

Sub-Municipal Government as a Tool for Decentralization

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Abstract : In different countries, sub-municipal units have different organizational and political positions. In some countries, the role of sub-municipal units is important; in others, it is marginal. That depends on the organization of the local government system in different countries, and the political role of local self-government units, their size, public authorities, and the possibility for managing various local public tasks. This paper attempts to analyze the sub-municipal government as an organizational form of local governance participation of citizens in the local community with a comparative perspective. Secondly, it presents elements that generally format sub-municipal government as a tool for strengthening of democratization processes in local government units. Those elements are crucial for the understanding of the dynamic in relation to local government vs. sub-municipal government. Special focus is put on the sub-municipal government in South-Eastern European countries, which have a common history and institutional framework, with this main question: how can sub-municipal government contribute to strengthening democratic processes in these countries. In centralized countries, the sub-municipal government usually has a reduced role, which relates to managing public tasks connected with local community needs. The purpose of this comparative research methodology is used for analyzing the present organization and role of sub-municipal government in local government systems in Croatia and other significant countries in Europe, with a special focus on the states in South-Eastern Europe and Croatia. Comparative analyses attempt to show that local government systems with bigger local government units have more significant sub-municipal government. On the other hand, local government systems with small local government units don't have a strong sub-municipal government. Finally, this paper aims to present ideas on how the sub-municipal government can improve decentralization and contribute to better development of the local community and the whole of society.

Keywords : public administration, local government, sub-municipal government, decentralization

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