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The model of change in the Polish local government system during the Cold War era from the perspective of Security Studies

Model zmiany polskiego samorządu w czasach zimnej wojny w perspektywie nauk o bezpieczeństwie

Abstract. The local government is a form of organization of the public authority that is constantly changing, which is connected with the evolution of the society. It is also strongly connected with the system of a particular country. Moreover, it creates space, in which politics has got a personalised dimension. The diversity of the local government is at the same time the diversity of the developmental politics, as there are different communities, the emotions they have, experiences and democratic governance skills. There are two main aims of this article: one of which is to describe the changes in the local government organization in The Polish People's Republic and the other one to graphically present the model of the changes in the local government organization based on Security Studies. As a consequence of this, the communist process of changes in the Polish local government, the apogee of which took place during the Cold War, was characterized using the methodology of science

Keywords: security studies, Cold War, public administration, local government, history

Streszczenie. Samorząd terytorialny i jego ewolucja od czasów powstania nowoczesnego państwa może stanowić podstawę do obserwacji przemian zarówno politycznych i społecznych. Jest zatem łącznikiem pomiędzy kategoriami bezpieczeństwa państwa i bezpieczeństwa narodowego, a jakością jego funkcjonowania może być zmienną pomiaru efektywności demokracji wśród określonej społeczności. Cel badania przedstawionego w artykule pozostaje złożony: po pierwsze scharakteryzować proces ewolucji zmian w polskim samorządzie od czasów zimnej wojny do 1991 r.; po drugie: przedstawić graficzny model zmiany polskiej samorządności poprzez analizę systemową właściwą naukom o bezpieczeństwie.

Słowa kluczowe: nauki o bezpieczeństwie, zimna wojna, administracja publiczna, samorząd, historia

Pre-communist historical background

The term „security” is an „essentially contested concept that provides space for ambiguity¹.” Security Studies is an academic discipline strongly connected with international relations and rapidly developed during the Cold War times amid political realists and scientists. The end of the superpowers rivalry era brought forward new dimensions where governments had to expand new tools and measures to exert desired political pressure. The Strategic Studies concept was extremely successfully institutionalized and transformed to Security Studies which is not only military-oriented science, but also includes the whole variety of security fields: social, economic, cultural, ecological, etc². Security Studies, constituted itself as thoroughly interdisciplinary field, seems to offer a catalogue of some methodological tools on the verge of scientific disciplines. One of the ways of presenting the analysis of this phenomenon is to construct a model that shows those changing processes. At the same time, it is an experimental method of researching and learning about complex systems. What is also worth mentioning is that creating the models is a permanent element of the designer’s work, regardless of the field he deals with.

The modern³ local government was formed when Poland was still under partitions, which was influenced by the ideals of the French Revolution.

Polish tradition connected with the idea of local governance was deeply rooted in fight for independence and had its formal rules of law

¹ D. A. Baldwin, „*The Concept of Security*.” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1997, pp. 5–26. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20097464. Accessed 7 July 2021.

² See more: Buzan, B. *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, Cambridge University Press 2009;

in The Constitution of 3 May 1791³. During the interwar period Polish local governance experience referred to classic nineteenth-century modern state governance. This should be understood as a self-governing form of the country's administration and a self-governing functional form which gathered people around common goals (economic, social etc.)⁴. When describing the territorial administration of the interwar Poland, three periods can be distinguished.

The first period was from the rebirth of Poland in 1918 to the so-called May Coup of 1926⁵ and it can be called the period of „bourgeois democracy.” The Constitution of 17 March 1921 gained a pole position among the legal acts of that time, as it proclaimed the foundations of the state system „on the basis of broad territorial and professional self-government” (Articles 3 and 68), and the organization of state administration on the basis of decentralization, while taking into account the civic factor appointed by elections (Art. 66). The Constitution of 1921, however, was one of the last legal declarations regarding the development of the local government. Since then, the position of the government administration bodies had been consistently strengthened, whereas the role of the social factor in administration had been limited. A characteristic feature of this period was the desire to consolidate the lands that had so far been under various partitions and to unify the law. On the occasion of organizing the old and creating the new, uniform administrative legislation, the government's administration section was reinforced, at the same time weakening the local government.

³ In April 1791, city ordinance was established. It was included in the Constitution in the form of a section: Law in cities. See more: Leoński Z., *Samorząd terytorialny RP*, CH Beck, Warsaw 2006, p. 1.

⁴ V. Cromwell, „*Interpretations of Nineteenth-Century Administration: An Analysis.*” *Victorian Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1966, pp. 245–255. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3825730. Accessed 7 July 2021.

⁵ The May Coup (przewrót majowy) was a coup d'état carried out in Poland by Marshal Józef Piłsudski from 12 to 14 May 1926. The coup overthrew the democratically-elected government of President Stanisław Wojciechowski and Prime Minister Wincenty Witos, see more: J. Rothschild, „The Ideological, Political, and Economic Background of Piłsudski's Coup D' Etat of 1926.” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 78, no. 2, 1963, pp. 224–244. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2146124. Accessed 7 July 2021.

The year 1926 marked the symbolic start of the second period, the domination of „strong executive power”, which shifted the burden of running the state from collegial bodies, established by elections, to appointed monocratic bodies. The process of ordering and unifying administrative law also grew in its strength. The normative acts, issued in that period, sanctioned the domination of the government administration bodies over the local self-government bodies. It was manifested, *inter alia*, by granting, through the local government act of 1933, numerous supervisory measures to the government bodies over the local government bodies. As a result, the voivode played a dominant role. Some of his competences included: a) approving of the resolutions of self-government bodies regarding more important economic matters; b) ruling on the validity of resolutions of the local government bodies in cases where they are suspended as contrary to the law; c) inspections in local government bodies, institutions and enterprises; d) applying disciplinary supervision measures to the members of self-government bodies; f) dissolution of self-government bodies in situations of inappropriate activity⁶.

The starting point of the third period of the interwar administration, which lasted until 1939, was the issuance of the Constitution of 23 April 1935. It brought a significant centralization of the state system. However, in the area of administrative law, it formally maintained the existing elements of the administrative structure of the state without any fundamental changes. Art. 72 sec. 2 points out that the state administration was exercised by the government administration, the local government and the economic self-government. In the April Constitution one can notice the reduction of the provisions on the self-government, as compared to the March Constitution. There are no particular decisions defining the general legal position of the local government in the administrative system. Such fundamental provisions from the March Constitution were included in Art. 67 – the first sentence, and Art. 70 – paragraph 2. They defined „the very essence of self-govern-

⁶ The Act of 23 March 1933 on a partial change of the local government system (Ustawa z dnia 23 marca 1933 r. o częściowej zmianie ustroju samorządu terytorialnego) source: <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.sp?id=WDU19330350294>.

ment". The first sentence of the Article 67 expressed the principle of the election of legislative bodies and thus emphasized the corporate nature of self-government units. What is more, by granting them the right to self-establish it emphasized their independence in decision-making⁷.

The evolution of the local governmental system 1944–1989

1944–1950 was the so-called period of shaping the basic concept of the local administration model, as it was not possible to speak of adopting a relatively permanent solution in this regard. Evolutionary collectivization programmes based on cooperative principles turned out to be utopian, while collectivization could only be carried out by the revolutionary method. The political assumptions of the first socialist state, which emerged as a result of the revolution, valued great importance of the workers' councils, which included running the socialized enterprises. In the new political system, these councils became a core of the local government, which initially appeared in towns as the superstructure of the local self-employment. New socio-political situation created the need for centralized management of institutions serving political changes. Despite the fact that the legal foundations of the local administration were the new normative acts issued in the interwar period, apart from the new normative acts issued in the interwar period, that time should be regarded as a transitional stage, whereas those acts were only temporary. After the liberation of Poland from the Nazi-German occupation, the old organizational forms, provided in the March Constitution of 1921, were still used. However, the new forms, such as national councils, were also introduced. The State National Council⁸ (*Krajowa Rada Narodowa*–

⁷ Constitutional Act of April 23, 1935 (*Ustawa Konstytucyjna z dnia 23 kwietnia 1935 r.*), source: <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu19350300227>.

⁸ J. Zakrzewska., *Krajowa Rada Narodowa jako organ przedstawicielski*, [in:] *Krajowa Rada Narodowa*, Burdy A.(red.), Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków – Gdańsk 1976, p. 101.

KRN) was founded on the night of 31 December 1943 at the initiative of the Polish communist party, the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza) and passed the act called the „Provisional Statute of National Councils”. At that time, a three-tier structure of the national councils, with their hierarchical subordination, was announced. Apart from that, higher-level councils were also created.

The State National Council exercised its power on the basis of the system of the local national councils. The national councils based their organization on the administrative division of the Polish state. Commune National Councils covered the area of communes. Municipal National Councils, in some cities operated under the law of poviats, whereas in others - under the law of communal national councils. National councils, in the capitals of the voivodeships: Warsaw and Łódź had the powers of the voivodeship national council. It can also be added that Poviats National Councils covered the poviat area, while Provincial National Councils - the area of voivodeships. The Municipal National Council selected a presidium from among its members, composed of three people, headed by a chairman. One of the members of the presidium of the Municipal National Council was also a part of the poviat national council, constituting a link between the communal national council and the poviat national council. The supreme authority of all local people's councils was the State National Council, which, as the highest representation of the nation, outline the general guidelines for the work of local people's councils⁹.

The Polish Committee of National Liberation (Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego PKWN), which became the executive body of the State National Council, was established on 21 July 1944 in Moscow¹⁰. Communist authorities declared that this institution should

⁹ Resolution of the National National Council of January 1, 1944 Provisional Statute of National Councils see: Protocol of the first plenary of the first National National Council of Warsaw 31XII1943R./1I1944R., Warszawa 1947, (Protokół pierwszego plenarnego posiedzenia Krajowej Rady Narodowej Warszawa 31XII1943R./1I1944R., Warszawa 1947), pp. 30–36.

¹⁰ „The earliest and the most blatant case of Soviet involvement in the East European politics occurred in Poland, where the so-called Polish National Liberation Committee (PKWN) was secretly formed by Stalin from the ranks

remain until the parliament was convened in order to pass new constitutional law. The communist governance should therefore be available for the people through voivodeship, powiat, municipal and communal national councils, as well as the authorized representatives. This declaration stated that in the near future the dualistic model of the state power was to be created, in which the principle of broad territorial and "special" self-government would be implemented.

The local governmental system distinguished between the administrative solutions and other states in the process of building socialism. The State National Council having legislative, control and planning powers, also could make opinions about the functioning of the local governments, which became just executive agencies. It was established on all levels of the administrative territorial division of the country, i.e. communes, counties and voivodeships. When regulating the issues of competences, the legislator adopted the principle that the local government was to deal with all public matters of local importance, except for state authorities reserved for the competence of the state. The following were excluded from the scope of the territorial self-government's competences: foreign affairs and foreign trade, military, justice, forestry, mining, aviation, railroad, national and provincial roads and waterways, postal services and telecommunications, currency, insurance, state taxes, fees, duties, excise duties and monopolies¹¹. When such vital areas for the local communities as healthcare or education were excluded, the range of competences remained significant, taking into consideration post-German and post-Jewish property takeover and management.

On 20 March 1950 the local governmental institutions were officially abolished, which resulted in giving the power to the national

of former Polish communists living in Moscow." [in:] *The Soviet Union And The Establishment Of Communist Regimes In Eastern Europe, 1944-1954: A Documentary Collection*, Gibianski L., Naimark N.N., The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, Stanford University 2004., p. 10.

¹¹ Jastrzębski L., *Zarys historii terenowych organów władzy i administracji państwowej* [in:] *Terenowe organy administracji i rady narodowe po reformie*, Służewski J. (red.), Warszawa 1977, p. 36. and: Leoński Z., *Rady narodowe, zasady organizacji i funkcjonowania*, Poznań 1969, pp. 7-8.

councils and their executive and management bodies – the presidencies of the councils. Until 1954 the national councils were not elected by the society. It should be explained that this fact was confirmed in the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic of 1952: „National councils are local organs of state power and basic organs of the social self-government of the working people in towns and villages in communes, cities, and districts of larger voivodeship cities”.¹² Local governance was performed in a classic way, elected by communities. It was perceived as dangerous competition for the party's monopoly, so even public and academic debates were conducted in the historical context. The abolishment of local governments and self-governance was regarded as a one of the most significant successes of the Polish communism.

In December 1970 massive workers' protests took place in the coast cities such as: Szczecin, Gdańsk, Gdynia, Elbląg, the main reason being a sudden increase of food prices. At least 44 people were killed in riots, whereas over a thousand were injured in the acts of violence in which Polish People's Army and Citizen Militia were involved – these events were the manifestation of political terror¹³.

The political outcome was the change of the Polish Communist Party's chairman. Edward Gierek replaced Władysław Gomułka. The new leader attempted some administrative changes. The aim was to restrain the increasing power concentrated in the local national councils, which became a provincial tool of power dependent on certain branches of the Polish Workers' Party located in each voivodeship. Hence, the original plan concerning the process of centralisation was full of gaps filled with decentralized actions in reality. Officially, however, it was all about communist transformation ideology. It was realized that the first secretaries of provincial party instances had an enormous scope of power¹⁴ and every socially-motivated diversity

¹² The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, (Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej 22 lipca 1952 r.), Warszawa 1987, p. 36, art. 43, 1.

¹³ Anonymous protesters were being shot at, which is a factor differentiating between 'political terror' and 'political murder', see more: P. Pleskot, *Zabić. Mordy polityczne w PRL*, Znak, Warsaw 2016.

¹⁴ J. Reguński, *Samorząd III Rzeczypospolitej. Koncepcje i realizacja*, Warszawa 2000, s. 23.

was threatened. The constitutional amendments of 1972 and 1975 introduced changes to the administrative division of the country, while the amendment of 1973 established new organs and changed the competences of the national councils¹⁵.

The Polish reforms based on the decreasing importance of local units: from about 4,3 thousand to 2,3 thousand¹⁶ were beyond the communist standards. After 18 years a commune became a basic administrative unit again. National councils continued to be the organ of state authority. They were also supposed to act as the organs of social self-government, however it was not properly implemented. The most important legal record was the deprivation of the functions of the local state administration bodies from the councils. New one-man organs were established for those tasks. In cities, they were the heads of cities and in city districts they were the heads of districts. As a result of the changes, they were the heads of poviats, whereas in large cities (over 100,000 inhabitants) - mayors and in voivodeships - voivodes. Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) authorities recommended the chairmen of voivodeships and the representatives of poviat national councils appointing the first secretaries of poviat and voivodeship committees. This practice was abandoned only after the introduction of martial law in August 1980. Pursuant to the Act of 28 May 1975 on the two-tier administrative division of the state and the amendment to the act on national councils, poviats were dissolved, changing to a two-tier territorial division of the state, increasing the number of voivodeships to 49. Many organs were unable to adjust their spatial scope of operation to the new two-stage basic division. This entailed an uncontrolled increase in territorial divisions. In practice, some areas of social and economic life exceeded the possibilities of dealing

¹⁵ J. Służewski, *Końcowy etap reformy rad narodowych i terenowych organów administracji państwowej*, «NP» 31.7-8/1975, s. 935 [in:] Siarkiewicz K., *Trzeci etap reformy terenowych organów władzy państwowej i administracji w PRL*, «PiP» 30.6/1975, s. 5-19.

¹⁶ M. Kiełczewka Zaleska, *Dotychczasowy rozwój lokalnej sieci osadniczej a reforma administracyjna wsi z 1973. Na przykładzie powiatów gorlickiego i żyromińskiego*, Przegląd Geograficzny 1974, Tom XLVI, zeszyt 2. PWN, Warszawa 1974.

with them within certain communes (for example, geodetic matters). Due to these needs, district offices resembling poviats were established. Lack of qualified staff, technical facilities, and in particular the lack of funds for the creation of appropriate infrastructure in communes meant that they were deprived of many competences which were handed over to laypeople. Perhaps some centers were the basis for the creation of new voivodeships, but many new, small voivodeships, in the face of the impending economic crisis, had no chance to create foundations for the new regions¹⁷.

There is no clarity how much the economic crisis influenced the implementation of the assumptions of the 1972-1975 reform, and to what extent the reform contributed to the deepening of the crisis. The Act of 26 May 1978 on the national councils attempted to institutionalize and introduce some kind of centralization, the forms of social control. The need to reactivate the authentic local government in Poland began to be clearly spoken of in the mid-80s. Ultimately, only the discussions held in the 1980s and the liberalization of the political system began to pave the way for the return of the concept of the local self-government. However, two different notions emerged in these discussions. One referred to the idea of local self-government in the classic sense, whereas the other one opted for maintaining the existing system of national councils, taking into account its subsequent modifications. The proponents of the first group believed that local self-government was not only decentralizing the state administration and handing it over to the local authorities, but also socializing the local authority and empowering the local community. The second group was convinced of the indivisibility of the national interest in comparison to other local goals, hence the national representatives could serve both at the central and local level.

In 1981 Polish Economic Association (Polskie Towarzystwo Ekonomiczne), which was responsible for the preparation of the local-government reform programme stated that the local administration was

¹⁷ Z. Leoński, *System organizacji i funkcjonowania terenowych organów przedstawicielskich i organów administracji państwowej PRL*, Warszawa-Poznań 1989, p. 14.

not effective due to lack of demarcation between central and local institutions. Two years later the Act of 22 July 1983¹⁸ on the system of national councils and local self-government was an attempt to reach a compromise, which in the end, turned out to be only a propaganda procedure. It was not defined which of the tasks of the national councils would serve to implement the idea of the self-government. Even in 1986 when the parliament passed an act amending some of the existing acts regulating the functioning of local organs of state authority and administration, the commune did not obtain the status of a local self-government. If it had been successful, the authorities would have been forced to treat it as a relatively independent corporation of public law with its own subjectivity, separate from the state. Only in the era of the great transformations of the 90s this situation actually changed. After all, 1981 could be described as a breakthrough in articulating political postulates, including those concerning self-governance. It should be highlighted that the activity of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity" contributed to this. During the 1st National Congress of Delegates in September 1981, it was stated that the Union demanded local and democratic reforms at all levels of management and a new socio-economic plan.

In February 1989, the Committee became a party to conduct talks with the authorities. The postulate's aim was to create territorial self-government in administration units. It was gaining importance in the programmes of the opposition circles. The local government's commission operated until the end of 1989, and its primary task was to prepare for the possibility of negotiations with the authorities. The basic postulates included as follows: „a) The focus should be placed on restoring city self-governance and municipalities. (...) Voivodeships will not have legal personality or their own property. (...) It is necessary to reject the Stalinist principle of a unified state power; b) restoring local self-government requires empowering cities and

¹⁸ Act of July 22, 1983 on the system of national councils and local self-government (Ustawa z 22 lipca 1983 r. o systemie rad narodowych i samorządu terytorialnego), source: <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19830410185>,

communes. (...) Democratic electoral ordinance. (...) Having their own executive bodies. (...) Communal property. (...) Freedom to determine the ways of carrying out tasks. (...) Limiting the interference of superior bodies; c) The development and implementation of a new systemic concept of local self-governments required creating such institutional forms that would ensure the independent environment to have a real influence on the adopted solutions. Experience showed that the state administration itself was not capable of carrying out reforms. In the era of great transformations of the 90s, the establishment of a local government in 1990 became one of the most important decisions taken in order to transform the system of the Republic of Poland.¹⁹

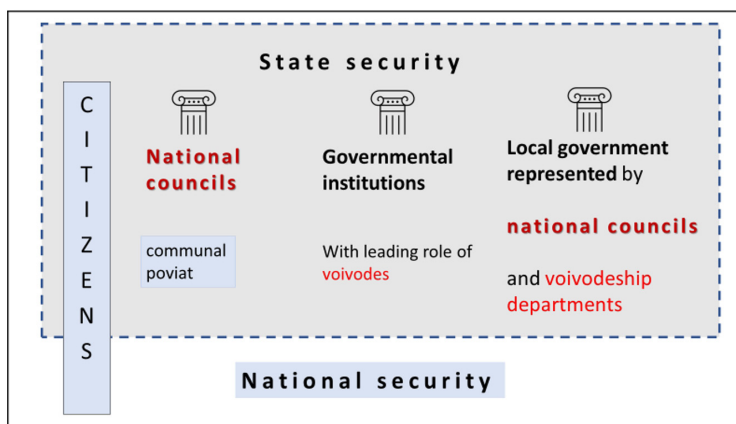
In 1990, one of the most successful local government reforms was conducted. It resulted in the so called Package of Acts, which consisted of the Act of May 10, 1990; the regulations introducing the Act on the local government and the Act on local government employees²¹, as well as the Act of March 8, 1990 on the commune local government²². On 27 May 1990 completely free and democratic elections to the 2383 commune councils were conducted. It should also be explained that they replaced national councils. Professor Jerzy Regulski, the contemporary senator and government representative in charge of implementing this reform said: "In 1989 nobody in the country had the knowledge about the idea of a local government – neither the authorities of the Polish People's Republic, nor the opposition, which was not prepared to take over the authority".

The model of change within the Polish local government

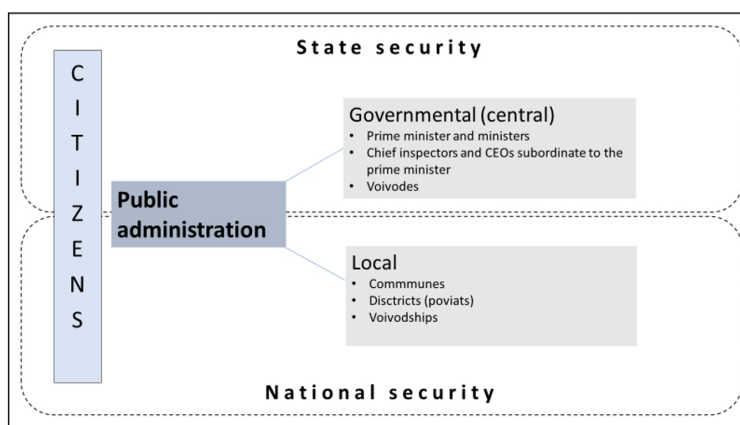
Local government could be treated as a system. It consisted of the following elements: local administration organs, normative acts and building complexes (material back-up), local people and all interest that they had. The system was hierarchically ordered, as its elements were interdependent on each other. There was a close dialogue with the

¹⁹ A. Gołębiowska, B. Zientaski, *Funkcjonowanie samorządu terytorialnego – uwarunkowania prawne i społeczne*, Kancelaria Senatu, Warszawa 2016.

external environment of the system, the most important elements of which were central administration bodies. During the Cold War era the idea of local self-government was distorted as a result of domination of the state factor over the national one. The diagram presented below, reflects the organization of the local administration in the communist Poland (1) and the transformed model of the public administration created in 1990 (2).



Own study: The model of state administration in relation to the state security and national security (1).



Own study: The model of public administration in relation to the state security and national security (2).

With reference to the model number 1 it should be noticed that *National councils* appears in two pillars of organization: as a single pillar named *national councils* and as a representative body of the local government. Additionally, voivodes and voivodeship departments as a central administration organs are located in two pillars. It shows that the state, as a team of state institutions, played the major role in everyday civic life. The only sign of presence of the local community in the political administrative system can be observed in the established organs at the communal and district territorial level. In fact, people should have had an opportunity to have their interests represented through the local institutions, but in reality they stayed under the control of national councils, whose members were gathered among the most eager supporters of the communist party.

The need for change in the 70s, XX century was realized among the communist elites of Poland, which was inspired by Moscow. It should be highlighted that the level of servility of the contemporary Polish politicians were different. Stanisław Kania said "(...) Do not believe those, who say *what could have I done, it didn't lie in my hands (...)* . Obviously Breżniew was preaching and scolding me multiple times (...), however it was not that I could not convince him, trying to explain certain issues, offer some beneficial solutions – in other words that nothing depended on me²⁰."

The conviction about the necessity of change was expressed and transformed into centralized management style. The transformation of the management process, which theoretically was based on forecasting threats related to the process of changes, in practice was carried out through the expansion and restructuring of administrative solutions. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* – this slogan was accurate. It was often the case that the cost of administrative changes, which included personal shifts or even buildings' alteration, exceeded the value of potential benefits coming from them. There is a difficulty in measuring the value of the changes implemented, as they may not only be material, but intellectual and/or emotional. According to the Kurt Lewin model of change, all behaviours are the result of a combination of driving and restraining forces. Those forces have completely opposite directions, however they are equally important when it comes to actions

to be taken. Therefore, the authorities were seeking to achieve certain results in two ways. One was to strengthen the driving forces, and the other to limit the restraining forces. Nevertheless, they had to be aware that too much strengthening of the driving forces may have resulted in a significant increase in the restraining forces, which may have made it impossible to achieve the chosen goal. The change is a phenomenon that causes different reactions in people. Most of them naturally react reluctantly when someone tries to impose something on them. This is, of course, one of the theories, as some researchers believe that there are changes that people do not feel resistance to, but even strive for them. It's also worth noticing that during the process of change, the above-mentioned forces: driving and restraining, are equally strong. However, it is more effective, in the long run, to strive for change by reducing the negative impact of the latter.

The model number 2 depicts the situation of the administration after the local government reforms in 1990. Some changes in 5 major areas were introduced at that time, namely:

- Politics: free and democratic elections were conducted;
- Authority: a local government was isolated, in which the inhabitants creating the community had a relatively independent power;
- Property: due to the reform, the communes received properties, hence it was first major quasi-privatization. Before 1990, local governments did not have legal personalities, so they could only manage state assets;
- Finances: communes were given their own budget;
- Personnel: local governments were given government officials occupying the positions in public administration²¹.

The changes concerning administration were about the process of decentralization, deconcentration and devolution. The competences and privileges within decentralization were statutorily given over by the central organs to the unsubordinated subjects, namely local governments. Deconcentration²² in Poland had an internal character. What is more, it can also be characterized as direct, which means that the tasks were given over down within the same administrative structure. The example of which can be giving ministerial powers to voivodes.

Deconcentration through indirect means was also conducted, which resulted in establishing government agencies, such as Industrial Development Agency. The process of deconcentration was accompanied by giving over the legislative competences, however not the right of scrutiny. Devolution is a form of decentralization, which made local governments eligible to decide about the tax rates and the ways of using financial resources, as well as the competences in the field of healthcare. This process also involved giving over the legislative and scrutiny competences²³. Devolution represented the strongest form of decentralization and was also connected with the transfer or shift of the portfolio of authority to the local governments²⁴.

Socio-political processes of the transformation period in Poland were complex and almost unpredictable. It resulted from the richness of different relations, however not from the lack of determinism whatsoever. The lack of control over the professionalism of the administration personnel did not allow to determine the conditions of the initially taking place changes. As a consequence, there was no chance of isolating the space that would allow to determine all the variables within the system and state structure being created. This is the reason why after 1989 the political area in Poland was not coherent, i.e. it consisted of many different groups from the side of those who were giving authority, as well as those who were taking it over. As a result, new area of authority couldn't be fully directed at democracy, and at the same time all the activities could not lead to the definitive severance with single-party *PRL* reality.

In the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 the local government was regulated in a manner unknown to the previous constitutions. Due to the new constitution, the principle of local self-government and decentralization of public authority acquired the rank of the main principle of the system expressed in Chapter I, entitled „Rzeczpospolita” (Articles 15 and 16). The significance of this classification was manifested in the fact that in these principles other constitutional norms were anchored. It should be explained that they defined the features of a given constitution and expressed basic constitutional values. According to Art. 15 sec. 1, the territorial system of the Republic of Poland ensures the decentralization of public authority. Furthermore, Art.

16 sec. 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland contains the rule stating that “local government participates in the exercise of the public authority. The local government performs a significant part of public tasks on its own behalf and under its own responsibility”.

The Constitutional Tribunal claimed that „all tasks of local self-governments are public tasks in the sense that they serve to satisfy the collective needs of local communities, in the case of their own tasks, or the whole society organized in the state, as in the case of commissioned tasks”. What is more, the tasks performed by the local self-governments “have the character of a state function understood as a universal organization of public authority, and therefore should be subject to the constitutional rigours for the performance of the state functions. In particular, they have to comply with the fundamental principles of a democratic state ruled by law, which means that when carrying out their tasks, they should act not only within the framework of statutes, but also in accordance with the elementary principle of legality, supplementing and specifying the principle of a democratic state ruled by law - on the basis of legal provisions. Moreover, just like any other state organ, their basic duty was to obey the law of the Republic of Poland. It would be unacceptable that in a democratic state ruled by law, public tasks, which constitute main part of the state authority, and at the same time refer to the relations between the institutions of power and citizens, are subject to varying rules of law and legality. Depending on the legal nature of the entity competent to exercise them.” These views remained fully valid also under the 1997 Polish Constitution.²⁰

Summary

To conclude, it should be stated that during the first period of the People’s Poland, the ruling communist camp did not entirely disclose its political programme and the systemic vision of the state it was building. This vision focused on the leading role of the party, as the fore-

²⁰ Constitution of Polish Republic of April 2, 1997 (Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 r.), source:<https://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/polski/kon1.htm>

front of the communist revolution. It consisted of a single organization of the state power, concentrated in the councils (soviets) of workers, peasants and soldiers, operating in Russia since the 1917 revolution. The participation of citizens in the life of local community was implemented through the management within the framework of national councils, whose main task was to strengthen the idea of communism, rather than to realize the needs of the local community. The concept of public administration was trialistic, which was a reference to the system of the Second Polish Republic. Then, authorities poured new content into the old organizational forms. This metaphor corresponds closely to reality. Despite maintaining many old forms, the moment of liberation was a revolutionary turning point, from which the development of a completely new type of state, contrary to the old one, began. The old forms served purposes quite the opposite to the previous ones.

According to the classic concepts of the process of changes in the organization, it can be assumed that the system's environment was relatively stable and the changes were the consequence of synergy, routine and rationality. In fact, Poland's membership of the communist bloc was the result of the decisions of Yalta conference, and therefore its natural consequence. However, it was also necessary to find an institutional solution that, despite the revolutionary nature of the changes, would give the citizens a common sense of security. Therefore, first it was decided to adopt the traditional ideas of self-government, but in such a form that would give the dominance of the ruling party. The division between the national and the state security was clear, as the local interest was realized only on the condition of being politically correct. The question about the actual support for the realization of the goals of the communist party, understood as strengthening the "state security idea" remains still open. The integrity of research, the perspective of the understanding of the „national security" concept at that time should be taken into account. Did communist officials consider stabilizing the communist system as the only guarantor of security against bloodshed and the threat of the civil war? To what extent were there any forces that held back local government organization changes within the administrative system? The answer to these questions should be based on security studies, as well as sociology and the politics of historical memory.

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