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Summary of doctoral thesis

Title: Impact of the number of the local executive tenures on the socio-economic situation of municipalities

In the Polish institutional setting, mayors of municipalities, as directly elected representatives of local communities, are important actors in local development. In recent years, the topic of the number of terms of office they hold has become important. In Poland, the phenomenon of so-called "multi-term mayors" has become common, particularly after the introduction of direct elections of the municipal executive in 2002. Since, as a single-member executive body, they have a strong constitutional position, in 2018, the legislature decided to make a change in the form of abolishing this multicandidacy (limiting the executive to two consecutive terms, which were simultaneously extended to five years). This move has gained both a large number of supporters and opponents, with arguments for and against it but remaining primarily in the layer of theoretical inquiry - empirical research in this area is almost non-existent.

In view of the above, the purpose of the study was to determine whether and to what extent the tenure of the executive body of Polish municipalities affects its socio-economic situation. The fact of a significant legislative change in this area (limiting to two the number of terms of Polish commune mayors) was treated as an opportunity to study the change in the local executive's strategy on how to influence the condition of the communes.

The subject of the study was 133 rural municipalities in Łódź Voivodeship. Several research methods were used in the study, including a review of the literature and legal acts; a quantitative survey, allowing the construction of rankings of the studied municipalities based on indicators of their socio-economic development; a questionnaire survey conducted among 133 mayors; and in-depth interviews with selected ten local government officials.

The research indicated that multivalency in local governments had a moderate but positive impact on the socio-economic situation of municipalities, as revealed in available local data sets. It was further confirmed that, in the absence of a limit on the number of terms of

office, multiple re-election of an executive body strengthens its ability to be elected(s) in the future, to the detriment of potential new candidates. The results, however, did not provide a clear answer to the question of whether the change in the "rules of the game" in the form of limiting the number of terms to two had an impact on changes in the strategies of the incumbent (including multiple-term) mayors in terms of their commitment to municipal development. The answer to this question was decided to require further research over a more extended period since the introduction of significant legislative changes in 2018. The research conducted can also serve as a starting point for similar analyses in a different temporal and spatial scope.

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