

## РЕЦЕНЗІЇ

**Paweł Swianiewicz, Adam Gendźwił, Julita Łukomska, Anna Kurniewicz. *Wielkość gmin i powiatów a sprawność ich funkcjonowania. Hipotezy wielkoludów i liliptów*. – Warszawa : Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, 2016. – 191 p.**

The dispute which concerns the size of municipalities and administrative division of countries is constantly current in academic debate and also in political actions. These issues are especially important for areas which have limited experience and practice of democracy and self government. An example of this type of area is Poland, where self government has de facto a short history, therefore a lot of global trends and solution in this issue are implemented with delays. The most significant change in Poland was the public administration reform in 1999 which reduced the number of provinces (voivodships) and restored counties. After implementation of these reforms there were a lot of discussion of scientists and politicians about further reducing of number of voivodeship. Currently an important issue is the separation of the area of Warsaw city from the Mazovia voivodeship. The main imperfection of previous considerations and research on this issue in Poland is the conviction about some well-worn myths such as statement, that small municipalities perform their tasks much better than bigger units. The book of Paweł Swianiewicz, Adam Gendźwił, Julita Łukomska and Anna Kurniewicz is noteworthy and innovatory attempt of explanation of the relationship between the effectiveness of functioning of municipalities and their size.

The main research problem of reviewed book concerns on size of municipality and its impact on efficiency of tasks performing. The researchers decided to focus on a three issues such as an ability to performing the tasks, operating costs of local government and local democracy. This assumption enable the creation of comprehensive approach to the main issue. Previous results and arguments of the proponents of consolidation/fragmentation of municipalities are based on research which was focused only on one the above-mentioned issue. The first chapter of the book is an introduction to administrative division of Poland, which is the context of the research. The authors scrupulous describes the genesis and historical change of territorial division of Poland with particular emphasis on demography. The following sections present an examples of the changes which were inspired by local communities and central authorities. The last section of this chapter refers to administrative division of Poland compared to european countries. The analysis of main territorial reform of european countries in recent years present the ambiguity and differentiation of this issue. The main conclusion of this chapter is that, there is no dominant model of territorial organization. In fact, the territorial division of countries is strongly rooted in their history and tradition.

The second chapter present the theoretical considerations and empirical analysis referring to connection between ability of municipalities to tasks performing and their size. Previous research results of this issue in other countries prove that ability to performing public tasks is strongly connected with size of municipality. The research conducted by P. Swianiewicz, A. Gendźwił, J. Łukomska and A. Kurniewicz presents similar results in many aspects. The results of their study shows that bigger territorial units prepare more accurate financial forecast and they are more efficiently in obtain the EU funds. While the small municipalities have difficulties with such issues as public child care and local sewage network. On the other hand the research results presents, that the size of territorial unit is not important in such issue as the quality of local law.

The next chapter describes relationship between the cost of public tasks of municipalities and their size. Most researchers argue, that bigger municipalities spend less money to perform public tasks and they are more accurate. Moreover they claim, that we can observe economies of scale in functioning of self government, which is typical phenomenon in economic sector. In this issue the research results in Poland are identical as the results in other countries. The economies of scale is noticeable especially in such areas as financing of administrative services. Interestingly, this effect is more observable in counties than in municipalities. Probably the most crucial fact, is that municipalities have more financial autonomy and they have more extensive catalogue of tasks.

The fourth chapter refers to influence of the size of municipalities on the local democracy. In this

section the authors try to examine the common statement, that the small territorial unit means better local democracy. The researchers concentrate on such issues as satisfaction with the activities of local authorities, voter turnout in local elections and other form of political form of participation. The research results in Poland show, that the above hypothesis is proven. In small territorial units the local communities are more satisfied with the government and they are convinced that they have influence on the local decisions. This relationship is lower in counties. However in smaller counties the quality of local democracy is better than in bigger county units.

The next chapter describes selected cases of territorial reform in european countries such as Georgia, Denmark, Netherland, Finland, Ireland, Greece, Albania, Norway, Ukraine, France and Macedonia. Analysis of the above reform was used to indicate the conditions and circumstances which are favorable for implementation of territorial consolidation reform. Presented conclusions in this chapter may be useful for central governments and expert groups which elaborate the administrative reform of country. The last chapter of the reviewed book describes the conclusions of the presented research.

The reviewed book is a reliable and noteworthy analysis of relationship between size of territorial units and their ability to performing public tasks. Extensive sources and various qualitative and quantitative methods confirm that it is an meaningful scientific publication on this issue. Previous scientific research based only on description and incomplete data. Therefore the book of P. Swianiewicz, A. Gendźwiłł, J. Łukomska and A. Kurniewicz is also an innovatory attempt of research of presented issue. The important advantage of the reviewed book is also description of experiences of european countries with administrative reform and its effects, which may be useful for public authorities in less experienced countries.

**Reviewer: Piotr Pięta (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland).**