

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **DOES CITIZEN VOICE MATTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE PERFORMANCE?<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

Bureaucratic behavior lowers the effectiveness of public administration. Implementing of financial incentives for improving the quality of job of officials is in many cases impossible due to budget constraints. In such a case other mechanism should be implemented. One of them is considering of citizen opinions.

The paper addresses a problem of the impact of citizen voice on public service performance at the local level of the public administration in Poland. The research purpose is to investigate whether citizen voice has a direct impact on the quality and accessibility of public services and/or whether citizen opinions have an indirect impact influencing the strength and causality of the relationships between public service performance and: 1) corruption, 2) transparency, 3) enforcement of rules, as well as 4) meritocracy.

Section 1 of the paper is a presentation of the role of citizen voice in public service performance discussed in the literature. Section 2 describes the methodology. Empirical findings are presented in Sections 3, 4 and 5, and finally, conclusions in the last section.

#### **The Role of Citizen Voice in Public Service Performance**

The source of bureaucratic behavior is discussed for a very long time in literature . According to M. Weber the perfect clerk is “a servant of society”. Nowadays mostly the improper - from the social point of view - bureaucratic features are pointed out. Downs (1965) defines two types of bureaucrats : “good “ ones – those focused on public interest and “egoistic” ones – focused on maximizing personal profits. Niskanen (1968) stressed that the public officials tend to enlarge their bureaucratic domain to satisfy directly their private needs.

Public administration entities manifest their bureaucratic behavior by transferring some of their capital from supplying of public services to fulfilling their officials needs. Raising the public institution budget and this way its size the management raises its social status. Another distinguishable feature of bureaucracy is risk avoiding. The administrative decision-making process is strictly formalized. Typical official can very easily avoid bearing responsibility for wrong decisions – it is enough to prove they were made according to procedure. Sophisticated decision-making procedures raise the costs of administration and also the costs to be covered by the citizens. But there is a positive feature of multilevel decision-making – single official does not have the dominant opinion and this limits the corruption sensitivity.

Literature points out many sources of bureaucratic behavior. One of the causes of ineffectiveness of public administration is the lack of solution of principal-agent problem.

The principal-agent theory points out the information problem in bureaucracy systems

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(Becker and Stigler, 1974; Rose-Ackerman, 1975; Tirole, 1986; Mookherjee and Png, 1992, 1995). Due to incomplete information citizens (“principals”) experience difficulties to induce public officials (“agents” employed by the public) to meet their interests. In this context the principal-agent theory addresses the question how to create mechanisms that build up citizens voice (Besley and Case, 1995; Porto and Porto, 2000; Gordon and Wilson, 2001). Citizen voice means the capacity of citizens to express their views to the public officials.

The best way of solving a principal–agent problem is an introduction of such a system of incentives which promotes the officials who fulfill the citizen’s needs and punishes the opposite ones. Unfortunately the efficiency raising incentives are weak in public administration due to constraints in human resources management - parallel it is difficult to fire an ineffective official and promote the effective ones proportionally to their achievements because the promotion system is less developed than in private sector. As the result officials do not combine their salaries with their effectiveness.

A raise of officials’ wages, as a way to improve the administrative efficiency, has inspired long lasting debates concerning such problems as misallocation of talents between the private and public sector (Acemoglu and Verdier 1998) and high costs of such a policy tool, and danger that raising wages can attract only the dishonest (Besley and McLaren, 1993; Dabla-Norris, 2000; Wane, 2000).

The other way is combining of hierarchical system of administrative control with accountability mechanisms based on citizen voice. Citizens should have the opportunities to express their complaints and preferences and the public administration institutions should incorporate them into the method of improving of the public service performance. It is also important for public administration to have clear and transparent procedures of gathering of information about citizen need. Kaufmann et al. (2002) argue that in case of Bolivia citizen voice has been more important in explaining the public service performance than traditional determinants, e.g. wages and internal enforcement of rules.

Considering the constraints in human resources management and disadvantages of multilevel decision-making the influence of citizen’s opinion on public administration activities should be an important factor of improving of the public service performance.

## **The Methodology**

### *The Source of Data*

The research presented in this paper is based on a questionnaire survey of 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils in Poland in 2009. A commune council is a primary institution of local administration in Poland. There are 2543 commune councils in total. They are divided into four types: 1586 rural commune councils, 586 urban-rural commune councils, 306 urban commune councils and 65 commune councils in big cities. Since the percentage of rural commune councils is rather big (62%), and the percentage of commune councils in big cities is small (2%), the construction of officials’ sample is not easy. If the selection of the commune councils had been representative, the rural councils would have been dominating. But such a selection would not have corresponded with the aim of the research. The results of the research are to help identify the differences in perceiving various aspects of public service performance and governance by officials of those four types of commune councils. Numbers of officials from all types of councils should be similar. The polling agency carrying out the survey has chosen councils at random so that the number of them conforms with their density in every province (there are 16 provinces in Poland). Therefore in rural provinces more rural councils have been chosen, and in urbanized provinces – more urban councils. The more communes are in a province, the more councils

have been chosen. The second principle of the construction of the sample involves the number of officials selected in each council. Generally these numbers are similar, though bigger in big cities, because more officials are employed in large urban councils. Finally, in each rural, urban-rural and urban commune council 7-9 officials have been chosen, while in large urban councils – 8-12. The third principle concerns the selection of officials in each council. Within each institution, a stratified random sample has been selected from each of the following decision-making ranks: top management, middle management, and ordinary officials.

Finally, the sample of the 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils covers:

- 226 officials from 26 rural commune councils,
- 227 officials from 28 urban-rural commune councils,
- 203 officials from 24 urban commune councils,
- 202 officials from 22 commune councils in big cities.

The officials have been asked to evaluate: quality and accessibility of public services, enforcement of rules in personnel/budget/service management, politicization, transparency of decisions on personnel/budget/service management, meritocracy, citizen voice, wage satisfaction, resources of the agency, personal honesty, corruption. Corruption relates to the abuse of power for private gains.

Typically, more than one question is used to describe each governance index and each institutional factor. In the survey all answers about individual perceptions are scaled from 1 to 5 (1 = very bad; 2 = bad; 3 = medium; 4 = good; 5 = very good). “1” always means that in the official’s opinion the situation is very bad, in other words, there is a very low level of: service performance, enforcement of rules, transparency, meritocracy, wage satisfaction, agency resources. The impact of citizen voice is also very weak, however, the level of corruption is very high. “5” always means that the situation reflected in a given question is very good, for example, the quality and accessibility of public services are very high, the impact of citizen voice is very strong, and corruption is evaluated as very low.

The survey was carried out by the professional polling agency in July 2009. The officials were asked to express their opinions directly in the course of face-to-face interviews.

### *Research Objectives*

The main purpose of the paper is to investigate whether and how citizen voice may influence the public service performance at the local level of administration in Poland. The paper addresses the following questions:

- Does the existence of : a) the procedure of allowing citizen/company opinion about commune council, and b) the procedure enabling to recognize the citizen/company needs in commune – improve or not in official’s opinion the public service performance in their institution?
- Is there the direct relationship between the officials’ perceptions of the impact of citizens’ complaint on decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks and their evaluations of public service performance?
- If no, is it possible to identify the indirect influence of citizens’ complaint on how the officials identify the strength and causality relationships between the public service performance and corruption/transparency/rule enforcement/meritocracy.

The public service performance is measured by the officials’ perceptions of the quality and accessibility of public services in their commune council. The individual perceptions are scaled from 1 to 5. The quality of public service performance is reflected by three questions in the survey that refer to:

- Considering citizen's/company application in legally foreseen time
- Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies
- Summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications

The accessibility of public services is expressed by two questions that refer to:

- Queues of citizens/company representatives waiting for considering their applications
- Difficulties in reaching competent official

Citizen voice represents an "external" (to public sector management) factor. It is measured by the officials' perceptions of the following issues (see Kaufmann et al., 2002):

- Clearly defined mechanisms exist so that the users can express their preferences
- Decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks are done based on users complaint
- Clearly defined mechanisms exist to ask the users about their needs

### *Methods*

For the research purpose the whole sample of 858 officials is divided into several sub-samples. There are two categories of sub-samples.

- The first one refers to sub-samples that cover the officials who assert that the role of citizen voice is important in their commune council. It means that they gave the evaluations "4" or "5" for any question describing the citizen voice. Therefore, there is the sub-sample covering the officials who gave the marks "4" and "5" in the question "Clearly defined mechanisms exist so that the users can express their preferences". Another sub-sample covering the officials who gave the marks "4" and "5" in the question "Decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks are done based on users complaint". Similarly for the third question concerning the citizen voice.
- The second category of sub-samples covers the officials who assert that the role of citizen voice is irrelevant in their commune council. It means that they gave the evaluations "1" or "2" for any question describing the citizen voice. Therefore, there is the sub-sample covering the officials who gave the marks "1" and "2" in the question "Clearly defined mechanisms exist so that the users can express their preferences". Similarly for two other questions.

For the whole sample as well as for each sub-sample the correlation analysis (Pearson product-moment correlations) and the Granger causality test are carried out. The results should reveal the differences in the strength and causality of relationships between:

- the officials' perceptions of the public service performance and corruption/transparency/rule enforcement/meritocracy that can appear in the sub-samples.

Here a doubt appears whether the Pearson product-moment correlation is a proper tool of analysis. The use of an ordinary correlation would give misleading results if a research task was to find all factors that determined the public service performance in Polish administration. The high multicollinearity between various variables describing governance and public service management could appear and distort the findings. In such a case the econometric model of simultaneous equations would be a proper tool of analysis (see Kaufmann et al., 2002). However, the aim of this paper is only to investigate which role citizen voice may play for the officials' perceptions of different aspects of public service performance. A correlation will measure the strength of the relationships, while the Granger test will reveal causality between the public service performance and other factors of management in the local administration in Poland.

### Perceiving the Public Service Performance and Citizen Voice by the Public Officials in the Commune Councils in Poland

The investigation based on a questionnaire survey shows that the majority of the public officials perceive the quality and accessibility of public services in their councils as good and very good (see Table 1). They assert that citizens do not experience significant problems with reaching competent officials, they do not stay in long lines and their applications are considered more or less on time (see mean scores in Table 1). Comparing to these very good opinions, the ones about “summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications” are less favorable. Only 45.6% of officials estimate the problem does not appear or appear on little scale in their councils. Almost 17% of officials think that summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications is often or very often. Incorporating “summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications” in the questionnaire survey was aimed at stating if some negative features of bureaucratic behavior such as demonstrating of power or avoiding of risky decision-making appear. Basing on one question the solid statement cannot be created but considerably smaller mean score for this question points at possible problem.

Table 1 also presents the officials’ perceptions of citizen voice. The distribution of responses shows that in Poland most of commune councils have introduced formal procedures that have allowed citizens to express their needs and preferences but these mechanisms have occurred to be inefficient and unaccountable. Considerable part of officials (48%) evaluates that decisions on service delivery and performance of daily tasks were not done based on users complaint. Only 28% of officials assert that the impact of citizens’ complain is strong and very strong in their institutions. The question appears whether citizen voice matters for perceiving the public service performance, governance and internal management by the officials in the commune councils.

Table 1. The distribution of the officials’ perceptions of citizen voice and public service performance, local administration of commune councils in Poland, 2009 – the whole sample

	Perceptions scaled from 1 to 5						Mean score (perceptions scaled from 1 to 5)
	1=very bad evaluation	2=bad	3=medium	4=good	5=very good evaluation	No answer	
Questions on citizen voice	Percentage distribution of responses						
Clearly defined mechanisms exist so that the users can express their preferences	3,3%	4,2%	28,4%	45,3%	17,6%	1,2%	3.71
Decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks are done based on users complaint	27,9%	20,7%	25,6%	18,6%	5,4%	1,7%	2.52
Clearly defined mechanisms exist to ask the users about their needs	4,0%	10,8%	35,0%	35,7%	12,5%	2,1%	3.43
Questions on public service performance							
Considering citizen’s/company application in legally foreseen time	1,3%	0,9%	13,3%	47,8%	36,4%	0,3%	4.16



Clearly defined mechanisms exist so that the users can express their preferences	good and very good	550	4.32	3.85%	4.00	1.78	3.45	2.07	4.22	2.43	4.36	1.63
	very bad and bad	74	3.88	-6.73%	3.91	-0.51	3.51	3.85	4.07	-1.21	4.33	0.93
Decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks are done based on users complaint	good and very good	200	4.26	2.4%	3.95	0.51	3.46	2.37	4.26	3.4	4.35	1.4
	very bad and bad	432	4.24	1.92%	4.04	2.8	3.44	1.78	4.22	2.43	4.39	2.33
Clearly defined mechanisms exist to ask the users about their needs	good and very good	431	4.39	5.53%	4.04	2.8	3.45	2.07	4.29	4.13	4.49	4.66
	very bad and bad	145	3.85	-7.45%	3.94	0.25	3.43	1.48	4.16	0.97	4.12	-3.96

Source: the questionnaire survey of 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils in Poland in 2009

The Pearson moment-product correlations allow to measure of the strength of the relationships between citizen voice and the public service performance (see Table 3). In general, the correlations are weak and very weak, however some of them are statistically significant (in bold in Table 2). They confirm the findings, shown in Table 1, with reference to the mechanisms through which citizens may inform on their preferences and needs.

Table 3. The Pearson moment-product correlations between public service performance and citizen voice – whole sample

Citizen voice	Public service performance				
	Considering citizen's/company application in legally foreseen time	Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies	Summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications	Queues of citizens/company representatives waiting for considering their applications	Difficulties in reaching competent officials
Clearly defined mechanisms exist so that the users can express their preferences	<b>0.258169</b> (0.0000)	0.051709 0.1625	0.020263 0.5844	0.087775 0.0176	0.070496 0.0568
Decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks are done based on users complaint	-0.054489 0.1411	<b>-0.111269</b> 0.0026	-0.069433 0.0606	<b>-0.101910</b> 0.0058	<b>-0.106335</b> 0.0040
Clearly defined mechanisms exist to ask the users about their needs	<b>0.315657</b> 0.0000	0.080613 0.0293	0.062205 0.0928	0.099196 0.0073	0.192511 0.0000

Source: author's calculations based on the questionnaire survey of 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils in Poland in 2009, included observations: 731, probability in parentheses.

Table 2 signals, however, something new. The correlations between "taking citizens' complaint into account" and the public service performance are very weak but what it is interesting they are negative. Three of them are statistically significant. The Granger test suggests causality in a case of only one of these relationships. Table 3 shows only one case

(the pair of P2-P19, in bold) in which we **do reject** the null hypothesis that P2 does **not** Granger-cause P19 and we **cannot reject** the null hypothesis that P19 does **not** Granger-cause P2. It means that if “Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies” (P2) appears often and very often, such a situation explains why the citizens’ complaint (P19) is taken into account to larger extent. However, the very low correlation suggests to be very careful with the interpretation.

In general, the findings reveal rather the modest *direct* influence of citizen voice on the public service performance.

Table 3. The Granger causality between citizen voice and public service performance

Pairwise Granger Causality Tests  
Lags: 2

Null Hypothesis:	Obs	F-Statistic	Prob.
P19 does not Granger Cause P1	802	1.03050	0.3573
P1 does not Granger Cause P19		1.76492	0.1719
P19 does not Granger Cause P2	805	0.18599	0.8303
<b>P2 does not Granger Cause P19</b>		<b>4.66693</b>	<b>0.0097</b>
P19 does not Granger Cause P3	801	0.36512	0.6942
P3 does not Granger Cause P19		1.34443	0.2613
P19 does not Granger Cause P4	802	2.00657	0.1351
P4 does not Granger Cause P19		0.52388	0.5924
P19 does not Granger Cause P5	802	0.12408	0.8833
P5 does not Granger Cause P19		0.17691	0.8379

Source: author’s calculations based on the questionnaire survey of 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils in Poland in 2009. In bold are shown the cases in which we **do reject** the null hypothesis that  $x$  does **not** Granger-cause  $y$  or/and that  $y$  does **not** Granger-cause  $x$ . The same direction of causality for lags =1, 2, 3 and 4

Public service performance:

P1- Considering citizen’s/company application in legally foreseen time

P2- Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies

P3- Summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications

P4- Queues of citizens/company representatives waiting for considering their applications

P5- Difficulties in reaching competent officials

Citizen voice:

P19- Decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks are done based on users complaint

In general, the findings reveal rather modest *direct* influence of citizen voice on the public service performance. This phenomenon should worry because financial incentive system as a mean of improving of the performance of public services seems also ineffective.



Officials do not combine the effects of their job measured by the quality and accessibility of public services neither with wages nor benefits – all the correlations in Table 4 are statistically insignificant.

Table 4. The Pearson moment-product correlations between public service performance and satisfaction from wages and benefits, whole sample

		Public service performance				
		Considering citizen's/company application in legally foreseen time	Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies	Summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications	Queues of citizens/company representatives waiting for considering their applications	Difficulties in reaching competent officials
Satisfaction	wages	0.094689	0.007450	0.033349	0.025361	0.084282
		0.0104	0.8406	0.3679	0.4936	0.0227
	benefits	0.090116	0.017303	0.036025	0.044185	0.079096
		0.0148	0.6405	0.3307	0.2328	0.0325

Source: author's calculations based on the questionnaire survey of 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils in Poland in 2009, included observations: 731, probability below the correlation coefficient

### The *Indirect* Influence of Citizen Voice on Public Service Performance

The findings shown in Tables 1-3 suggest that “taking the citizens’ complaint into account” or not - does not matter directly for the officials’ evaluations of public service performance. It seems necessary to investigate if there is any *indirect* influence. Are there any differences in strength and direction of relationships between public service performance and corruption/transparency/rule enforcement/meritocracy, which can be revealed after splitting of the whole sample of 858 officials into two sub-samples? The sub-sample 1 named “strong and very strong impact of citizens’ complaint” covers the officials who gave the evaluation “4” or “5” for the question “Decisions on service delivery/performance of daily tasks are done based on users complaint”. While the sub-sample named ‘weak and very weak impact of citizens’ complaint’ covers the officials who gave the evaluation “1” or “2” for this question.

#### *The Differences in the Relationships between Public Service Performance and Corruption*

The positive and statistically significant correlations between public service performance and corruption mean that the officials connect both the higher level of public service performance with the lower level of corruption as well as the lowest level of public services with the higher level of corruption (evaluations “4” or “5”) as well as the lowest level of public services with the higher level of corruption (evaluations “1” or “2”). In other words, the officials perceive bribery rather as “sand” exacerbating the red-tape (Kaufman and Wei, 2000) than „grease” helping businesses by getting around red tape (Lui, 1988). In such a case this positive relationship should be as strong as possible and it creates a question if “taking citizens’ complaint into account” raises while neglecting it diminishes the correlation between corruption and public service performance.

- *the strength of the relationships*

Comparison of Tables 5 and 6 shows that in the sub-sample 2 named “weak and very weak impact of citizens’ complaint” all correlation between public service performance and

corruption are becoming lower and even statistically insignificant. When the citizen complains do not matter for the commune council activities, the influence of corruption on public service performance is less distinguishable for the officials .

Table 5. The Pearson moment-product correlations between public service performance and corruption, sub-sample 1 named “strong and very strong impact of citizens’ complaint”

Potential factors influencing public service performance		Public service performance				
		Considering citizen’s/company application in legally foreseen time	Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies	Summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications	Queues of citizens/company representatives waiting for considering their applications	Difficulties in reaching competent officials
Corruption	Jobs purchased	0.173765	<b>0.370702</b>	<b>0.292655</b>	<b>0.339055</b>	<b>0.323431</b>
		0.0243	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>0.0001</b>	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>0.0000</b>
	Budget diverted illegally	<b>0.226318</b>	<b>0.303316</b>	<b>0.301096</b>	<b>0.328914</b>	<b>0.411215</b>
		<b>0.0032</b>	<b>0.0001</b>	<b>0.0001</b>	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>0.0000</b>
	Services purchased	0.122111	<b>0.309469</b>	<b>0.258949</b>	<b>0.391864</b>	<b>0.456776</b>
		0.1148	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>0.0007</b>	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>0.0000</b>

Source: author’s calculations based on the questionnaire survey of 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils in Poland in 2009, included observations: 168, probability in parentheses, correlations statistically significant in bold

Table 6. The Pearson moment-product correlations between public service performance and corruption, sub-sample 2 named “weak and very weak impact of citizens’ complaint”

Potential factors influencing public service performance		Public service performance				
		Considering citizen’s/company application in legally foreseen time	Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies	Summoning citizens/companies to supplement or correct their applications	Queues of citizens/company representatives waiting for considering their applications	Difficulties in reaching competent officials
Corruption	Jobs purchased	0.070064	0.122418	<b>0.147020</b>	<b>0.223677</b>	<b>0.274088</b>
		0.1805	0.0190	<b>0.0048</b>	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>0.0000</b>
	Budget diverted illegally	0.043621	0.139547	<b>0.150082</b>	<b>0.234289</b>	<b>0.257215</b>
		0.4047	0.0074	<b>0.0040</b>	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>0.0000</b>
	Services purchased	0.137183	<b>0.165075</b>	<b>0.135957</b>	<b>0.205878</b>	<b>0.267403</b>
		0.0085	<b>0.0015</b>	<b>0.0091</b>	<b>0.0001</b>	<b>0.0000</b>

Source: author’s calculations based on the questionnaire survey of 858 public officials working in 100 commune councils in Poland in 2009, included observations: 367, probability in parentheses, correlations statistically significant in bold

- causality of the relationships

Does the scope, the citizen’s complains are considered, influence the direction of causality of relationships between corruption and public service performance? The results of the

Granger tests<sup>2</sup> show the relevance of “purchasing jobs” for the quality of public services. The relevance is more visible in the sub-sample 1 named “strong and very strong impact of citizens’ complaint”. In both sub-samples “Difficulties in reaching competent officials” are perceived as a cause of corruption, however, the officials in the first sub-sample assert that these difficulties generate corruption in service delivery while the officials in the second one think that these difficulties are responsible for purchasing jobs. Additionally the officials perceive service corruption as the cause of “Appealing against the administrative decisions by citizens/companies”.

In general, the differences in the direction of causality of relationships are not dramatic. Therefore the further investigation focuses on the strength of the relationships and addresses the importance of a type of a commune council.

#### *The Impact of a Type of a Commune Council on the Strength of the Relationships between Public Service Performance and Corruption*

The strength of relation between corruption and public service performance is magnified by the type of commune. The biggest differences appear in two extreme types of communes. Weak and very weak impact of citizens’ complaint results in drastic drop of correlation in big cities and rural communes – all the correlations are statistically insignificant, while in the sub-sample 1 named “strong and very strong impact of citizens’ complaint” statistically significant correlations are from 0.37 to 0.51 in communes in big cities and from 4.92 to 0.61 in rural commune councils<sup>3</sup>. Contrary in two remaining commune types, i.e. urban–rural and urban the correlations are smaller only in the sub-sample 2 named “weak and very weak impact of citizens’ complaint”.

#### *The Differences in the Strength of the Relationships between Public Service Performance and Transparency as well as Enforcement of Internal Rules<sup>4</sup>*

A type of a commune council is a factor which matters for the strength of the relationships between public service performance and transparency. The most considerable differences appear in two types of councils: urban and rural. In these councils there are no statistically significant correlations in the sub-sample 1 named “strong and very strong impact of citizens’ complaint”. While two aspects of transparency which refer to personnel management and performance of daily tasks, are correlated with “Considering citizen’s/company application in legally foreseen time” in the sub-sample 2 named “weak and very weak impact of citizens’ complaint”.

Very similar findings come from the correlation analysis for the relationships between public service performance and rule enforcement

#### *The Differences in the Strength of the Relationships between Public Service Performance and Meritocracy<sup>5</sup>*

Meritocracy is embedded in two questions referring to: 1) the dependence of salary

<sup>2</sup> The results of the Granger tests are available on the request

<sup>3</sup> The matrixes of the Pearson moment-product correlations between public service performance and corruption for the sub-sample 1 named “strong and very strong impact of citizens’ complaint” as well as for the sub-sample 2 named “weak and very weak impact of citizens’ complaint”, by a type of a commune council are available for the request.

<sup>4</sup> All correlation matrixes are available on the request

<sup>5</sup> All correlation matrixes are available on the request

raise, promotion on professional skills - power; 2) the dependence of tasks to accomplish on professional skills – power. The findings based on the correlation analysis are worrying. Officials combine only “Considering citizen’s/company application in legally foreseen time” and meritocracy. The strength of this combination is influenced by the scale of citizen’s complain consideration but only in rural and urban-rural communes and only in the sub-sample 1 named strong and very strong impact of citizens’ voice.

In big city communes the officials do not combine the quality and availability of public services with meritocracy i.e. they do not see the relationship between their promotion, salary raise or tasks to accomplish and their professional power. All the correlations are statistically irrelevant – citizen’s voice does not matter for this issue.

## Conclusions

The survey of public officials in the commune councils in Poland confirmed – stressed in literature – the problem of ineffectiveness of financial incentives in administration. The officials do not recognize any influence of the quality of their jobs with the satisfying wages or additional benefits. The officials’ responses to the questions in the survey may signal some features of bureaucratic behavior like reluctance to risk in decision-making, bossy attitude to petitioners. Considering the lack of financial incentives encouraging the officials to improve the effectiveness and accessibility of public services the citizen’s voice could be an useful mean of improving public service performance. The meaning of public voice depends to a certain extend on the importance which is recognized by the public officials for the council activity.

The paper aim was to investigate to what extent citizen voice influences officials’ perceptions of public service performance. The findings show that direct impact is rather modest. The existence or nonexistence of procedures in which the citizens can express their preferences and expectations influences weakly the officials’ evaluation of quality and availability of public services. Almost half of the officials estimated the impact of expressed citizen opinions on everyday council activity as weak or even very weak.

Bearing in mind very modest direct influence of citizen voice the author interest was focused on the existence of the indirect one. The question : does the scope in which the citizen voice is considered matter for the officials’ perceptions of links between phenomena of corruption, decision-making transparency, obedience of internal procedures and meritocracy was asked. The paper findings prove that citizen complains have distinguishable influence on the perception of the above mentioned links.

The positive impact of nonexistence of corruption on efficiency and availability of public services can be distinguished more clearly in communes where the citizen’s voice matters. Additionally the officials for who the citizen opinion is important point at the difficulties in reaching competent officials as a potential cause of corruption. In contrary in councils where citizen’s voice is overlooked the officials are not sensitive to this problem. It is quite visible in big city and rural communes.

In councils where the citizen’s voice does not matter the obedience of internal procedures is regarded as an important factor determining the public service performance. Concentrating on procedure obedience and neglecting the citizen’s opinions may result in bureaucratic behaviors.

The findings concerning the links between the meritocracy and public service performance are worrying. In big city commune councils no visible link between meritocracy and public service performance can be noticed disregarding if the citizen’s voice matters or not. Meritocracy is regarded an important factor of public service performance only in small commune councils where the mechanism of citizen’s voice has been implemented. Also there

when the mechanism does not work meritocracy does not determine the public service performance.

In general, the influence of citizen voice on public service performance is indirect. In councils where the citizen's opinion is taken into consideration the officials more clearly see the link between meritocracy and public service performance as well as between corruption and public service availability. Where citizen's opinion matters the influence of meritocracy on service performance as well as of corruption on quality and availability of public services is more sharply perceived. On the contrary the lack of clear mechanism of citizen's voice consideration makes the internal procedure obedience the main factor determining the quality of public service what may result in bureaucratic behaviors.

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