

## **SELECTED BARRIERS OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

Contemporary local self-governments exert significant influence on many occurring social, economic and environmental processes, as well as on objects located in the area of communes. They frequently initiate such processes and create these objects. The results of such influence are significant enough to refer to local self-governments as the most important creators of multidimensional evolution in local structures. What is more, the discussed effects often extend, by far, the communal borders and are reflected in transformations of other territorial systems therefore, for this reason, they may be referred to as factors or components of their development. In this perspective it seems founded to present an opinion that they exert an important influence on regional, national or even international transformations.

Such knowledge encourages to focus attention on decision making processes carried out by local authorities, as well as on the effects of these decisions since the structure, directions, scope and also final evaluation of the discussed changes depend on these processes. It mainly refers to decisions resulting in long-term, deep and diversified effects. There are many, elaborated and accepted by science, concepts for decisions' optimization, including these made by public units. Among them an eminent position is taken by strategic management. Additionally, important progress has been made in adapting such management rules for the needs of communes, particularly with reference to their development strategy conceptualization. Therefore, it may be expected that strategic management will spread and become common practice with high standards. Unfortunately, the Author's knowledge and experience provide a multitude of arguments confirming that a real life practice is different. In other words, strategic management of local development by local self-governments, understood in line with the contemporary scientific output, occurs quite rarely. The less often it occurs the smaller social and economic potential a given commune has at its disposal. Such situation results in many negative consequences, among which the most important factors are: lower, than possible to accomplish, efficiency and effectiveness of self-government activities, as well as its non-optimal range, which results in lower speed of local development and supra-local developmental processes.

Therefore, there are justified and substantial reasons to identify barriers occurring on the way to strategic management application in local self-governments. The knowledge in this subject matter, in an objective meaning, is unfortunately missing. However, obtaining it will help in finding theoretical solutions which, after

their practical verification and introducing improvements, will facilitate such management to become common and, in this way, enhance local and supra-local development. The Author focuses his attention on this particular research problem. He aims at the presentation of initial identification results devoted to one of several barrier groups related to strategic management of local development. It was performed by means a research method application consisting in the processing of collected data (e.g. about properties of communes and their authorities, management processes applied in theses communes, several hundreds of local legal acts and recommendations published in literature regarding the discussed type of management) by means of cause-result analysis and logical reduction methods. The representative sample included 100 communes and data referring to them were collected in the period of 1995-2017.

The construction of local development strategic management category requires prior explanation of the local development concept importance since, in spite of its common usage, it is often incorrectly understood or partially misunderstood. It happens so, because the concept itself is a complex one covering a multitude of meanings. It should be applied by means of considering jointly the elements of a certain set composed of similar or different, but related to each other, components of real life practice, processes illustrating its transformations and the idea of its creation, which present or potential significance for the broadly understood life quality of societies and ecosystems functioning, turns out to be very high. Following this path of reasoning two ways of local development understanding may be distinguished which do not exclude each other, but even happen to be strictly complementary for each other.

Before the barriers will be presented, it is necessary to provide local development strategic management definition. In fact, two respective definitions may be presented. According to the first one it is represented by a complex process of obtaining, processing and generating information by local authorities (commune, district) the final effect of which are their own decisions and the decisions of entities they cover, resulting in the development of a local system characteristic for them (commune, district) in a long time perspective. As far as the second approach is concerned, it is the complex process of obtaining, processing and generating information by supra-local authorities (regional, state, international) the final effect of which are their own decisions, as well as the decisions of entities they cover, resulting in common application of local development processes in the due administrative area. As it has already been illustrated, strategic management objectives, referring to local development of particular public entities, are quite concurrent. Differences refer to spatial scale of influence and – partially – to the applied tools. Commune or district authorities aim at the development of one local system, while the state government is focused on the development of all local systems and on obtaining supra-local synergic effects which may stem from local potential enhancement. Barriers for strategic management of local development may

be discussed in the context of both, supra-local and local authorities functioning. However, author's attention is focused exclusively on the latter ones. At the level of local authorities these barriers take the form of all possible factors which are crucial and, at the same time, influence strategic management processes negatively which results in their incorrectness or absence. A few, listed below, groups of such barriers may be distinguished:

- methodological barriers, i.e. faults of local development strategic management concept consisting in e.g.: their non-adjustment to the capacity and needs of communal authorities representing small social and economic potential,
- legal barriers, i.e. imperfections of the self-government legal system constructed by state,
- barriers in cooperation between local self-government and strategic cooperation partners, such as e.g.: their perception of the environment exclusively in terms of their own interests, as well as the lack of knowledge regarding potential advantages of such cooperation,
- barriers resulting from insufficiencies of local social capital and local human capital – e.g. lack of social involvement in the construction and implementation of development strategy,
- information barriers reducing the availability of data indispensable for strategic management, such as e.g.: imperfections of public statistics,
- financial barriers limiting the potential of communal instruments for strategic management,
- human resources barriers referring mainly to insufficient qualifications of self-government staff,
- barriers in standards, i.e. discouraging information and behaviours of other public entities,
- support barriers covering imperfections of performed services for local self-governments by consultancy entities and weaknesses in relations between research centres and self-governments,
- barriers in local development policy conducted by state government and the European Union authorities consisting in incomplete, incoherent activities or other disadvantages,
- barriers resulting from personal qualities of local authorities.

The significance of presented above barriers is crucial. Such situation has its dire, negative consequences described in the introduction. Therefore it is important to undertake research focused on the presented barriers and their sources, and also the effects of their occurrence. Information obtained in this way will allow for searching such methods which could eliminate them effectively and this is extremely important for taking full advantage of the majority of opportunities brought about by the idea of local development, democracy, decentralization and territorial self-government.