system of the capital city of Warsaw. This was an outcome of the reform of an earlier system of associated municipalities that existed on the city territory which were transformed into districts.

In 23 cities the districts (*dzielnica*) were created, in 18 – neighbourhood (*osiedle*) and in four – units with other names, in three cities next to them there exist as well villages (*sołectwo*), usually in the parts which in the past were rural areas which became part of the city. Practically only Warsaw and Cracow implemented the system with big districts. In other cities there exist big number of smaller units. In Zielona Góra, big district with small villages was created on the

territory of the former municipality which amalgamated with the city – this way despite the unification, some sort of “autonomy” was kept. In 17 cities, despite the fact that the neighbourhoods were created, the neighbourhood bodies do not function on the whole territory of the city, usually because the local councils were not elected, or there were not enough candidates. In five cities, there is an asymmetrical division and the entities were formed only in parts of the city, e.g., in Jelenia Góra in Cieplice, which has a status of spa resort. In Białystok, the neighbourhood councils have not been elected since 2018, and in Dąbrowa Górnicza – they were not elected, due to the legal dispute with supervisory organ.

The Polish neighbourhoods have representative bodies: in 37 cases there is a local council and in seven – residents’ assembly, in one city both forms are practiced. In the cities with village structures, the village assembly takes this role. Usually the councils have between 15–21 members, depending on the number of inhabitants. The executive body is the neighbourhood board, and in one case it is the president of the council, and in 13 cases the same person presides the council and the board. In Warsaw and Cracow the district bodies are supported by the professional administration and there is an office in each district, although in Cracow they are very small entities with limited number of staff. Zielona Góra created the special department in the city office devoted to the district. In other cases, usually the office that serves the city council is responsible for serving the neighbourhoods, and it is one unit for all entities, responsible for their everyday operations (not for service provision).

The councils are elected in two modes either in the elections with ballots (24 cases), or during the residents’ assemblies (15 cases), in Opole the local councils are elected via the on-line platform, the election lasts 10 days. In 44 cities the mandates are distributed in the first-past-the-post procedure and in two cases it is done in the proportional scheme, using the d’Hondt method. In five cities, the turnout thresholds, which vary from 1–20%, were introduced; in the cities with assemblies usually the minimum amount of participants is commissioned. The exact numbers vary in each city. The executive boards are elected by the councils in 40 cities, in 6 cities – the board is elected by the residents’ assembly.

The catalogue of competences varies between the cities, as in each one the city council is responsible for defining them in the neighbourhood statute, in most of the cities the scope of competences is broad though (Table 2). The main responsibilities of the neighbourhood bodies are representing the residents, fulfilling their needs, informing them and enabling them to the active engagement in the affairs of the city. Neighbourhood bodies also organize local events, like cultural or integration fetes, as well as activities against social exclusion and self-help.

They are allowed to apply and give opinions on investments and participate in the technical acceptance of the finished investments. Other competences are the technical infrastructure, the localisation and work of industrial plants. They also deal with security and order, education, culture, healthcare, sports and recreation. They have responsibilities in spatial planning, greenfields and environmental protection, public transport. The neighbourhood bodies are obliged to cooperate with NGOs and associations active in the neighbourhood or district.

**Table 2.** Competences of Polish Districts and Neighbourhoods

Competence	No. of cases	Competence	No. of cases
representing the residents	18	enabling the residents to active engagement in the affairs of the city	30
fulfilling their needs	33	technical infrastructure	25
organization of local events (cultural or integration fetes)	36	localisation and work of industrial plants	19
activities against social exclusion and self-help	30	education	34
security and order	34	culture	41
opinions on investments	32	sports and recreation	38
participation in the technical acceptance of the finished investments	10	greenfields and environmental protection	34
informing the residents	19	healthcare	24
public transport	30	cooperation with NGOs	32

Source: Author's own research.

In order to realise the tasks in the listed fields of competences, the neighbourhood bodies have the powers and tools to fulfil them (Table 3). In only six cities the neighbourhood bodies are allowed to submit the project of resolution to the city council, in additional three they can apply to the city council to start the work on the project of the resolution. Neighbourhood organs organize or participate in consultation processes and in the participatory budgeting. They are also obliged to cooperate with city authorities and with members of the city council. Neighbourhood bodies can apply to city authorities, make proposals to the city budget, and make opinions on the policies. They organize the initiatives and events and initiate actions for the neighbourhood. They have possibility to administer the properties. In few cases, they were granted the decision-making

powers, although very limited ones: representatives of neighbourhood bodies can participate in committees that appoint important persons and companies to realize investments and decide on the priorities in the investment in the neighbourhood. In Warsaw, the districts are responsible for realization of public services, like schools, social services, cultural institutions, sport facilities, housing management, issuing documents, or local tax collection.

**Table 3.** Powers and Tools of Districts and Neighbourhoods

Powers and tools	No. of cases	Powers and tools	No. of cases
submitting the project of resolution to the city council	9	proposals to city budget	31
organizing or participating in consultation processes	31	organization of the initiatives and events	38
participatory budgeting	6	initiating action for the neighbourhood	33
cooperating with city authorities	40	participating in committees that appoint important persons and companies to realize investments	10
cooperating with members of city council	28	deciding on the priorities in the investment in the neighbourhood	9
applying to city authorities	43	public services	1
giving opinions on the policies	43	tax collection	1

Source: Author's own research.

Polish neighbourhood bodies have financial means at their disposal, which was compiled in Table 4. In proportion to the city budget the amounts are marginal, only in Warsaw 48,5% of expenses of the city budget is decided in the districts. In other cities, the neighbourhoods are responsible for lower than 1% of the city budget. Nevertheless some cities give to their bodies the means that allow to decide on repairs and smaller investments, organize the events for the local community or self-help to support the poor residents. In Polish conditions, amounts higher than 70.000 PLN (\$14.800) at the disposal of a neighbourhood body enable such activities. This certainly broadens the scope of binding decisions they are allowed to make.

**Table 4.** Financial Means at the Disposal of Neighbourhood Bodies in Poland (2021)

Financial means per unit/per year	No. of cases
over 100 million PLN (\$21 million)	1
10–100 million PLN (\$2,1–21 million)	0
1–10 million PLN (\$0,21–2,1 million)	2
70.000–1 million PLN (\$14.800–0,21 million)	8
less than 70.000 PLN (\$14.800)	29
no means	4

Source: Author's own research.

## DISCUSSION: POLISH NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE MODELS AND TYPOLOGIES

In the Polish case, there is a well-developed system of neighbourhood governance – most of the biggest cities have implemented such entities, in institutionalised form with democratic structures and procedures. As proved above, in most of the cities, they have very limited scope of tasks, even if the catalogue of competences is developed, it cannot be called the delegated powers. Most of the activities are applying and giving opinions, which means the final decision remains by the city council and president. This makes the scope of activities of neighbourhood bodies additional to the city authorities, or grants them the ancillary role (like it is defined in the Polish legal regulations). In fact, they are marginalized, as the final decision can be made without the neighbourhood bodies. Only Warsaw has the system where public services' delivery and wide scope of decisions was devolved, and there is professional administration to implement it (Swianiewicz, 2014, p. 179).

Putting Polish case into the ideal types of Lowndes and Sullivan (2008, pp. 57–62), Polish cities realise the model of neighbourhood empowerment in which the representatives of neighbourhood get the voice to speak and through their opinions and consultation participate in the co-production of public services, although in a very limited way. Warsaw realised the model of neighbourhood government as it allows to the decision-making in many fields of local policies. According to Griggs and Roberts (2012, pp. 189–190), the cities that refused to implement the neighbourhood governance realise the centralized machine

authority with top-down approach. Few cities like Cracow, Gdynia, Gdańsk, Koszalin, Poznań, Wrocław, Tarnów, and Zielona Góra implemented the elements of the decentralized professional authority with devolved powers and significant financial means to decide on. Decentralized divisional authority is realised in Warsaw, where many powers were devolved to the districts and services are delivered at this level, while the central authorities control strategic issues and finances.

Referring to the typology of the models presented in this paper, Warsaw implemented the administrative model – the districts have a role of mini-local government, in which they decide on wide scope of issues, have professional administration at their disposal and decide on the important part of the city budget. Cracow, Poznań, and Zielona Góra realise the strong version of the intermediary model, where the most important role of neighbourhoods is participation and mobilisation of residents, but there are limited spheres in which the neighbourhood bodies can make the accountable decisions. Gdynia, Gdańsk, Koszalin, Lublin, Opole, Tarnów, and Wrocław can also be included into the weak version of this model, but with the disclaimer that in Gdynia, Lublin, Opole, and Wrocław, the scope of decision-making is very limited, but the districts and neighbourhoods decide on significant financial means. In Gdańsk, Koszalin, and Tarnów, the districts and neighbourhoods can decide, e.g., on the investment priorities. The rest of the cities realize the participative model, in which the only role of the neighbourhoods' bodies is to make opinions, consult and propose ideas, with no guarantee they will be realised; in the strong version, they have very little amounts of public expenses to decide on, in the weak version, they cannot decide on any public means. The models implemented in Polish cities are presented in Table 5.

Paradoxically, when formal tools for participation are created, it does not mean that the residents will engage massively (Somerville et al., 2009, p. 36). The Polish case shows such lacking interest, of which the outcome is the low turnout in the neighbourhood elections, way below 15%, and in the most of the cases below 10%. In 17 cases, the councils were not elected due to the lack of minimum number of candidates – this proves that the marginal role of sub-municipal units in the city governance does not help to empower the citizens (Swianiewicz, 2018, p. 179; Madej, 2022, p. 140). This is the result of the asymmetries between the broad catalogue of competences and narrow range of instruments with which the neighbourhoods would be able to decide on their issues, and small amounts of financial means at their disposal.



**Table 5.** Models of Neighbourhood Governance in Poland

Permanent								
City	Bodies	Members	Professional administration	Functional setting	Decision-making	Opinion, consultation, applying	Financial means per unit average (PLN)	Service provision
Administrative								
Warsaw	councils boards	Elected	YES	multipurpose	YES	YES	9 billion	YES
Intermediary (strong)								
Cracow	councils boards	Elected	Limited	multipurpose	Limited	YES	2,7 million	NO
Poznań	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	854 thousand	NO
Zielona Góra	councils boards	Elected	Limited	multipurpose	Limited	YES	9.5 million	NO
Intermediary (weak)								
Gdynia	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	649 thousand	NO
Gdańsk	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	191 thousand	NO
Koszalin	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	84 thousand	NO
Lublin	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	150 thousand	NO
Opole	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	255 thousand	NO
Tarnów	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	269 thousand	NO
Wrocław	councils boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	Limited	YES	87 thousand	NO
Participative (strong)								
29 cities	councils (23), assemblies (6) boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	NO	YES	less than 70 thousand	NO
Participative (weak)								
4 cities	councils (3), assemblies (1), boards	Elected	NO	multipurpose	NO	YES	NO	NO

Source: Author's own research.

Logically, the bigger the city, the more advanced and expanded the model of neighbourhood is created, as such cities are more interested to come closer to their residents. This trend can also be observed in Poland, as Warsaw implemented the devolved administrative model in order to decide on the issues and provide the public services more locally. Other cities are significantly smaller than the capital (1.8 million inhabitants, second Cracow has 766 thousand), and more reluctant to make broader inner decentralization reform. Nevertheless some of the bigger cities (Cracow, Gdańsk, Lublin, Poznań, Wrocław, Zielona Góra, which has a big territory after the amalgamation) attempt to empower their neighbourhoods by implementing the intermediary model with enhanced participation, providing some decision-making powers, supported with the financial means that enable the realisation of investments and more significant projects. In the medium-sized and smaller cities, the neighbourhood governance is kept only on the participative level, with additional and consultative role in the city governance (although exceptions like Gdynia, Koszalin, Opole, and Tarnów with the intermediate model can be observed).

## CONCLUSION

As proved in the paper, the neighbourhood governance can be realised in different forms, even within one country, as its final shape and institutional setting strongly depends on the decisions of cities' authorities. The city has to decide which model of neighbourhood governance to implement and what should be the actual objective of this tool of governance. Should it be an one-time action (e.g., to renew a degraded neighbourhood), or permanent forms which will engage the community repeatedly or in an on-going way, or will be responsible for the provision of public services. This brings up the issue of professionalization of participation. The more responsibilities, and the bigger the accountability for the decision-making, and the more powers devolved, the more professionalism and engagement is necessary (Blakeley, 2010, p. 138). Therefore the scope of devolved powers has to follow the applied apparatus, which the implemented model should include in its assumption, and the rationale of the implemented solutions should correspond with the institutional setting.

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