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## BOOK REVIEW

**NEW PUBLIC GOVERNANCE IN THE VISEGRÁD GROUP,  
EDITED BY ROBERT WISZNIOWSKI AND KAMIL GLINKA,  
SERIES BIBLIOTEKA ATHENAEUM, PUBLISHED BY  
WYDAWNICTWO ADAM MARSZAŁEK, 298 PAGES, ISBN  
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In times of a European Union crisis, the voices of the countries who got access in 2004 could be heard clearer. The Visegrád Group (V4), in existence since 1991 and includes the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, year-on-year has gained its importance in the international arena thanks to enhanced cooperation and common interests in politics. In the current geopolitical situation, in which the majority of member state governments represent the conservative right, the Visegrád Group's common activity may be the main way to strengthen their position in the European Union. That is why the attempt to summarize the activities of Visegrád Group countries in the field of administrative management is such an important field to research. Due to the fact that each of these states still struggle with political transformation, *New Public Governance in the Visegrád Group* is a great source to compare and find the differences in their activities, and helps one to understand their role in contemporary Europe. This book concisely sums up the common features of the four Visegrád countries, which were crystalized during their democratic transition and have allowed these countries to distance themselves at the organizational level from the other countries of the former communist bloc. From 1 July, 2016, Poland took over the presidency of the Visegrád Group. It is important that social sciences should lean on the importance of the organization in the context of the situation in Europe.

The publication is a collective work in which we can read the articles from the representatives of the best academic resources in the Visegrád countries. The book has been written under the editorship of Robert Wiszniowski, one of the pioneers on thinking about political marketing in Poland. He is a co-author of many publications on public communication, marketing, administration and management, and he is a professor at the University of Wrocław. Kamil Glinka, the co-editor the book, is currently a PhD student at the aforementioned university, whose object of study are local governments and the cooperation between them at certain levels. Because the book is a collective work, one can find articles from the representatives of universities from Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Many of the contributors are experts in areas such as public management, local partnership, European integration (especially in the Central European countries), EU policies, social dialogue and public participation. Authors of the articles for many years have engaged in research on the cooperation of V4. Additionally the quality of the publication is even higher due to the fact that the authors are citizens of V4 member states, so they

are experienced to examine these areas. One prominent author to note is Edit Soós, the professor of the Department of Political Affairs at the University of Szeged, who for many years has successfully engaged in research on regional policy and cohesion policy.

The book itself consists of three main sections, which are described in the scientific publication *New Public Governance in Visegrád Group*. The first part, entitled *Public Governance – Traditions and Evolution*, focuses on the presentation of the theoretical framework for the management and governance, and the concept of having to specify the aspects which create a New Public Governance. Seven articles cover this subject. Leading off strongly is the first of the publications, by Marek Ćwiklicki, which takes on the issue of the definition of bureaucracy according to Max Weber and tries to place it in the context of modern concepts concerning the management of public policies. As a result, we can determine that the reinterpretations of certain definitions are still evolving due to changes in the modern world, and neo-bureaucracy is a milestone from which we can start a complete new line of research for the whole of this phenomenon. Further articles are also an introduction to the discussion about New Governance in the area of Visegrád. Both Wiszniowski and Soós focus on new modes of governance and its theoretical assumptions, referring to the theories of Rudolf Wawrzyniec. They suggest that modern governance is defined by financial and institutional opportunities of state. Soós develops this idea while also giving attention to the role of local authorities in individual member states and how they are able to work together under the common policy of the European Union and its subordinate institutions. Finally, Soós recalls the merits of the Visegrád Group countries on decentralization and points out, that we can observe huge progress in their cooperation in the framework of local governments. It is worth mentioning that local and regional authorities must have the necessary means (referring to power) in order to implement programs for improving competitiveness and innovation in the region. Subsequent articles focus on the theme of management and marketing in relation to accountability, supervision and practices at the local level. Answers to questions about New Public Management's instruments or strategies. Recognition of these challenges is described in a general form without division at the state and allows us to understand the mechanisms that direct them. In the article by Jacek Sierak, concerning the practice of New Public Management, it is understood that NPM is a set of managerial techniques used in the public sector, through which one can change the decision-making processes, which would allow to transfer the good practices from the private sector. The author also shows how this type of model management works in highly developed countries, especially using the example of the UK and New Zealand. The article refers to David Osborne and Ted Gaebler's concept of New Public Management, suggesting that the administration should provide citizens with some goods, but not always offer them at an individual level. This should be done by NGOs and other non-governmental organizations.

The second part, entitled *Public Governance from the Perspective of the V4*, centers on the experiences of member countries of the Visegrád Group and focuses on the management of certain areas. It begins with Dorota Murzyn's article concerning the concept of good governance and its development in the Visegrád Group thanks to a common integration policy of the European Union. Drawing from Francis Fukuyama's concept on the relationship between quality of government and the socio-economic results, Murzyn focuses on the quality of service and governance and the EU support for this concept using the EU cohesion policy. The analysis applies to the documents related to the plan for coop-

eration in 2007–2013 and 2014–2020 and its implementation in the current activities of V4 member states. Describing well-known mechanisms of good governance, he is trying to show the effect of union funds that helped to transfer such behavior on the ground of the V4 countries. It can be also said that the main objective of the countries is to increase the quality of services and reduce bureaucracy, aimed at improving citizens' trust in public service agencies. Anna Czapska analysed the risk of corruption in the V4 countries. This is mainly due to relatively young democracy in member countries and recent initiatives on the suppression of corruption, resulting in frequently changing governments. One of the main foundations of this study were statistics from Eurobarometer surveys which show up to 87% of inhabitants of Central Europe noted that the problem of corruption is an issue. The author focuses on the weakest regional institutions and analyses how they can increase their level of public trust. She also draws attention to the fact that the highest authority to control institutions are among the most effective ones in the V4 countries. Czapska also raises the still existing problem of transparency of such institutions. After examining the operation of institutions in the V4 countries, one can pay attention to the fact that each are facing similar institutional problems. These areas include media markets or civil society. A final article to note is by Jakub Morávek, which focuses on a comparison of fire protection in the V4 countries, both volunteering and enterprise.

The third part of the publication, entitled *Theory and Practice of Public Governance – the Case of Visegrad Countries*, focuses on different aspects of research regarding to the V4 countries. In this chapter, one may find a variety of case studies for implementing public management at both the national and regional levels. In the first article, by Maciej Olejnik, it can be observed how the corporatist institutions in Hungary work and how to operate in certain levels of such institutions. Using the definition of national profiles of public policy making by Martin Minogue, Andrzej Zybała turns the attention to the historical and cultural features that allow for the creation of such behaviors in long duration. It is also worth noting that some societies prefer to solve problems by means of public action, rather than rely on centrally-planned solutions. Successively, the author focuses on the implementation of these solutions in the centers of local government, stressing the importance of decentralization in the proper functioning of democratic processes in this country. One of the interesting parts of this section is the work of Lucyna Rajca on new forms of political participation and decision-making in the local government. It is worth highlighting the Scandinavian model, in which new forms of democracy, such as councils, citizen's panels or institutions of conditional delegation, were established to increase the involvement of voters. Another key article is from Przemysław Żukiewicz concerning a new local leadership style developed after the local elections of Poland in 2014. Stressing types of management, Żukiewicz suggests the deconstruction of the old style of governance of local authorities and predicts increased activity of citizens through engagement in participatory budgets and the increasing popularity of urban movements. It draws attention to the fact that the NPG model is becoming more recognizable because older styles of management are beginning to fail, and that citizens are looking for more and more ways to be able to cooperate with their government authorities. Successive authors in this section confirm this thesis, suggesting also that effective communication of management is one of the main challenges faced by the authorities in the 21st century. An interesting addition to these considerations is the final article by Gabriela Roszyk-Kowalska, Edyta Majorek and Maciej Majorek concerning competencies of a forester based on the inspectorate in Koś-

cian, Poland devoted to issues of human resource characteristics and positions. The book ends with a very functional index of terms, facilitating access to specific issues.

The problem of management in public institutions of the Visegrád Group has been thoroughly explained in *New Public Governance in the Visegrád Group*. Both public and local administrations in countries with such young democracies face many challenges and are still going through a process of transformation – perhaps not political, but certainly ideological. One could blame here the mentality, reflected in a faint interest in the role of the implementation of new solutions (especially in local government) or the lack of appropriate models. Regardless, there is a noticeable change that can be presently observed. When forming the Visegrád Group in 1991, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland wanted to defend their common interests in the new geopolitical configurations in Europe. Twenty-five years later, V4 has brought the four member states together into the European Union, in which one of them is also a member of the Eurozone and has a much greater ambition when it comes to roles to play in the international arena. In the current situation, when dealing with the governments of right-wing groups, the rulers are skeptical of new solutions within the framework of local government, but some changes are noticeable in the perception of the problems of local governments. Much of the credit comes from European Union policies, which used the funds to spread social awareness that resulted in increased levels of civic participation. It is worth mentioning, that the complexity of public management mechanisms, both at nationwide and regional level, may establish a framework for action if it is for increasing the participation of citizens in the daily processes of civil society. Wiszniowski and Glinka's book will influence modern thought regarding public management, mainly because it focuses deeply not only on the relations between the public and private sector, but also on evidence of good governance within the member countries of V4. In these still developing countries, such research is a very important issue that might help observers understand the processes the administrations will be going through within the next few years. The discussion focused on that matter is a great challenge for all the researchers who specialize both in marketing and Central and Eastern European countries.