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# Quality of local democracy (or deficit)

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# The main questions of the presentation

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- Is there any democratic (community) engagement in inter-municipal cooperation activities?
- What's about the local democracy?
- What is the role of local community in inter-municipal cooperation activities?
- What are the main motives and drivers for inter-municipal cooperation from the point of view of local governance and community stakeholders?

# The local democracy and limitations for community involvement (Klok, Denters, 2004)

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1. The selective involvement of citizens.
2. The unequal positions of actors in participation (dominates those with higher resources and power position)
3. A lack of transparency in policy processes (who is accountable for the outcomes of local policy)
4. Biased outcomes towards the interests of actors that participate.
5. Inconclusiveness of deliberative processes (creation of mutual understanding and consensus do not always result in these outcomes).
6. Open conflict and intensified interactions.
7. The increased power of public officials (introduction of participatory arenas alongside the traditional representative arenas might result in the 'empowerment' of other actors such as public officials).

# Different experiences on inter-municipal cooperation: the role of different actors

## (A) CAUSES AND RATIONALITY

- **Motives**
- **Drivers**
- Initiatives
- External factors (legal constraints, EU funds, administrative system, etc.)

## (B) PROCESS

- **Actors**
- Networking
- Communication
- Power, etc.

## (C) EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Different forms of municipal cooperation arrangements:

- Voluntary
- Compulsory
- Private-public
- Enterprises, joint ventures,
- Nothing happens..

# Different experiences on inter-municipal cooperation: where to find local democracy and the role of different actors

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**Diversity of actors:**  
(A) Administrative and political actors (elected mayor)  
(B) Local councilors  
(C) Upper decision-making actors  
(D) Local stakeholders (community, business)

**Initiative and drivers for cooperation (bottom-up and top-down):**  
(A) Internal efficiency (networking) and trust building  
(B) Central state pressure  
(C) Services quality characteristics

**Cooperation benefits and outcomes:**  
(A) Economy of scale  
(B) Public interest  
(C) Internal cooperation and bottom-up effects

Types of inter-municipal cooperation engagements in Lithuania (bottom-up and top-down approaches)

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**(A) VOLUNTARY COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Single purpose contracts for cooperation.** Mainly cities and smaller neighbouring suburban municipalities on public transport provision and public health services. **STRONG TERRITORIAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASPECT.**

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**Joint undertakings/venture or agencies.**

Ad hoc projects **in culture or tourism.**

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**(B) CENTRALLY IMPOSED PARTNERSHIPS (COMPULSORY)**  
driven by EU Structural Funds requirements in public-infrastructure:

EU structural support for investment planning and coordination on the regional level (e.g. waste management).

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Centrally-imposed reforms on public health sector and social services (e.g. multifunctional social services centers)

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# Variety of actors in fostering IMC

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- **LOCAL DECISION-MAKING LEVEL:** mayors of municipalities (directly elected); municipal, administration, councilors.
- **LOCAL PARTICIPATORY LEVEL:** local NGOs, communities, business associations.
- **CENTRAL STATE LEVEL:** authorities in provision of top – down reforms, MPs;
- **INTERMEDIATARY:** Municipal associations do not play important role as initiators or coordinators.

# Dataset and methodology

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**Aims of survey:** (1) reveal the scope and potential for inter-municipal cooperation and (2) to identify the differences in coordination mechanisms used by different interest groups which are operating in the field of municipal services delivery.

**Purposive sampling procedure:** to define the list of respondents in municipalities directly engaged in inter-municipal cooperation and implementation.

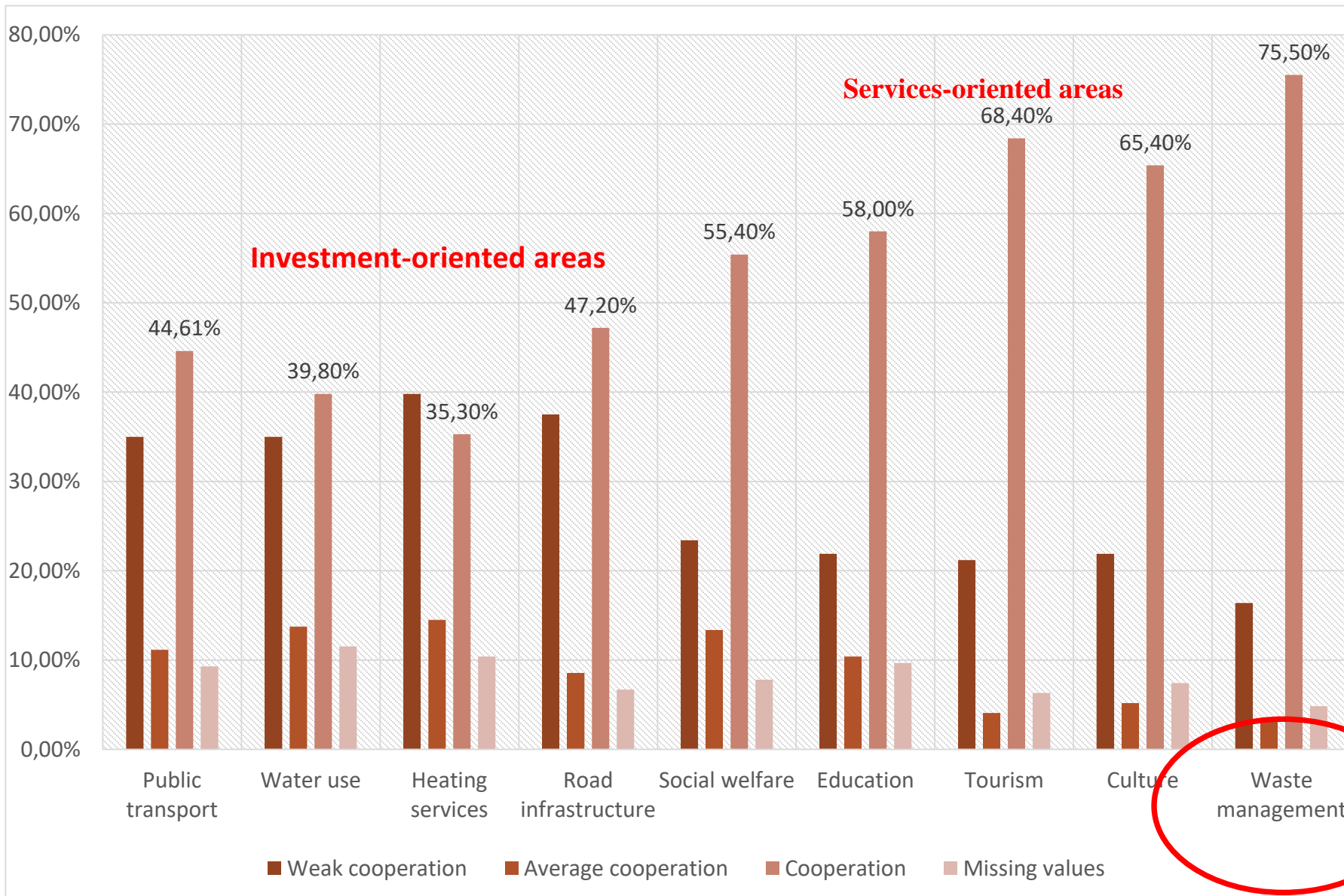
**Different groups of respondents:** local actors (mayors, heads of municipal administrations, municipal officers, local Council members, local public services enterprises and local community representatives)

**Timing:** January-May, 2018, using electronic platform.

**Final dataset:** N=284.

A research is a part of a broader project "Inter-municipal cooperation and implementation of public services: options for network governance and public interest dilemma in Lithuania" research project, No.S-MIP-17-3, financed by Lithuania Council of Science.

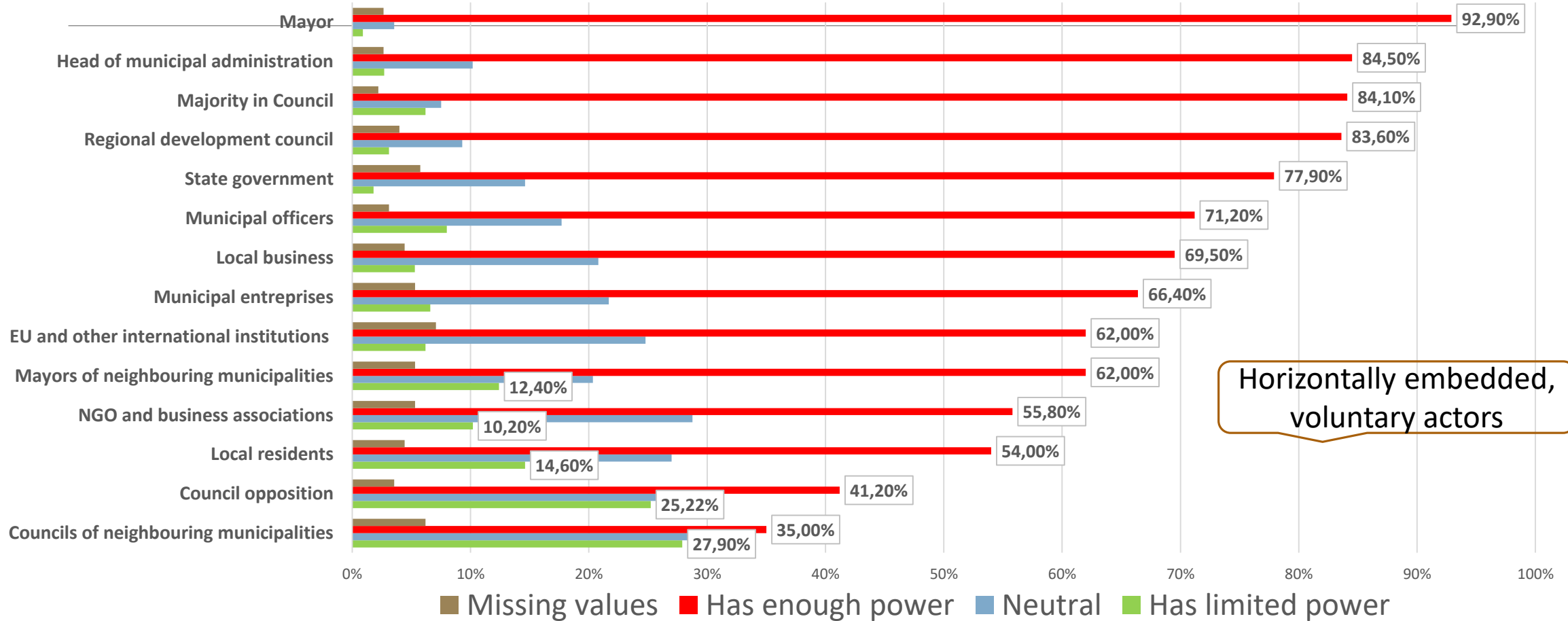




Inter-municipal cooperation areas in municipal services, percentage, Likert scale (n=284).

# The perceived power of authorities and agents for strengthening inter-municipal cooperation (n=284), percentage, Liker scale


Horizontally embedded, governance actors




Horizontally embedded, voluntary actors


# Few hypothesis to reveal

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(H1) Higher power of local administrative political actors  more intensive networking, trust and services quality.

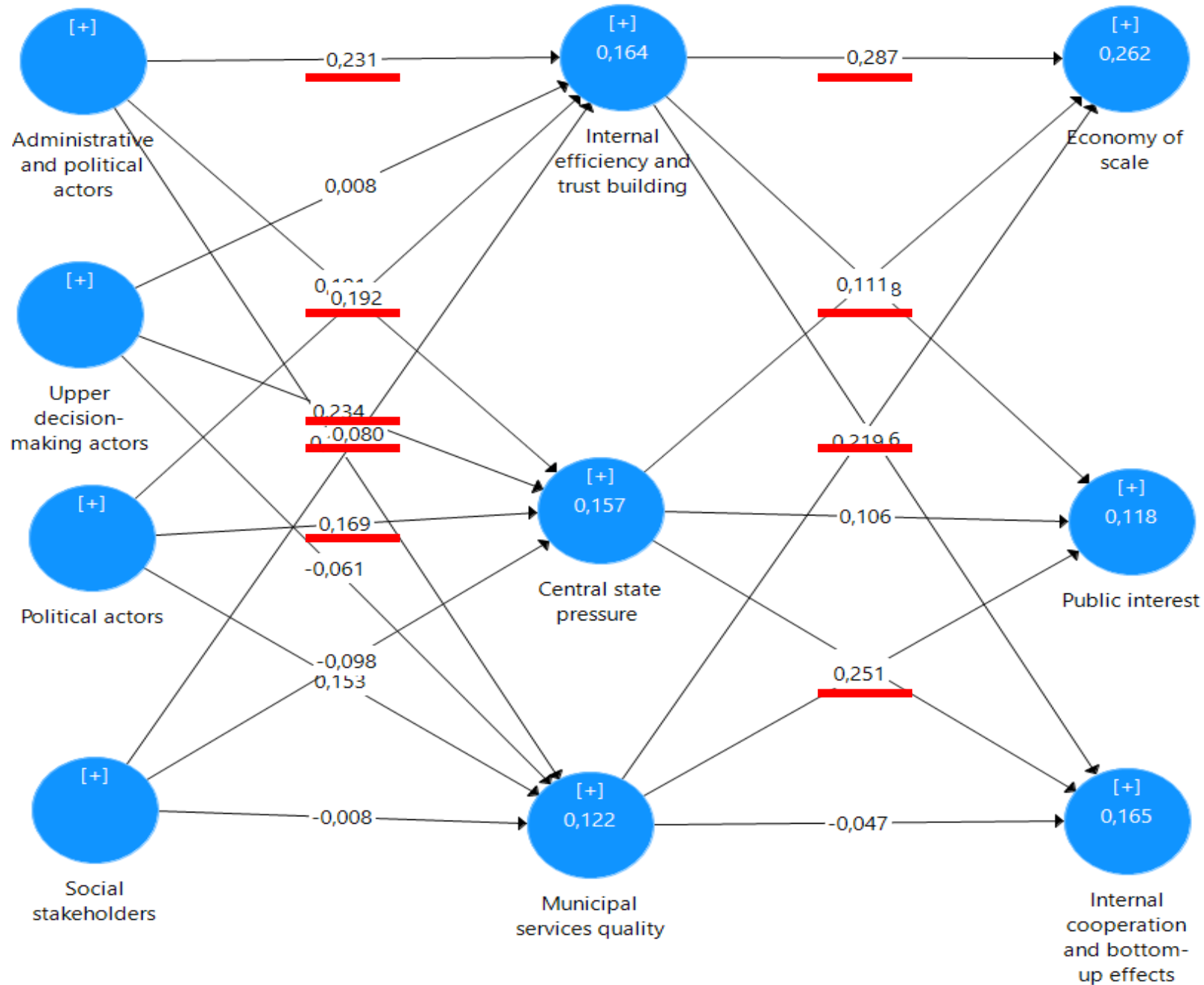
(H2) Higher power of social actors  more intensive networking and trust and services quality.

(H3) Higher power of upper-decision making actors  more intensive central state pressure.

(H4) Higher internal efficiency (networking) as driver  higher public interest and bottom-up effects.

(H5) Higher state pressure as driver  higher economy of scale.

(H6) Higher services quality as driver  higher economy of scale, public interest and bottom-up effects.



# Measurement model: main results

(Partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling approach)

Results	P-values
<b>Administrative and political actors</b> -> Central state pressure	0,046
<b>Administrative and political actors</b> -> Internal efficiency and trust building	0,046
<b>Administrative and political actors</b> -> Municipal services quality	0
Central state pressure -> Economy of scale	0,043
Internal efficiency and trust building -> Economy of scale	0
Internal efficiency and trust building -> Internal cooperation and bottom-up effects	0
Municipal services quality -> Economy of scale	0,004
Municipal services quality -> Public interest	0
<b>Councilors (local political actors)</b> -> Central state pressure	0,044
<b>Councilors (local political actors)</b> -> Internal efficiency and trust building	0,006
<b>Upper decision-making actors</b> -> Central state pressure	0,005

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Main results of the measurement model: the role of different municipal level actors

# Finally, summarizing points

1. The rising **IMPORTANCE OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL ACTORS** in driving and shaping IMC.
2. Central authorities play the crucial role in defying the IMC agenda, especially in terms of economy of scale, austerity and public sector optimization narrative.
3. **THE RISING POWER OF COUNCILORS** (local political actors) is related to higher levels of internal efficiency (networking) and trust building relationships but also reflects reliance on central authorities.
4. **HIGHER LEVELS OF INTERNAL EFFICIENCY (NETWORKING)** and trust building (learning, negotiating, exchanging) somehow correlate with the economy of scale and public interest (!) related to perception of local inhabitants' needs.
5. **FRAGMENTED BOTTOM-UP INITIATIVES** for cooperation.
6. **WEAK BARGAINING AND PARTICIPATORY POWER OF LOCAL SOCIAL STAKEHOLDERS** (communities, NGOs, local citizen groups, business associations). No traces of deliberative arenas for discussing services quality and accessibility.

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Thank you and enjoy the conference!

