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ACTIVITIES X

Regions as networks. Administration as a tangle of contracts

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are getting closer to the end. It is therefore time to start pulling the various strands together. We already know what regions are, what their specific characteristics are and what public management is and how it has evolved. Today, we will look at regions as networks and see how management in the regions is changing as a result of the implementation of governance.

Let us first start with the concept of civil society that is popular today. As it is argued in the latest literature on the subject - it is not only about citizens with their rights and duties, but in a way about common care for the public interest by means of actions taken by communities of citizens and their organisations. This, in turn, often results in cooperation with the public administration in the implementation of public tasks, as well as with the broadly understood economic sector [**Kusiak-Winter 2022, p. 63 - 65**].

This, in turn, will provide us with the basis for the networks that will emerge, characteristic of governance, in which we will take into account the hierarchy, especially with regard to public administration on the one hand, markets on the other hand and societies (including their organisations) on the third [**Löffler 2009, p. 222**]. As A. Chrisidu-Budnik writes, simple, sectoral mechanisms based on the so-called outsourcing, characteristic for the earlier stage of public management, have been replaced by actions adopted at different levels of government and in different sectors, both multilevel and multidimensional in nature. The above will not happen without the government sector respecting the principle of subsidiarity, allowing, among other things, for broad investments in the development of the potential of the non-governmental and private sector. It is also important not to undermine or reduce the independence of local governments [**Chrisidu-Budnik 2009, p. 168**].

This gives us a picture of network administration. However, it is even more far-fetched to conceive of administration as a tangle of contracts. As J. Supernat points out, this is related to the fact that many contemporary administrative bodies are forced to improve themselves in the sphere of contract management, which, however, falls within the framework of the mentioned networks [**Supernat 2008, p. 168**]. Moreover, in governance not only results but also processes count. It is not without reason that this concept explains the formation and implementation of social policy. For the aim here is, as has in a way been mentioned in previous topics, to identify the most important actors and their roles, as well as to determine how behaviour and interactions affect the provision of public services. Finally, governance is oriented towards the relationship between government and society, while NPM, is in fact, as J.

Supernat writes, a theory of organisation [Supernat 2009, p. 144]. The same author also points out in another publication that the essence of public administration actually requires it to be open twice, i.e. to citizens on the one hand, and to the theory of organisation and management on the other, due to the aim to improve the efficiency of operation [Supernat 2013, p. 118]. In turn, the essence of participatory reforms manifests itself in the somewhat already mentioned inclusion in the decision-making process of both civil servants and customers [Herbut 1999, p. 52] who are, from our perspective, citizens. Privatisation in too extreme a sense, even in the name of improvements in the public sector, if only in the framework of governance, may carry the threat of transforming the public subjective rights of citizens into private subjective rights of citizens-clients, which in fact may give rise not only to retribution, but put into question the continuity of the provision of certain services that are, in a democratic state of law, public tasks that should be carried out regardless of place and time or even economic conditions [Błaś 2013, p. 48].

Let us now translate the previous considerations into the regional arena. As L. Wood notes in his review of one of the existing positions on the market, regional integration has not only resulted in the involvement of politicians of various options, but also no less diverse social actors not directly related to politics. This integration is only slowed down by so-called populist groups reluctant to do so [Wood 2018 no. 17, pp. 529 - 530].

K. Właźlak, on the basis of Polish realities and legal regulations, points to the already mentioned cooperation between entities of different levels, i.e. cooperation between government administration, local government and widely understood social organisations [Właźlak 2010; LEX, accessed: 11.06.2022]. A similar opinion was expressed earlier by M. Kulesza, who treats cooperation between public administration entities and the economic and social sector as one of the most important factors supporting regional development [Kulesza 2000, no. 10, among others pp. 7 - 12].

Naturally, each country has its own specifics in this respect. As we know, we can deal with both autonomous and administrative regions, or to be more precise in the case of Poland and France, self-governing regions. However, cross-sectoral cooperation in governance is nowadays essential for all regions. There may of course be differences between the different legal solutions or the regions mentioned. At European Union level, in a general sense, it is all about the same thing: strengthening the development of the regions and, within them, civil society, and within the latter, improving cooperation between the various actors. In addition to its dynamic development, globalisation is also forcing us to abandon the distances and borders that used to separate societies from their authorities. Within the societies themselves, attempts are being made to bridge prejudices and distances by caring for the common good, which is now increasingly cross-border in nature. What is changing, however, is the scope of their tasks and the range of tools used for their implementation, with fairly measurable effects in terms of their effectiveness.

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