



BETWEEN SELF-GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT – THE AUXILIARY ENTITIES OF GMINAS

JAROSŁAW WOJTAS

WSB University in Torun, Poland

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to examine the potential of auxiliary entities of gminas in the context of their usefulness from the point of view of the process of implementation of participatory management tools. The District Councils, the auxiliary entities of the Gmina of the City of Toruń, were the subject of the study. The analysis was carried out using the institutional and legal method. They were examined in terms of their competences, principles for appointment and opportunities for using them to reinforce the participatory processes, such as legislative initiatives, public consultation or a participatory budget. The presented recommendations relate mainly to the problem of superficiality of the auxiliary entities and the resulting consequences. This article presents the legal status as at 22 February 2017.

ARTICLE INFO

Available online: 25 April 2017

Keywords:
public management,
participatory management,
democracy.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic development of urbanisation, which can be observed in all corners of the globe, has made urban organisms to become democratic centres of the modern world. A lot points to the fact that its fate in the 21st century rests on the shoulders of city managers. As a result of the crisis of legitimacy of authority, both at state and local level, the cities have found themselves in need of creating a new model, not so much of administration, as of management and participation in its processes.

As a consequence of the Velvet Revolution and the break-up of the block division of the world, the third wave of globalisation has also reached Central and Eastern Europe. With it came crisis of the institution of representation, key to the model of authority shaped in the course of the history of Western civilization. The introduction of participatory tools was an attempt to respond to its symptoms. Their effectiveness

and universal nature aroused the confidence of the societies, whether in Porto Alegre or in Poland. The auxiliary entities of gminas make it possible to increase the participation of citizens in decision-making at local level. Remaining at the same time a part of the participatory instrumentation and, on the other hand, working to reinforce its tools. The District Councils, the auxiliary entities of the Gmina of the City of Toruń, were studied to answer the question about their role. They were analysed in the perspective of the principles for their appointment, their competences and their support in the context of related participatory tools. A number of important questions have been raised: Are the competences transferred to the auxiliary entities in Toruń sufficient? Is it that their scope translates into turnout in the election to the District Councils, shaping their image as a result of the attitude of local media, and finally the negotiating power in relations with officials, councilors and city authorities? Answers to these questions are the diagnosis on the basis of which the author has attempted to find a remedy for the present situation.

THEORETICAL NOTES

The city has been the subject of research of economy and management science from the very beginning of the existence of this field. The Antiquity's works focused their attention on the issue of management (Sedlacek, 2013). Former metaphors, which today function as scientific categories, refer to urban space. The market itself is the determination of a place where the trade took place. It was in the cities that the largest number of economic entities, transactions being the subject of interest of economists, concentrated. Space was probably the first factor they drew attention to. Nowadays, many key questions concern aspects being the subject of studies of economic science: what makes one city more attractive than others, how the neighbourhoods of wealth and the enclaves of poverty are created, or even why the prices of real estate vary so much within one city organism (Sokołowicz, 2016). The studies on the management of cities are the cornerstone of the increasingly popular urban studies dominated by managerial issues. Therefore, it should be stressed that not solely. The city is also an object of interest of political science.

The cities are studied by political scientists in many aspects, for instance, in the context of transitions. This is due to the fact that one of the most important reforms of the political system in Poland concerned, indeed, the local self-government. The majority of substantive decisions concerning the daily life of state citizens are made at the self-government level, in the local environment. However, the decentralisation of authority in the spirit of subsidiarity, calling for the implementation of tasks at the lowest level possible, as close to the citizen as possible and the new public governance (Gawłowski, 2016), has not solved the pressing problems (Król, 2015).

The self-government election, although seemingly the most important from the point of view of the citizen, has enjoyed the lowest turnout for years. Even superficial reading of magazines, online forums or a review of other articles on local politics raises concerns. Why is this happening? The gmina offices provide a secure career stronghold

for political activists supporting the local authority. A workplace that is not subject to market situation but political circumstances. The process of selecting local authority is far more brutal than the parliamentary or presidential election. This, in turn, raises questions about the political culture, the leadership model or, finally, the distribution of authority, and with it the development of the subjectivity and the possibility of the citizens' participation. Oligarchical trends are particularly evident when they become the residents' own experience.

CITY: A PLACE OF BIRTH AND DEATH OF DEMOCRACY?

The Athenian democracy, which is one of the pillars of European identity, was born in the cities. That is also where key political terms, used today by scholars, were forged. Benjamin Barber emphasised the importance of cities for the development of democracy, highlighting its timelessness: "*The extraordinary history of cities has come full circle. In the polis, a centre of urban nature, humanity has begun its march towards politics and civilization, as it was the incubator of democracy*" (Barber, 2016). But it is not to be forgotten that cities are also the cradle of ochlocracy, gerontocracy and tyranny.

An analysis of the processes taking place in the modern world reveals that democracy, in its liberal form, is going through a deep crisis. Trust in the elites governing the states and the level of participation in the elections is falling, whereas the wave of demagogic extremism is intensifying. In July 2016, when as a result of a referendum commissioned by Prime Minister David Cameron, the British society manipulated by Nigel Farage decided to leave the European Union, it turned out that even the tools of participatory democracy could serve its weakening. And while the supporters of staying in the EU won in the cities, the wave of dissatisfaction (Makowski, 2016), reinforced by demagogues, could not have been stopped.

It should be noted that in countries where the consensual model of exercising authority has blurred the gap between political entities, societies are trying to find a space where the right of choice will not be constrained by dominant entities. A substantialist attribute of democracy is the existence of choice between alternative, and not identical, variants of the solution to a given problem (Mouffe, 2015). However, the consensus on solutions within the free market economy and liberal democracy has significantly reduced the possibility of adjusting the economic policy and measures determining the level of existence and life chances of societies (Mouffe, 2008).

PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

The participatory management, in its current form, is a mechanism derived from the enterprise sector. They were introduced to encourage, more effectively, as many people as possible to become involved in the decision-making processes. For many years, managers have been observing that increasing the participation of a wide representation of the entity's staff has a positive impact on its development. This allows to transform them in line with the expectations of owners, managers and employees, and thus significantly raise its efficiency. The participatory management gained in some circles such an overwhelming popularity that it is regarded as a universal model, which boundaries should be moved as far as possible. The Total Participation Management has become almost a kind of fashion (Stocki, et al., 2008).

The participatory management includes a number of inviolable principles. Attention should be drawn to the fact that participation cannot be limited only to presenting the managers' decision to their subordinates. It should not be also a non-authentic form of legitimacy of controversial or unfavourable decisions to one of the parties. The properly carried out process of implementing the participatory management must be based on the efficient flow of accurate information on key topics, such as the entity's economic condition, the planned evolution or the strategy of its development. But before including the employees in these tasks, they must be properly prepared, trained in such a way as to know the capabilities and limitations resulting from the economic and legal situation, applicable procedures, standards, etc. The process of inclusion in the decision-making may take place in small steps, from less important to strategic ones.

The successful participatory management had to persuade the representatives of public administration to a deeper reflection on the use of this mechanism in the city management process. The rapid development of urbanisation, the increase in the number of agglomerations and the need for mechanisms contained in the idea of *Smart City* persuaded the self-government officials to take advantage of the tools resulting from the participatory forms of corporate governance. A number of actions aiming at the professionalisation and the introduction of the executive management style were taken to optimise the functioning costs of self-governments and to adapt the principles of operation of the public sector to market realities. The consequence of this process was the emphasis on standards, rules and measures relating to the control of outlays and procedures for raising quality standards. Preferences for private property, competition in providing services and outsourcing their execution outside the administrative structures were introduced to decentralise hierarchical bureaucratic structures (Nowakowska & Przygocki, 2016).

The political transformation in Central and Eastern Europe enabled the transition from the previously preferred authoritarian forms to more liberal and democratic ones. The increase in satisfaction of inhabitants, the level of identification with the city and, finally, the big savings of funds wasted for removing the effects of vandalism, the level of which decreases with the increase in the sense of responsibility for the place

of residence, meant that the interest in participation grew. Also, the process of Europeanisation of public life and the disappearance of organisational culture characteristic of the previous system created a favourable ground for the management called *governance*.

The globalisation and the accompanying dynamic evolution of economic, political and social processes caused fundamental changes in the field of *governance* and public space management. Both globally and locally, horizontal network relations appeared in place of hierarchical *governing* structures. The concept of government was replaced by the term *governance* that better reflects the sense of current changes. It more adequately reflects the nature of public management in the perspective of political science. Jakub Potulski accurately summarised the essence of the discussion on this change: "*The discourse around the concept of governance is (...) an attempt to capture the multi-level and multifaceted phenomenon of governance in a world characterised by globalisation, the development of transnational institutions and movements as well as the changing role of the nation state and moving the centre of authority from government institutions to other entities*" (Potulski, 2015).

The distinction made by Potulski is particularly important on the basis of the language. The subject of considerations of the article, in the light of economic theory, is called the *participatory management*, but in the context of political science it is *governance*, which entails serious consequences. Managerial successes are a consequence of, among others, a change in the language used to depict the reality. The substantial aspect of public space is the nature of property: it cannot be commercialised or appropriated because then it will cease to be a public space. It is about the internalisation of property, the effect of which is to make everyone feel like its co-owner, to take responsibility for it and devote time and attention in the same way he or she cares about private property.

METHOD

The auxiliary entities of gminas were subject to various analyses. They were examined from the point of view of their role in the self-government system (Jarosz, 2014), in the context of the implementation of city management rules (Swianiewicz, et al., 2013) and in the perspective of local studies (Wojtas, 2014). On the other hand, adopting the political science perspective requires the application of orientation characteristic of this scientific discipline, namely an ontological realism and epistemological institutionalisation (Marsh & Furlong, 2006). For the purpose of the article, it should be assumed that:

- A relatively large part but not all relations within the subject of the analysis can be directly observed
- Despite this, the consequences of these relations can be seen
- What can be observed can provide a false image of the phenomenon
- There is a reality-appearance dichotomy concerning the evolution of the subject of the analysis
- The subject of the study exists independent of its interpretation but its results may be used for its fluctuation

It seems that nowhere else the subjects of interest of economics and political science are so close, thus for the purposes of this article a definition proposed by David Marsh and Gerry Stoker is adopted: “...the policy includes an unequal division of power in the society, a way of power struggle and the impact on creating and distributing resources, life chances and prosperity” (Marsh & Stoker, 2006).

For the purposes of this article, factors that play a key role in the level of participation of a given entity are indicated. It will concern the authority entities of the gmina, the District Councils in Toruń. The following aspects should be examined:

- the principles for organising the election
- the universal availability of a right to vote
- the availability of a right to candidacy
- terms of office
- the possibility of dismissal during the term of office
- the scope of possibility of support for candidates
- the legislative competences going beyond the individual ones
- the budgetary competences
- the opinion-making competences

The subject of the analysis are documents regulating the principles of functioning of the District Councils and the context of their formation. They will be presented against the public consultation report, information obtained during the meeting of the Toruń City Council Committee and from press releases.

RESULTS

In the light of the analysis of the resolutions of the Toruń City Council concerning the competences and principles of functioning of the auxiliary entities, the main aspects of their appointment, functioning and competences were presented.

Table 1. Appointment of the District Council

Who is appointing the council?	Residents at the meeting on the day designated by the representative of the city president for the election of district councils in the number of 150, or 100 at a second date.
Where is the council appointed?	At a school or other public place, accessible to the disabled, designated by the electoral representative
When can the council be appointed?	Once every four years, in the middle of the term of office of the Toruń City Council, on the date designated by the representative

Source: A template statute of the District Councils. Own elaboration based on the Annex entitled “The electoral law on the elections to the District Councils of the City of Toruń to the Statute and Resolution No. 212/16”.

A serious shortcoming of a resolution regulating the appointment term of the District Councils is its limitation only to the date indicated by the representative. In 2012, the lack of possibility of changing it or repeating the election on another day led to a fiasco due to non-substantive reasons (Wojtas, 2013). A very low barrier was set in terms of the number of people attending the election meeting. 150 people are enough to bring the citizens' legislative initiative or initiate public consultation. The second approach, set at the same place and time, requires the attendance of only 100 people. But even such a low number was an impenetrable barrier in almost half of the districts (Gierdys, 2016).

Table 2. Electioral rights and mandate

Who has the right to vote?	Residents registered for permanent or temporary residence.
Who has the right to candidacy?	Residents registered for permanent or temporary residence. The obligation to make the residence address public took effect from 2016.
Is there a limit to the number of terms of office?	No, there is not.
Does the statute provide for the possibility of expiration of the council member's mandate?	There is no such possibility (except for death or as a result of legal consequences).

Source: "A template statute of the District Councils" as amended in 2016.

The authors of the resolution concerning the appointment of the District Councils have appointed, in a relatively broad way, a group of people who have the right to vote. People, who could not identify themselves on the basis of a document with entered place of residence within the district, were allowed to make a statement in which they confirmed the address. It was sufficient to cast a vote. The right to candidacy was granted to everyone who collected at least fifteen signatures and submitted them in the City Council Office before the deadline expired. Since 2016, the candidates' residence addresses have started to be publicly known by being displayed in a polling place. On the one hand, this act seemed to be on the borderline of the violation of their privacy, and on the other hand, it made it possible to eliminate a person who would provide a false address within the district. The function of the council member can be performed repeatedly, as no possibility of expiring the mandate was envisaged, for example, due to frequent absences. The number of terms of office remained unlimited.

Table 3. Competencies of the District Councils after the changes in 2016.

<p>Representing and expressing the needs of the citizens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organising the citizens' activities for the local community for the common good, both material and spiritual; - giving opinions on the draft resolutions of the City Council concerning the district; - issuing recommendations on local matters to the City Council, the City President and organisational entities of the gmina; - submitting draft resolutions concerning district matters to the City Council; - presenting, in agreement with the chairman of the relevant City Council committee, problems of the local community at the meetings of a problem committee concerned; - issuing opinions on motions and complaints of district residents at the request of the City Council, the Mayor of the City or the applicant; - giving opinions on local investment projects planned in the city budget
--	--

Source: "A template statute of the District Councils. Own elaboration based on the Statute and Resolution No. 212/16."

The analysis of documents regulating the competences of the District Council clearly indicates that no significant changes occurred since their establishment. It should be noted that the auxiliary entities in Toruń, in the present form, are primarily of representative nature. Their competences go slightly beyond those held by every citizen of Toruń. The number of people who can sign the support for a candidate for the council has increased. Premises, where the election is held, must be accessible to the disabled. The scope of giving opinions on the investment projects is clarified.

DISCUSSION

In the light of the results presented, it is necessary to answer a number of questions. Do the auxiliary entities of gminas, in this case the District Councils, and if so, to what extent, strengthen the participatory processes? Are they capable of doing so at all? It should be noted that the causal relation between their action and activity in terms of the implementation of participatory tools cannot be observed. The report on studies prepared by the Stabilo Foundation states that only 5% of the respondents indicated the District Council as a source of knowledge about the issues concerning the participatory budget model in Toruń (Gołębiewski, 2016). This was despite the fact that they organised training on writing proposals and also assisted individual authors in collecting signatures of support as well as removing formal and substantive errors (Wojtas, 2016). Initiating the public consultation looked even worse. Even the proposal from the autumn of 2016 for the public consultation on the statute of the council was rejected. In the light of the analysis, a thesis presented in this article has been

reviewed negatively. As far as theory is concerned: no improvements in terms of participative tools have been identified. As for practice: as many as six out of thirteen District Councils failed to be elected for the 2016-2020 term of office (Tokarczyk, 2016).

Drawing from the achievements of the theory of institutional economics, it can be stated that the dysfunctions that can be observed are similar to the phenomenon of pursuing a pension. They can be defined in a synthetic manner as achieving, in this case, political profits that exceed the competitive level. Anders Aslund pointed out that this is related to the transit process. In his opinion, even those representatives of governing authorities in the era of transformation who were moderate supporters of competitive solutions, tried to stop radical reforms. They did this because they learned to use these complications, which translated into, as he put it, large sums of money (Aslund, 2010). In such a situation, the question arises about the existing analogies. The oligarchic tendencies of the authority, even the one manifesting the will of reforms, make it in its best interest to prolong the situation of uncertainty, the complicated procedures and, finally, the overlapping competencies characteristic of the Soviet model of governance. Let us cite by Seymour Lipset that the legitimacy means the ability of the political system to create and maintain the society's belief that the existing political institutions are the best or the most appropriate for the society (Lipset, 1995). In order to maintain their holding, decision makers not so much have to care about the quality of procedures, as to maintain the potentially mistaken conviction of citizens of their validity. The discussion itself may be an opportunity to blur the responsibility for reforming these institutions (Miessen, 2016).

It may not be possible to analyse the process of extending the participation based on the study of the relevant entities, from the point of view of performing a specific metacontrol - the principles of setting the principles dominating the District Councils. However, this does not mean that based on empirical evidence, one cannot attempt to separate the available knowledge of facts from official knowledge: illusory or false information. As a result, recommendations can be made to achieve the desired changes. This activity was led by a distinguished scholar in international urban studies, Manuel Castells (Castells, 1982), and his followers follow in the same direction (Merrifield, 2016). By maintaining diligence in terms of predictive prudence, they can be encapsulated in a few important praxeological postulates. If it is possible to pinpoint the root of the problem, one should try to build participation tools, as if there were no imperceptible hidden barriers. Despite their existence, one should preserve the appearance of ignorance and try to broaden the scope of subjectivity of the citizens and move as far as possible to raise their competences. The study results can affect the subject of cognition. This gives the opportunity to limit the superficiality of the auxiliary entities and, consequently, to increase public confidence and the authentic legitimacy of institutions and participatory mechanisms.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the article was to analyse the usefulness of auxiliary entities of gminas in the scope of implementation of participation management tools on the example of solutions used in Toruń. The examination of their role in shaping the processes of participation in making decisions on public space at the local level. The subject of the study was included in the universal problem of the democratic crisis and the legitimacy of the institution of authority in a global context. In the light of the presented results it should be stated that the District Councils have the potential to support the participatory management, but it is not being used to the anticipated extent.

Referenes:

- Uchwała nr 511/97 Rady Miasta Torunia z dnia 25 czerwca 1997 r. w sprawie powołania Okręgów będących jednostkami pomocniczymi Gminy Miasta Torunia oraz nadania im statutów.
Wzorcowy Statut Rady Okręgu, Załącznik nr 1 do Uchwały nr 372/12 Rady Miasta Torunia z dnia 7 września 2012 r.
Ordynacja Wyborcza do Rad Okręgu Miasta Torunia, załącznik do Wzorcowego Statutu Rady Okręgu z dnia 7 września 2012 r.
Uchwała nr 422/16 Rady Miasta Torunia z dnia 6 października 2016 r. w sprawie zmiany uchwały w sprawie powołania okręgów będących jednostkami pomocniczymi Gminy Miasta Toruń oraz nadania im statutów.
Budżet Partycypacyjny Mieszkańców Torunia. Raport z badania ankietowego dotyczącego podsumowania realizacji dotychczasowych edycji budżetu partycypacyjnego mieszkańców Torunia w ramach projektu „Włącznik Obywatelski”. Filip Gołębiowski, Fundacja Stabilo, Toruń 2016.
Aslund, A. Jak budowano kapitalizm. Transformacja Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej, Rosji i Azji Środkowej, Wyd. Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa 2010.
Barber, B. Gdyby burmistrzowie rządili światem. Dysfunkcyjne kraje, rozkwitające miasta, Wyd. MUZA, Warszawa 2014.
Castells, M. Kwestia miejska, Wyd. PWN, Warszawa 1982.
Gawłowski, R. Bottom-up Integration of Polish Metropolitan Cites, “Torun Social Sciences Review” 1/2016.
Giedrys, W. Podgórz bez Rady Okręgu. Osiedle jak „bez ręki”, Dzień Dobry Toruń
Jarosz A. Jednostki pomocnicze w miastach województwa kujawsko-pomorskiego (in:) Jarosz, A.; Springer, B. Jednostki pomocnicze w polskich gminach. Pozycja, funkcje i wyzwania, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, Zielona Góra 2014.
Kędzia, P., Bezradne Rady Okręgu, Nowości Dziennik Toruński, 17.01.2017.
Król, M. Byliśmy głupi, Wyd. Czerwone i Czarne, Warszawa 2015.

- Lipset, S. M. Homo politicus. Społeczne podstawy polityki, Wyd. PWN, Warszawa 1995.
- Makowski, K. The Inside Story of Brexit Impetus for the Key Event of 2016, "Torun Social Sciences Review" nr 1/2016.
- Marsh, D.; Stoker G. Teorie i metody w naukach politycznych, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2006.
- Merrifield, A. Nowa kwestia miejska, Wyd. PWN, Warszawa 2016.
- Miessen, M. Koszmar partycypacji. Niezależna praktyka, Wydawnictwo Bęc Zmiana, Kraków 2016.
- Potulski, J. Współczesne problemy badawcze w politologii, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2015.
- Mouffe, Ch. Agonistyka. Polityczne myślenie o świecie, Wyd. Krytyki Politycznej, Warszawa 2016.
- Mouffe, Ch. Polityczność. Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej, Wyd. Krytyki Politycznej, Warszawa 2008.
- Sedlacek, T. Ekonomia dobra i zła. W poszukiwaniu istoty ekonomii od Gilgamesza po Wall Street, Warszawa 2015.
- Stocki, R; Prokopowicz, P.; Żmuda G. Pełna partycypacja w zarządzaniu. Tajemnica sukcesu największych eksperymentów menedżerskich świata, Wyd. Wolters Kluwer, Kraków 2008.
- Swianiewicz, P.; Krukowska, J.; Lackowska, M.; Kurniewicz, A. Błędne rondo marginizacji? Jednostki pomocnicze w zarządzaniu dużymi miastami, Wyd. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, Kraków 2013.
- Tokarczyk, M. Na toruńskich osiedlach nie dajemy rady. To zła wiadomość, Gazeta Wyborcza Toruń, 29. 11. 2016.
- Wojtas, J. Demokracja partycypacyjna to przyszłość demokracji jako takiej, (in:) Kwartalnik kultury. Bydgoskie Przedmieście, Berlińska, P. (ed.), Wyd. PSP, Toruń 2016.
- Wojtas, J. Kampania informacyjna „Damy Rady!” i proces wyłaniania Rad Okręgów, organów pomocniczych Gminy Miasta Toruń IV Kadencji, (in:) Współczesne wyzwania administracji rządowej i samorządowej, Plecka D. (ed.) , Wyd. Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2013.