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**NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN LATVIA:
VARIATIONS IN OPENNESS TO CUSTOMER REQUESTS IN PUBLIC
AGENCIES**

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Autobiographical note

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Abstract

The transformation of public administration in Latvia represents a commitment to continuous modernization. New Public Management (NPM) has under different names, such as "reinventing government" been proffered as an improvement of productivity and quality in relation to traditional public administration characterized by bureaucracy. In addition to adopting managerial systems from business, advocates of NPM include promises to alter the relationship between public services and the individual. Commitments to transparency and service declarations customarily follow in the wake of new forms of governance marked by privatization and contracting out of public services.

This article reports on an empirical investigation of responsiveness to customer requests in a sample of Latvian public agencies at the national and local level. The survey included requests for basic information about the agency regarding the budget, expenditures, staffing, information services, and complaint procedures. In analyzing the findings, it is hypothesized that variation in service levels will correlate with agency type and the language spoken by the client.

I ncreased attention on the citizen, as consumer of public services should be seen as only one aspect of current efforts to reform public administration. Internationally this movement goes by the name of New Public Management, but nationally may be designated as Reinventing Government in the United States and the *Neues Steuerungsmodell* in Germany. Overall, NPM programs seem to emphasize simplifying public administration and allowing individuals more choice and influence on governmental decision-making. These reforms of public administration may encompass management methods, devolution, deregulation, market reforms, and customer-oriented services. However, scholars usually agree that these change programs are far from being unified in content and direction (Christensen and Lægreid 2001).¹

In Latvia, as in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, reform has often meant the creation of new institutions and the recruitment of a new generation of public officials. As Anders Åslund has remarked, contrary to the general perception, the communist administration was not all that large, and most countries saw their bureaucracies swell with the transition (Åslund 2002, 373). Although reformers stressed the need for a quick end to the old Soviet administrative model, actual changes in procedures and behaviors of Latvian public administration have only occurred gradually (Kress and Miller 1997).

This article focuses on openness in public administration in Latvia. Does the public have easy access to current information about the government, and how well are they treated when they ask? In the recent past, “for communism, secrecy was even more sacrosanct than openness is for democracy” (373). Thus, although openness or transparency is a salient issue for public administration in any democracy, it seems particularly pertinent to the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. Actually, increased transparency has been one of the most striking changes in the government of some of these countries (Sundakov 2001, 23). In other countries, the lack of

a rule-of-law tradition in government may impede the acceptance of openness as a general rule. The treatment of citizen inquiries depend in these countries mainly on the cultural norms of each public agency and the ethical values of individual civil servants (Stewart et al. 2002).

Public Administration Reform and the Citizen

Some scholars have been concerned that administrative reforms contribute to the conversion of citizens into users and consumers, who must depend on their ability to use individual ‘voice’ to influence public services rather than their collective political power (Johansen 1998). In his important work on privatization and empowerment, Joel Handler argues that decentralization, delegation, and privatization are moves toward local control (1996, 5). However, for subordinate groups, whom Handler sees as quite powerless in dealing with public and private agencies, these reforms “might only mean re-regulation under another master.” To work as intended, this type of reform presupposes citizens who take an active part in keeping themselves informed about government affairs. In the literature on modern public management, citizen ‘voice’ is important because well-informed service recipients and citizens can pressure governments for better services and exit when necessary. Competitive pressures can then be used to improve public sector performance (McCourt and Minogue 2001, 75).

A proponent of citizen involvement in administrative processes argues that it serves to increase the accountability of bureaucracies:

First, it lets public administrators know how citizens perceive the performance of an organization; second, it provides participating citizens with information that can help them make judgments as to what that part of government should and can do; and third, it leads to better government and increased confidence in it (Rosen 1998, 91).

According to Frieder Naschold, there is a trend within the OECD reforming countries towards quality control of public service production through citizen and consumer participation. “The systematic incorporation of citizens into administrative quality policy as part of a democratic process of devolution within the modern state is, in addition to the activation of the competitive context, a further essential element of the far-reaching modernisation process currently under way in the public sector of the OECD countries” (Naschold 1996, 8). Another proponent of this view is the British sociologist Paul du Gay (2000, 109):

It is citizens, or their elected representatives, who originally decide that some needs will be met by state provision (whether directly or through use of private contractors). Naturally, citizens, whose tax revenues finance these services, have a keen interest in various features of the services, including economy, efficiency, and effectiveness . . . Even when they are not themselves direct ‘customers’ of some services, they are likely to have and express views about those services in some way, shape or form.

These views can be expressed through institutionalized channels such as public hearings, polls, advisory committees, ombudsmen, and organized interest groups (Rosen 1998), while this article focuses on the less formalized, immediate contact between civil servants and individual members of the public. However, the prominent American public administration scholar, George H. Fredrickson, argues that marketization, as an important feature of contemporary public management, means that “the distinctions between institutions that are essentially public in character and institutions that are profit making are now fuzzy” (Fredrickson 1999). Although Latvia has carried out the privatization of most businesses, some large utilities (natural monopolies) and transport companies remain in state hands, including Latvernergo (electricity), Latvijas Gāze, Latvian Post, and the railways (Latvia. Ministry of Economy 2002).

The Citizen–Customer Dichotomy

Managerial reforms in the public sector have meant the gradual evolvement of the individual from subject to citizen to customer. The evolution from subject to citizen means that people not only enjoy political rights, but also are entitled to claim benefits and services from state and administration (cf. König, in Wollmann and Schröter 2000, 47-66).

The public is both a citizen and a customer with respect to public services. As citizens, members of the public have a right to comment on services regardless of whether they directly use such services (Goldsmith and Page, in Lane 1997, 230). The combination of the roles of citizens and consumers involve serious problems according to some scholars of public administration. In his praise of bureaucracy, Paul du Gay claims that the focus on ‘customer satisfaction’ as a primary value of public sector management downplays the political context within which management processes take place. In particular he is concerned with diminishing political accountability (du Gay 2000, 109-110). This may be particularly true of state-operated utilities that are more likely to view their users as customers rather than citizens, and therefore less likely to be open to public inspection.

Trust

In surveys and studies of public administration, trust is usually discussed from the point of view of the public’s trust in political institutions. For instance, recent surveys document that the population of Latvia expresses relatively low trust in parliament, the national government, the civil service, and the political parties (Eurobarometer 2002, 24).

However, trust in government is a problematic term. People often show greater trust in particular public services, especially on the local level, while distrusting government or

parliamentary bodies in general. “It seems quite possible for citizens to maintain a generalized cynicism or mistrust of ‘government’ whilst simultaneously being reasonably satisfied with many of the specific public services they actually make use of” (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000, 143).

In literature on management and organizations, trust is mainly seen as a result of a reciprocal process between multiple actors:

At the beginning of a social encounter, people do not assume that the other person is trustworthy, but they suspend suspicion about the other person . . .

Trust is established when both parties have confidence in the trustworthiness of each other, have favorable attitudes toward each other, and have had positive experiences together (Levi 2001, 103).

For Levi, the key to good communication between people is trust. If the level of trust is low, there will be decreased communication, less cooperation, and more conflicts that are harder to resolve (103). Ridley claims that “Managerialism is easier to practice than customer-orientation,” since “customer-orientation requires rather more in terms of ethics and personal commitment” (Ridley, in Wollmann and Schröter 2000, 148). From this point of view a failure of officials to provide general information about their agencies when asked should be seen as an indicator of a lack of trustworthiness as a shared value of the national political culture.

The lack of cooperation between official and client is not only dependent or resolved by trust “but by implicit and explicit power relations” among the parties, to paraphrase Palmer and Hardy (2000, 29). Despite the rhetoric of public administration reform, the official may still regard members of the public as subjects, and – in the Latvian context – as alien non-citizens, rather than as clients with the right to know. Former U.S. Vice-President Al Gore has been quoted as saying that trust in government depends on telephones being answered promptly and politely (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000, 174). Although this statement hardly expresses the whole

truth about citizen trust in government, it at least indicates a significant step in developing openness and trust. The way bureaucrats respond to simple requests for information by phone or mail can therefore provide us with a better grip on current problems in making public administration in Latvia more open, trustworthy, and accountable.

Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this research was to measure the responsiveness of public officials to simple requests for information about the general affairs of their organization, such as the number of workers and the size of the budget, see questionnaire in the Appendix. In the spirit of the ethnomethodologist Harold Garfinkel, it was not the information to be collected, but the experience of the information collectors that was to be the focus of the research (Coloun 1995). As a consequence, an important part of the design was to collect data for each organization about response time, the number of calls required, and the number of persons that had to be contacted in order to get the required information. In addition to these objective data, the interviewers also recorded their subjective impression of the friendliness of the respondents and other impressionist data. Since a large minority, 36 percent, of the population uses Russian as its first language, the research design also included a test of customer-orientation towards Russian as well as Latvian speakers.

A sample of thirty-seven organizations was selected as objects of research. This sample included all ministries, parliament, several independent agencies, some large state companies², and the seven largest municipalities in Latvia. The research team considered that these institutions would represent the most advanced proportion of the public sector with regard to openness. The team also expected to find whether there were any differences in providing

information between different types of institutions: central government, enterprises, or city councils.

Since all the questions in the survey regarded matters belonging to the public domain, there was reason to anticipate that professional and experienced officials would be willing and able to provide adequate answers. The interviewers therefore also recorded data about the position of the respondent.

The survey was conducted by telephone and by mail. All thirty-seven organizations were contacted by phone in both Latvian and Russian by a team of four interviewers, all university students, in November 2001. Each interviewer presented herself or himself by name and as a student at the University of Latvia to increase the probability of getting a positive response.³

Soon after the telephone interview, each of the sampled institutions received a supplementary questionnaire in Latvian. The mail survey included brief questions about information services, opening hours, and complaint procedures. In all the research team recorded seventy-four interviews from the thirty-seven organizations in the sample, a response rate of 100 percent for the telephone survey. In addition the team received twenty replies to the questionnaire, a response rate of 54 percent, by the end of January 2002.

Context

The Latvian Constitution and a recent Freedom of Information Law provide the basis for public access to information from the government. The Constitution gives everyone the right to address state institutions and local government and get relevant answers to all inquiries. The Freedom of Information Law of 1998 provides specific rules to ensure public access to government information. The law states that “Generally accessible information shall be provided to anyone who wishes to receive it, subject to the equal rights of persons to obtain information.

The applicant shall not be required to specially justify their interest in such information, and they may not be denied it because this information does not apply to the applicant” [Chapter III, Section 10 (1)]. The law provides for both oral and written requests for information, and includes procedures for making complaints if a request for information is denied. The Freedom of Information Law does not exempt any particular public institution from its provisions.

The majority population of Latvia speaks Latvian, which also serves as the official language of the state, according to the Language Law of 1992. Although a sizable minority of 44 percent speaks other first languages, mainly Russian, these languages are not recognized by the state for being on an equal footing with Latvian. In principle, government on all levels, including the major cities, conducts its business in Latvian only. However, since it can be safely assumed that most adult Latvians understand and speak Russian in addition to their first language, all officials can be expected to understand and answer questions in this language. This pertains particularly to the larger cities, including the capital Riga, where the majority population speaks Russian.

This report concerns then two central aspects of openness in public administration. First, openness in relation to legal requirements about freedom of information, and second, openness in relation to the language used by the client. It is our hypothesis that the knowledge, customer-orientation, and trust of the officials concerned will in practice temper both aspects. With regard to the Law on Freedom of Information, this means that *unwillingness* to answer questions in Latvian indicates either lack of knowledge, low customer-orientation, or trust. On the other hand, with regard to language, *willingness* to answer questions in Russian shows not only knowledge, but also high customer-orientation and trust.

Findings

Oral Information

The public institutions in the survey varied greatly in size. Eight reported that they had less than one hundred employees, seventeen ranged between 100 and 280, and four utilities had from 1,200 to 7,500 workers. Seven institutions provided no answer to this question, which otherwise was the question most easily answered by the respondents as can be seen in *table 1*. The officials gave different explanations for their refusals. One reason for denying information about the number of workers embodied a claim that this information could only be provided if the caller visited the ministry concerned in person. The locating of trust solely in face-to-face contacts, that is the need to see a face, can be found in many societies also among clients, according to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000, 158). Another explanation was based on the status of the caller, as when a respondent claimed that his agency was not authorized to provide answers to students. In other instances of failure to provide answers, the official simply argued that he or she did not know, or that the information had to be provided by the boss, who just happened to be busy or absent.

Table 1. Agencies answering questions concerning the numbers of workers, budget size, car ownership, and transportation budget.
N=37.

	Positive answers	Percent
Workers	30	81.1
Budget size	10	27.0
Cars, owned or leased	20	54.1
Transportation budget	6	16.2

Despite the team's expectations regarding the availability of budget data, the question on budget size got surprisingly few factual responses. Instead of replying orally, the officials

occasionally told the callers to look elsewhere for this information, either in the official gazette, *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, or on the web. However, when the students then asked for a printed version of the budget, copies were actually received from thirteen (35%) of the public institutions.

The high response rate to the question of car ownership was also somewhat unexpected. This item was included because the use and abuse of official passenger cars have for years been an on-going issue in the Latvian press. Essentially, cars remain the most visible aspect of the old 'nomenklatura' system that compensated party officials in a variety of non-salaried ways. Evidently, the constant media interest in this issue gives the respondents good reason to keep themselves up to date about the number of official cars available in their own institution.

On the other hand, the survey question about transportation expenditures was perceived as either too intricate or elicited responses about confidentiality. Institutions that willingly informed about their total budget size, hesitated or refused to give any information about how much money they spent on transportation.

How much effort was expended in getting answers to phone requests for information? Only occasionally did the members of the research team receive answers from the first available person on their first call. On average, for each institution the interviewer made 2.4 calls and spoke to 2.3 different people for 3.4 minutes. The maximum effort to get information from one public institution required seven separate telephone calls, six contact people, and speaking for ten minutes. Regrettably, this extra effort did not necessarily increase the probability of actually receiving the information. The impression was rather that the caller was sent on an unending trip to an ever-receding destination.

Overall, the phone survey succeeded only partly. In 40.5 percent of the seventy-four cases the interviewers received no useful information. However, since each institution was contacted twice (in Latvian and Russian), the actual success rate was higher. In the end only five

institutions refused to provide any oral answers, and two of these nevertheless sent requested information by email. The three remaining non-responders included the two ministries of Internal and Foreign Affairs, and the telephone monopoly, Lattelekom. Despite the sense of futility felt by making a large number of wasted calls, the students were satisfied by getting at least some answers from 92 percent of the surveyed institutions.

Although most public institutions have established information or PR offices to deal with the public, the research team encountered a broad range of expertise in their quest for information. In addition to the press, information and PR officers, respondents were just as often found among accounting, finance, budget, administrative, and personnel people. Workers in the transport or garage section occasionally answered the question about official cars. Evidently, giving proper answers to seemingly simple questions such as those included in the survey required both specialist competence and specific authority.

Whenever the students received an incomplete or no answer by phone, they were instructed to ask whether information could be supplied by mail. In 40 percent of the cases (n=30), the informants promised to send information by email, letter or fax, the remaining 60 percent said no. Actually, little of the promised information materials, such as copies of the budget, was ever received, or the information was incomplete.

Despite the apparent lack of cooperation from civil servants in their efforts to gather information by phone, the students encountered little hostility. On the contrary, they felt that a plurality (47 percent) was friendly and courteous, even in cases when officials provided no substantial information. On the other hand, a minority (14 percent), appeared negative or hostile, while the remaining 40 percent handled the questioning in a neutral manner. In conclusion, with regard to openness and trust, Latvian public institutions still have some way to go to fulfill

reasonable oral requests from individuals seeking basic information about them. To get proper answers requires persistence and patience on the part of the citizen.

Written Information

While oral requests for information can only be satisfied with a great deal of perseverance what is then the likelihood of receiving responses to written requests? All thirty-seven public institutions received a brief letter from the research team requesting data about their information services to the public. Only twenty (54%) responded. However, the written answers showed that most of these public institutions have designated offices or officials responsible for public relations, information, and contact with the press. Nearly all produce periodical reports and occasional booklets, while some institutions also make regular use of TV and radio. In addition, many public institutions organize meetings, seminars, and conferences directed at particular audiences, and even use the Internet for web chats. The increasing availability of laws and regulations on the Internet represents an important step in eliminating past secretiveness. The limited scope of this research project did not include an assessment of the effectiveness of these channels of information and participation. However, an overall impression remains that Latvian public institutions appear better at producing prepackaged top-down information, than engaging in a dialogue with their users from the bottom-up.

As long as Latvian public administration is still evolving, the problems of openness may be viewed as growing pains that will be eliminated over time. However, the disinclination of many civil servants to provide basic data about their agencies to people who request it, may as well indicate an underlying, but emblematic problem of some post-Communist societies. In a comparative survey of ethical attitudes among civil servants from the United States, Poland, and the Russian Federation, Debra Stewart et al. (2002) found significant differences with regard to

rule-of-law orientation. In weighing their responses to a number of fictionalized, but realistic dilemmas, Russian officials tended to prefer higher principled reasoning while their American and Polish colleagues would be thinking about law and duty (287). While principled reasoning represents a clear improvement on decision-making based on fear, bargaining, or personal relationships, it is precisely the lack of respect for the law in Russia that concerns Stewart et al. Among Latvian civil servants only further research can determine their orientation to the rule of law as a salient criterion for decision-making.

Multivariate Analysis

Closeness to Customer

How can variations in openness between public agencies be explained? The survey data allow for the exploration of at least two hypotheses that are related to agency type or language of the client. The first hypothesis draws on the assumption that public institutions – ‘welfare state institutions’ – producing services directed at individuals or groups will be more open and trusting compared to agencies providing collective goods, such as foreign affairs and defense, characteristic of the ‘night guard’ role of the state.⁴ Some of the latter institutions may also be more wary of providing information that is considered sensitive even if not secret.

Table 2. Positive answers to questions concerning the number of workers, budget size, and car ownership according to agency type. N=37.

Percentages.

	'Night guard' institution (n=12)	'Welfare state' institution (n=13)	City council (n=7)	Utility company (n=5)	Total (n=37)
Workers	75	77	100	80	81
Budget	33	23	43	0	27
Cars	58	54	86	0	54

Although the data are too sparse for significance testing, the results in *table 2* indicate that the city councils are most helpful in answering questions, while the state-owned monopolies are the most reticent. It seems that these companies identify themselves with private firms that regard core aspects of their business as privileged information. This confirms George Fredrickson's observation about the fuzzy role of market-oriented public companies mentioned above (Fredrickson 1999). However the expected difference between 'welfare' ministries and 'night guard' ministries failed to materialize.

Despite the variation in response rate, the effort it took the research team to get proper answers did not vary much according to agency type, except that the city councils required fewer calls and appeared friendlier than other public institutions. On the other hand, the 'welfare state' ministries showed greater hostility to being questioned.

Language

Our second hypothesis seeking to explain differences in the response rate concerns the use of language by the client. Since Latvian is the official language, we should expect that speakers of other languages, such as Russian, would be less successful in getting requested information, see *table 3*.

Table 3. Answers to questions concerning the number of workers, budget size, and car ownership according to the language spoken by the client.

N=37. Percentages (*n*).

	Latvian	Russian	Total
Workers	88.2 (15)	75.0 (15)	81.1 (30)
Budget size	28.6 (6)	25.0 (4)	27.0 (10)
Cars, owned or leased	70.6 (12)	40.0 (8)	54.1 (20)

Note: Totals vary since missing observations are excluded from the table.

Latvian speakers succeeded in getting the information they requested about the number of agency workers, budgets, and cars more readily than Russian speakers did. They also felt that they were treated with more courtesy, see *table 4*.

Table 4. Perceived attitude of officials to questioning according to the language spoken by the client. Percentages (n). N=73.

	Latvian	Russian	Total
Negative attitude	8.1 (3)	19.4 (7)	13,7 (10)
Neutral	40.5 (15)	25.0 (14)	39.7 (39)
Friendly	51.4 (19)	41.7 (15)	46.6 (34)
Totals	100.0 (37)	100.0 (36)	100.0 (73)

Regardless of the language spoken, interviewers felt well treated by the respondents on most occasions. However, the few situations when the respondent seemed negative or hostile occurred more often when they were asked questions in Russian. This negative attitude could be expressed by asking the caller to speak in Latvian or consistently answering Russian-language questions in Latvian.⁵ In exceptional cases, Latvian speaking callers were asked to use Russian when asking people who obviously were not front-line personnel for information about official cars and transportation budgets.

Because of the small numbers involved, the results have not been broken down and analyzed according to the level of government. At the local level, only the larger municipalities, with a plurality or majority of Russian-speakers, have been included in the survey. For this reason one may speculate that the data set gives a more favorable picture of the treatment of Russian-speakers than would be the case if one also had included the smaller, but mainly Latvian-speaking towns, such as Talsi and Valmiera. Nevertheless, the findings

presented in *tables 3 and 4* accord with the results of the Norbalt living condition studies of 1999 (see Aasland & Fløtten 2001, Aasland 2002). This comprehensive survey documents that minority ethnic status and lack of citizenship do not appear to be the main causes of social exclusion in Latvia. Members of the Russian-speaking minority group are not particularly disadvantaged regarding jobs, income, education, and social participation. The results of the openness survey corroborate the impression that problems of transparency in Latvian public administration exist independently of the ethnic divide.

Conclusion

In their adaptation of central elements of New Public Administration, such as customer-orientation, Latvian public institutions have embraced certain aspects of this policy more readily than others. Telephone inquiries are usually answered courteously and even in a friendly manner. However, this does not mean that the officials concerned are willing or able to provide substantial information about their organizations. In particular the major public institutions of the state, such as the ministries and the major independent agencies, compare poorly to the administrations of the major cities of Latvia. This discrepancy indicates that institutions on the state level still have some distance to cover in order to unshackle the secretiveness of the past, and the distrust of people who show an interest in their business.

These observations suggest alternative courses for further research on transparency in Latvian public administration. First, the findings of the four student researchers in this study could be broadened to include the experiences of a broader sample of Latvian citizens and residents about access to information from public agencies. An extended survey would allow for the inclusion of smaller municipalities that were excluded from this study.

The results of the mail survey showed that many Latvian state agencies and municipalities seek to establish channels of communication and participation, such as information offices, publications, electronic services, conferences, and committees with citizen representation. Thus, another direction for future research would include an evaluation of the effectiveness of these organizational structures in providing transparency and trust in government. A third approach would focus on the values of civil servants to ascertain whether the practice of openness is anchored in agency cultural norms, the acceptance of rule-based government, or other ethical principles.

However, the findings also may have more immediate and practical applications. The Freedom of Information Law of 1998 provides a necessary element in securing a legal basis for openness in administration. This law could be fruitfully reinforced by formal commitments of the government similar to the Citizen's Charter program introduced in Great Britain and in several Commonwealth countries since 1991 (McCourt and Minogue 2001, 115). These charters emphasize customer-orientation in public service and are often combined with mission statements making pledges of good service by local authorities. When effective these programs "have changed the behavior of counter staff" (Ridley, in Wollmann and Schröter 2000, 146). Applied to Latvia, this strategy could well mean the strengthening of the functions of municipal government, which already shows a higher level of customer-orientation and openness, regardless of the language issue. In a recent national survey, a large proportion, 48.5 per cent, regarded local self-government as one of the ways that people best can participate in decision-making with a ranking just below voting and use of the media (Vilka et al. 2002, 142).

Advocates of New Public Management mainly see openness as a tool for making public administration more efficient, responsive, and accountable, but some writers take a

broader view. The prominent American economist Joseph Stiglitz claims in a recent World Bank publication that transparency in government contributes to successful economic development and combating corruption. He also argues that if authorities are honest towards citizens, trust in government and public institutions will follow (Stiglitz 2002, 27-44). In Latvia economic development, corruption, and lack of trust in government are all matters of concern. Latvia's application for membership in the European Union will require the republic to open its governmental affairs to increased insight from abroad and from its own inhabitants. Openness and trust will also be promoted by additional efforts made to integrate minority residents into the mainstream of Latvian society and politics, through Latvian language training and citizenship.

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Notes

1. Some critics go even further, in claiming that public administration reform suffers from an excess of rhetoric and false claims of precision, implying “the danger that the language of reform can take on a life of its own” (Palmer and Hardy 2000, 190).
2. These companies included Lattelekom with a majority of private shareholders, but with a monopoly on land-based telephony, and the Latvian Shipping Company (LASCO), which was privatized in June 2002.
3. However, since the official teaching language of the university is Latvian, this information may well have served as a clue to some respondents that the caller could speak and understand Latvian even if his or her name was russophonetic.
4. Institutions classified as ‘night guard’ institutions were the Saeima, the Chancellery of the President, the State Chancellery, the ministries of defense, finance, foreign affairs, justice, and economy, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Civil Service Directorate, State Control, and the Bank of Latvia. The ‘welfare state’ institutions were the ministries of agriculture, communications, culture, education, environment and regional development, internal affairs, and welfare, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the Directorate of Naturalization, the Privatization Agency, the State Agency of Social Security, the State Mandatory Health Insurance Agency, and the State School of Administration.
5. Since the interviewers were bilingual these cases have been registered as answered.

Appendix 1

Sampled public institutions

Municipal governments

Daugavpils

Jelgava

Jūrmala

Liepāja

Rezekne

Rīga

Ventspils

State institutions

Saeima (parliament)

Cabinet of Ministers

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ministry of Defense

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Welfare

Ministry of Communications

Ministry of Economy

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Ministry of Culture

Ministry of Education

State Chancellery

President Chancellery

State Control

Bank of Latvia

Directorate of Naturalization

Department of Citizenship and Immigration

Privatization Agency

State Agency of Social Security

State Mandatory Health Insurance Agency (VOVA-A)

State School of Administration

Civil Service Directorate

Utilities

Lattelekom

Latvijas Gāze

Latvenergo

Latvian Shipping

Agency "Latvian Post"

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for interview by phone

Introduction: My name is (name of interviewer). I am a student at the University of Latvia (Department of Political science) and need some information regarding your agency/organization/institution.

1. (A) Can you tell me how many people work at your central office?
(B) If you cannot give me this information now, can you send it to me? By regular mail or email?

2. (A) Can you tell me the approximate total size of your budget for this year (2001)?
(B) If you cannot give me this information now, can you send it to me? By regular mail or email?

- 2.1. (A) Can you please send me a copy of this year's budget?
(B) If you cannot send it, where can I get hold of it, or read it in person?

3. (A) How many passenger cars do your organization own or lease for the use of your civil servants?
(B) If you cannot give me this information now, can you send it to me? By regular mail or email?

4. (A) How much money did your organization, in this year (2001), spend on the acquisition and servicing of transportation for the central office?

(B) If you cannot give me this information now, can you send it to me? By regular mail or email?

Data Registration Form for Interviews

Form is completed by _____

1. Date, time:

2. Language of the interview:

Latvian

Russian

3. Institution:

4. Answers to items in the questionnaire.

5. How many people did we have to speak to in order to get our answers?

Respondents:	Name:	Position:	Phone:	Duration of call:
First				
Second				
Third				
Fourth				

6. Overall quantity of calls:

Overall duration of the interview:

7. Did we get the requested information by phone (specify for each item)?

Yes

Partly

No

8. If we got the requested information, how detailed is it?

9. The respondent's attitude to the interviewer and the questions?

10. Did we get a promise from the respondent to send answers by email or by regular mail?

Yes

No

11. Did we get the promised written answers and information?

Yes

By regular mail

By email

No

12. How quickly did the respondent send answers?

13. Was it what we requested?

Yes

No

Notes:

Mail survey

1. Has your institution (municipality) established a one-stop service or information center or office to provide service and information to the public?
2. Is there a separate structural unit which is responsible for public information in your institution (PR center or press center)?
3. What does your institution do to inform inhabitants about services and to ensure contacts with society?

	How often?	How many copies?	Free of charge?	For a fee?
Regularly publishes				
annual reports				
Issues information				
booklets				
Publishes newspapers				
or journals				
Produces TV or radio				
broadcasts				
Other activities (please specify)				

4. When can I visit your office (visiting hours)?

5. How can someone make a complaint to your institution? Can it be done orally?

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