

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNICATION

Zsolt ANTAL\*  
Tamás GYULAVÁRI\*\*

**ABSTRACT:** *This synthesis essay, based on a review of multidisciplinary literature, considers the factors affecting the performance of public service communication, especially of external communication towards citizens, thus structuring and including these factors in a uniform conceptual framework. The examination primarily focuses on the significant differences between the public and private sectors, which also determine the mode of communication. The essay lists the environmental, intraorganizational and moderating factors influencing the implementation and the performance of communication. As a result, the proposed framework lays down several further research directions that, by testing the conceptual model, may contribute to a better understanding of this field of research.*

**KEYWORDS:** *public service communication; public sector; performance*

**JEL CODE:** *K 23*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Public service communication is a somewhat neglected field of research despite its unquestionable significance.<sup>1</sup> Liu and Horsley (2007) state that while most of the time the communication of public sector institutions has more far-reaching social consequences than those pursued by a business enterprise, researchers nevertheless focus primarily on the communication of the private sector. The authors prove how important a role rapid, effective and professional public service communication plays in restoring public peace through the example of the suspected anthrax attack following the September 2001 events. The very well-prepared professionals and the appropriate organizational system played a significant role in managing the crisis situation.

While Katz and Kahn (1978) explicitly name communication as the essence of an organization, there are clearly fewer scholarly studies dealing especially with public service communication. Professional and academic attention, which leans toward the private sector, is partly related to the debate on the conceptual separability or inseparability of the two sectors. The trend, called New Public Management (or NMP),

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\*Associate professor, National University of Public Service, Budapest, HUNGARY.

\* Associate professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest, HUNGARY.

<sup>1</sup>Németh, 2017.

which emerged in the second half of the 20th century, also aimed at doing away with this differentiation (Antal, 2017b; Osborne et al., 2013). NMP played a great role in research primarily beginning to investigate how management practices that were well tried in the private sector could be adapted to public service; however, they often disregarded the differences between certain characteristics and environmental conditions of the two sectors. Here we must note that while most of the Anglo-Saxon literature commonly compares the public sector and the private sector in general, in this essay we consider the for-profit sector - which can be regarded as part of the private sector - and the business enterprises operating within that as reference points.

The aim of this essay is therefore to determine and organize the factors affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of public service organizations' external communication concerning citizens. Since the communication activity of the for-profit sector organizations is an intensively researched field, we perform the analysis in comparison to business enterprises. As a result of this, we will touch upon the differences arising from the peculiarities of the two sectors. The essay does not aim to identify and define all relations or their nature completely (e.g. moderating or mediating). This can however be the task of future research and analyses focusing on certain sub-fields.

## 2. INTERPRETATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNICATION

In order to define public service communication, it is necessary to state in advance what we mean by public service and to separate the private and public sector clearly.

The literature traditionally derives the concept of public service from the laws determining the legal status of employees performing public service. This is the *legal approach* to public service, which prevails in different ways from country to country. In general, it is typical of the approach that it interprets the task at the level of the individuals working in the public service field and not at the level of the organization. The advantage of the legal approach, in this regard, is that it accurately determines those who function by performing public service tasks. However, the variability of the legal approach by country and by era makes its application in academic research difficult.

The *functional approach*<sup>2</sup>, as opposed to the legal approach, classifies the given individual or organization as public service based on the functions performed. In this case, a person or organization that participates in providing public tasks or communal services may be considered as part of the public service system. This interpretation immediately raises the need to clarify such terms as public good and public utility.

The concept of public good (*bonum commune*) is fundamentally an economic approach related to the concepts of public usefulness and total social utility. However, just as economics interprets the concept of utility at an abstract level, public good is also not limited merely to its material interpretation, but covers all factors increasing an individual's quality of life. How the priorities among public purposes are determined is a key issue in the interpretation of public good. Smaller or larger groups in society represent differing and often conflicting interests, among which a choice has to be made. This, obviously, is not an easy task. When setting priorities, in general, those public purposes

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<sup>2</sup> Hazafi, 2009.

that may increase the total social utility to a greater degree should be given priority. However, this appears as the sum of the individual utilities and says little about the social distribution of the utility; as such, it may turn out that, by considering this, an option is chosen as the result of which fewer people will benefit while many will be worse off. In this dynamic perspective, it is also difficult to determine how useful it becomes - over time - at the level of the whole of society if a narrow social group is put into an advantageous position.

It is, however, difficult for the members of society to comprehend these decision-making mechanisms and modes of action, so they judge and simplify the ranking of public purposes, mainly according to their individual attitudes. The interpretive work of Bábosik et al.<sup>3</sup>, by the way, also goes beyond the perspective of total utility: "Public need is a special social need that arises on behalf of the majority of the members of society and which is acknowledged as a community need based on a community (political) decision (...)", The authors approach social need - the satisfaction of which may be manifested in form of a public purpose - from the perspective of the *majority*. Similarly, the representation of the interests of the greatest number possible of members of the community, but at least of the majority interest, also often appears as a criterion in the interpretation of public interest.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, social approval is often a criterion, which is related ultimately to the question of legitimacy. All this means that the priorities are determined by considering the utility detectable at the level of the individual.

In addition to the legal and functional approach, setting the dividing line between the public and the private sectors requires a more sophisticated *organizational approach* and separation as well. Researchers dealing with organizational theory mostly refer back to the research work of Perry and Rainy (1988), in which the authors classify organizations along three dimensions into several overlapping types: a) operating under state or private ownership; b) financed by the public or private sector; and c) control mechanism exercised by the market or the state.

Thus, on the whole, we define the term *public service* in a broader sense, as *the totality of the activities not directed by market mechanisms, but aiming at maintaining or improving the public good and carried out by organizations in which the state holds a majority interest*. In this definition, we did not take into consideration the form of financing, since an activity performed in the interests of public good may not only be realized through state funding, but also through mixed funding.

Based on our definition of public good and public service, we think that public service communication may be defined thus: *By public service communication, we mean the communication performed or controlled by organizations majority-owned by the state that directly or indirectly contribute to efficient and effective public service*.

However, public service communication does not necessarily have to be arranged within the organization. An external, professional agency may perform public service communication tasks just as well as the public service organization itself. It is, however, important that the organization performing the public service takes charge of the content of the communication in every case.

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<sup>3</sup> 2017, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> Antal et al., 2015.

### 3. INTERPRETATION OF PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNICATION

The performance of the organization's activity is a complex term, from which two relevant dimensions are contemplated here: efficiency and effectiveness. The differences between them are well summarized by Hubert et al. (2012). Of the two terms, efficiency is easier to interpret and measure based on the relative proportion of the outcome of the activity performed in the interest of achieving certain goals and the amount of the resources used for it.

This ratio may be interpreted mostly in comparison with other activities and less of itself. Effectiveness is a more complicated term, which refers not only to the measure of achieved effect - as it is known in colloquial language - but which also includes the extent to which the set goal way optimal or in what way it served communal interests etc. In contrast with efficiency, which the English literature briefly explains by the "*doing things right*" expression, the essence of effectiveness can be expressed mostly with the phrase "*doing the right things*". In public service, this means that the state, for example, has to decide in what measure it allocates its resources to the improvement of roads or to the maintenance or creation of kindergartens. Of these two activities, in theory, the one that contributes to a greater extent to the welfare of society in the long run will be the more effective.

Although in the literature, many consider effectiveness and performance as synonyms, from our perspective, efficiency and effectiveness constitute the concept of performance together. Therefore, even though our communication follows well-founded purposes or brings about a strong effect, it is still in vain if it achieves this, for example, only through unaffordable costs and resources. Performance thus is achieved along a sort of balance between effectiveness and efficiency.

We note that the management literature also recognizes further concepts regarding the performance of organizations.<sup>5</sup> From these, it is important to mention the concept of economy, which may be relevant within the public sector, where only the quantity of resources used is taken into consideration during the evaluation.

### 4. DIFFERENCES INFLUENCING THE PRACTICE AND THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC AND FOR-PROFIT SECTORS' COMMUNICATION

In the following, we will explain those factors that are significantly different in the for-profit and the public sectors and which may influence the practice of public service communication and its performance.

In *Figure 1*, we summarized those factors that may be different in the fields of the public and for-profit sectors and that may affect the practice of public service communication. In the following, we examine the differences that may be observed in the implementation of the communication.

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<sup>5</sup> Brignall - Modell, 2000; Kiss, 2005.

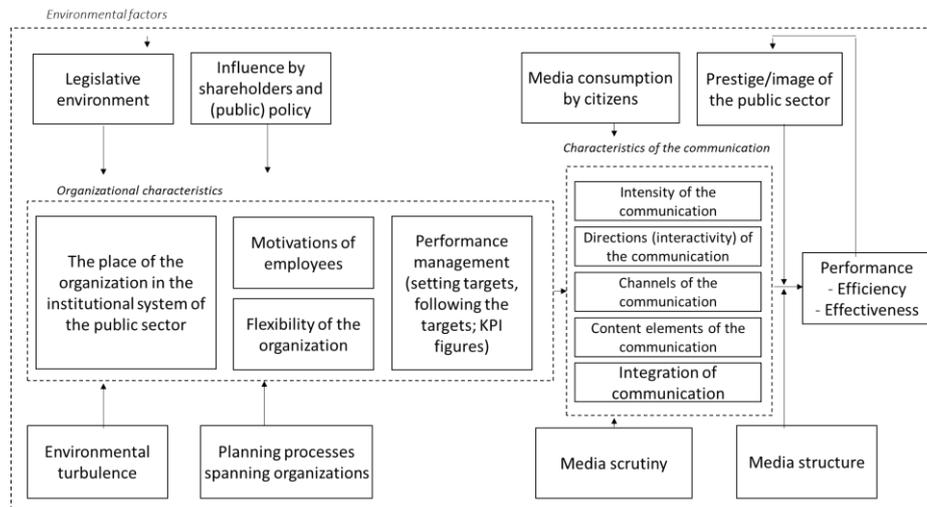


Figure 1: Factors affecting the implementation and performance of public service communication

1. *Indirect external factors* that mainly affect the organization and influence communication through that; such factors are the legislative environment, public policy influence, the state structure, its integrated nature and planning process spanning organizations, and the turbulence of the environment;

2. *intraorganizational factors*, that is the internal structure, the motivation of employees and the forms of performance evaluation;

3. *direct external factors*, that is the media consumption of citizens and the intensity of media attention determine how the given organization communicates; these are therefore such external factors that affect communication that is not through the organization, but which may also directly influence it; and

4. *factors moderating the performance of the communication*. The media structure of the given country that broadcasts and, at the same time, interprets the content of the communication belongs among these, but the assimilation of information may also be influenced by the image or prestige of the mediator channels and by the relationship between the citizens and these.

In *Table 1*, we summarize the differences influencing the communication practice of the public and for-profit sectors.

#### 4.1. Indirect, external factors affecting the operation of organizations

One of the most significant differences between the private and the public sectors appears in the *legal environment*. The legislator regulates the organizations of the public sector more strictly and, apart from the legal status of the employees, it lays down the operation of the organizations differently as well.<sup>6</sup> The more intensive regulation often influences the difference between the efficiency of the sectors. To illustrate this, it is

<sup>6</sup> Gelders et al., 2007

enough if we think of public procurement.<sup>7</sup> Based on international examples, we can see that in certain countries separate laws are applicable even to the communication activity of the private and the public sectors.

The *influence of shareholders and public policy* discernible in the public sector is colloquially, but even in the academic literature, generally mentioned as of a negative character. On the other hand, the selection of the public purposes to be achieved by public service is influenced by the members of society through communal, political processes, and its legitimation is ultimately provided by the political elections. As to its mechanism, it may not show a big difference compared to the private sector, since the “shareholder” (community/voter) also exercises their rights indirectly, like the shareholders of business enterprises. However, it is an important difference that, in the public sector, the “shareholder” of all organizations is the community thus, in theory, each citizen has an equal shareholding. In contrast, in the private sector, the status of shareholder in respect of a given organization may belong to a small circle of people or even to one person. Due to this, the interests of the shareholders may be enforced more efficiently in the for-profit sector. However, in the public sector - even just on the basis of the number of those involved - this happens through much more cumbersome mechanisms.<sup>8</sup> A community of several million individuals, for example, cannot be “summoned,” similarly to the general meetings held at private companies. For this reason, in the public sector the “management”, i.e., the government directing the system, represents the community’s interests under much more complex conditions.

The *volatility and turbulence of the environment* differs pronouncedly with regard to the two sectors. In the public sector there is usually no *competition*; communal services are often connected with natural monopolies. As a result, the lack of competitors does not force organizations to operate quickly and flexibly, so there is a bigger chance of the emergence of slow-reacting, inflexible bureaucratic organizations with a big apparatus. On the other hand, due to the complexity of the public sector, the stability of the environment is not true in all cases.<sup>9</sup>

The dynamics of the demand for services also differ. While on the one hand, consumer demands are constantly changing and can easily be stimulated from the seller’s side (they often deliberately induce new needs due to the competitive situation), on the other hand, a citizen’s expectations of public services are much steadier. Citizens’ needs, such as public safety, national defense, energy supply and food safety, are less open to influence than the demands regarding daily luxury or consumer goods. All of this provides stability in the operating environment of public institutions, but at the same time also strengthens the inflexibility of these organizations.

The management of public administration and other public services poses a challenge for their leaders due to the processes spanning organizations. Since the public sector is extremely complex and strongly fragmented, the processes of planning and realization are generally based on lengthy consultations and intricate coordination mechanisms. The discretion of organizations that are also legally separated is rigidly delimited by their

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<sup>7</sup> Schapper et al., 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Andersen - Jakobsen, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Nutt - Backoff, 1995.

scopes of authority, which restricts efficient cooperation among these organizations<sup>10</sup>, while in other cases they may even have a conflict of interest.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast, in the private sector, those corporate networks that build on the close cooperation of organizations are gaining more and more ground. They are, in general, open to modifying their relations in order to continuously optimize their activity. However, in the organizational network of the public sector, an organization is not able to configure its operational environment in this way, although the network approach is gaining more and more ground in this field as well.<sup>12</sup>

#### **4.2. Intraorganization factors that have a direct influence on the communication practice**

The environmental factors described above affect the operation of the organization and influence the communication practice only indirectly, through organizational phenomena. In the following, we briefly review those organizational concepts that represent these.

The *organization's flexibility/inflexibility* also determines the success of its communication activity. We have already mentioned several of those factors that move the public sector towards bureaucratic, rigid operation.

Next to planning processes extending across organizations, the legislative environment also defines the operation and, among others, the reaction of the organization to external challenges. The effects of this can be detected also in the communication activity. For example, in respect of the integration of digital platforms, the public sector only slowly follows the practices that have become successful in the market and, even from those, it only follows the which can be applied without any obstacles arising from how the organization's operations are regulated.<sup>13</sup>

*Employee motivations* directly affect any organizational activity, hence the practice and mode of realization of communication as well. Several studies deal with a comparison of employees working in the public and private sectors. Based on these, several differences can be demonstrated; however, the results are not always clear-cut. In general, based on the studies, it can be established that, due to the indirectly visible goals and the worse financial conditions, public-sector employees are less motivated and satisfied. This makes the efficient operation of a service provider state and a customer-driven public service more difficult. On the other hand, we can see that there is a smaller difference between those working in higher positions in the two sectors, so the lower commitment can be explained rather by the content of the job role and the material conditions allocated to it.<sup>14</sup>

The existence and scope of *organizational performance management* also defines the performance of communication. In the for-profit sector, measuring organizational performance has a greater tradition, since its foundations were laid down decades ago. In the field of public administration, this trend became popular only in the past decade.<sup>15</sup>

One area of performance management is the setting of goals. The concept of public good is much more abstract and more difficult to quantify compared to an easily

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<sup>10</sup> Webb, 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Boyne, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Kiss 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Meijer - Torenvlied, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Buelens - Van den Broeck, 2007

<sup>15</sup> Kiss, 2009; Takács, 2015.

quantifiable business target, so it is not accidental that - as Klein et al. (2013) also remark - qualitative goals are more typical in the public sector. Due to this, setting up an adequately defined system of goals presents a bigger challenge in the public sector. Consequently, in this field, the goals defining the operation often appear in a less articulated form, or in a form somewhat removed from the mission of the organization. In the latter case, for example, defining the goals focuses not on the interests of the social groups targeted by the organization's services, but it supposes its operational goal to be some sort of organizational self-interest. Hence, often such indicators as increasing the organization's budget or staff headcount, ensuring the mere survival of the organization for a long time or creating predictable career paths are named as ways to measure performance.

#### **4.3. External and environmental factors directly influencing communication practice**

Of the factors directly influencing the practice of communication, we have to highlight the *media scrutiny*. The activity and communication of the public sector and the private sector receive a different amount and substance of attention from both the media and citizens/consumers.<sup>16</sup> The media mainly show an interest in the communication activity of the private sector in connection with specific events. In contrast, the attention of the media regarding the public sector is continuous and intensive.<sup>17</sup> This interest is strongly influenced by the political and power motives of the interest groups behind the respective medium. At this point, however, it is worth returning a little to the issue mentioned earlier, of competition and the lack thereof. The organizations of the public sector generally do not have a competitor in an economic sense, thus, the reaction they receive does not come from their challengers. The role of the competitors is generally taken over by the media, however, with two significant distinctions. The need for communication arising on behalf of state institutions, even if that is based on an obligation to inform, is generally viewed by the media with reservations and a critical attitude. This critical attitude often appears in a political context in the media content. Politically less interesting utterances of simply professional relevance are less likely to make their way into the news. Public service organizations have to deliver their messages to the citizens in this environment, not infrequently amidst strong "media noise". From the organizational aspect, the consequence of this is that public institutions are prone to carry out communication in a conservative, reserved way, mostly aiming to avoid possible conflicts, and they are less willing to take up more creative solutions.

It is worth observing how the attention toward public service organizations is manifested from the community's side. On the one hand, citizens are less interested in public affairs than their own affairs and problems, and they are likely to judge public issues based on how those concern them personally. This is regularly indicated by the pre-election surveys showing the superficial awareness of citizens in respect of public affairs. Media consumption habits and the popularity of tabloid media are also of indicative value. On the other hand, public service communication is an important factor in shaping public confidence. It is therefore an inevitable task for the public sector that the citizens receive

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<sup>16</sup> Boyne, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Karakiza, 2015.

the proper information about the activity of the state institutions through the media despite all the hindering factors.

*Citizens' media consumption habits* are under transformation. As we have mentioned, public service media content in tin itself raises less attention from people than the content generated by the private sector and mostly embedded in the context of entertainment programs. Together with the appearance of online platforms, the structure and content of media consumption also goes through change. In this process, the for-profit sector finds more readily those modes by which it can increase its opportunities to reach consumers and the effectiveness of the information broadcasted to them. The various new media platforms (bloggers, vloggers, YouTubers, platforms of Facebook groups etc.) display the messages of the private sector in such a context so that these messages fit the interests of the given target audience, even if in a hidden form, as well as possible. It is not by coincidence that even organizations in the public sector have started lately to appear on these new media platforms.<sup>18</sup>

#### **4.4. Factors moderating the performance of communication**

Following the factors influencing, directly or indirectly, the practice of communication, we briefly introduce those factors that may modify the effect of the former ones.

In this context, the *pluralism of the media system* means the combination of the communication channels of various ownership backgrounds, audiences and prestige available to public institutions for delivering their messages, and which are those tools, platforms and solutions that may support the public service communication adjusted to the information needs of citizens. Pluralism includes both the right to access information and the freedom to deliver the communication, which must include the right to access the tools of information delivery freely. Research studies have proved that there is a strong correlation between the characteristics and informing activity of the media systems and citizens' awareness in respect of public affairs.<sup>19</sup>

In general, all over the world, the *social recognition of public service* is lower than that of the for-profit sector.<sup>20</sup> One of the main reasons for this is that citizens discern a difference in efficiency in the operation of the two sectors; of two service providers in the same field, they usually consider the one operating in the for-profit sector to be more efficient.<sup>21</sup> Society's opinion of the public sector is strongly influenced by the citizens' attitudes evolved in direct and indirect ways that are basically defined by their experiences while taking up the services provided by the public sector.

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<sup>18</sup> Knox, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Meier - Trappel, 1998; Antal, 2017b.

<sup>20</sup> Heintzman - Marson, 2005; Waraas - Byrkjeflot, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Andrews - Van de Walle, 2013.

THE DIMENSION OF DIFFERENTIATION	PUBLIC SECTOR	FOR-PROFIT SECTOR
<b>EXTERNAL, ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS</b>		
<b>Factors affecting the operation of public administration organizations</b>		
<i>Regulatory environment</i>	Special, stricter laws tailored to the organization (e.g. public procurement, transparency etc.)	Less strict, general legislative environment (e.g. employees' legal status, competition law etc.), occasionally tailored to the given industry
<i>Influence by the shareholders, (public) policy</i>	All citizens are shareholders; direct enforcement of proprietary rights more difficult; public policy consultation processes have greater role	The number of shareholders with decisive ownership is few; more efficient/faster enforcement of shareholders' rights, the appearance of public policy interests is limited
<i>Turbulence of the environment</i>	Relatively stable demands by citizens; lack of activity of competitors	Fast changing consumer demands, dynamic reactions by competitors
<i>Processes spanning organizations</i>	A holistic system of processes, spanning the organizations	Despite the creation of networks and internationalization, organizations are highly autonomous
<b>Factors affecting the practice of communication</b>		
<i>Media scrutiny</i>	Constant, critical media attention on costs and operations as well regarding the communication itself	Moderate media attention; press comments only in extreme cases; rare complaints by consumers regarding supposed advertising costs
<i>Media consumption of citizens</i>	Low interest shown in content of public service topics	Resistance toward direct advertising; reception of advertising messages in new context (e.g. vloggers)
<b>Factors moderating the performance of communication</b>		
<i>Media structure</i>	Infotainment, tabloidization and the constant changes in the online environment make the media appearance of public institutions more difficult	Intensive use of direct channels as online environment becomes more prevalent
<i>Prestige, image</i>	Citizens' perceptions of public service communication and propaganda are blurred	Consumers acknowledge and respect the performance of the private sector
<b>INTRAORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS</b>		

<i>Inflexibility</i>	Bureaucratic, hierarchical organizations and processes	Flexible organizations, small number of levels of hierarchy
<i>Motivations of employees</i>	Mission-based motivation, low material remuneration	Profit motivation, materially motivated management
<i>Organizational performance management</i>	More indirect, hard-to-quantify goals; activity-based performance evaluation instead	Quantifiable goals, performance evaluation based on customer value and shareholder value

Table 1.- The differences influencing the communication practice of the public and the for-profit sector

## 5. DIFFERENCES IN THE COMMUNICATION PRACTICE OF PUBLIC AND FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

### 5.1. Intensity of the communication

The attention of the citizens and the media often focuses on reports regarding the amounts spent on communication. This urges organizations to spend moderately on this activity,<sup>22</sup> sometimes even if the social usefulness of the intensive communication is clearly demonstrable. The planning and process management spanning organizations often raises the questions of which participant in the system should communicate, how concentrated the communication should be or to what extent it should be delegated to organizations at the lower levels.

The prestige and acknowledgement of the role of communication within the organization also affect the amount of resources spent on communication. This is also explicitly shown in what targets are set for communication within the system of performance management, and how the performance of achieving those targets is measured. It is a general principle that the less defined the goals and the communication performance indicator systems (KPI) appear, the less the organization is forced to increase the intensity of communication.

The motivation of those working in the organization also affects the intensity of external communication. In general, a more motivated organization is also more active in the field of communication.

### 5.2 Direction (interactivity) of the communication

Public service activity and the communication supporting it are basically planned based on the priorities established on the forums of public policy and specialized policy consultations. At the same time, communication is the field where there is constant feedback,<sup>23</sup> which helps to fine-tune the activity. While in the private sector, the drop of sales, for example, provides immediate feedback to the company, in the public sector there is less direct reaction received in respect of the activities of each organization, although social media platforms may bring a change in this area as well.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Boy-ne, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Vass, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Meijer - Torenvlied, 2016.

### 5.3 Communication channels

In both the private and public sectors, the choice of media is primarily determined based on the extent to which consumers and citizens follow them. For this, media consumption data must be known, which - in case of the mass media - requires continuous measurement with the help of the agencies registering media consumption. These data are easily collectable, especially in the case of online channels, but regarding offline channels (e.g. letters or notices placed in the mailbox etc.) they become available only through targeted measurements. If it is important for the organization to demonstrate the performance of its communication explicitly as well then this may divert the decisions toward the use of more easily measurable media.<sup>25</sup>

### 5.4 Topical and formal elements of communication

The content elements of public service communication are principally determined by the aim of the communication, which, however, is generally connected with governmental goals and indirectly also dependent on the outcome of (specialized) policy consultations. The difference, compared to the private sector, is mainly that public service communication professionals have less leeway in respect of packaging the message, namely in respect of the creative solutions and formal elements applied. Due to the media attention analyzed above, the public sector's style of communication is usually more moderate and includes less venturesome elements; it tries to avoid popular design elements, often resorts to "officialize" and frequently applies legal references and phrases related to legal jargon.

However, the *comprehensibility* of communication plays a key role in respect of any type of activity.<sup>26</sup> Certain fields are also identifiable in the private sector that operate in a stricter regulatory environment, due to which the consumer cannot help but come across texts that are full of phrases in legal jargon. For example, the scope of financial services is like this; for instance, when taking a loan, the client has to sign a document full of long, for most people hardly or even not at all comprehensible, technical terms. However, the financial service providers are able to explain the content and main characteristics of the services at the recipient's level at the very beginning of the process. Public institutions would also have the opportunity to adopt and apply a similar practice. This change is, however, not only a question of decision, but it is also necessary to create all the system-level conditions for ensuring a wider leeway for communications directed at citizens.

### 5.5 Integration of communication

In the private sector, great attention is given to integrated communication in order to exploit synergy effects.<sup>27</sup> This endeavor is less typical of public service communication and even communication at organizational level has gained ground only lately.<sup>28</sup> One of the reasons for this is the already mentioned planning and communication supervisory system extended across organizations. The task is really not easy. Several organizations are in contact with the citizens on behalf of the state serving the public good, and to ensure communication with them that is consistent with the state's purposes poses especially great challenges to those involved.

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<sup>25</sup> Krajcovic, 2015

<sup>26</sup> Antal, 2017a; Antal - Bódi, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Keszey - Gyulavári, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Wsraas, 2010.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

We have reviewed all those factors that are significantly different in respect of the operation of and possibilities for communication in the public and private sectors, and which, at the same time, determine the communication practices of the organizations providing public services.

Public service communication includes such areas (e.g. education, culture) that resemble, to a greater or lesser extent, the communication used under market conditions, and where the practices known from the private sector may be easily adopted.

However, in other areas, public service communication holds several particularities that may present challenges to managers working in the sector. In the examined field, academic empirical research is considerably scarce and therefore the majority of the essays found in the literature are primarily based on professional experience. This suggests the necessity of research in this direction. Furthermore, for reasons of brevity, this essay could only touch upon such phenomena and correlations that have a significant effect on the evolution of the requirements of public sector communication and on the communication leeway of the public sector. These phenomena and correlations outline several possible future research directions, from which we primarily highlight the following here:

1. it is important to learn how the given public service organization evaluates communication, its role, importance, and which are those factors of organizational sociology that determine this evaluation;

2. it may be a separate research direction to assess in what form the performance of communication appears in organizational performance evaluation, and what effect the currently used evaluation system has on the operation of the organization;

3. on what consideration it is based and through which processes a given organization establishes its public service communication's target system are critical questions, since - as we highlighted when discussing performance - it is not enough to operate efficiently, but the right direction has to be kept as well and, in the case of public service communication, this requires an especially complex analysis and evaluation, the research modelling of which may also improve the quality of future planning; and

4. on the international scene, an increasingly prevalent research trend is represented by studies of the easy comprehensibility of communication. The possibility of replacing the officialese and jargon still dominant in the public sector also raises several linguistic, communicational and management theory questions, the interaction and combined effects of which may require deeper, research-based analyses.

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