

Summaries of scientific papers of Assoc. Prof. Milena Hristova Stefanova, Doctor Habil, presented for participation in a competition for a professor in Professional field 3.3. "Political Science" (local authority and self-government), declared SG 22/16.03.2021

Summary of the monograph "Comparative Studies of Local Self-Government", Sofia, UPH "St. Kliment Ohridski ", 2021, ISBN 978-954-07-5154-2 ISBN 978-954-07-5155-9 – pdf

The monograph fills a significant gap in Bulgarian science for the study of local government and self-government in municipalities as part of the political system. The focus is on the methodology, methods and the practical application of results from comparative studies of local self-government. This monograph discusses three essential aspects of comparative research on local government. The first is related to the choice of comparison methodology. The second concerns the choice of subject and objects of comparison. The third aspect is probably very important – in addition to the cognitive component, do comparative studies have a practical effect? Do these studies influence the development and reforms of local government models in individual countries? Do comparative studies on a national scale help to improve local government practices? Examples of various comparative studies of local self-government are used to prove the theses in the monograph.

The **first chapter** discusses the issues of the methodology of comparative research of local self-government. The latter are considered as part of comparative political science and in this sense the similarities and differences between the different comparative approaches are systematized. Like any methodology of scientific research, that of comparative research is based on the choice of object and subject of research, the setting of a clearly formulated goal, its operationalization in tasks, formulation of hypotheses. The next step is to choose the appropriate methods to carry out the research. The goal of the research is fundamental. Basic principles of comparative research are presented: comparison of comparable objects, clear formulation of the goal and its conceptual operationalization to unambiguously understandable indicators through which to gather information, and last but not least - the selection of appropriate teams of researchers who will perform field work.

The thesis that there is no universal methodology of comparative research of local self-government, and there cannot be one, has been proved. This is done sequentially by considering various examples of such research in three directions: selection of the subject and objects of research, formulation of objectives and their operationalization and, thirdly, research

methodology. Comparative research has its peculiarities and they provide a special kind of scientific knowledge, as they often become the basis for the development of concepts, classifications and explanations of what is happening.

The **second chapter** traces and outlines the stages of development of comparative research of local self-government in four directions: the first is the inevitable review in the historical context of the development of comparative research of local self-government, the second - the specifics of the institutional approach, the third - post-institutional approaches to comparative research of local self-government, and the fourth - approaches to the study of emerging democracies. The development of comparative research of local self-government is traced in direct connection with the creation of classifications of systems, as well as with the attempts to build new theories. All known classifications of local self-government systems are systematized. During the discussion on the creation of classifications based on comparative studies, special attention was paid to the selection of criteria for comparison and reaching an agreement on the tolerance of the differences observed in the objects belonging to one group.

In the analysis of the approaches for comparative research of emerging democracies, emphasis is placed on the peculiarities of the application of concepts and their operationalization, characteristic of the developed democracies. This kind of comparative study of new democracies has been shown to be progressive.

The **third chapter** is devoted to the role of comparative research of local self-government in practice in international and national contexts. The examples for Bulgaria are comprehensively analyzed. The contribution of comparative research of local self-government to the activities of international organizations such as the Council of Europe, the Committee of the Regions, the World Bank and others has been proven to be the most significant. Apart from the fact that international organizations commission such research, the results are used to initiate reforms, introduce good practices or support development.

Summary of the monograph "Local Government and Local Self-Government", second, revised and supplemented edition, Sofia, UPH "St. Kliment Ohridski ", 2021, ISBN 978-954-07-5153-5 ISBN 978-954-07-5156-6 pdf

The monograph is devoted to the main issues of the theory of local government and local self-government. The exposition follows the logic from the general to the concrete and in

this sense examples are often given mainly from the Bulgarian practice of exercising power in the municipalities. The content is developed in 11 chapters, dedicated to the main theoretical pillars of the study of local government and local self-government. The first chapter gives definitions of the basic concepts: local government, local self-government, decentralization, deconcentration and local independence. The second chapter is dedicated to the municipality in two aspects: 1) as a human community and 2) as an administrative territorial unit. The approaches for forming a municipality, the main tasks of the municipal policy, the concepts for the role of the municipality in the modern process of policy and management at the local level are considered. The process of transformation of the state policy towards the municipalities and the understanding of the role of the municipality in Bulgaria after 1989 is analyzed.

The third and fourth chapters examine in detail the municipal authorities - their definitions, structure, areas of competence, powers and the balance of power resources available to the municipal council and the mayor of the municipality. Special attention is paid to the mutual control between the legislature and the executive at the local level.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the systems known in world practice for the distribution of powers between the legislature and the executive at the local level. "Weak mayor - council", "strong mayor - council", "council - governor" and "commission" are considered as systems for distribution of powers between local authorities.

The sixth chapter provides basic knowledge about the financing of local activities. The principles of financing, the types of local taxes and fees known in the EU countries, the role and importance of the possibility for local authorities to be able to provide funds from their own sources of income, as well as to make tax policy are discussed in detail. The system of financing the local activities in Bulgaria has been subjected to a critical analysis, as well as the possible expenditure activities have been considered. As the main source of additional revenues for the municipal budgets, the management and disposal of municipal property and the opportunities for the municipalities to develop economic activity are analyzed.

The next three chapters of the monograph are devoted to one of the most important problem areas of the theory of local government - the relationship between local and central government and ensuring balance and stability of the government system in the country. A balanced and integrated management system is important in view of the efficiency of providing quality public services for the population and the efficiency of the spent public funds. The

possibilities and mechanisms for horizontal and vertical integration of the control system, as well as the possibilities for control are considered.

The tenth chapter examines in detail the peculiarities of local self-government in large cities, where local democracy is endangered due to the large population, and intra-urban decentralization is introduced as a counteraction and guarantee for democracy's preservation.

The last chapter pays special attention to the forms, mechanisms and importance of civic participation in local self-government. Both the legal norms and their application in practice in Bulgaria are considered.

The conclusion makes it possible to review everything written through the prism of the decentralization process in Bulgaria and the prospects for the coming years.

Challenges of the Implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in Bulgarian Legislation , LEX LOCALIS - JOURNAL OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT, том:Vol. 16, брой:N 2, 2018, стр.:215-227, doi:[https://doi.org/10.4335/16.4.915-927\(2018\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/16.4.915-927(2018))

This article discusses the challenges of improving Bulgarian legislation in terms of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. It proves the necessity to introduce a legal definition of the concept of a “matter of local significance”. In order to ensure the consistent implementation of decentralization it is required to put in writing the rules for how the local and central government should interact. Both the tools as well as the mechanisms which are used in the decentralization process as well as the expansion of local self-government are in need of legal regulation. All of this aims to improve the effectiveness and efficacy of local government.

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING THE ACTIVITIES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST, ПУБЛИЧНИ ПОЛИТИКИ.bg, vol:10, issue:4, 2019, ISSN (online)1314-2313

The paper answers 5 questions about the contemporary understanding of the public interest and proposes a methodology for assessing the activities of the local authorities to protect the public interest in the management and disposal of municipal property. This research seeks to address the question of whether and how public interest is being defended in local

government. There is no doubt that local authorities must work to protect the public interest, but the answer to this is far from easy. The goal is to demonstrate that it is possible to assess the work of public authorities by using the concept of good governance. Although we are talking about a single concept, there are actually different understandings of good governance. Therefore, in order to achieve the goal, we analyze and evaluate existing views on the issue. The choice of principles of good governance that will be the basis of the methodology for assessing the activities of local authorities to protect the public interest is determined by the specifics of local government.

Local Self-Government in Bulgaria, IN: Local self-government in Europe, editors: Brezovnik, B, I.Hoffman, J. Kostrubiec, Publisher Institute for Local Self-Government Maribor Smetanova ulica 30, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia, 2021, pages:23-47, ISBN:ISBN 978-961-7124-00-2 (pdf), doi:<https://doi.org/10.4335/978-961-7124-00-2> .01

This paper, a part of an international comparative study of local self-governement, presents the implementation of the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in Bulgarian legislation after 1991. It briefly follows the historical development of local self-government, the introduction of democratic principles and norms in legislation, constitutional guarantees for local self- government, the sphere of competence of its bodies, protection of local authority boundaries, the structure and functions of local administration, financial sources for local activities, the relation between local and central authorities, local authorities` right to associate, as well as the challenges in front of the implementation of ECLSG principles in Bulgaria.

Summary of paper Decentralization of Public Administration: The "Dead Duck", In: 30 Years of Public Administration Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe, editor Milena Stefanova, publisher: St. Kliment Ohridski University, 2019, pp. 73- 90, ISBN: 978-954-07-4843-6

The process of decentralization of government in Bulgaria is discussed. The main features, achievements and obstacles are outlined. The factors that influence the decision making for decentralization, the results of the decentralization process are analyzed and its importance for improving the efficiency of the state government is proved.

Summary article The Strategic Approach in Management and Disposal of Municipal Property, Where Have We Went? Anniversary collection in honor of Prof. Todor Tanev, editors Elena Kalfova and Simeon Petrov, UPH "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2018, ISBN 978-954-07-4533-6 pp. 66-78

A survey of the experience of 19 municipalities in Bulgaria seeks to answer the question whether a strategic approach to managing and disposing of municipal property is possible. The influence of the "clearly defined political majority" factor in the municipal council in the formulation of policy and the development of a strategy for management and disposal of municipal property is studied. It proves that there is no strategic capacity at the municipal level. The law is implemented formally. It does not create a public environment for the management and disposal of municipal property and does not guarantee the sustainability of good practices.

Summary article Regionalism in the Christian Democratic Value System, Reason, issue 2, 2002, ISSN - 1312-1146

The article examines the prospects for the introduction of regional self-government in Bulgaria in the context of Christian Democratic values and traditions. Assessments of the real state of local self-government and regional policy substantiate the need for the introduction of regional self-government and analyze the advantages and risks of regionalization.

Summary article Criteria for democratization of local government, "Political Studies", issue: 3, 1993, ISSN 0861-4830

The article examines the main legal norms that were introduced in Bulgaria in 1991 in order to ensure democratic procedures and policies at the local level. Special attention is paid to the principles influencing the decentralization process. The process of reforms in local self-government in Bulgaria is analyzed, and prospects for development are outlined.

Summary of the article "Trust in public systems", In: "European values. The new constellation", editor Georgi Fotev, publisher: NBU, 2019, ISBN 978-619-233-065-1, pp. 103-114

The trust of Bulgarian citizens in the public systems of healthcare, education, social security and assistance, through which basic human rights are guaranteed, is reviewed. In addition, trends in trust in the armed forces, police and public administration are analyzed, in as much as security – both national and personal - is a leading European value. The analyzed data is from the fifth wave of the European Values Survey for Bulgaria, conducted in 2018. To outline trends, the results for Bulgaria from previous waves of the survey are used. The data

from these is comparable as the research methodology and methodology are the same. The connection of trust / distrust in public systems with the general picture of trust in general has been proven. The place of trust in the public systems in Bulgaria in relation to the opinion of the citizens from other European countries is outlined.

Summary of a chapter from the collective monograph "Ombudsman" In: "Assessment of the National Integrity System of Bulgaria: National Report 2011", Transparency without Borders, Sofia ISBN: 978-954-2999-02-7

The security of resources and capacity, transparency, independence, responsibility and integrity of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria are analyzed and evaluated in terms of legislation and practice through the application of the methodology of "Transparency International".

Summary of a chapter from the collective monograph "Public Sector" In: "Assessment of the National Integrity System of Bulgaria: National Report 2011", Transparency without Borders, Sofia ISBN: 978-954-2999-02-7

An assessment of the integrity system in the public sector in Bulgaria is made through the application of the methodology of "Transparency International". The provision of resources and capacity, transparency, independence, responsibility and integrity of the public sector are analyzed and evaluated from the point of view of legislation and practice.