

## *Local Sub-Decentralization and Sub-Municipal Divisions in Slovenia*

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UDK 35.072.1(497.4)  
Preliminary scientific report / prethodno znanstveno priopćenje  
Received / primljeno 12. 7. 2012.  
Accepted / prihvaćeno 25. 3. 2013.

Since independence gained in 1991, local self-government reform has been considered one of the most important projects of the Slovenian state. A key aspect was the introduction of different forms of local democracy and sub-municipal units into the newly established units of local government. The main goal of this paper is to analyse the process of sub-decentralization – the establishment of sub-municipal units of local government. The paper emphasizes their level of autonomy, which is dependent upon the size of municipality. We will assume that the establishment of sub-municipal units is one of the ways to increase public participation at the municipal level, and analyse: a)

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why municipalities undertake sub-municipal divisions that are entirely dependent upon their decisions; and b) how the level of sub-municipal autonomy is dependent upon the municipal size. The hypothesis was examined using a survey of 80 Slovenian municipalities and analysis of statistical data acquired from the National Statistical Office.

*Key words:* decentralization, local government, Slovenia, sub-municipal units, subsidiarity

## 1. Introduction

When Slovenia was still part of the socialist Yugoslavia, the basic unit of local self-government was called the local community (*krajevna skupnost*), established with the adoption of the last communist Constitution in 1974. Municipalities of the time were rather units of state than local administration and were considered too remote for ordinary citizens to see them as autonomous or self-governing units of a local nature. With democratic changes and the introduction of local self-government in the 1990s, local communities were formally preserved, but their status and the scope of their tasks changed quite significantly (Lavtar, 2007: 50–51). They lost their unique nature as self-dependent and self-supporting local units and became part of new municipalities in a territorial, organizational, functional and financial sense. In many cases, the new municipality took over the former tasks of local communities, and local communities were left without any real local competencies or purpose. The Slovenian Local Self-Government Act (LSGA, 2007) stipulates that within the municipal boundaries, intra-municipal divisions are possible, if this is determined in municipal statute. Smaller components of a municipality could be the size of a village, town or local community. Despite the opinions that increased autonomy of the smallest parts of local government could undermine the stability of the state and that only increased centralization of power could maintain stability (Mlinar, 2000: 144), some specific competences and tasks of the sub-components of municipal administrations were defined. In the process of sub-decentralization, most municipalities saw local, village or town communities not as their rivals, but as their supplements, and as a way to make up the deficiencies of the new local self-government system (Kaučič, Grad, 2003: 347; Vlaj, 2005: 29).

The main thesis<sup>1</sup> of our research emphasizes the competences of sub-municipal units from the viewpoint of municipal size, and is based on the work of Page and Goldsmith (1987), who reported that the size of the local community is the key factor that determines the allocation of tasks and relations between the state and local (or, as in our case, between the local and sub-local) levels of government.

Intra-municipal division is commonly understood as an organizational provision that enables decision-making processes to be brought closer to citizens, to adapt to the specific needs of a territory, and to decentralize tasks that are otherwise within municipal jurisdiction. The tasks of sub-municipal units are minutely determined in municipal documents (statutes, decrees); some basic tasks are also prescribed by the LSGA. Further, the scope and responsibility of sub-municipal units depend on whether they have a legal entity (Dolinšek Hribar, 2004: 35-41). The concept of decentralization is usually understood in terms of the relationship between the national and local levels of government (Brezovnik, Oplotnik, 2003: 10, 16; Burns et al., 1994: 10), but can also be interpreted as the relationship between the municipality and its sub-municipal units. In this case, we can discuss sub-decentralization, a specific form of decentralization. In the final part of the empirical analysis we put some emphasis on the question of the municipal motive(s) for implementing the process of sub-decentralization, as municipal motives can be strictly formal (merely implementing the legislation or following examples from other municipalities), but can also be functional (usage of sub-municipal units in order to enhance effectiveness of administrative capacity and municipal services) or even participatory (to bring decision-making processes closer to citizens and to facilitate participatory processes in the municipality). In order to verify the main thesis and follow the findings of Page and Goldsmith (1987), larger municipalities should put more emphasis on functional and participatory motives and vice-versa.

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<sup>1</sup> We tested our main thesis with an empirical study (conducted in summer 2009), where we invited all 210 Slovenian municipalities to participate and 80 of them responded. We should also point out, that some questions were not answered by each participating municipality. For the purpose of our analysis, we define the municipal size as the number of inhabitants in a single municipality.

## 2. Public Participation, Sub-Decentralization and Subsidiarity

Public participation is not a monolithic concept. In addition to the usual instruments used by the public to exert pressure, there are other forms of participation that allow citizens to express their opinion about different issues, such as environmental protection, for example. Each process requires a different form of public participation (Pek et al., 2001: 618). Nevertheless, the forms of public participation can be divided into two broad categories: formal and informal. Public participation may be formal, meaning a law has prescribed its form, or informal, meaning the public decides independently which form of participation it will adopt (Nagy, Vrečko, 1994: 65). The process of decentralization is basically the transfer of tasks from the central government to regional and local governments. As a rule, responsibilities are transferred to self-governing territorial communities (Vlaj, 2004: 94), but the same logic can also be used for cases of municipal and sub-municipal units, where sub-municipal units do not have legal personality.

The decentralization of local government is a dynamic process (Drozdek et al., 2010: 39), dependent upon regulation of the state and society; because of this, new possibilities for more efficient implementation of tasks at the local level should always be sought. Similar to the national level, the degree of decentralization within an individual municipality depends on its geographical, societal and other characteristics, as well as on whether or not sub-municipal units have a legal personality. Our understanding of sub-decentralization derives and updates the idea of Vilma Milunovič (2009: 174). Milunovič claims that decentralization presumes that the most effective political decision-making and provision of public goods and services is achieved by the level of government closest to citizens. When addressing local public affairs, the starting point for local government is greater familiarity with local problems and, consequently, a greater likelihood of successfully implementing policy solutions to those problems. Such reasoning can also be applied to even lower levels of government, despite the fact that sub-municipal units do not necessarily represent autonomous government, but a form of government even closer to the people. This kind of decentralization will be regarded as local decentralization or sub-decentralization. Similar ideas have surfaced in many countries, for instance in Sweden, in the form of sub-local political decentralization in neighbourhoods (Bäck et al., 2005: 19).

Pierre (2000) also discussed a special form of decentralization, i.e. *local governance* that could be transferred to the sub-local level. This is a flexible pattern of public decision-making, where public decisions should untwine in the course of long-term relations between individuals at different levels. For the concept of sub-decentralization, the key characteristic is that it enables sub-municipal units to be included into the decision-making process and thereby gain some power. Pierre's model of local governance refers to the abilities of each level of local government to coordinate local politics and address complex public problems. These may often be connected with only one isolated part of the municipality that could unilaterally produce the solution. There are three distinctions for this kind of sub-municipal units: (1) dependency upon financial resources from the central municipal level, (2) clear rules of the game, thus precisely defined jurisdictions and responsibilities, and (3) considerable level of autonomy, at the national level from the state, and at the local level from the municipality. Sub-decentralization obviously produces a more decentralized structure, new forms of participation in decision-making, and decentralization of the central municipal authority. Autonomy means freedom from the interventions of the central state authorities and the right to act when solving narrow, localized problems. If we transfer the basic idea of sub-decentralization to the municipal level, we can ascertain that it brings not only restraints to the municipal authority, but also the right to autonomously solve local problems at the lowest possible level of authority.

One of the key concepts in understanding the processes of sub-decentralization is the principle of subsidiarity. This principle is a contemporary concept, but its origins can be traced back to Aristotle and the exposition of the importance of the individual (Brezovšek, Nahtigal, 2011: 148). The principle of subsidiarity is today used mainly as the means that can limit centralized decisions. It is well-known from the Maastricht treaty and introduces the idea that public decision-making should be transferred to the lowest possible level of authority; national and regional levels of authority should practice only those public affairs that, for various reasons, cannot be transferred to the lower levels. In other words, the principle of subsidiarity demands that political power is involved only when society and its constitutive elements are not capable of satisfying various needs. Closely connected with the principle of subsidiarity are the principles of non-intervention of state authority and restriction of its authority (Vlaj, 2004: 25–27; Brezovnik, 2008: 34). Everyday implementation of the principle of subsidiarity is not prescribed and is up to the individual countries and their organization of the vertical division of authority to state, re-

gional and local levels (Brezovnik, Oplotnik, 2003: 15); we could also add sub-local levels to this division. The principle of subsidiarity represents the universal principle of institutional organization that strives to give advantage to its base rather than its apex (Brezovnik, 2008: 35). It differs from the centralist arrangement, which runs from the *top down*; the principle of subsidiarity establishes a structure wherein activity is initiated from the *bottom up* (Mlinar, 2000: 415).

We can ascribe two meanings to subsidiarity, both deriving from the Latin word *subsidium*. One interpretation refers to assistance that goes from bigger to smaller groups, while the other refers to the allocation of functions, which need to be initiated with smaller groups or with individuals. We understand subsidiarity in the latter sense, which is also commonly used in European state theories. However, at the same time, we should not neglect the question of whether the state has the possibility or duty to intervene, or when it is the appropriate moment to intervene (Brezovšek, 1997: 189; Brezovnik, 2008: 36). According to international law, the principle of subsidiarity represents one of the keystones of the European integration processes, and carries philosophical, legal, institutional and administrative-organizational meaning. The latter two factors are especially important within the context of division of competences or public affairs management and decision-making (Vlaj, 2005: 26). One of the most common ways in which the principle of subsidiarity is implemented is the establishment of local authority, especially the lowest levels of local self-government.

### 3. Sub-Municipal Division in Slovenia

#### 3.1. Normative Framework of Sub-Municipal Units of Local Government

The area of sub-municipal units in Slovenia is regulated by documents at the national and local levels. As Slovenia is an EU member, it must also conform to European legislation.

##### a) *The European Charter of Local Self-Government (ECLSG)*

The Charter ratified by Slovenia in 1996 (Official Gazette 57/1996) does not specifically mention sub-municipal units. We can understand the establishment of sub-local entities as a step towards fulfilling the principle

of subsidiarity. The execution of public tasks is thereby brought even closer to citizens and, consequentially, leads to stronger decentralization and inclusion of citizens in the decision-making process. The need to perform tasks as close to citizens as possible, if possible, is defined in Article 4, section 3 of the ECLSG.

### *b) The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia*

The supreme act of normative regulation at the national level is the Constitution (OG 33/1991). This document is similar to the European Charter in that it also omits any specific reference to sub-municipal units, which is why they are not a typical constitutional category. The position of local self-government is defined in Articles 138 to 144 and the starting point is Article 9, which states that Slovenia guarantees local self-government. In Article 138, the Constitution stipulates that citizens exercise the right to local self-government in municipalities or other local communities. Other local communities could be understood as sub-municipal units but there is the question of their self-management, as no sub-municipal unit actually has the legal personality. Furthermore, Article 139 states that a municipal area contains one or more settlements that can connect together based on the needs and interests of citizens. The possibility of settlement connection demonstrates that the Constitution has already incorporated the possibility of the formation of sub-local entities. These connections therefore represent an intermediate tier at the local level placed between the municipality and settlements. The rest of the chapter is related to the working area of self-governing local communities, to town municipalities, municipal incomes, and provinces as well as to state supervision of local communities.

### *c) The Local Self-Government Act*

The LSGA represents the first instance within the legislative hierarchy in which sub-municipal units are explicitly mentioned (OG 94/2007). We can therefore speak about a legally defined category. Article 18 stipulates that the municipality may consist of local communities, village communities or district communities and that the name of a sub-municipal unit is defined by the statute of the municipality. Thus, we can conclude that the Act points to acts of local character, which should minutely determine the position and tasks of sub-municipal units. Municipalities have the option to independently define the size and names of sub-municipal units,



because it would be difficult to define the size of sub-municipal units in a law at the national level, due to territorially and demographically different municipalities. When forming sub-units, municipalities must also take into account historical, administrative, cultural and other factors. The same applies to the naming of sub-units, since some municipalities have more characteristics of a town (a suitable name here is the *local community*) whereas others are more rural (sub-municipal units would be suitably named *village communities*). The last paragraph of Article 18 stipulates that, in case of creating or changing the area of a sub-municipal unit, the town council has to identify the interests of its citizens through a citizens' meeting or a referendum and thereby form and name a sub-municipal unit within the municipality.

Article 19 of the LSGA defines that the representative body of the sub-municipal unit is the council, which is elected from among the citizens residing in the same part of the municipality. This representative body proposes decisions relevant to sub-municipal units, to the town council. The statute can also define the absence of such a council, but then the municipal council has the option to create local, village or district committees. General tasks of sub-municipal units are defined in Article 19b, which stipulates that sub-municipal tasks are related mainly to the citizens in a particular area and that the tasks are transferred to sub-municipal units by the municipal statute. The statute must define the tasks performed independently by the sub-municipal units as well as their form of financing, their principles, means of operation and legal status. The tasks transferred to sub-municipal units are also defined in detail by a decree. In contrast to a statute, a decree is one of the local or municipal acts. If a municipality delegates part of any task from its self-governing scope to the competence of a sub-municipal unit, the municipality must provide adequate financial resources. In Article 19c, the Act has defined that the municipal council can give legal entity to sub-municipal units. Sub-municipal units are represented by the council and operate within legal boundaries, defined by the municipal statute.

#### *d) Municipal acts*

The internal organization and social relationships of the municipality are defined in detail by local acts. These legal acts are subordinate to the Constitution and national laws. Most commonly, these take the form of statutes, decrees, orders, rulebooks, instructions and, in some cases, resolutions (Kaučić, Grad, 2003: 343). It is difficult to discuss the con-



crete content of individual local acts because every municipality has its own arrangement of sub-municipal units and it is up to the municipality to transfer some degree of (functional and financial) autonomy to the sub-municipal unit or not.

### 3.2. An Analysis of the Formation of Sub-Municipal Units

In the empirical part of the study, we analyse variables to test the research hypotheses. The analysis is focused on determining the reasons for the creation of sub-municipal units within municipalities and on checking the relationship between municipality size and the level of autonomy that local communities<sup>2</sup> have in decision-making and addressing their own sub-local affairs.

Sub-municipal units can be formed for several reasons. For the purpose of this study, eight causes of formation are defined. These causes can occur individually or in combination (see Table 1). The selection of potential causes enabled the precise determination of a key factor that influenced the creation of sub-municipal units. Due to increased government transparency, it is possible to list the reasons cited Table 1 in descending order of frequency.

Table 1: Motives for the establishment of the sub-municipal level

Motives	%
Combination of historical and territorial factors	25
Territorial structure	19.1
Historical breakdown	13.2
Combination of territorial and functional factors	13.2
Combination of historical, territorial and functional factors	8.8
The remains of a former, socialist municipal system	7.4
Functional breakdown	5.9
Other	5.9

N = 68 Source: Authors' empirical research.

<sup>2</sup> The naming of sub-municipal units is different. The most frequently used title is the local community, which appears in most of the analyzed municipalities. It is likely that the expression was retained from the former socialist municipal system, when there was an organization of local communities in the area of municipalities. However, other titles are also used, such as local, district or village community; and town district.

As shown in Table 1, we cannot confirm our thesis that the prevailing reason for the formation of sub-municipal units is functional. The functional structure or other specific reasons were cited for only 6 per cent of responding municipalities. The predominant reason for establishment is the combination of historical and territorial circumstances, which account for a quarter of all analysed municipalities. If we compare territorial and historical reasons, we can conclude that territorial factors are more common than historical.

### 3.3. The Connection between Municipality Size and the Autonomy of Sub-Municipal Units

The responses from municipalities participating in our empirical research show that the smallest municipality in terms of population has only 1.334 residents, while the largest is the town municipality of Ljubljana, which is also the capital city, with 276.100 residents.<sup>3</sup> The number of inhabitants within a single sub-municipal unit ranges between 9 and 34.340 residents, and the number of sub-municipal units per municipality is between 2 and 29.<sup>4</sup> The connection between municipality size and the number of sub-municipal units is weak (Pearson's coefficient = 0,324), which does not support the hypothesis that larger municipalities have a larger number of sub-municipal units.

Sub-municipal units' tasks or competences are classified into three groups (see Table 2). The groups are based on the analysis of municipal acts and are then ranked by the level of autonomy, which gives sub-municipal units the right to perform individual competences. The first group performs a cluster of tasks – these sub-municipal units can independently decide on and perform their own affairs, thus having the widest powers and the highest level of autonomy. The second group has the responsibility for certain tasks – these sub-municipal units cooperate in the discussion and

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<sup>3</sup> In May 2012, the smallest Slovenian municipality (Hodoš) had only 379 inhabitants, while the largest (Ljubljana) had 280.607 inhabitants. No institution, not even the National Statistical Office, keeps any data regarding local communities. Source: Statistical Office, <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp>

<sup>4</sup> It is widely speculated, that 1,200 to 1,300 local communities exist in 211 Slovenian municipalities today, but it must be pointed out again, that it is entirely upon the municipality to establish or abolish local communities.

realization of certain issues, whilst those in the third sub-municipal category only collect, form and accept propositions.<sup>5</sup>

Data in Table 2 indicates that some municipalities do not allow sub-municipal units to make independent decisions or to define and perform their own affairs. These examples show a limited autonomy of some sub-municipal units. With regard to the data on the average number of tasks per sub-municipal unit, we must emphasize that the lowest average number (3.89) represents the type of major tasks that grant sub-municipal units the widest autonomy in performing their own affairs. The highest average number of delegated tasks (10.51) was reported for minor tasks that grant sub-municipal units the lowest level of autonomy.

Table 2 Competences of sub-municipal units by category

Type of competence	Number of tasks		
	minimal	maximum	average
Independently decide about own affairs and perform them	0	18	3.89
Cooperate in discussion and realization	0	15	9.04
Collect, form and accept propositions	2	23	10.51

N = 73<sup>6</sup> Source: Authors' empirical research.

From the viewpoint of autonomy, the municipality of Ljutomer grants its sub-municipal units the highest level of autonomy in decision-making and management of their own affairs. It lists 18 tasks where local communities have the possibility to independently decide and act on certain issues. The opposite situation is observed in Ljubljana, where most tasks conducted

<sup>5</sup> Municipalities allow sub-municipal units different competences. The tasks that grant sub-municipal units the widest level of autonomy are related to autonomous decision-making and managing their own affairs. This is a deviation from the provisions of the Local Self-government Act, which regulated only the option of proposal for the sub-municipal units and not independent decision-making. Local acts, therefore, give a higher level of autonomy to sub-local communities than granted by the LSGA. The problem here is that municipalities are willing to grant a higher level of autonomy to their sub-municipal units than is permitted by the national legal framework.

<sup>6</sup> Despite the sample of municipalities that was part of the research, some municipalities do not have defined competences of sub-municipal units in their acts. Due to data relevance, this part of the analysis includes only those municipalities where data for sub-municipal units' competences were accessible.

by sub-municipal units convey very limited autonomy. The local *Act of the Ljubljana Town Municipality* includes 23 tasks according to which the sub-municipal units can collect, form and accept propositions. We would have thought that, due to Ljubljana's size and numerous functions, especially because of its capital city status, it would allow its local communities a higher level of autonomy.

### 3.4. The Connection between Municipality Size and the Tasks of Sub-Municipal Units

Table 3 shows the connection between municipality size and sub-municipal units' competences. At first sight, most of the tasks (44 to 46 per cent) are such that sub-municipal units only have an advisory role. Of the functions granted to sub-municipal units, the smallest proportion (10 to 22 per cent) are functions conveying greater autonomy and the right to independently decide in their own affairs.

Table 3 Municipality classification by size and competences of sub-municipal units

Type of municipality	Decision-making powers	Cooperates, forms	Gives propositions, cooperates, reports
Small municipalities (up to 5.000 residents)	37 (10%)	161 (44%)	170 (46%)
Medium municipalities (5.001 – 20.000 residents)	187 (18%)	407 (38%)	473 (44%)
Large municipalities (20.001 and more residents)	60 (22%)	92 (33%)	125 (45%)

Source: Authors' empirical research.

From Table 3 we can conclude that the larger the municipality, the higher the level of autonomy in independent decision-making granted to its sub-municipal units. Small municipalities grant only 10 per cent of such tasks to their sub-municipal units, medium size municipalities grant 18 per cent, while large municipalities grant 22 per cent. One could note the contrast of this general trend with the exception seen in Ljubljana, the largest municipality. The question remains, however, why the municipal seat of national government appears to have the greatest difficulties in

relinquishing decision-making power within the municipality, in line with its own national constitution?

## 4. Conclusions

Participation is an occurrence when an individual or a group takes part in certain social processes, games, sports or other joint endeavours (Brezovšek, 1995: 202). The key aspect of citizens' participation in local community decision-making is the relationship between local self-government bodies and the broader public. Communication and cooperation between the elected local self-government bodies on the one hand, and citizens of the local community on the other, is crucial if a higher degree of legitimacy is to be achieved and public interest served. This goal can be achieved in several ways, one of which is sub-decentralization to the sub-municipal level of authority. Based on a comprehensive empirical analysis of the sub-decentralization processes within Slovenian local government during the previous two decades, it is apparent that, despite the suggestions of several authors (Vlaj, 2004 or Grad, 1998), sub-municipal units in Slovenia are a legacy of the previous, non-democratic system, this is not the case. In the previous (socialist) system of local self-government, local communities (*krajevna skupnost*) were formed as a spontaneous answer to the municipal level restraints of the central government. However, since independence, Slovenian municipalities have had a possibility of establishing sub-municipal units within their own territory. The current structure of sub-municipal units is therefore not simply a remnant from the previous regime. The predominant reason for the establishment of sub-municipal units (almost sixty per cent of municipalities in our research sample) was either historical or territorial, or even a combination of both dimensions.

Our main thesis has shown a positive correlation between the size of the municipality and sub-decentralization processes. The empirical data has confirmed the initial assumption that larger municipalities grant wider autonomy to their sub-municipal units. According to the special position that sub-municipal units enjoy in Slovenia, special characteristics of local community at the municipal level can be discussed. In sub-municipal units, we can observe a special kind of group-belonging and cohesion between citizens living together in a small area that has, in some cases, a very limited or even negligible level of autonomy in managing its own affairs. Within such communities, one can often observe a strong social dimension, a very distinct and important element of local community.

We have clearly established that the scale and position of sub-municipal communities in Slovenia differs tremendously between municipalities. This means that it would be impractical to propose the reorganization of local self-government, since deconcentration as a special form of decentralization cannot be simultaneously and uniformly implemented in all municipalities. We believe that the most appropriate form of decentralization is devolution, since this could also be used as an appropriate starting point for the process of political decentralization. In this way, municipalities could transfer special authorization rights, means and assets. To achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency, such a process should also ensure clearly defined responsibilities of sub-municipal units for their own actions.

Slovenia already has territorial decentralization that could be upgraded, and the same is valid for local management and the process of decision-making. Even stricter and more clear-cut administrative and political decentralization could be introduced, and such decentralization would enable citizens to take part in decision-making related to their own sub-local affairs. At the same time, we should not forget the legislative gap in regulating sub-municipal units. The Local Self-Government Act currently only allows sub-municipal units to make various proposals to their respective municipal council and take measures and steps thereof; the Law is not always observed, as municipalities tend to not always observe some regulative points, for instance on the minimum number of citizens when establishing a sub-municipal unit. Even a limited transfer of autonomy would probably be strongly opposed by municipal councils, as their political power would be somewhat reduced, albeit not substantially. However, it should be clear that such a »loss« on the side of municipal councils would create an opportunity to reduce the democratic deficit at the local level.

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## LOCAL SUB-DECENTRALISATION AND SUB-MUNICIPAL DIVISIONS IN SLOVENIA

### *Summary*

*Since independence gained in 1991, local self-government reform has been considered one of the most important projects of the Slovenian state. A key aspect was the introduction of different forms of local democracy and sub-municipal units into the newly established units of local government. The main goal of this paper is to analyse the process of sub-decentralization – the establishment of sub-municipal units of local government. The paper emphasizes their level of autonomy, which is dependent upon the size of municipality. We will assume that the establishment of sub-municipal units is one of the ways to increase public participation at the municipal level, and analyse: a) why municipalities undertake sub-municipal divisions that are entirely dependent upon their decisions; and b) how the level of sub-municipal autonomy is dependent upon the municipal size. The hypothesis was examined using a survey of 80 Slovenian municipalities and analysis of statistical data acquired from the National Statistical Office.*

*Key words: decentralization, local government, Slovenia, sub-municipal units, subsidiarity*

## MJESNA SAMOUPRAVA U SLOVENIJI

### Sažetak

*Od stjecanja neovisnosti 1991. godine, reforma lokalne samouprave smatra se jednim od najvažnijih projekata slovenske države. Ključni dio reforme bio je uvođenje različitih oblika lokalne demokracije i mjesne samouprave u novoosnovane jedinice lokalne samouprave. Glavni cilj ovog rada jest analizirati proces subdecentralizacije, tj. proces osnivanja jedinica mjesne samouprave. U radu se naglašava razina njihove autonomije koja ovisi o veličini lokalne jedinice. Pretpostavili smo da je osnivanje jedinica mjesne samouprave jedan od načina da se poveća sudjelovanje građana u lokalnoj razini vlasti i analizirali: a) zašto lokalne jedinice poduzimaju osnivanje jedinica mjesne samouprave koje u potpunosti ovise o njihovim odlukama, te b) na koji način razina autonomije jedinica mjesne samouprave ovisi o veličini jedinica lokalne samouprave. Hipotezu smo ispitivali koristeći anketu provedenu u 80 slovenskih lokalnih jedinica i analizu statističkih podataka dobivenih od Državnog ureda za statistiku.*

*Ključne riječi: decentralizacija, lokalna vlast, Slovenija, jedinice mjesne samouprave, supsidijarnost*