

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC (IN ENGLISH) (State the objective of the project, describe the research to be carried out, and present reasons for choosing the research topic - max. 1 standard type-written page)

The phenomenon of participation have been increasingly discussed all over the world for last 25 years. One of the most important reasons for that is the fact that public policies are in motion e.g. participatory budgeting are more and more common all over the world. Analysis of participation often focuses on perspective of the initiators of participatory activities. However little is known on the citizens' and especially local elites' (members of local community who affect a lot on its shape) reception of participation. The main aim of the project is to provide insights in this respect by answering the question: How does the reception of participation (understood as citizens' opinion about consultation and similar activities conducted by local governments) look like from local elites' perspective. Four hypotheses are tested:

1. From the point of view of local elites', the use of participatory activities by local government does not improve the quality of decision making.
2. From the point of view of local elites' the use of participatory activities can adversely affect the level of trust to the local government.
3. From the point of view of local elites' the use of participatory activities not affect their sense of agency.
4. Reception of participation from local elites' point of view is related to the location of the municipality in one of the four historical regions of Poland.

Case study of 12 polish municipalities approach will be applied in the research. The purposeful case study areas selection will be implemented. It will be based on typology of four historical regions of Poland: 1) East and North Lands – the lands of settlements (*ziemie osiedleńcze*), 2) Former German Partition, lands attached to Poland in 1918-1921 and Upper Silesia plebiscite area, 3) Former Austrian Partition (lands attached to Poland in 1918-1921), 4) Former Russian Partition. This typology is relevant for the study of citizens' reception of participation because the previous study has revealed that participation type is correlated with location of a municipality in one of the four types. Concerning the administrative division of municipalities in Poland, three types of municipalities will be selected as case study areas for each of four historical regions: 1) urban municipalities, 2) rural municipalities, 3) urban-rural municipalities (fourth type of municipality: city count was intentionally excluded because of its specificity.) Therefore the total number of case study areas will be 12. The case study analysis will apply two techniques of data collection. The first one is desk research of available data pertaining to a particular case in terms of participation: scientific literature, press releases, official documents. These data will be used as a background for designing second technique - in-depth interviews (not less than 6 at each case study area, not less than 72 in total) with local elites' representatives (e.g. NGOs, business, media, local politicians, local leaders) who will be identified within desk research. The interviews will explore the reception of participation from the perspective of different groups of local elites. Results from all case study areas will be included in final comparative analysis

The innovative approach applied in the project will assess the reception of participation – social consultation from local elites' perspective, in order to provide the insight to earlier not investigated. Moreover, the effects of the project can be used in further researches on the local elites' reception of participation at a more detailed level (concerning social consultation in the areas of culture policies, environment protection etc.) which could provide recommendation to local government e.g. how to improve the consultation processes or in particular circumstances even to recommend not to conduct any.