
"Public Administration : local elections in 2014", Danuta Plecka, Zuzanna Osmólska, Toruń 2015 : [recenzja]

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Danuta Plecka and Zuzanna Osmólska (eds.), *Public Administration. Local elections in 2014*, Adam Marszałek Publishing House, Toruń 2015, pp. 300.

Reviewer: Aleksandra Hoppe (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland)

The joint publication edited by Danuta Plecka and Zuzanna Osmólska entitled “Public Administration. Local elections in 2014” is still a current experience in 2016. The reviewed book, which was published last year, is the latest in the “Local government in the 21st century” series, which was published by Adam Marszałek Publishing House under the direction of Professor Joanna Marszałek-Kawa from Toruń.

This dissertation fits perfectly in the character of the entire series. Furthermore, it stands out not only because of a theoretical overview of issues related to the recent municipal elections in Poland, but also drawing reader’s attention to their practical dimension. This joint publication is a continuation in the substance of Adam Marszałek Publishing House series. What is more, even its form and design is well elaborated with the consistency to the whole book series.

The scientific publication edited by Danuta Plecka and Zuzanna Osmólska consists of 21 articles and as the editors indicate in the introduction *it is the result of successive thoughts and analyses on public administration*. Moreover, it can be stated that this book comprehensively treats the issue of self-government in Poland in relation to the elections taking place in 2014. The publication contains theoretical issues as well as an overview of news or key problems associated with the recent municipal elections, but also a thorough analysis of specific cases and the results obtained in the electoral process in selected Polish regions. However, reaching for the book one should not be influenced only by the title of this item (“Public Administration. Local elections in 2014”). The texts enclosed in this publication represent a wider recognition of the problems of public administration and self-government. Above all, the authors of the articles are considering, inter alia: issues related to the past experiences of local elections, broadly defined democracy, current legal regulations, the importance of the polls and electoral mechanisms, the role of political marketing, the problem of corruption, growing popularity of participatory budget or relationships between municipal elections and the activities of political parties. Scientists present interesting and bold conclusions, accurately indicate errors spotted in both polarization and electoral process, and also try to inspire the thoughts or discussion about the eponymous public administration.

Further considerations on the publication should be preceded by a short presentation of its editors. Professor Danuta Plecka is an employee in the Department of Political System of Poland at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, where she conducts research in the field of the origins, evolution, structure and functioning of Polish political system with particular emphasis on the period after 1989. In addition, she also serves as a Deputy Chief Editor of the quarterly entitled “Athenaeum. Polish Political Science Studies”. While MA Zuzanna Osmólska is an active employee of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, which means that she can work closely with Professor Danuta Plecka. Both editors have organized scientific conferences, which subject was associated with public administration. After gaining extensive experience in this field, they have taken the initiative to create this joint publication, to which they invited 21 researchers from the whole country to participate in.

It seems that it is rather impossible to fully discuss the dissertation especially so extensive and complex without a summary presentation of the content. In the case of the book “Public Administration. Local elections in 2014” it is sufficient to list the authors and titles of their articles, because they fully reflect presented content.

It contains articles such as: *The right to self-government as a basic principle of the democratic lawful state functioning* (Agnieszka Lipska-Sondecka), *Hopes, expectations, discussions – local elections 1990-2014* (Beata Tomaszewska-Hołub), *Controversies considering the election system and election mechanisms in the local self-governance units* (Beata Słobodzian), *Political radicalism and local government* (Adam Hołub), *Exit poll – opinion polls on the forgery trail* (Janina Kowalik), *The importance of political manipulation in local elections* (Katarzyna Miętkiewicz), *The political marketing process. Local elections 2014 – selected aspects* (Małgorzata Kmak), *Electoral corruption* (Jacek Bil), *The local elections in 2014 in the works of the polish national Parliament* (Krzysztof Makowski), *Does participatory budget need the law?* (Piotr Pięta), *Participatory budgets and local political manifestos* (Mariusz Popławski), *Polish civil society in local elections. Toruń’s campaign analysis* (Zuzanna Osmólska and Olga Wadowska-Wróbel), *Elections to the City Council of Szczecin in 2014 – strategy, tactics and results of the committees* (Krzysztof Kowalczyk), *How to win or lose? Local residential elections for the city of Szczecin in 2014* (Łukasz Tomczak), *Electoral trends in region of Zachodniopomorskie* (Natalia Glińska), *Specificity of Podkarpackie Voivodeship in the light of the results to local government elections in 2014* (Przemysław Maj), *The consequences of the introduction of single-member*

districts in selected cities of Lower Silesia (Robert Alberski), *Analysis of local elections in the municipality of Dąbrowa Górnicza in the period 1990-2014* (Bożena Wroniszewska), *Political parties in the local elections in the region of Opolskie* (Ewa Ganowicz), *Single-member legislative districts as a novum in local elections to municipal councils in 2014 – based on a case study of Mielno Municipality* (Ewa Włodyka) and *The Dzierzgoń's elite – identification and characteristic of the tested group* (Marzena Piepiórka).

The design of the reviewed book is well considered. What is more, the editors wisely decided to order properly the presented articles in an attempt to get the reader primarily acquainted with the theoretical sphere of the main problem of this publication. In the further parts of the book authors raised selected aspects related to public administration and more specifically these connected to municipal elections in 2014. Articles ending the publication represent an interesting and narrow overview of the electoral process in different Polish regions. The reader may refer to the realities of the local governments of voivodships such as:

Kuyavian-Pomeranian, West Pomeranian, Subcarpathian, Lower Silesian and Opole. The content of the publication enables also the analysis of the results of the 2014 local elections selected and presented by the authors.

Not only the texts' selection and their correct order are the advantages of this book. The editors also took care about the language. It is definitely academic, but at the same time coherent and understandable to any reader. Some articles contain tables and graphs, which clearly present the referred data. The authors do not use them in excess, rather, on the contrary, only when there is a justified need to add them. All these features make the reviewed book accessible and enjoyable for readers interested in the subject of public administration.

To sum up, the reviewed book edited by Danuta Plecka and Zuzanna Osmólska entitled "Public Administration. Local elections in 2014" should definitely be regarded as particularly valuable. Despite the specific nature of the publication, it can be definitely said that it is coherent and properly structured. The authors deal with the current and, at the same time, very important issues, which are clearly and fairly presented. The diversified composition of the team of authors specialized in various disciplines allows for a comprehensive look and the recognition of the problem from many perspectives. Still the most important fact is that the thesis enables and opens further discussion on public administration and local elections. All in all, the reviewed book is an interesting and logically arranged content, which should be widely recommended.