

**Managing Territoriality:  
between centralisation and self-governance.  
Experience from 30 years of the Polish way**

Prof. Mariusz Czepczyński  
Department of Spatial Management  
University of Gdańsk

# The powers and its *depositif*

- (*apparatus*): system of institutions, decisions, laws, moral prepositions and relations established between these elements
- The ultimate aim of administration
  - Effective management
  - Shared responsibilities
  - Long-term (strategic) goals
  - Resilience / adaptability
  - Better quality of life

# Challenges of local administrative systems

- Constant, unpredictable and rapid changes (social, demographic, cultural, legal, technological)
  - Expectations of the managers and the manager
  - Demand for direct public participation
  - Changing stakeholders (new trends, hopes and fears)
  - Migrations (in and out)
  - New media, post-truths and information flows
  - Politics (local, regional, national, European, global)
  - Environmental and climate change
  - Macro and micro-economics
- In result: bigger administrative units could cope better with many of the challenges, but local societies expects even smaller, self-govern units

# Introducing self-government in Poland

- 27 May 1990: introducing self-government gminas
- 1 Jan 1999:
  - 16 voivodeships (provinces): central government-appointed governor - the voivode (a political appointee) + an elected assembly (sejmik), an executive board (zarząd województwa) and its leader (marszałek) chosen by that assembly.
  - 380 powiats (counties or districts), including 66 cities with county status
  - 2477 gminas (communes or municipalities), including 1537 rural, 638 urban-rural and 302 urban
  - optional auxiliary units might be created by gminas (jednostki pomocnicze: sołectwa in rural areas; dzielnice, osiedla in urban), which play a subordinate administrative role.

# Gmina's tasks and obligations

- own tasks, exercised by self-government, which serve to satisfy the needs of the community.
  - compulsory: the municipality cannot decline to carry out the tasks, and must set up a budget to carry them out in order to provide the inhabitants with the basic public benefits
  - optional: the municipality can carry them out in accordance with available budgetary means, set out only to specific local needs (on the gmina's own responsibility and budget).
- commissioned ones: public tasks resulting from legitimate needs of the state, commissioned by central government for the units of local government to implement. The tasks are handed over on the basis of statutory by-laws, charters and regulations, or by way of agreements between the self-government units and central-government administration.

# Recent governmental trends

- growing bottom-up demand for self-governance
- lost / gained trust
- easy / difficult EU funds
- depopulation and shrinking communes
- mobilities, flows, linkages and alliances
- globalisation, internationalisation and competitiveness
- rise of new functional regions (not only metropolitan)
- local identities and fears
- new right and new rights towards central control