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OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN POLAND. THREATS, DILEMMAS, CHALLENGES

Difficult time has come for the territorial self-government in Poland. Its model has been one of most successful reforms in the country and now instead of improving it there are visible strong recentralization trends that may endanger the local democracy.

There are even more dangers for self-governing and they do not apply only to the relation the state versus local authorities. In this article I point to three types of danger: external – related to recentralization, social – relations between local authorities and citizens and internal dangers – the qualities of the local elites of power. A lot of attention is paid to self-governing dilemmas, and some areas of reflection and analysis are indicated.

Territorial self-government faces lots of challenges, among others demography, population's increasing aspirations and the technological progress, as well as the condition and quality of local elites and civil society.

Keywords: territorial self-government, decentralization, local authorities, local elites, civil society