A review of the book:

**Łukasz Zaborowski, *Podział kraju na województwa. Próba obiektywizacji*
[Division of Poland into Voivodeships. An attempt at Objectivisation],
Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warsaw 2013, p. 164**

by Beata Słobodzian

Issues related to the administrative division of Poland are among those problems that are intriguing to various social circles: researchers, scientists, economists, politicians. Disputes as to the number of voivodeships and their shape have been going on uninterruptedly since the introduction of the new administrative division of Poland in 1999. Every now and then we are faced with recurring debates, disputes about the need to introduce changes in Poland's territorial organisation, yet with no effects.

That is why issuing the publication "*Division of Poland into Voivodeships. An attempt at Objectivisation*" in 2013 seems justified and necessary. This study might spur deliberations on the reorganisation of territorial space on a voivodeship level.

The book is made up of two chapters: I *Creating Territorial Division – A Theoretical Perspective*, and II *Assessment of the*

Current Territorial Division of the Republic of Poland, preceded with an "Introduction" having a rather peculiar content.

In the "Introduction" – in the classical perspective, the Author mentions the reasons for broaching the problem, presents the thematic scope of the study and characterises the source materials (mostly Polish language literature, studies published in "Biuletyn KPZK"). In this part the Author explains basic concepts such as: territorial division, and administrative division, referring to extensive literature on this subject. He contends that these concepts are wrongly used interchangeably, since they denote different features and properties of the divisions (p. 13). Each division is established by legal acts of different rank, there are various territorial divisions, e.g. basic, auxiliary, special and each of the divisions is made up of different degrees/levels of units.

In the generally adopted classification we can distinguish between levels of basic territorial division:

- a) regional – land, country, voivodeship,
- b) subregional A – department, province, county,
- c) subregional B- *powiat*, region, district,
- d) local – city, municipality,
- e) sublocal – parish, *sołectwo*, residential district, city district, city (p. 15).

The lack of conceptual unification causes problems when attempting to explain and characterise the administrative and territorial divisions of Poland. The Author emphasises that creating a territorial division is a kind of geographical regionalization. It should be understood as the activity of dividing the Earth's surface into smaller parts that distinguish themselves from the surroundings (p. 16). The process of regionalization leads to creating regions: a) uniform regions – it is an area marked by certain features distinguishing it from the surroundings, b) junctions – it is a space around a larger city (complex of cities), marked by bilateral exchange of resources – between the centre and its surroundings. The deliberations end with a specification of what the aim is, and what the results are of the existence of territorial division. The Author emphasises that prior to undertaking territorial

division one should specify precisely its aim, and based on that aim formulate its assumptions.

In chapter I the Author presents territorial divisions in the theoretical perspective. Adopting the so-called main rule does not guarantee that a specific territorial division will be developed, since it is modified by different circumstances. The basic differentiation as to the main rule of the division is the opposition between priority of historical-cultural and functional connections. When creating functional units the dominant feature of the arrangement are social and economic ties, access to centres considered junctions.

The Author distinguished between several criteria determining the rules of territorial division. They include the following:

- a) the rule of anticipation,
- b) size of units,
- c) territorial density of a unit,
- d) compliance with geographical regionalization,
- e) coherence of a unit in terms of the natural environment,
- f) historical-cultural coherence,
- g) compliance with the settlement network,
- h) expectations with regard to junction centres.

As the Author points out – it is not possible to shape territorial division on

the basis of one dominant rule. That division is not a reflection of the current space differentiation, and as a tool for exercising power it has a significant impact on the shape of the space. It is part of the central government's spatial policy (p. 48–49). Creating the units of division should begin by determining and selecting the basic unit, which will be used to build larger ones.

In chapter II the Author makes an attempt at assessing the existing territorial structure introduced in 1999. As he himself emphasises “today's territorial structure was not created by putting any of the theoretical conceptions into practice (...) Among projects of Poland's division into large voivodeships before 1999 there was not a single one that would assume creating more than 12 units. On the other hand, the minimum number of voivodeships proposed for the competitive model of average-size regions was 20. In the proposals for division there was no project for 16 voivodeships (p. 50–51).

Allowing a certain fortuity in the process of creating the current territorial division does not preclude the possibility of assessing it on the basis of objective rules of creating that type of structures. The Author makes a detailed analysis of the differentiation degree of voivodeships with regard to: a) the surface and population number, distinguishing: territorial density, nomenclature, b) the choice of voivodeship cities, c) specifying the limits

of voivodeships and the junction region, d) historical ties. The subchapter regarding the limits and names of voivodeships merits special attention in the light of historical ties (p. 76–137). The Author attempts to answer the following question – can the run of the limits of current voivodeships be determined on the basis of historical premises? With this in mind, each voivodeship with a historical name was discussed with regard to the meaning of the concept (e.g. Pomorze, Małopolska, Śląsk) from which the name was taken, and charted to allow comparing the limits of the current voivodeship with the limits of the historical region. Moreover, a list in tabular array was drawn up of *powiat* cities belonging to historical units or having the seat of the authorities in the current voivodeship city.

In the conclusion part the Author writes about the need for rectifying the current territorial division; a solution could be extensive use of the model of bipolar voivodeships (p. 137–138).

The publication includes an extensive and rich bibliographical list in alphabetical order and an index of geographical names. The publication under review is an abstract of knowledge on Poland's territorial division into voivodeships, scientific ideas, and knowledge about how that division should be formed. The publication merits the attention of people dealing with the above problems.