# Local political leadership in eyes of local bureaucrats in Poland

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**Abstract:** Bureaucrats not only implement policies formulated by politicians but they also can see operation of local political leaders from a very close distance. Therefore their specific perspective may give us an interesting insight into governance anatomy. This paper adopts this particular perspective studying styles of political leadership in Polish local governments.

What employees of local administration expect their political leaders to be like? And how they actually perceive their styles of managing local government units? These are two empirical questions to be answered on the basis of the survey of ca. 12,000 employees of local administration in Poland, conducted in September and October 2025.

The paper refers to typology of styles of leadership developed by P. John and A. Cole (1999) who distinguish between four types: city boss, visionary, caretaker and consensus facilitator. Thanks to relying on methodology similar to earlier studies, results of bureaucrats' perception may be compared with perception of general public.

There are following hypotheses to be tested in the paper:

- General preferences and actual perception of styles of local political leadership are similar in case of average local bureaucrat and local citizens;
- Responsive styles of governance are strongly preferred, but this preference is especially strong in large cities;
- Bureaucrats occupying top managerial positions are more likely to accept authoritarian style of leadership then street level bureaucrats;
- Multi-term mayors (occupying their positions for several years) are perceived as more authoritarian comparing to recently elected mayors.