

THE ELECTION ATTITUDES AMONG THE POLISH MINORITY INHABITING THE REGION OF ZAOLZIE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC (1990-2018)

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Abstract. *The paper analyses the election activity of the Polish inhabitants of the Zaolzie region (the Czech Republic) in the 1990-2018 period referring to national elections (Lower Chamber of Parliament, Senate, President of the Czech Republic) as well as local and regional elections. The theoretical section offers analyses of national and ethnic minorities as (collective) political actors. The empirical part provides an in-depth analysis of the votes in particular elections, taking into consideration the communes with a significant rate of Polish inhabitants as well as those communes where the Polish ethnos was rather scarce. The ethnic affiliation has been considered as a vital independent variable of the choices made; however, other variables explaining election behaviour have also been indicated.*

Keywords: *Zaolzie, Czech Republic, Polish national minority, elections, politics*

Rezumat. Atitudinile electorale în rândul minorității poloneze din Regiunea Zaolzie a Republicii Ceha (1990-2018). *Articolul analizează problema activității electorale a locuitorilor polonezi din regiunea Zaolzie (Republica Cehă) în perioada 1990-2018, referindu-se la alegerile naționale (Camera inferioară a Parlamentului, Senatul, președintele Republicii Ceha), precum și la alegerile regionale și locale. Secțiunea teoretică prezintă minoritățile naționale și etnice ca actori politici (colectivi). Partea empirică oferă o analiză aprofundată a voturilor la anumite alegeri, luând în considerare comunele cu o pondere semnificativă de locuitori polonezi, precum și acele comune unde etnicii polonezi sunt puțini la număr. Afilierea etnică a fost considerată o variabilă vitală independentă a opțiunilor exprimate. Pe lângă aceasta, au fost luate în calcul și alte variabile care explică comportamentul electoral.*

INTRODUCTION

Faced with the growing significance of national and ethnic minorities in domestic and international politics (*vide*: the role of local self-government and civic

diplomacy in multicultural regions, the diplomacy of the diaspora), increasing (self-) awareness among their elites and members of their rights but also of their possibilities of political influence, as well as the development of research in political science on election behaviour of national, ethnic and religious minorities, the Polish national minority in the Zaolzie region, forgotten and “scientifically neglected” in the political science, has turned out to constitute a fascinating area for research.¹

The area of Zaolzie, in the context of the Polish issue, understood in categories of interests, attitudes and behaviours of Poles inhabiting this region, has been the topic of scientific interest among Polish and Czech scientists since the first years it started to function as a social and cultural space (that is, since 1920, when Teschen Silesia was divided between Poland and Czechoslovakia). The subject literature on the ethnic/national issue of Teschen Silesia includes some books written by scientists from outside our region.²

The subject of Zaolzie has not been analysed in political science for various reasons (in contrast to history or ethnography research). Until the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, this was due to obvious reasons. In Czechoslovakia *de facto* there was no political science, whereas in Poland there was an informal ban on analysing the Polish national minorities in neighbouring countries, let alone their political activities. What the author finds surprising is the fact that after the 1989 transformation, we have not seen any in-depth and comprehensive analyses of the election behaviour among the Poles inhabiting Zaolzie in the area of political science. This, in particular, refers to the Polish literature, since we can mention a few attempts made by Czech political scientists at analysing the political behaviour of national and ethnic minorities, including the Polish minority in Zaolzie. The above analyses mostly concern the forms and ways in which the minority managed to organise itself politically, neglecting the issue of political behaviours in the long term, indicating specific trends.³

¹ The paper was written as part of the project entitled: “Právní, historické a společenskovední aspekty nových a tradičních menšin v České republice” [Legal, historical and social aspects of new and traditional minorities in the Czech Republic], kód projektu DG18P02OVV064, in the program of the Czech Republic Ministry of Culture “Národní kulturní identita II”.

² See for example: Kevin Hannan, *Borders of language and identity in Teschen Silesia*, New York, 1996; Kevin Hannan, *Identity and assimilation among the Poles of Zaolzie*, Houston, 1996; Kevin Hannan, *Language and ethnicity among students in Teschen Silesia*, New York, 1999; Kevin Hannan, *Polishness in the borderlands*, Poznań, 2005; Kurt Witt, *Die Teschener Frage*, Berlin, 1935.

³ See: Miroslav Mareš, Martin Strmiska, *Political Participation by Ethnic Minorities in the*

With its nationality problems, Zaolzie should be perceived in a broader – Central European scale, especially concerning the experiences related to the system transformation of the countries forming the Visegrad Group. Of four member states, only Slovakia had a significant percentage of national minorities within its borders, especially 10% Hungarian minority which, in many southern communes, formed a large majority of the population. The authorities in Bratislava, especially in the first five years of the history of independent Slovakia, ran the policy of marginalising the Hungarian population by adopting the election laws aimed at maximally dispersing the votes of the Hungarian voters (for example gerrymandering). The situation of the Hungarian minority at that time caused numerous interventions of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the European Union. It was only at the end of the 1990s that it was possible to work out some compromise solutions satisfying the representatives of the Hungarian minority. They have been nominated for government positions since that time. Other countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland did not have large national minorities in their territories. In the Czech Republic, which ran a relatively liberal policy towards nationalities, the biggest national minority were the Slovaks (approximately 300 thousand in 1991). Still, it was the Polish national minority, a few times smaller (around 60 thousand people in 1991) that posed the greatest challenge to the governments in Prague (this aspect will be analysed in detail further in the article).

On the other hand, the contemporary ethnic policy of the Hungarian government is a model solution expected by the Hungarians from the neighbouring countries, in which the Hungarians account for a large percentage of the

Czech Republic, in: Tomáš Sirovátka, *The Challenge of Social Inclusion: Minorities and Marginalised Groups in Czech Society*, Brno, 2006; Miroslav Mareš, Lubomír Kopeček, Pavel Pečínka, Věra Stýskalíková, *Etnické menšiny a česká politika. Analýza stranických přístupů k etnické a imigrační politice po roce 1989* [Ethnic minorities and Czech politics. Analysis of political parties' approaches to ethnic and immigration policy after 1989], Brno 2004; Miroslav Mareš (editor), *Etnické a regionální strany v ČR po roce 1989* [and English translation], Brno 2003; Miroslav Mareš, *Etnické a regionální subjekty ve stranickém systému České republiky* [Ethnic and regional entities in the party system of the Czech Republic], Brno, 2003; Lubomír Kopeček, *Study of interest representation development of Polish minority in the Czech Republic*, "Středoevropské politické studie – Central European Political Studies Review", 2002, No 4, <https://journals.muni.cz/cepsr/article/view/3918/5357> (23.10.2019); Lubomír Kopeček, *Coexistence-Soužití a politická reprezentace polské menšiny na Těšínsku* [Coexistence-Coexistence and political representation of the Polish minority in the Teschen Silesia region], "Středoevropské politické studie – Central European Political Studies Review", 2003, No 5, <https://journals.muni.cz/cepsr/article/view/3941/5312> (23.10.2019).

population (mainly Romania, Slovakia, Serbia). In Poland, the German minority is a relevant political actor representing ethnic and national minorities. This minority densely inhabits several communes in Opolskie province, and thanks to this take advantage of some concessions included in the election ordinance (no election threshold for the minority). This subject occasionally causes some controversies in domestic politics and bilateral relations between Poland and Germany, as it is pointed out that although the Germans enjoy the statutory guarantee of their national minority status, a many times larger group of Poles residing in Germany do not have such status.⁴

THE AIM, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this article, which constitutes a contribution to further, more in-depth quantitative and qualitative research, is to analyse the election activity of the Poles inhabiting the Zaolzie region in the following aspects: **(a)** election (ideological) preferences and the mobilisation of the electorate; **(b)** political effectiveness manifested in gained seats in representative bodies.

Specifying further the **scope** of the conducted analyses, it must be stated that the **subject scope** covers members of the Polish minority inhabiting communes with the highest rate of the Polish population. The **object scope** is the election activity performed by the Poles, understood in categories of “redistributing the power into its particular stages.”⁵ The research focuses on the votes cast in elections to (a) commune councils (commune elections) in 1994-2018; (b) nationwide representative bodies: The Lower Chamber of the Czech Republic Parliament (*Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu ČR*) in 1996-2017; the Senate of the Czech Republic in 2000-2017, the office of the President of the Czech Republic (*Prezident republiky*) – 2013, 2018.

The time scope covers the period of 29 years, from 1990 to 2018. In 1990 the first elections were held after the communism collapsed; to the People’s Chamber of Federal Assembly (*Sněmovna lidu Federálního shromáždění*), to the Nations Chamber of Federal Assembly (*Sněmovna národů Federálního shromáždění*) and

⁴ See: Henryk Chałupczak, Radosław Zenderowski, Walenty Baluk (eds.), *Ethnic Policy in Contemporary East Central Countries*, Lublin, 2015, pp. 175-218, 303-348, 399-444, 489-532.

⁵ Michał Wójcicki, *Pojęcie, istota i formy partycypacji społecznej w procesie planowania przestrzennego* [The concept, essence and forms of social participation in the process of spatial planning], „Rozwój Regionalny i Polityka Regionalna”, 2014, Vol. 24, p. 171.

the Czech national Council (*Česká národní rada*), whereas in 1996 – the first parliamentary elections were held in the Czech Republic after the split of Czechoslovakia. In 2018 (the closing point) we observed the election for the office of the President of the Czech Republic (*Prezident republiky*) and the commune elections. However, the elections that took place after the split of Czechoslovakia were of great interest, for two reasons. Firstly, the author decided to perform an analysis of election behaviours within one state organism (instead of two). Secondly, since 1996 we have had a few political parties operating on the Czech political stage, which manage to gain at least 5% of votes in each election, allowing them to be represented continuously in the parliament. **The territorial scope** is the region defined by the Poles as Zaolzie (in Czech language *Zaolší*), whereas the Czechs call it Teschen Silesia, located within the borders of the Czech Republic (in the Czech language: *Těšínské Slezsko v České republice, Těšínsko*).

The term „Zaolzie”, since the division of Teschen Silesia into two parts (Polish and Czechoslovakian), has never been used concerning the whole territory (of Teschen Silesia), which belonged to Czechoslovakia, and which consisted of: the Frydek-Mistek district, inhabited by the Czech population, the Fryštát (Karvina) district, inhabited by Czechs and Poles, and part of the old Teschen district, inhabited mainly by the Polish population. As observed by Krzysztof Szelong, “The Zaolzie area should only incorporate those areas of Teschen Silesia which in 1920 were within the borders of Czechoslovakia, and in which the Polish population had an absolute majority, or at least outnumbered the Czech population (with a significant presence of the German population). In this sense, the western border of Zaolzie coincides with the ethnographic border, which – despite some instability – as late as at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries clearly separated the areas populated by Poles and Czechs in Teschen Silesia.”⁶

Methodology. The conducted research is, in fact, **statistical analysis**. This research aims to determine whether the Polish population inhabiting Zaolzie, first of all – shows specific inclinations (regularities) to vote for particular political parties, and secondly – whether this differentiates them from their Czech neighbours. To analyse the election activity of the members of the Polish minority I referred to various existing data, such as results of particular elections published on websites (www.volby.cz) of the Czech Statistical Office (*Český statistický úřad*). This, however, posed some fundamental difficulty, which consisted in the fact that in

⁶ Krzysztof Szelong, *Zaolzie. Pojęcie, obszar i historia* [Zaolzie. Concept, area and history], <https://openairmuseum.info/pl/dzialy/Zaolzie/Pojecie-obszar-i-historia> (22.10.2019).

the analysed area (Zaolzie), there are no “clearly Polish” or “clearly Czech” election constituencies which could be compared assuming that ethnic identity is the significant independent variable for the political (ideological) choice made. Moreover, it should be remembered that there are numerous co-existing variables which may determine election decisions (for example the socioeconomic status of voters, place of residence – the country or the city, or the fact that an outstanding and popular candidate associated with the region or the commune appeared on the list). Nevertheless, to avoid resigning entirely from the quantitative (statistical) analysis, it was decided to outline the specificity of the region, in particular, the election behaviour of its inhabitants and use the obtained data as a reference point for further qualitative research conducted based on a free interview technique. To this purpose, the detailed analyses of the election behaviour were conducted for:

(a) Inhabitants of three communes, in which Poles constitute the largest percentage of the population and three communes in which they account for the lowest rate of the population (according to the census from 2011). All the above communes, both “Polish” and “Czech”⁷ are located close to one another. Thus, it was decided to choose three communes in which Poles account for approximately 1/3 of the inhabitants. The “Polish” communes – **Gródek/Hrádek** (31.33%), **Milków/Milíkov** (30.35%) and **Koszarzyska/Košařiska** (27.93%) – are in the southern side of the Zaolzie region and neighbour to each other. For comparison, the author analysed the election results in the “Czech” communes also located in the southern part of Zaolzie, in which the percentage of the Polish population is negligible, namely in **Herczawa/Hrčava** (2.17%), **Toszonowice Dolne/Dolní Tošanovice** (3.74%) and **Dobracice/Dobratice** (0.99%) (see tables: 1 & 2).

(b) Inhabitants of (twenty) communes in which Poles account for the largest percentage of the population (over 15% - the so-called Polish communes) and **inhabitants of (fourteen) communes** where Poles constitute the lowest percentage of the population (up to 5% - the so-called Czech communes) (see tables below) (see tables: 1 & 2).

(c) Inhabitants of northern (industrial and mining, highly urbanised) and **southern** (agricultural and pastoral, rural or small town; without Třinec) part of Zaolzie. The north part covers the area of the Karvina district and includes the following communes with extended competencies: Český Těšín, Karvina, Havířov,

⁷ The terms “Polish” communes and “Czech” communes are only mental shortcuts to describe respectively – communes in which Poles constitute a significant (though not exceeding half of inhabitants) population in a particular commune and communes in which Poles account for a negligible percentage of local population (below 5%).

Orlova and Bohumin. The southern part covers the eastern part of the Frydek-Mistek district, namely two communes with extended competencies: Třinec and Jablunkov (see the map below).

(d) Inhabitants of the so-called **Góraliszczynna**, which is located in the southern part of Zaolzie (see the map below), composed of the following communes: Boconowice/Bocanovice, Bukowiec/Bukovec, Bystrzyca/Bystřice, Dolna Łomna/Dolní Lomná, Górna Łomna/Horní Lomná, Gródek/Hrádek, Herczawa/Hrčava, Jabłonków/Jablunkov, Koszarzyska/Košařiska, Milików/Milíkov, Mosty k. Jabłonkowa/Mosty u Jablunkova, Nawsie/Návsí, Nydek/Nýdek, Pioseczna/Písečná, Piosek/Písek. This part of Zaolzie, unlike the northern part, did not experience significant migration movements.

(e) It was also decided to use **the data from the population census of 1921** and on this basis select **(twenty) communes in which the Polish population exceeded 58.8% of all inhabitants and (sixteen) communes in which the Czech population accounted for over 59.3% of all inhabitants** (see tables: 3 & 4).

NATIONAL MINORITIES AS POLITICAL ACTORS

Ethnic or national minorities **are generally inclined to have their political representation** on particular levels of public authority – starting from local authorities, through the regional level (for example self-governing regions), to the central level (the parliament, central offices). The more populous the minority, the greater political ambitions it usually reveals. Smaller minorities are traditionally content with securing sufficient representation on the commune, district or regional level. However, larger minorities, especially those concentrated on a specific area, demonstrate at least the ambition to shape the regional politics. It also happens that their political parties join government coalitions or support the government without the coalition agreement in return for some concessions for their national community (the Hungarian minority parties which belong to the government coalitions in Slovakia and Romania, the Turkish party co-forming the government in Bulgaria, the Polish party in Lithuania). One should also mention here the odd case of the Serbian party (Serbian list) which until 2018 co-formed the government coalition in Kosovo. The Belgrade government does not officially recognise this country.

We can observe an increasingly popular conviction that, **thanks to the participation of the representatives of minorities in a given political and party system, it is easier to avoid discriminating practices** from the state (and the majority nation) as far as cultural, social or economic laws are concerned. Rafał

Woźnica points out that „the lack of participation in state institutions, and thus the marginalisation of the minority, may lead to the alienation of this minority towards the state of its residence. As a consequence, minorities often do not feel any sense of belonging to the country which is perceived only as the domain of the majority. One reaction to this might be resorting to non-institutional remedies, covering a broad range of activities, from creating parallel (alternative) institutions or non-parliamentary organisations to military secession movements.”⁸ This usually leads to the process of ghettoization of a particular minority group.

There are two forms in which national or ethnic minorities may possess political representation. Firstly, the minority may strive for building **its political party** – either an ethnic party or an (ethno) regional party operating either exclusively in the local environment or having the ambition to function on the main level of domestic politics. Such a party may be formed by one minority. However, it is also possible that **alliances with other ethnic/national minorities** inhabiting a particular country may be formed to create the most robust possible representation of the interests of the minorities. Secondly, a specific ethnic/national minority **may consider it to be sufficient and desirable to join the political structure and to exert influence on decision processes through the existing nationwide political parties**, often negotiating with them the type of political cooperation, including placing the minority candidates on election lists of the party on such positions that may win them seats. Between these two generally different models of political participation of ethnic/national minorities, there is some sort of a **compromise variant** consisting in developing institutions which, while not being political (ethnic) parties, are to coordinate the efforts aimed at having appropriate political representation (members of parliament, senators, councillors, etc.). One could list here various types of associations and civil movements which continuously or on an *ad hoc* basis try to build a platform of cooperation for various political options operating within a given minority group, to select candidates who will guarantee election success.

It might seem that the possession of a relevant **ethnic party**, operating within the political system of a particular country, is an optimal solution, taking into account the interests of a specific minority. Before this issue is further analysed, we need to specify in a few sentences the concept of an ethnic party. Martyna Wasiuta

⁸ Rafał Woźnica, *Partie polityczne i udział mniejszości w życiu politycznym Macedonii i Bułgarii* [Political parties and the participation of minorities in the political life of Macedonia and Bulgaria], „Studia Środkowoeuropejskie i Bałkanistyczne”, 2016, t. XXIV, p. 187-188.

notices that ethnic parties are not typical political parties, indicating two approaches to understanding their nature. The structural approach “allows us to define them with this name since they are organisations associating members, with their structure (leaders etc.), aiming at obtaining some posts in the state.” The functional approach, on the other hand, allows us to exclude the ethnic party “from the collection of classical political parties, since ethnic parties (...) do not aggregate interests, but emphasise their particularism; they do not integrate the society or create social consensus.” Wasiuta also states that “What weakens their condition as political parties according to some researchers, is perceived by others as an advantage of ethnic parties *in the strict sense*. Their participation in the party system allows them to reflect the interests of the divided society, does not exclude its segments, thus enabling it to institutionally channel ethnic moods, taking away the threat of intractable conflict. It is also a manifest of democratic consociationalism.”⁹

Specialist political literature lists the following variations of an ethnic party: “ethnopolitical parties”, “ethnic or national minority parties”, “regionalist parties” and “ethno regionalist parties”, as well as “multi-ethnic parties.” What they all share is „based on ethnic (regional) criteria membership structure and leadership, electorate and type of appeal, which give rise to specific functions that such parties perform for the ethnic group and its surroundings. These parties are based on socio-political splits between the centre and the peripheries or the ethno-regional division.”¹⁰

While conducting analysis and a synthesis of various definitions of an ethnic party, Martyna Wasiuta writes that according to Donald Horowitz an ethnic party “is a political organisation located between a political party and an interest group.” Paul R. Brass describes it as a specific political organisation dominating in representing demands of a particular ethnic group, as opposed to its rivals.¹¹

⁹ Martyna Wasiuta, *Partie etniczne w Republice Czeskiej* [Ethnic parties in the Czech Republic], „Sprawy Narodowościowe. Seria nowa / Nationalities Affairs. New series”, 2017, No 49, p. 3. See also: Ryszard Herbut, *Teoria i praktyka funkcjonowania partii politycznych* [Theory and practice of political parties functioning], Wrocław 2002, p. 28-31; D.L. Horowitz, *Ethnic groups in conflict*, Berkeley, 1985, p. 296-297; John Ishiyama, *Ethnopolitical parties and democratic consolidation in post-communist Eastern Europe*, “Nationalism & Ethnic Politics”, 2001, No 7(3), 25-45; Heleen Touquet, *Multi-ethnic parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Naša Stranka and the paradoxes of postethnic politics*, “Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism”, 2011, No 11(3), p. 451-467.

¹⁰ Martyna Wasiuta, *Partie etniczne...*, p. 3-4. See also: Seymour M. Lipset, Stein Rokkan, *Party systems and voters; cross-national perspectives*, New York, 1967, p. 16; Lieven De Winter, Huri Türsan, *Regionalist parties in Western Europe*, New York, 2003, p. 1.

¹¹ John Ishiyama, Marijka Breuning, *What is in a name?: Ethnic party identity and democratic*

According to Kanchan Chandra and David Metz, an ethnic party is a party which openly presents itself to its supporters as a defender of interests of one ethnic group or an aggregate of groups, saving them from exclusion by another group or groups, and locates this representation in the heart of its mobilisation strategy.¹²

Donna Lee Van Cott proposes that the term ethnic party should be allocated to an organisation entitled to stand in the election, whose majority of leaders and members identify themselves with a non-dominant ethnic group and whose election manifesto slogans contain demands of ethnic and cultural nature. Wasiuta notices that “the features based on which ethnic parties are classified, include: the size of the election votes received by the party from a particular ethnic group on which the party depends, and whether the party presents itself as a representative of this group. An ethnic party as such would not be ethnic if it did not receive the majority of the support from a particular ethnic group and if it did not define itself in such categories (especially in the name of the party), thus excluding other segments of the electorate.”¹³

As we have already stated, an ethnic party does not necessarily have to represent the interests of one ethnic/national minority. It is possible to create a specific **party alliance of two or more ethnic minorities**. A perfect example of such minority “alliance” is the Political Movement Coexistentia–Wspólnota–Együttélés–Spivžitja–Soužití–Zusammenleben, established in 1989 as Political Movement of National Minorities in Czechoslovakia. “Coexistentia” is a political group which initially operated among national minorities in Czechoslovakia and then in the Czech Republic, aiming at securing the rights of national and ethnic minorities. In the second decade of the 21st century in Serbia, one could find the party called The List of National Communities (Lista nacionalnih zajednica), which took part in parliamentary elections. It associated a few national minorities inhabiting Serbia (Hungarians, Croats and Bosnians).

On the other hand, an ethnic/national minority provided it is big enough, may create **two or more political parties which are *de facto* ethnic parties**, and thus somehow shape the parallel party scenery in a given country (reflecting

development in post-communist politics, “Party Politics”, 2011, No 17(2), p. 225.

¹² Kanchan Chandra, David Metz, *A new cross-national database on ethnic parties*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Political Science Association, Chicago. <http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/ocvprogram/licep/5/chandra-metz/chandra-metz.pdf> (16.02.2018).

¹³ Martyna Wasiuta, *Partie etniczne...*, p. 4. See also: D. L. Horowitz, *Ethnic groups...*, p. 291; John Ishiyama, Marijke Breuning, *What is in a name...*, p. 223-241; Donna L. Van Cott, *From movements to parties in Latin America: The evolution of ethnic politics*, New York, 2005, p. 3.

ideological divisions inside a particular minority community). **Inter-ethnic political parties**, a rare phenomenon, openly aim at developing some sort of a consensus **between an ethnic/national minority and the nation constituting the majority**, through promoting reconciliation, inter-ethnic cooperation and breaking mutual prejudices and stereotypes. Contrary to other political parties which also promote breaking inter-ethnic barriers, this type of parties is characterised by a strong emphasis placed on ethnic identity and a demand that a separate national identity is preserved.

THE VELVET REVOLUTION AND THE ORIGINS OF POLITICAL SELF-ORGANISATION OF THE POLISH MINORITY IN ZAOLZIE

Some Poles were actively involved in the activities of **Civic Forum**, at some point creating its **Polish section**, and then also participated in establishing structures of new political parties, especially **ODS, KDU-ČSL or ČSSD**. On the other hand, some Polish activists, including those initially operating within the Civic Forum, at the beginning of the 1990s were actively involved in establishing a party which was to represent all national and ethnic minorities in the Czechoslovakian state at that time: **Wspólnota – Soužití – Egüttelés (COEX)**. With the splitting of Czechoslovakia, which meant that an overwhelming majority of national and ethnic minorities remained on the Slovakian side of the border, in the new system (the Czech Republic), this party became clearly associated with the Polish national minority. However, since it lost its „Hungarian component”, the party ceased to play any national role (parliamentary elections), and its representatives concentrated their activities on the local dimension of politics (elections to local authority). It must be admitted that the political activities of the representatives of the Polish minority since the beginning of the 1990s had a two-vector nature.¹⁴

On the one hand, there were those who opted for – to simplify things a little – the **“civic principle”** and accomplishment of the interests of the Polish minority based on co-participation with the Czechs in the implementation of various political projects. In this case, it was assumed that the political activity should, above all, have civic, over-ethnic dimension, while the exercise of the rights of the minority was seen in consensus and cooperation with the majority nation (the Czechs). The most prominent figures of this political trend include, inter alia: Marian Siedlaczek, Tadeusz Wantuła, Jan Rusnok, Janusz Klimsza.¹⁵

¹⁴ Lubomír Kopeček, *Study of interest representation...*

¹⁵ Idem, *Coexistentia-Soužití...*

On the other hand, there were those representatives of the Polish minority who opted for the “**national principle**” and clear determination and accomplishment of the interests of the Polish group in the form of parallel social and cultural institutions and, above all, political parties (this policy followed the example of political strategies used by the Slovakian Hungarians). Contrary to their compatriots from the liberal and civic option, who insisted on cooperation with state authorities and the majority nation, the supporters of the second way of accomplishing the Polish interests in Zaolzie focused on close collaboration with representatives of other national and ethnic minorities. Of crucial importance here was the agreement with the half-million Hungarian minority – the largest minority in Czechoslovakia, whose position was similar to the Poles (densely populated areas close to the border with the homeland, long history of settlements, high level of national self-awareness and identity, the existence of religious divisions inside the group, “hushed up” by national interests). Of some significance was also the fact that, at the beginning of the 1990s, Slovakian politicians demanded autonomy or independence of Slovakia, and such requests were politically very influential. The most outstanding politicians of this group included, among others: Stanisław Gawlik, Edwin Macura, Władysław Niedoba¹⁶ (*nota bene* S. Gawlik and W. were candidates to the Czechoslovakian parliament from ... Slovakian constituencies).

LOCAL (COMMUNAL) ELECTIONS IN ZAOLZIE (1994-2018)

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Zaolzie elites have gradually realised how little influence they have on national politics or even regional one – provincial (little chance for appropriate concessions for the Polish minority) and devoted their energy to local, self-government politics. Communal authorities have thus become a testing ground for the political self-organisation of the Polish minority, whose representatives did not have any uniform strategy of promoting Polish interests. Here, as in national politics, we have observed two different attitudes to the election strategy since the beginning of the 1990s.

On the one hand, there is a widespread conviction that in order to be an influential local politician one must gain possibly broad election support, which boils down to **building the election base (electorate) over ethnic divisions**. Advocates of this strategy mostly refer to the interest of a given region as a whole, not to the interests of the Polish or the Czech nationality group. As a result, it happens that the Polish candidate wins more Czech than Polish votes in the election,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

which may lead to the success in national elections.

However, some socially and politically involved Poles believe that they should, first of all, defend the interests of the Polish nationality group, aiming at **mobilising the electorate mostly among the Zaolzie Poles**, or additionally among other national and ethnic minorities (by referring to common, minority interests). They do notice the necessity to cooperate for the benefit of the region and the accomplishment of its over-ethnic interests, this, however, should be done from a position of a separate, Polish organisation, which possesses its own political identity.

It seems that in time the former strategy began to prevail over the latter one, especially as the number of people declaring themselves to be Polish, declines systematically. This does not mean in any way the "loosening" of the discipline among these local activists, who bet on "ethnic mobilisation" of the Poles inhabiting the Zaolzie region.

The statistical analysis of the first trend poses some challenges since Poles or people of Polish origin in local elections usually focus on the issues of interests of a particular region and do not expose their national identity. It often happens that they are very effective in winning election votes of Poles and Czechs, as well as people who declare another national identity (Silesian, Slovakian, Hungarian, Roma, etc.).

Referring to the second trend, for obvious reasons, it is much easier to conduct a statistical analysis. In this context we should pay more attention to the party called **Coexistencia–Wspólnota** (Coexistencia-Soužití – COEX), which, following the splitting of Czechoslovakia, transformed from a nationwide party representing several national and ethnic minorities to a party, or, to be more precise, a social movement operating locally and representing *de facto* only the Polish minority. As observed by Martyna Wasiuta, "this transformation can be described in a nutshell as a transformation of a multi-ethnic party of independent type into a mono-ethnic party of moderate protectionism. The main reason for this transformation was the change of the political system in 1993. Formally COEX remains a political movement; however, it performs functions of a political party."¹⁷ After the breakdown of Czechoslovakia, the leaders of this movement made a few unsuccessful attempts at obtaining seats in the parliament by forming coalitions with other entities which enjoyed low social support (1996 – the Independent movement – NEZÁVISLÍ, 2002 – with Rural Party – Strana venkova - spojené občanské síly). The same was also observed in regional elections.

In the Ostrava region of 2000, in the first election to the regional parliament, COEX won 2.31% of votes in the region, in the Karvina district – 5.85%, whereas in

¹⁷ Martyna Wasiuta, *Partie etniczne...*, p. 13.

Frydek-Mistek district – 5.64%. COEX did not stand for the next elections of this type. In 2006 it decided to resign from national and regional political activity finally to concentrate on the local economy.¹⁸ Taking into consideration the 1994-2018 period and the support enjoyed by COEX candidates in commune elections (those who stood under COEX name, not in coalition with other entities), we should note that the noticeable decrease in the number of votes, from nearly 85 thousand in 1994 to slightly over 33 thousand in 2018, does not translate into a proportional reduction in the number of won places: respectively 39 in 1994 and 32 in 2018). This may show that the election strategy was perfected and this allowed the party to radically reduce the number of the so-called wasted votes, which do not secure the seat for the representative of the analysed party (see figures: 1 & 2).

On COEX website we can find the list of all Polish councillors in the communes of the Czech part of Teschen Silesia (including those who do not belong to COEX); there are 105 of them (out of the total of 692 councillors) in the 2018-2022 term of office.¹⁹ Needless to say, we deal with some sort of discretion concerning the political importance of national identity, especially concerning people elected for councillor posts from outside COEX lists. Their Polish nationality was “confirmed” by COEX on the official website, which itself offers an exciting contribution to research on “top-down” determination of national/ethnic identity. Nevertheless, in all likelihood, we need to assume that these people identify themselves with the Polish national group since there were no objections to the content of the analysed list raised by the people whose names appear on it. We can assume, though, that the list of the Polish councillors on the official website of COEX is not complete, as not all Polish candidates, in the opinion of the list editors, deserved to be called “Polish councillors.” Therefore, the presented data should be treated with due caution (see table 5).

Taking into consideration three communes with the highest percentage of the population declaring Polish national identity (Gródek, Koszarzyska, Milików) it must be noticed that Coexistentia-Wspólnota has enjoyed the relatively stable support on the level of self-government (commune) elections since 1994 (see table 6). The table below also shows councillors with Polish surnames, elected from outside COEX lists. It should be clearly pointed out, however, that this does not determine their national identity, but only ethnic origin. It should also be noted that COEX has had robust and stable representation in the commune of **Milików**

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14-15.

¹⁹ *Polacy w radach miast i gmin (2018 – 2022 r.) / Poláci v zastupitelstvech měst a obcí (2018-2022)*, <http://www.coexistentia.cz/2018wybor/polacy2018.htm> (30.01.2020).

since 1994 (approximately 40% of votes in the commune council). As a comparison, the table below shows the support for COEX in five other communes, in which Polish candidates (also not from COEX lists) in the 2018 self-government election received over 40% of votes. Such high support was possible then probably because Polish candidates were on various lists, often as independent candidates. In the communes presented below, only in **Vendryně** we can see stable and high support for COEX, oscillating, as in the case of Milików, around 40% (see table 7).

To summarise, the activity of Poles in **self-government elections** is characterised by powerful dynamics, which has two aspects. On the one hand, it is conducted within the COEX group, which is a specific substitute for the Polish ethnic party, and on the other – within other local groups. In the last election, 1/3 of all (that is 39 out of 105) Polish councillors were representatives of COEX. In total, Polish councillors in 2018 accounted for slightly over 15% of all commune councillors in Zaolzie, which reflects the ethnic potential of the Polish minority, though in some communes we can observe clear over-representation of the Polish councillors in comparison to the percentage of the Polish population, as measured in the public census.

NATIONAL (PARLIAMENTARY, PRESIDENTIAL) ELECTION IN ZAOLZIE (1990-2017)

As for the political activity, or more specifically, election activity of Poles inhabiting Zaolzie in national elections in the period after 1989, we must point out a few significant events and processes.

Firstly – only in the 1992-1996 period, the Polish minority did not have its representation in the Czech parliament (Lower Chamber, Senate). In 1990-1992 there were **three Poles in the People's Chamber of the Federal Assembly, and one – in the Czech National Council**. This was a record representation since the beginning of the Czechoslovakian parliament (that is since 1918). One should observe here that the election ordinance at that time did not provide for any concessions for national or ethnic minorities. (On the contrary, constituencies were designed in a way that would lower the chances of non-Czech national group representatives of becoming a member of parliament or a senator). In the discussed period, there emerged two political trends among Poles: the liberal one, connected with the Civic Forum, and the conservative one, oriented at rights of minorities, associated with the Coexistencia movement. On the other hand, since the election in 1996, in the 1996-2017 period, the Polish minority had **three representatives in the Lower Chamber of the Czech Republic**, and interestingly, none of them served

the full term. In the first case (Wawrzyniec Fójcik), this was due to the early election in 1998, in the second case (Marian Bielesz) the MP resigned from the post, and in the third case (Jiří Rusnok) – this was due to the shortened term of the parliament.

Secondly, despite the rather unfavourable division of Zaolzie into three constituencies, Poles were successful in the **election to the Senate**, since **three candidates declaring themselves to be Poles or openly admitting that they had Polish roots, won the Senator seats** (Andrzej Feber in 2000, Eduard Matykiewicz in 2002, Jiří Cieńciała in 2016). Only a few votes more and this group would have been joined by Stanisław Czudek in 2010. **What is interesting, none of the Polish MPs won the Parliament seat from the list of two parties, most supported by Poles**, that is ČSSD and KDU-ČSL (see table 8).

Thirdly – contrary to the previously mentioned elections, **the presidential elections** did not practically have any influence on the situation (and the representation) of Poles inhabiting Zaolzie. However, we could observe much higher support for “fellow compatriot” Jiří Drahoš (who comes from Zaolzie, from a mixed Czech-Polish family) in communes with a significant percentage of the Polish population (see figure 3).

Fourthly – the results of the parliamentary elections, in particular, allow us to distinguish **two sub-regions – the northern one** (covering the territory of the Karvina district), dominated by supporters of left and centre-left parties (KSČM, ČSSD) and **the southern one** (the eastern part of the Frydek-Mistek district), in which apart from centre-left ČSSD, the Christian-democratic KDU-ČSL enjoys much greater popularity than in the north of the region (see figures: 4-6). Comparing these election preferences to the results of the elections from the period between world wars (1925, 1929, 1935), we can clearly see that despite the passage of time some patterns of political behaviour remain the same. The areas which once were decisively won by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Polish Socialist Workers' Party (court districts of Frysztat/Fryštát and Bogumin/Bohumín) were “taken over” by the Communist Party of the Czech and Moravia Regions and the Czech Social Democratic Party. The regions in which before the World War II the Christian democratic Association of Silesian Catholics in Czechoslovakia (dominated by Polish Catholics) and Christian Democratic People's Association in Czechoslovakia (dominated by Polish evangelicals) won (in various coalition configurations), still sympathise politically more with KDU-ČSL and ČSSD. In this system ČSSD may look like a specific „centre party”, enjoying comparable support in the northern and southern parts of Zaolzie, though recently this support has been gradually lost for the benefit of the populist ANO party.

Fifthly, as observed several times while analysing in detail the support for

particular political parties, **the inhabitants of the communes with a large percentage of the Polish population** demonstrate **greater inclination to vote for conservative parties** (especially KDU-ČSL). In contrast,²⁰ inhabitants of communes with negligible Polish population more often choose leftist parties (especially KSČM) (see figures: 7 & 8).

This may be connected with declared religiousness, which is much higher in the Polish community than in the Czech community, and far higher in the southern than in the northern part of Zaolzie. It is worth noticing that of all nationality groups living in the Czech Republic, Poles are at the top of the list of the most religious nations. In 2011 in the whole country 20.8% of its citizens declared their belief in God, with Poles being the most religious group (56.9%), followed by Silesians (47.4%) and Slovaks (40.2%), the least religious nationalities were Vietnamese (8.7%) and Czechs (22.6%). Moreover, we can observe a significant difference between the northern and the southern parts of Zaolzie concerning their religiousness. It is sufficient to compare the percentage of religious people in the commune of Orlova (12.3%) on the one hand, and in the commune of Jablunkov (51.8%) on the other²¹ (see table 9). As we can see, religiousness constitutes an essential independent variable determining the political choices of Zaolzie inhabitants.

And finally, **it is difficult to conclude that we are witnessing some weakening of political activity among the Poles which would coincide with the declining size of the Polish population in Zaolzie.** Poles, including Polish voters, constitute a relatively integrated community, aware of its identity, whose representatives understand well election mechanisms and principles of political representation. Poles also seem to be more determined to be politically active, usually on the local level, which is frequently manifested in “over-representation” of Poles in commune councils (compared to their population in a particular commune).

CONCLUSIONS

The Poles from Zaolzie do not have one strategy of gaining election support or building political structure. There is a clear division into those who pursue

²⁰ Český statistický úřad. Odbor statistiky obyvatelstva, *Náboženská víra obyvatel podle výsledků Sčítání lidu* [Population by religious beliefs and by size groups of municipalities, districts and administrative districts of the ORP - Moravian-Silesian Region], Praha, 2014, p. 14.

²¹ Český statistický úřad, *Sčítání lidu, domů a bytu 2011, Obyvatelstvo podle náboženské víry a podle velikostních skupin obcí, okresů a správních obvodů ORP - Moravskoslezský kraj* [Census of population, houses and flats], <https://www.czso.cz> (17.02.2020).

Polish interests within the groups voicing interests of minorities (especially COEX) and those who prefer to join the structures of the Czech political parties and thus obtaining certain concessions for the Polish minority. Simplifying this matter, we could define both models of political behaviour as, respectively, confrontation and cooperation models. However, the above does not entitle us to conclude that Poles living in Zaolzie are somehow “politically inconsistent”. On the contrary, we can propose a thesis that this election tactic, though probably not coordinated by any decision centre, ultimately brings measurable political benefits to the Polish minority. Neither closing themselves in the ethnic ghetto nor choosing the option of political activities within Czech political parties would provide the Polish minority with sufficient opportunities and chances for accomplishing their political interests. Paradoxically thus, these two vectors of political activity undertaken by the Poles living in Zaolzie seems a rational political strategy. However, taking into account permanent demographic trends, a namely regular decline of the percentage of the population who declare to be of Polish nationality in Zaolzie, in the future we might expect to see the gradual disappearance of the first election strategy and the reinforcement of the method consisting in joining structures of large, nationwide political parties. It is also possible that politicians coming from the Polish nationality group will more frequently declare themselves to be not Poles, but Czechs of Polish origin.

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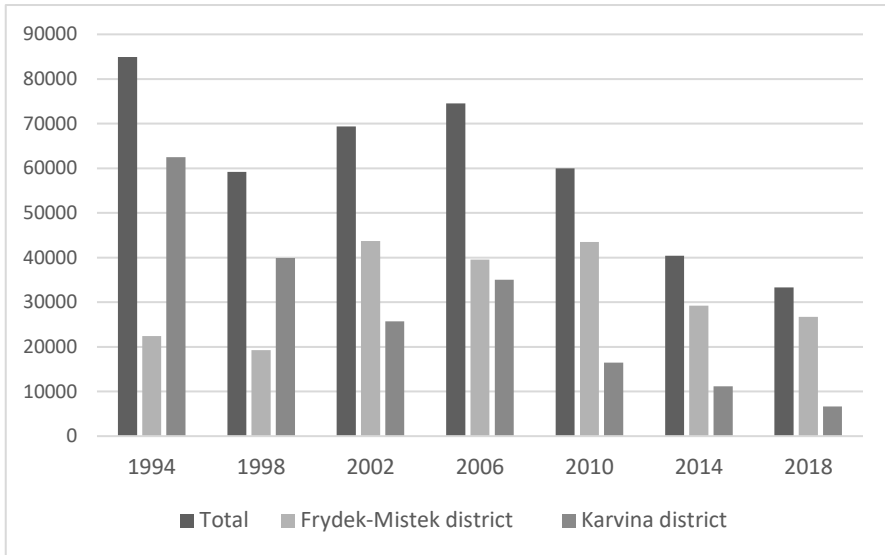
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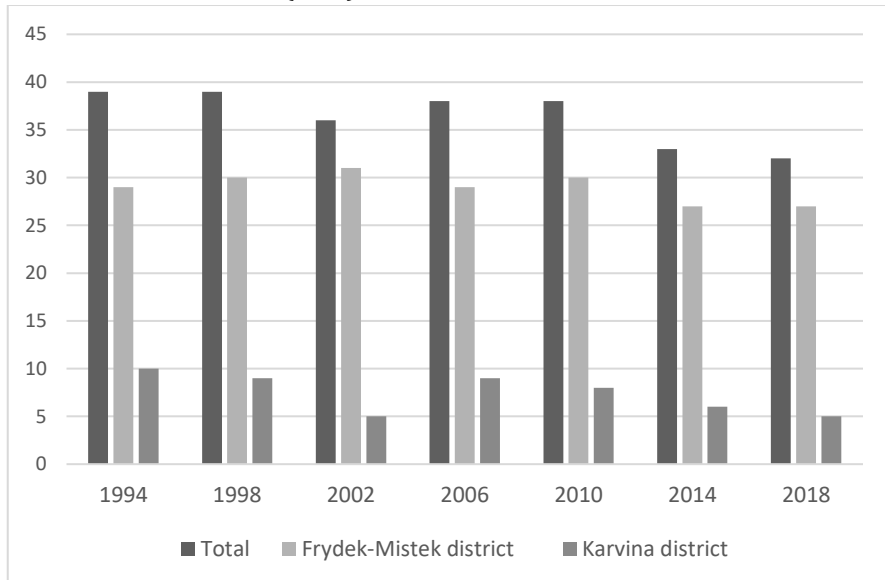
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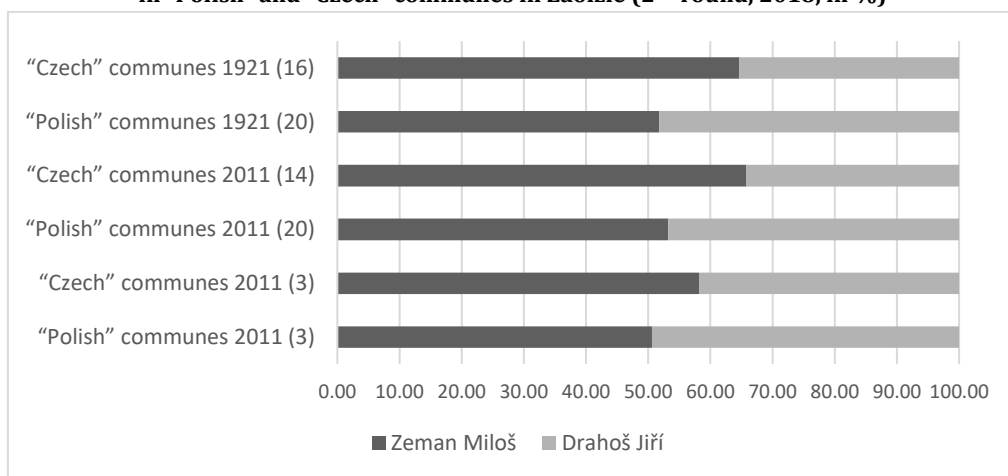
Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

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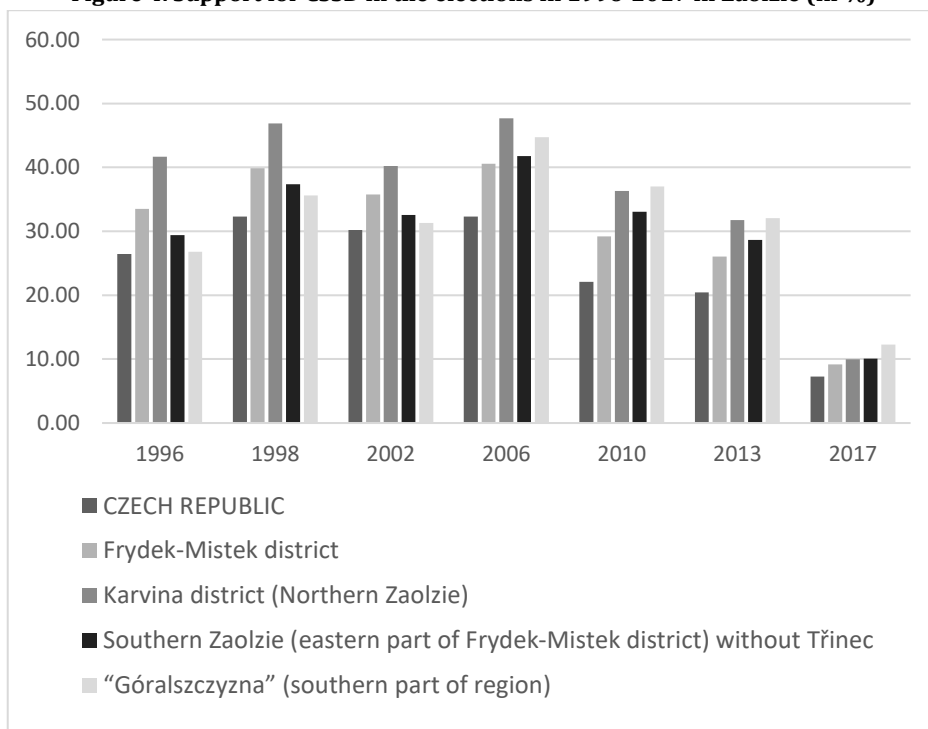
Sources: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

Figure 3. The results of the election for the President of the Czech Republic in “Polish” and “Czech” communes in Zaolzie (2nd round, 2018, in %)

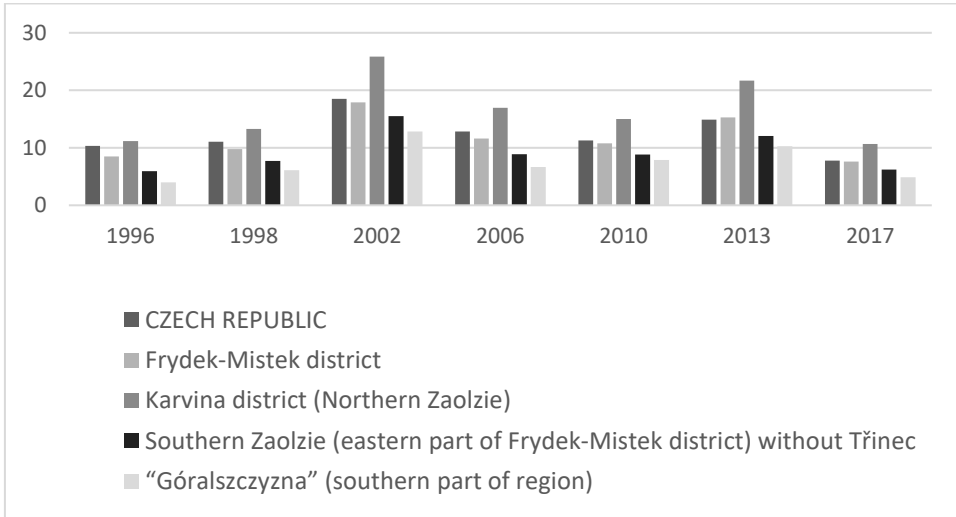


Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

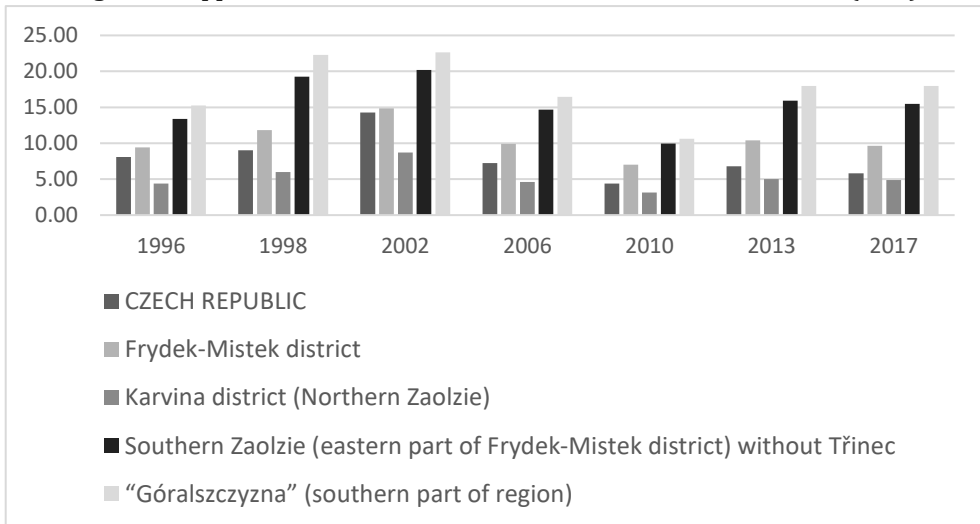
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Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

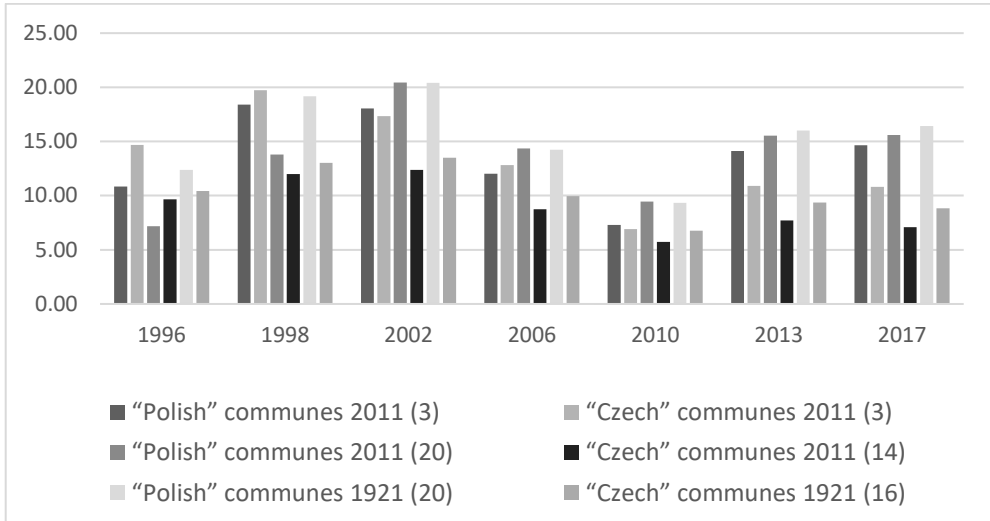
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Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

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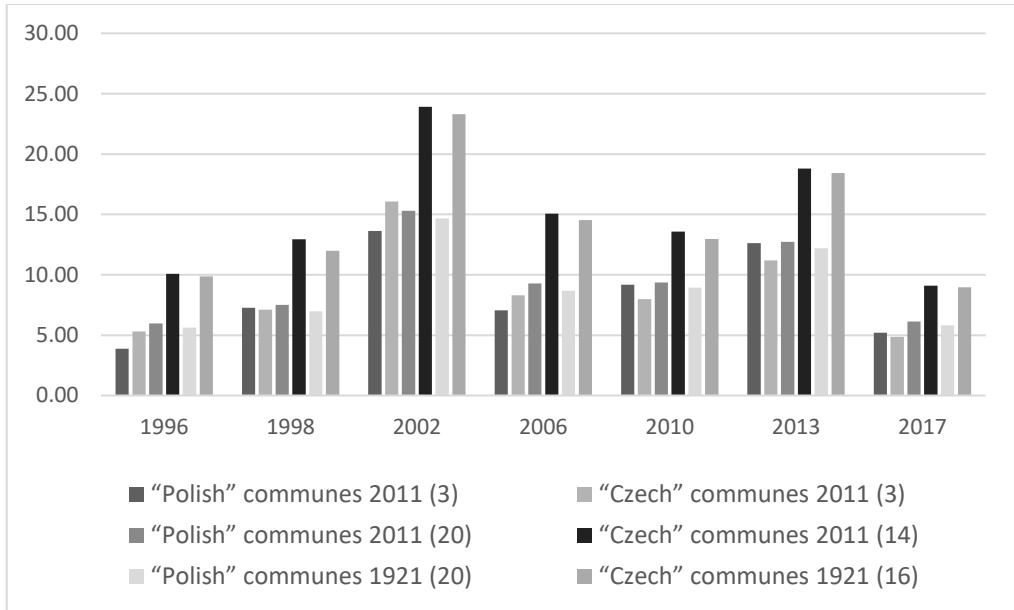
Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

Figure 7. Support for KDU-ČSL in the elections in 1996-2017 in „Polish” and „Czech” communes in Zaolzie (in %)



Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

Figure 8. Support for KSČM in the elections in 1996-2017 in „Polish” and „Czech” communes in Zaolzie (in %)



Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, Volby.cz, <https://volby.cz>.

Table 1. Communes in Zaolzie with the highest percentage of the Polish population (above 15%, 2011)

Commune	% of Poles
Hrádek / Gródek	31.33
Milíkov / Milików	30.35
Košařiska / Koszarzyska	27.93
Vendryně / Wędrynia	27.12
Bukovec / Bukowiec	26.06
Dolní Lomná / Dolna Łomna	25.39
Bocanovice / Boconowice	24.16
Bystřice / Bystrzyca	24.13
Ropice / Ropica	22.42
Horní Lomná / Górna Łomna	21.71
Písečná / Pioseczna	19.39
Nýdek / Nydek	19.32
Smilovice / Śmiłowice	19.08
Stonava / Stonawa	18.99
Návsí / Nawsie	18.58
Albrechtice / Olbrachcice	17.63
Horní Suchá / Sucha Górna	17.1
Komorní Lhotka / Ligotka Kameralna	16.75
Chotěbuz / Kocobędz	16.45
Řeka / Rzeka	15.86

Source: own elaboration based on:

Český statistický úřad, *Sčítání lidu, domů a bytu*, <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/scitani-lidu-domu-a-bytu>;
Mečislav Borák, Dan Gawrecki (editors), *Nástin dějin Těšínska*, Ostrava-Praha, 1992, p. 160-251.

Table 2. Communes in Zaolzie with the lowest percentage of Polish population (below 5%, 2011)

Commune	% of Poles
Soběšovice / Szobiszowice	0.93
Dobratice / Dobracice	0.99
Petřvald / Pietwałd	1.05
Horní Domaslavice / Domasłowice Górne	1.77
Dolní Domaslavice / Domasłowice Dolne	1.93
Hrčava / Herczawa	2.17
Dětmorovice / Dziećmorowice	2.18
Rychvald / Rychwałd	2.44
Bohumín / Bogumin	2.51
Havířov / Hawierzów	3.08
Orlová / Orłowa	3.6
Dolní Tošanovice / Toszonowice Dolne	3.74
Dolní Lutyně / Lutynia Dolna	3.91

Horní Tošanovice / Toszonowice Górne	4.02
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Source: own elaboration based on:

Český statistický úřad, *Sčítání lidu, domů a bytu*, <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/scitani-lidu-domu-a-bytu>;
Mečislav Borák, Dan Gawrecki (editors), *Nástin dějin Těšínska*, Ostrava-Praha, 1992, p. 160-251.

Table 3. Communes in Zaolzie with the highest percentage of Polish population (above 58.3%, 1921)

Commune	% of Poles
Košaržiska / Koszarzyska	97.5
Bocanovice / Boconowice	96.8
Bukovec / Bukowiec	94.9
Dolní Lomná / Dolna Łomna	94.2
Smilovice / Śmiłowice	92.8
Milíkov / Milików	91.9
Nýdek / Nydek	89
Mosty u Jablunkova / Mosty k. Jabłonkowa	85.4
Řeka / Rzeka	82.2
Horní Lomná / Górna Łomna	79.7
Hrádek / Gródek	78.7
Komorní Lhotka / Ligotka Kameralna	76.4
Bystrice / Bystrzyca	75.4
Petrovice u Karviné / Piotrowice k. Karwiny	70.1
Horní Suchá / Sucha Górna	67.7
Vendryně / Wędrynia	65.3
Písek / Piosek	65.1
Jablunkov / Jabłonków	62.9
Albrechtice / Olbrachcice	62.4
Vělopolí / Wielopole	58.8

Source: own elaboration based on:

Český statistický úřad, *Sčítání lidu, domů a bytu*, <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/scitani-lidu-domu-a-bytu>;
Mečislav Borák, Dan Gawrecki (editors), *Nástin dějin Těšínska*, Ostrava-Praha, 1992, p. 160-251.

Table 4. Communes in Zaolzie with the highest percentage of Czech population (above 59.3%, 1921)

Commune	% of Czechs
Dolní Domaslavice / Domasławice Dolne	99.8
Horní Domaslavice / Domasławice Górne	99.7
Soběšovice / Szobiszowice	97.7
Hrčava / Herczawa	97.5
Dolní Tošanovice / Toszonowice Dolne	96
Dobratice / Dobracice	95.1
Rychvald / Rychwałd	92.2
Petřvald / Pietwałd	91
Dětmarovice / Dziećmorowice	88

Orlová / Orłowa	81.6
Doubrava / Dąbrowa	80.7
Dolní Lutyně / Lutynia Dolna	79.4
Těrlicko / Cierlicko	65.5 (d) 43.1 (h)
Horní Tošanovice / Toszonowice Górne	65.5
Střítež / Trzycieź	59.4
Třanovice / Trzanowice	59.3

d - Dolní Těrlicko

h - Horní Těrlicko

Source: own elaboration on the basis of:

Český statistický úřad, *Sčítání lidu, domů a bytu*, <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/scitani-lidu-domu-a-bytu>;
Mečislav Borák, Dan Gawrecki (editors), *Nástin dějin Těšínska*, Ostrava-Praha, 1992, p. 160-251.

**Table 5. Polish councillors in particular communes of Zaolzie
(local self-government elections in 2018)**

Commune	Total number of councillor posts in the commune	COEX ⁽¹⁾	PL outside COEX	Total PL	% of councillor posts for PL	% of posts (Polish candidates) - % of the Polish population in the commune	% of Poles in the commune
Albrechtice / Olbrachcice	15	1	5	6	40.00	↑↑↑	17.63
Bocanovice / Boconowice	7	0	1	1	14.29	↓	24.16
Bohumín / Bogumin	23	0	0	0	0.00	●	2.51
Bukovec / Bukowic	11	2	1	3	27.27	●	26.06
Bystrice / Bystrzyca	15	0	5	5	33.33	↑	24.13
Český Těšín / Czeski Cieszyn	27	0	7	7	25.93	↑↑	12.76
Chotěbuz / Kocobędz	15	2	1	3	20.00	●	16.45
Dětmarovice / Dziećmorowice	15	0	0	0	0.00	●	2.18
Dobratice / Dobracice	9	0	0	0	0.00	●	0.99
Dolní Domaslavice / Domasłowice Dolne	15	0	0	0	0.00	●	1.93
Dolní Lomná / Dolna Łomna	7	1	2	3	42.86	↑↑↑	25.39
Dolní Lutyně / Lutynia Dolna	15	1	0	1	6.67	↑	3.91
Dolní Tošanovice / Toszonowice Dolne	9	0	0	0	0.00	●	3.74
Doubrava / Dąbrowa	15	0	1	1	6.67	●	5.67
Havířov / Hawierzów	43	0	4	4	9.30	↑	3.08
Horní Domaslavice / Domasłowice Górne	13	0	0	0	0.00	●	1.77
Horní Lomná / Górna Łomna	7	0	1	1	14.29	↓	21.71

Horní Suchá / Sucha Górna	15	0	5	5	33.33	↑↑↑	17.1
Horní Tošanovice / Toszonowice Górne	9	0	1	1	11.11	↑	4.02
Hrádek / Gródek	15	4	3	7	46.67	↑↑↑	31.33
Hrčava / Herczawa	7	0	0	0	0.00	●	2.17
Jablunkov / Jabłonków	21	1	2	3	14.29	●	14.6
Karviná / Karwina	41	0	4	4	9.76	●	9.73
Komorní Lhotka / Ligotka Kameralna	11	0	1	1	9.09	↓	16.75
Košařiska / Koszarzyska	9	2	1	3	33.33	↑	27.93
Milíkov / Milików	13	6	1	7	53.85	↑↑↑↑	30.35
Mosty u Jablunkova / Mosty k. Jabłonkowa	15	3	1	4	26.67	↑↑	13.42
Návsí / Nawsie	15	2	2	4	26.67	↑	18.58
Nýdek / Nydek	15	2	0	2	13.33	↓	19.32
Orlová / Orłowa	31	0	1	1	3.23	●	3.6
Petrovice u Karviné / Piotrowice k. Karwiny	21	0	1	1	4.76	↓	13.05
Petřvald / Pietwałd	15	0	0	0	0.00	●	1.05
Písečná / Pioseczna	7	0	3	3	42.86	↑↑↑↑	19.39
Písek / Piosek	9	1	0	1	11.11	●	14.88
Řeka / Rzeka	9	0	0	0	0.00	↓↓↓	15.86
Ropice / Ropica	15	3	0	3	20.00	●	22.42
Rychvald / Rychwałd	15	0	0	0	0.00	●	2.44
Smilovice / Śmiłowice	7	0	1	1	14.29	↓	19.08
Soběšovice / Szobiszowice	15	0	0	0	0.00	●	0.93
Stonava / Stonawa	7	0	3	3	42.86	↑↑↑↑	18.99
Střítež / Trzycież	9	0	0	0	0.00		13.66
Těrlicko / Cierlicko	15	1	1	2	13.33	↑	10.89
Třanovice / Trzanowice	15	0	2	2	13.33	●	15.74
Třinec / Trzyniec	33	0	4	4	12.12	●	13.17
Vělopolí / Wielopole	5	0	0	0	0.00	↓↓	13.94
Vendryně / Wędrynia	17	7	1	8	47.06	↑↑↑↑	27.12

Total (Zaolzie)	692	39	66	105	15.17	↑	7.80
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1) COEXISTENTIA independently or in coalition

Legend:

- difference up to 5%
- ↑ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference 5%-10%)
- ↑↑ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference 10%-15%)
- ↑↑↑ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference 15%-20%)
- ↑↑↑↑ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference above 20%)
- ↓ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference 5%-10%)
- ↓↓ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference 10%-15%)
- ↓↓↓ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference 15%-20%)
- ↓↓↓↓ % of Poles in commune <% of councillor posts won by Poles (difference above 20%)

Source: elaboration on the basis of: www.volby.cz, <http://www.coexistentia.cz/2018wybor/polacy2018.htm>

**Table 6. Polish councillors from Coexistentia-Wspólnota
in selected communes (1994-2018) part 1**

Commune % of Poles		YEAR OF SELF-GOVERNMENT (COMMUNE) ELECTION						
		1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018
Hrádek Gródek 31.3%	Number of seats	9	15	15	15	15	15	15
	COEX	6	3	3	3	4	3	4
	Others with PL sur- name	3	7	7	10	7	3	4
	% COEX	66.7	20	20	20	26.7	20	26.7
Košariška Koszarzyska 27.9%	Number of seats	7	9	9	9	9	9	9
	COEX	2	3	2	1	1	2	2
	Others with PL sur- name	3	3	4	2	3	2	1
	% COEX	28.6	33.3	22.2	11.1	11.1	22.2	22.2
Milíkov Milików 30.4%	Number of seats	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
	COEX	5	5	6	5	5	5	6
	Others with PL sur- name	3	5	2	4	2	2	3
	% COEX	38.5	38.5	46.2	38.5	38.5	38.5	46.2

Source: elaboration based on: www.volby.cz, <http://www.coexistentia.cz/2018wybor/polacy2018.htm>.

**Table 7. Polish councillors from Coexistentia-Wspólnota
in selected communes (1994-2018) part 2**

Commune % of Poles		YEAR OF SELF-GOVERNMENT (COMMUNE) ELECTION						
		1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018
Albrechtice Olbrachcice 17.6%	Number of seats	17	17	15	15	15	15	15
	COEX	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
	% COEX	11.8	11.8	6.7	6.7	13.3	6.7	6.7
Písečná Pioseczna 19.4%	Number of seats	x	x	7	7	7	7	7
	COEX	x	x	0	0	0	0	0
	% COEX	x	x	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Vendryně Wędrynia 27.1%	Number of seats	x	17	17	17	17	17	17
	COEX	x	5	6	5	6	7	7
	% COEX	x	29.4	35.3	29.4	35.3	41.2	41.2
Dolní Lomná Dolna Łomna 25.4%	Number of seats	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	COEX	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
	% COEX	14.3	28.6	14.3	14.3	14.3	28.6	14.3
Stonava Stonawa 19.0%	Number of seats	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	COEX	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
	% COEX	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: elaboration based on: www.volby.cz, <http://www.coexistentia.cz/2018wybor/polacy2018.htm>.

**Table 8. Representatives of the Polish national minority
in the Czechoslovakian/Czech parliament**

	Federal As- sembly People Chamber	Federal Assembly Nation Chamber	Czech Na- tional Coun- cil	Lower Chamber of Parliament	Senate	
1990- 1992	Danuta Branna (FO) 15.111 Władysław Niedoba (COEX)		Tadeusz Wantuła (FO) 10.674			
1992- 1992	Stanisław Gawlik (COEX)					
1992- 1996						
1996- 1998				Wawrzyniec Fójcik (ODS) 5.471		
1998- 2002					Andrzej Feber (US-DEU) (od 2000) 10.734	
2002- 2006				Marian Bielez (US-DEU) (until 2004) 5.490	Andrzej Feber (US-DEU)	Eduard Matykie- wicz (KSČM) (since 2002) 9.469
2006- 2010					Eduard Matykiewicz (KSČM) (until 2008)	
2010- 2013				Jiří Rusnok (VV/LIDEM) 2.952		
2013- 2017					Jiří Cieńciała (OSN) (since 2016) 10.804	
2017- 2021					Jiří Cieńciała (OSN)	
2021-					Jiří Cieńciała (OSN) (until 2022)	

COEX Coexistentia–Wspólnota–Együttélés–

Spivžitja–Soužití

DEU Demokratická unie

FO Občanské fórum

KSČM Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy

LIDEM Liberální Demokraté

ODS Občanská demokratická strana

OSN Občané Spolu – Nezávislí

US-DEU Unie svobody – Demokratická unie

VV Věci veřejné

Next to the name, we provide the party-election list and the number of obtained votes; BR – lack of representation

Source: elaboration based on: www.volby.cz

**Table 9. Religiousness in Zaolzie in communes with extended competences
(*obcí s rozšířenou působností*) in 2011**

Religion/Commune	Jablunkov	Třinec	Český Těšín	Karviná	Havířov	Orlová	Bohumín
	Jabłonków	Trzyniec	Cz.Cieszyn	Karwina	Hawierzów	Orłowa	Bogumin
Total inhabitants	22214	54627	25516	68024	91092	43020	28742
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Religious persons	11505	18849	8185	11388	13808	5294	4111
	51.8%	34.5%	32.1%	16.7%	15.2%	12.3%	14.3%
Non-religious persons	1945	9230	5457	20705	32398	15271	9101
	8.8%	16.9%	21.4%	30.4%	35.6%	35.5%	31.7%
Not determined	7556	21991	9933	30673	37891	19487	13362
	34.0%	40.3%	38.9%	45.1%	41.6%	45.3%	46.5%

Source: elaboration on the basis of: Český statistický úřad, *Sčítání lidu, domů a bytu 2011, Obyvatelstvo podle náboženské víry a podle velikostních skupin obcí, okresů a správních obvodů ORP - Moravskoslezský kraj*, <https://www.czso.cz>.