

## **NEW ECONOMY Section**



# THE PHENOMENON OF CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS (LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDIES FROM THE WARMIA AND MAZURY REGIONS OF POLAND)

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***Abstract.** Extracting resources for the common good in all of its aspects has been carried out primarily to ensure greater security for society. Proper functioning of the public sector, including management of extracted private sector resources, requires outlining precise procedures to ensure the efficient use of those resources. Unfortunately, standing in the way of those objectives is the obstacle of public officials who try to use their position to reap illegal benefits. It is believed that corruption and nepotism along with protectionism are wide spread phenomena that occur in all political and economic systems. Their amplification occurs within a defective system of public management. A high level of these pathological phenomena create social inequality and facilitate criminal activity; a lack of action taken to eliminate corruption leads to a breakdown of the basic functions of the state in general and to its individual elements, in particular local governments. The study presents the problem of corruption in the public sector, including nepotism and protectionism. Based on own studies conducted among employees in organizations of local governments, the Authors attempt to assess the state of this negative phenomenon in the public sector. Therefore, the goal of this research is to diagnose of corruption, nepotism and protectionism in public sector organizations and to propose activities that reduce these adverse phenomena in local government at the municipal level.*

***Keywords:** corruption, nepotism, favoritism, public sector, municipality, local government employees.*

## 1. Introduction

The use of privileges that are associated with the exercise of public authority has been the subject of scientific interest since ancient times. The

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attitude of Socrates and Plato [1] as well as the works of all thinkers of that period largely influenced the issues of abuse of power by politicians and authorities in general. It is also worthwhile to consult Confucius, whose thoughts contained in the Analects of Confucius are found to be relevant even today. The lifestyle of those in authority contrasted deeply with the poverty and backwardness of the majority of common people. Power was in the hands of the educated but often soulless new class of aristocrats. Many of them abused their privileges, drawing benefits and pleasures from that most vile profession which is war. The cold indifference of authorities to the misery of the common people created a situation in which social contrasts stood next to petty jealousy, political pushing and shoving between countries and leaders, fraud, corruption and decadence [2].

Analyzing works of the masters of past centuries, it becomes noticeable that emotions surrounding corruption throughout history have grown along with a strengthening of dictatorship in central government and with the ruling elite's and landowners' desire to reap benefits on each level of the social structure. An increase in public awareness owed to the progress of civilization in past decades and a change in management systems of states has engendered a growing interest in the allocation of all resources of public-legal organizations. In Poland as well, where each citizen transfers half of his income (in the form of taxes, duties, etc.) to the state budget in order to maintain the common good, an interest in what is happening with the common good, how it is managed and used, has not decreased but has increased. On the basis of Polish scientific study, it is often emphasized that the problem and size of the pathology associated with corruption, nepotism and favouritism, is a phenomenon that took root in a system in which public confidence in the state and its functionaries was destroyed, as it was in many post-communist countries [3]. Along with the establishment of local governments and the evolution of new elites at the local level, there follows a process of creating new solutions in a local level system of governance, including a forward motion for the management of public-legal organizations. As analysis on the use of public resources including financial resources presents, the first years of local government existence were full of examples of the threat of corruption due to the implementation of unclear principles for public management [4]. Analyzing literature relating to the public sector, it can be assumed that corruption and issues connected with it are widespread and common in all political and economic systems. Its size and increase occur primarily in countries with flawed systems of public administration and depend on the level of implementation of democracy and on the civic maturity of ruling

elites. A high level of corruption creates social inequality and builds facilities for criminal activity in a very wide dimension. If there is no activity aimed at the elimination of this pathology, it leads to a breakdown of the basic functions of the state in general, and to its individual elements including local governments. Reports of national studies indicate the prevalence of nepotism and favoritism and corruption in public sector organizations [5]. Therefore, in conducting research, many barriers that prevent or hinder the execution of test procedures are observed. Over the past 27 years of changes in the management system of the state, many disturbing phenomena associated with the use of public sector resources have been noticed. Contrary to expectations of the emerging democracy, corruption and cases generally described as unethical bureaucracy, paid favoritism, fraud, breach of trust, abuse of power and conflict of interest began to occur increasingly [6]. Although anti-corruption restrictions and prohibitions in the Act on Local Government exist, much negative phenomena still occurs, including acts of corruption among local government officials. Examples of anti-corruption regulations are mandates for publishing declarations of assets; a ban on conducting business based on the resources of the municipality and a ban on the employment the family members [7].

This paper discusses the problem of the occurrence and scale of corruption and associated phenomena such as favoritism and nepotism in the organizational units of the public sector. Research was conducted with an anonymous questionnaire among workers performing municipal tasks in the Warmia and Mazury regions. It should be emphasized that the studies are a self-assessment of pathological phenomena in the organizational units in which the surveyed employees work. The aim is to diagnose the scale of corruption, favoritism and nepotism in public sector organizations and to propose activities that reduce the incidence of these adverse phenomena at the municipal level.

## **2. Local Governments and the New Public Management**

Before 1989, Poland basically corresponded to a totalitarian state model. Almost all issues related to the life of citizens were governed by the legal dictates of the ruling party. The aim of changes introduced in the late 80's and early 90's was to subjectify citizens in their private and public life. However, an analysis of legal acts introduced after 1989 in Poland shows that the private and public life of society has become more and more regulated by the public sector. The public sector, including local

governments, took over the implementation of many tasks that traditionally were carried out directly by families, village councils and citizens. By this process, institutions and public sector organizations created rules for human behavior throughout the entire social and economic system. These phenomena and processes can also be observed at the local level and therefore have become the interest of various scientific disciplines. Previously carried out studies show the very wide range and scale of the functioning of those local communities and systems which are public-legal organizations. They show characteristics of social groups gathered in the local governments, the influence of particular groups on the decision-making processes, the volume of resources (including financial) and groups of the largest beneficiaries of goods remaining in the resources of the municipality. Positive changes at the local level are associated with an increase in activity of citizens in the implementation of tasks in their near environment and also an increasing interest in public affairs at the local level of governance. Unfortunately, local authorities often do not accept the growth of local activity and awareness of social responsibility by residents of the municipality. The widespread expectation that local authority should be understood as having an inherent responsibility to shape acceptable and fair relationships in all spheres of social and economic life from the perspective of the community are not always met. As Alojzy Zalewski indicates, the negative phenomena still may have negative consequences for the exercise of the power in local government. This refers to:

- the formation of “local power” elites representing their own and their party majority’s interests rather than societies’;
- the dominance of party affiliation over the criteria of professionalism in the selection of people for local government and local government employees;
- and also includes the occurrence of the phenomena of nepotism, clientelism and corruption [8].

Due to the tasks coming from state law, power inherent in the area of own income and satisfying basic citizen needs, the principles of New Public Management in local government, especially municipal, are based on years of experience creating systems of local government in Poland (and based on examples taken from other countries), on local government studies (including those carried out today) and on the achievements of science and practice for businesses. Moving away from Weberian bureaucracy and the transition to effective management require an elimination of hazards, including such pathologies as corruption, nepotism

and favoritism. These phenomena result, among other things, in the need for change in management and building of new procedures, including forming clear relationships between local authorities and citizens. It also desires to transfer (or decentralize) tasks to public benefit organizations which can effectively allocate the resources entrusted to them. The New Public Management system also strives to implement the experiences of efficiency in the public sector of other countries with well-established democracies, such as, among other things, a transparent management of all the resources of these organizations [9]. The ongoing process of transition to rational principles of management and prevention of negative phenomena within the public sector still meets resistance, which was evident, *inter alia*, in the procedures of passing the Act on county government and the Act on province governments. The political and clerical power at province and central levels strongly disagreed with the transfer of their power and their influence over decisions to local authorities of districts and provinces [10].

The existing system of local government is based on three levels in the structure of state governance based on the principle of subsidiarity. According to this principle, the municipal government takes the most important place in the system of local government as it is executing the tasks of fundamental importance to citizens. All these tasks are performed by the municipal offices and are controlled by representing and executive municipal bodies. Thus, according to Western European culture, the community organized in municipal self government through their representatives gathered in the municipal council control the executive body, hence the local authority. In creating a municipal government, the principle of decentralization of public authority was implemented, as well as a moving away from the system based concepts of a single state power in which all elements of the structure were formed hierarchically and tasks carried out under the supervision of the higher level. Tasks performed by local government units, both own and commissioned, are functions of the state and therefore must be in compliance with the fundamental principle of a democratic state ruled by law. This means that the performance of local governments duties should function not only within the state Acts, but also under elementary principle of legality. Within the local government, new relationships and principles of cooperation are created, including the elimination of all forms that breach widely accepted behaviors.

### **3. The phenomenon of corruption, nepotism and favoritism in scientific literature**

Isolating the resources of the public sector from the area of private ownership has created new quality in the management of all resources on a local and global scope. Thus, the duality of property was created: private and common. This required not only a determination of the precise rules protecting common resources against their appropriation or use inconsistent with rules of a social contract, but also to protect private property against appropriation attempts by the government on each level of the public sector structure. Due to the fact that, in practice, improper management of public sector organizations is not associated with the material responsibility of politicians or people in charge of these organizations and all employees of the public sector, (which differs in the case of the owners of private resources) a phenomenon of appropriation and unauthorized use of functions to enrich themselves has evolved on the one hand, and on the other the lack of a strong response from state authorities to eliminate these phenomena has occurred. The activities of state within the research area described in this study mostly refer to the effects and not the causes of the phenomena that make up the pathology of management in the public sector. Legal decisions and conducted research usually refer to the phenomenon of corruption as it regards to gaining personal material benefit or a promise of its transfer. Less common is the issue of favoritism or nepotism. Corruption usually refers to material benefits, such as receiving a sum of money, an object of economic value or debt cancellation. However, favoritism refers to receiving some personal benefit, which covers a wide area of goods that might satisfy the recipient's need and that cannot be directly converted into money, e.g., an honorary title or decoration, trainings in certain skills, sexual intercourse [11] or nepotism. In the area of nepotism, there arise activities that benefit immediate family members, provision of more favorable positions to persons from the closest political arena in the process of recruitment or promotion or in achieving benefits from allocation of the common good. Nepotism is particularly dangerous because it leads to a deepening of negative phenomena manifesting in the low qualifications of people employed in the public sector [12].

In the very complex structure that is the public sector, to be successful it is necessary to implement a wide range of procedures to create a kind of technology for decision-making. In countries that have built their democratic systems after a long loss of sovereignty, it is hard to



implement transparent management methods. Hence, rules to protect the public sector from all kinds of pathologies are required. Quoting Susan Rose-Ackerman, it can be asserted that corruption is any use of public authority for private purposes. A classical understanding of it is the attitude of a public official who is susceptible to temptation and unable to disassociate him or her from unauthorized benefits [13]. Using one's position in the public sector can assume various forms: from corruption in misusing financial resources to an informal support used to gain a competitive advantage. Referring to the Civil Law Convention on Corruption, [14] corruption is requesting, offering, giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, a bribe or any other undue advantage or its prospect, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behavior required of the recipient of the bribe. According to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, a domestic law adoption was imposed with measures that describe a number of behaviors related to the bribery of public officials in the public sector [15]. In Poland in the legal Act on the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, corruption is defined as directly or indirectly promising, offering, giving, requesting, or receiving by any person any undue benefits (personal or otherwise), for himself or any other person, or accepting proposals or promises of such benefits in exchange for an activity (or abandoning an activity) in the exercising of public functions or in the course of business [16]. Therefore, it may be assumed that nepotism and favoritism belong to this area. Upon scrutiny of scientific studies, newspaper articles and information of organizations carrying out research on the phenomena of this pathology, it can be undoubtedly concluded that the concept of corruption, nepotism and favoritism is perceived clearly as something wrong, harmful and worthy of condemnation, regardless of the cultural and political system. It should be emphasized that this pathology is protected and developed by the secrecy and confidentiality of exchange of benefits between parties. As the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau stipulates, corruption in offices will occur when there are unclear procedures of administration and competitive tendering and receiving the documentation of executed tasks as well as the lack of diligence in performing controls in the public sector [17].

Any behavior contrary to the law and, above all, use of the opportunities arising from the function in the public sector for the implementation of private interests [18], is part of the pathology of the system. This is manifested in specific human behavior or the phenomena occurring and an example of this phenomenon can be called electoral corruption. A consequence of vote-buying is usually the implementation of

local policy based on favoritism and nepotism. Although the Act on Local Self-Government established many standards to protect members of the legislative and executive bodies, heads of municipal entities and also local government employees against behavior incompatible with socially acceptable principles, it is largely a legal requirement easy to circumvent. The current Act on Local Government [19] describes the issues connected with employment in the municipal office and performing work for the community on the basis of a civil contract and regards the benefits of acting on behalf of self-government as councilor. It should also be emphasized that Article 24 of the Act on Local Government introduced the obligation to declare property status and place it in the Public Information Bulletin.

Another regulation designed to protect public officials in local self-government is the Act on Public Competitive Tendering [20] requiring the use of certain procedures in the choice of which contractor will realize the tasks for the municipality. Also, due to the fact that the basis for the functioning of the public sector is transparency, on 6<sup>th</sup> of September, 2001, the Act on Access to Public Information [21] was ratified which requires sharing and publishing almost all information about public affairs with outstanding claims in the Public Information Bulletin. Very important in eliminating corruption, although it has not yet been ratified, was a resolution in the Public Finance Act of 27 August 2009 [22] related to budget planning based on the task-system of income and expenditure. As a result of these activities, principles of controls, internal audits, management control and coordination of internal audit in the public finance sector units have been implemented. However, based on research conducted on the implementation of the performance budgeting [23] and a results of control carried out by the Supreme Chamber of Controls [24], it can be assumed in the currently functioning arena that neither the performance budget nor management control are factors reducing the negative phenomena in the functioning and management of resources remaining at the disposal of the public sector, including public finance at the local level.

Referring to the phenomenon of nepotism, it must be emphasized that it has occurred since the beginning of population grouping into large clusters and it has involved those positions that do not require special qualifications relating to the exercise of their functions, that is, occupations and roles based on the talent of a particular skill such as doctors or musicians [25]. Nepotism is a word that comes from Latin and its original meaning was 'nephew' or 'grandchild'. In literature it often referred to a

system of privileges that church leaders bestowed on their relatives [26]. Today it is believed that nepotism is synonymous for nomenclature, the clan, coterie, cronyism, clique or partisanship [27]. Primordial societies considered inheritance or appointment to office of those closest to one's self, often family, as something normal. However, they did not tolerate nepotism in religious systems where nepotism violated the fundamental canons of faith [28]. Favoring members of family without criteria of qualifications was a widespread phenomenon especially in systems that were undemocratic and hierarchical [29]. Generally it can be assumed that nepotism means favoritism of people characterized by specific features that distinguish them from the entire population and which are taken into account during decisions making. Most often such favoring is not socially acceptable because it does not refer to the positive features that distinguish a person or group of people. In fact, this favoring may be of immediate family members or people from immediate surroundings who belong to the same party, creed, gender or sexual orientation. The phenomenon of nepotism is often associated with intimidation and extortion [30]. As indicated in studies, nepotism characterized by staffing and allocation of the dignity of the members of family is most common in Third World countries [31]. Undoubtedly, nepotism is a threat to the rational management in the public sector, because favoritism based on familial relationships, buying influence or influencing processes of shaping legislation and policies for obtaining undue advantages [32] are currently diminishing state and local governments' resources as well as improperly using resources meant for the common good. Research conducted in Poland and Central Europe show a very large area of corruption and nepotism in offices and among politicians [33]. Therefore, legal solutions taken by the state authorities usually refer to the prohibition or restriction of hiring of relatives or creating positions for family relationships of public officials. However, the practices of competition recorded in the Act on Government Employees [34] are not unequivocal because they are devoid of clear procedures for selecting candidates for a specific office position. The procedures for hiring in the local governments' companies are not regulated causing the composition of the recruitment committee to be conducive to the phenomenon of nepotism. Legal solutions are filled with formal requirements; however they do not offer precise substantive requirements and a system for how to verify those requirements.

Regarding the phenomenon of favoritism, it must be emphasized that it is part of the broader pathology of the management system. Its aim is to provide lucrative positions for the circle of close friends or party

supporters. This phenomenon is always incompatible with the interests of the state and society [35], especially when it involves bribes or promises of receiving them and when it is connected with the possession of power in the organizational units of the public sector [36]. In the public sector, it refers to the use of resources meant for the common good and the system of management of these goods. Entitlements and misuse of power of persons performing managerial functions, especially the competencies [37] of politicians, carry the possibility of influencing different kinds of decisions in the interest of certain persons or groups. The phenomenon of protection where on one side there is a protector (supporting the efforts of the person) and on the other side a person or company seeking to obtain benefits, may strengthen to form a closed circle and, consequently, illustrates the model developed by Friedman [38]. The phenomenon of favoritism may both create interpersonal relationships and also lead to a kind of servitude or subordination. That is why this phenomenon is settled in criminal law as particularly dangerous in the management of public sector goods. But up until 1989 procedures dominated by a policy of favoritism within personnel was not regarded as inappropriate [39]. As a result of political changes, new regulations were designed to eliminate the phenomenon of favoritism. Although the Penal Code of 1997 does not define “favoritism”, articles 230 and 230a read that any person who misuses influence in state institutions, local government, international or national organizations or in a foreign organization or misuses public funds in an attempt to arrange some matters in exchange for financial or personal benefit, can be sentenced from 6 months up to 8 years [40]. It can be assumed, from this statement, that the person named in this act as decision-maker of the allocation of public resources is a person performing a public function.

#### **4. Nepotism, Favoritism and Corruption – the Survey Results**

In order to investigate the scale of the phenomena of corruption, nepotism and favoritism in organizational units of the public sector, research was conducted among employees of municipal governments in the Warmia and Mazury regions. Sampling research and the study area had purposeful dimensions. The study presents a fragment from a broad policy relating to personnel of government employees surveyed in Warmia and Mazury. The study involved nearly four thousand employees, mainly employees serving in municipal offices (about 1600 people) and other local government employees. In this group, municipal education workers were

isolated, most of which were teachers of primary and secondary schools (almost 1,200 people) not only because they constitute the largest group among local government employees but also because their participation in the management of the municipality is the largest in number other than farmers [41]. The article presents the issue of corruption in public sector organizations in local government at the municipal level of Warmia and Mazury regions. The study was conducted at the turn of 2014 and 2015 by specially trained interviewers who under a deadline distributed questionnaires to employees working in randomly selected organizations and gathered the results into a specially prepared urn in order to ensure complete anonymity. Interviewers personally distributed and collected questionnaires directly which guaranteed the anonymity of the research. After that, the questionnaires were entered into a database and calculations were made using the computer software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Respondents were asked whether an observable phenomenon of corruption, nepotism and favoritism occurred in public sector organizations. The questions were of closed character. The respondents could choose only three answers: *yes*, *no*, and *I do not know*. The study analyzed responses by quantitative and qualitative criteria also seeking a correlation between the answers [42]. Therefore, first of all, the Authors showed interrelations in respondents' answers, analyzed the results of surveys and pointed out the differences in the responses of each of the analyzed groups.

## **5. The phenomenon of nepotism**

The phenomenon of nepotism, personal relationships at the local level, is often the subject of news reports, analysis and scientific research, and discussions at the local and regional level, which is the reason for the issue of this study. Municipal employees were asked whether the phenomenon of nepotism exists in public sector organizations. The analysis of test results among local government workers showed that only one in six respondents out of the entire group (16.6% – women, 16.8% and men, 16.1%) is convinced that such a phenomenon does not exist in public sector organizations. However, 42.6% of people said (table 1) that nepotism is a common phenomenon in public sector organizations. This phenomenon is pointed out mostly by men: 44.4%, whereas women, 41.9%. The rest of the respondents had no opinion on the prevalence of nepotism.

Generally, the employees of institutions providing services to local authorities (i.e. municipal offices) are convinced of the existence of nepotism (46.5%), especially males (53.3%, women – 43.6%) and education workers (43.4%). Within this group, women constituted 43.7%, and men – 42.5%. Considering the age of the surveyed population [43], mainly people aged 30 to 49 years of age are aware of the presence of nepotism (from 43.5% to 43.4%), which are also the two largest surveyed groups. In the youngest age group and amongst people aged 50-59, 41.3% were aware of the phenomenon. The lowest indicator of 36.7% coincided with the oldest age group. There is an evident correlation between age and response rate in the group of employees of companies with the oldest respondents stating the existence of nepotism at 40.9% and the percentage indicator falling more or less steadily to 33.6% in the group of workers aged 18-29. When the education became the subject of analysis, it can be seen that the presence of nepotism is indicated in the whole group of people with higher education (44.6%) and also among teachers (47%). A higher number of answers concerning the existence of corruption among office workers is noticed in the group of respondents with a primary education (62.3%) just as among employees of companies – 40% and those with a higher education being 48.4%. Analyzing the opinions of these positions, a correlation between the functions (post) and the percentage indication of the presence of nepotism can be seen. The exception appears among heads of municipal enterprises (31.7%), where the response rate of the occurrence of nepotism was lower than among the employees of independent positions (37.2%) and primary (29.1%). In the entire population (44%) and in the group of education workers (45.5%) and municipal office workers (48.7%), most of the indications of the presence of nepotism in public sector organizations were among employees in managerial positions. This percentage decreases with the performance of a lower position in the hierarchy of local government employees to 43.4% in the total population at independent positions, including in education (44.4%) and municipal offices (47%). The lowest indication of the existence of nepotism is in a group of people who work in the lowest positions in the entire population (34.7%) and in particular study groups of employees. Therefore, within education workers it is 29.4% of the responses, in municipal enterprises 29.1% and 42.2% in offices.

**Table 1.**  
*Corruption, nepotism, favoritism in public sector organizations according to survey (numbers and %).*

Criteria		Corruption						Nepotism						Favoritism											
		yes		no		do not know		total		yes		no		do not know		total		yes		no		do not know		total	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
gender	female	684	25.5	679	25.3	1317	49.1	2680	1117	41.9	448	16.8	1104	41.4	2669	1384	51.9	365	13.7	916	34.4	2665			
	male	323	30.2	266	24.9	479	44.9	1068	475	44.4	172	16.1	422	39.5	1069	531	50.2	145	13.7	381	36.0	1057			
	total	1007	26.9	945	25.2	1796	47.9	3748	1592	42.6	620	16.6	1526	40.8	3738	1915	51.5	510	13.7	1297	34.8	3722			
age	18-29 years old	155	24.5	184	29.1	294	46.4	633	260	41.3	104	16.5	266	42.2	630	284	45.5	89	14.3	251	40.2	624			
	30-39 years old	325	25.4	347	27.1	607	47.5	1279	555	43.5	218	17.1	503	39.4	1276	659	51.7	186	14.6	429	33.7	1274			
	40-49 years old	333	29.8	250	22.4	535	47.9	1118	485	43.4	176	15.7	457	40.9	1118	619	55.6	139	12.5	355	31.9	1113			
	50-59 years old	171	26.8	146	22.9	321	50.3	638	262	41.3	112	17.6	261	41.1	635	321	50.6	89	14.0	225	35.4	635			
	more than 60	24	30.4	17	21.5	38	48.1	79	29	36.7	10	12.7	40	50.6	79	32	42.1	7	9.2	37	48.7	76			
education	primary/gymnasium	50	37.0	10	7.4	75	55.6	135	57	42.2	15	11.1	63	46.7	135	62	45.9	12	8.9	61	45.2	135			
	vocational secondary	61	30.7	46	23.1	92	46.2	199	63	31.7	29	14.6	107	53.8	199	95	47.7	25	12.6	79	39.7	199			
	high school/secondary	158	25.4	177	28.5	287	46.1	622	231	37.4	115	18.6	272	44.0	618	308	49.8	99	16.0	211	34.1	618			
	university/higher	739	26.4	711	25.4	1344	48.1	2794	1243	44.6	461	16.5	1085	38.9	2789	1452	52.4	374	13.5	947	34.2	2773			
work experience	up to 1 year	25	25.3	28	28.3	46	46.5	99	34	34.7	24	24.5	40	40.8	98	37	37.4	19	19.2	43	43.4	99			
	1-5 years	142	26.9	158	30.0	227	43.1	527	225	42.7	97	18.4	205	38.9	527	245	46.9	80	15.3	197	37.7	522			
	5-10 years	220	26.0	227	26.8	400	47.2	847	359	42.7	134	15.9	348	41.4	841	412	49.1	123	14.7	304	36.2	839			
	10-20 years	257	24.0	274	25.6	540	50.4	1071	458	42.6	181	16.9	435	40.5	1074	548	51.2	161	15.0	361	33.7	1070			
	20-30 years	247	30.3	181	22.2	387	47.5	815	356	43.9	115	14.2	340	41.9	811	476	58.8	78	9.6	255	31.5	809			
	more than 30 years	115	29.8	75	19.4	196	50.8	386	158	41.0	68	17.7	159	41.3	385	195	51.2	48	12.6	138	36.2	381			
current work experience	up to 1 year	118	28.9	115	28.1	176	43.0	409	164	40.3	69	17.0	174	42.8	407	187	46.3	54	13.4	163	40.3	404			
	1-5 years	294	27.3	271	25.1	513	47.6	1078	457	42.5	200	18.6	418	38.9	1075	514	48.4	159	15.0	390	36.7	1063			
	5-10 years	241	25.1	269	28.0	450	46.9	960	419	43.7	155	16.2	385	40.1	959	504	52.5	128	13.3	328	34.2	960			
	more than 10 years	354	27.3	288	22.2	657	50.6	1299	552	42.6	195	15.0	549	42.4	1296	711	54.9	168	13.0	415	32.1	1294			
post	managerial	99	28.2	108	30.8	144	41.0	351	154	44.0	73	20.9	123	35.1	350	175	51.0	56	16.3	112	32.7	343			
	adviser or assistant	804	27.0	731	24.6	1438	48.4	2973	1289	43.4	467	15.7	1211	40.8	2967	1559	52.6	400	13.5	1005	33.9	2964			
	auxiliary or support staff	101	25.7	96	24.4	196	49.9	393	136	34.7	73	18.6	183	46.7	392	167	43.4	47	12.2	171	44.4	385			
job in private sector	up to 1 year	171	24.2	155	22.0	380	53.8	706	288	40.9	101	14.3	316	44.8	705	326	46.4	101	14.4	275	39.2	702			
	1-5 years	235	28.1	208	24.9	394	47.1	837	350	41.9	169	20.2	317	37.9	836	419	50.7	133	16.1	275	33.3	827			
	more than 5 years	117	23.8	136	27.7	238	48.5	491	219	44.7	77	15.7	194	39.6	490	267	55.4	57	11.8	158	32.8	482			
	never	482	28.5	440	26.0	771	45.5	1693	731	43.3	270	16.0	687	40.7	1688	894	52.9	219	13.0	578	34.2	1691			
marital status	yes (husband/wife)	718	26.8	666	24.8	1297	48.4	2681	1136	42.5	444	16.6	1096	41.0	2676	1396	52.3	356	13.3	919	34.4	2671			
	no	288	27.1	275	25.9	499	47.0	1062	456	43.1	174	16.4	428	40.5	1058	518	49.5	153	14.6	376	35.9	1047			
place of living	city	704	27.3	627	24.3	1252	48.5	2583	1140	44	429	16.6	1008	39.1	2577	1385	54.1	337	13.2	839	32.8	2561			
	country	303	26.1	314	27.0	544	46.9	1161	452	39.0	189	16.3	518	44.7	1159	531	45.9	170	14.7	457	39.5	1158			

Analyzing the responses, it is worth pointing out that a high percentage of people did not replied (40.8%) to the question of the existence of nepotism in public sector organizations. 41.1 % of women and 39.5% of men had no opinion in this issue, and similarly the percentages occurred among civil servants (39.5% to 33.5% among women and men). However, among employees of enterprises of local government, 42.7% of women and 43% of men had no opinion. 45.7% of male and 42.6% of female education workers had no opinion on nepotism in organizations of public sector.

Analyzing the results of the survey in all areas, the qualitative and quantitative information obtained following these general conclusions can be put forward:

- there is a small percentage of people who are convinced that there is no nepotism in public sector organizations, contrary to the number of people convinced of the existence of this phenomenon, and there is a large number of those who have no opinion. This creates an alarming picture of human relations and the human resources policy in public sector organizations;

- nepotism in public sector organizations is visible mainly by employees of municipal government offices. The highest number of responses indicates heads of public sector organizations. The indications decrease along with the lower posts and employee's duties;

- comparing these research results on nepotism and those previously carried out by other organizations, it must be emphasized that there are no major differences in the level defined by the respondents of this phenomenon in public sector organizations;

- mainly the oldest people and employees with the longest work experience did not comment on the existence of nepotism.

## **6. The phenomenon of favoritism**

Regarding favoritism in public sector organizations, 51.5% of all respondents indicated its occurrence. Only 13.7% of respondents said that there is no favoritism in public sector organizations. Women (51.9%) are more convinced than men (50.2%) of the existence of this phenomenon. Analyzing the responses of particular employee-groups of local government, it should be stressed that favoritism is a phenomenon perceived mainly by municipal office workers (57.3%) and mainly by men (59.2%) rather than by women (56.5%). The lowest percentage of indications of favoritism appeared among employees of other organizations



and companies. According to the survey, 44.4% of workers in this sector are convinced of the existence of favoritism in the public sector (women – 46.7%; men – 39.1%). The opinions presented by education employees are similar to the opinion of the entire population, since nearly half of them answered that in the public sector there is favoritism (49.7%), and women are more convinced of the phenomenon's existence (46.7%) than men (39.1%). Therefore the conclusion can be drawn those closest to the municipal centre of a public authority and also those associated people who make a high impact on the decisions of the legislative body (i.e., teachers) are sure of a prevailing favoritism in public sector organizations. Analyzing the responses according to the age of respondents, people aged 40-49 years of age (55.6%) in all of the surveyed organizations see favoritism most often: 61.9% in offices, 54% in education and 49.4% in other organizations. Clearly, a smaller percentage of indications occurred in the group of respondents over 60 years old (42.1%) than either in the group of the youngest respondents (45.5%) or the group of those aged 50 to 59 (50.6%).

If the area of pathology in the public sector is large, it undoubtedly eliminates the persons with the highest qualifications and therefore it is not difficult to predict that people with higher education usually indicate the presence of favoritism. Studies show that 52.4% of respondents with higher education are aware of favoritism. The percentage of indications drops when people with secondary education (49.8%), vocational education (47.7%) and primary education (45.9%) are considered. Therefore, it can be assumed that the correlation is the opposite the expected outcome, i.e., in public sector organizations it is not qualifications but favoritism that decides a promotion. This correlation is strongest in education, because people who were highly qualified indicated the occurrence of favoritism in public sector organizations (52.3%) at the highest degree, followed by secondary (46.9%), vocational (42.2%) and primary educated (12.5%). The phenomenon of favoritism is generally visible by those employees working at independent posts (52.6%). It can be assumed that these are usually people with higher education, professionals who have the ambition to be promoted in the hierarchy of local government offices' employees. In all of the surveyed organizations, mid-level employees emphasized frequently the existence of favoritism in public sector organizations, especially office workers (59%), followed by education workers (50.7%) and other organizations' (45.5%). The presence of protectionism was more often noticed by employees in managerial

positions (51%) than low-level position employees (43.4%) throughout all of the surveyed organizations.

Summing up, the following general conclusions can be stated in analyzing the statements of municipal organizations' employees:

- mainly local government office workers with higher education and those in independent posts are convinced of the existence of the phenomenon of favoritism;

- favoritism in the management of public sector organizations is most often indicated by persons with higher education while the percentage of indications decreases along with a decreasing level of education;

- favoritism in public sector organizations is indicated by employees aged 40-49, thus amongst those with the greatest occupational activity;

- throughout the entire group of employees of local government, a correlation between assessments of the presence of favoritism can be seen: the highest number of indications occurred among people with the highest posts and lowest among employees with the lowest positions.

## **7. The phenomenon of corruption**

Analyzing the phenomenon of corruption, differences in the assessment of this phenomenon in comparison to the previously studied phenomena of nepotism and favoritism in the public sector are observed. Undoubtedly, the word 'corruption' carries its weight of authority and meaning even more than the phrases 'nepotism' or 'favoritism'. It can be assumed that the prevalence of corruption in the surveyed employees' assessments is associated with something particularly unworthy, dangerous and based on the consequences of theft of public resources. The Authors when conducting research often observed not only a reluctance to speak of corruption but also a fear of filling in the questionnaire. Therefore, presented opinions differ from previous assessments. There is a dominating lack of knowledge of this phenomenon in public sector organizations. The presence or absence of corruption in public sector organizations was indicated at similar levels by respondents. Among the 26.9% of indications of the presence of corruption, 30.2% were indications by men and 25.5% by women. Of these were the men and women who work in municipal offices (men – 31.4%, women – 23.3%) and those who work in municipal education (men – 34.6%, women – 28.5%). The conviction that corruption exists was indicated by education workers at 30% and municipal office employees at 25.8%. The employees of municipal enterprises were the least aware (25.1%). It can be assumed that along with age, the perception

of corruption in public sector organizations is growing, as among the youngest people one in four is convinced of its occurrence (24.5%) while that percentage increases to 30.4% among the oldest people. Generally, persons performing managerial positions are convinced of the existence of corruption (28.2%) but the percentage falls to 27% among mid-level employees and to 25.7% of executive workers. Analyzing the responses on the existence of public sector corruption as regards the respondents' education level, people with the lowest education mainly stated that the public sector is corrupted. 37% of the whole population, 30% of municipal enterprises, and 58.4% of local government offices indicated its presence. Among people with higher education levels, every fourth respondent stated that the public sector is corrupt and it was especially stressed by education workers (31.7%) and municipal enterprises workers (24.1%) whereas in office employees the percentage indicated was lower (23.6%).

Every fourth respondent employed by local government stated that there is no corruption in the public sector and there is little difference in the responses between women (25.3%) and men (24.9%) in the whole group. The least confident about the lack of corruption were the employees of education (19.4%); especially men (16.8%) rather than women (20.3%). The local clerks' responses are close to the average of responses of the entire population. 25.2% of office workers are convinced that there is no corruption in the public sector, and this is the women's (26.1%) opinion rather than the men's (23%). With the age of the respondents as a basis for analysis, a correlation between indications that there is no corruption in public sector organizations and the age of the respondents can be seen. The youngest respondents aged 18-29 usually indicated that there is no corruption in the public sector (29.1%) and the rate drops to 21.5% in the group of respondents over the age of 60. Mainly, people with secondary education (28.5%) believe that there is no corruption in the public sector. The least convinced are people with primary and gymnasium education (7.4%). Considering their answers according to employment, the employees of municipal enterprises with the lowest education are the most convinced that there is no corruption (40%) and people with higher education are least convinced (30.7%). The office workers with the lowest education level are the least convinced that the public sector is corrupt (6.5%). The fact that there is no corruption appears in responses of office employees with secondary (29.3%) and higher education (25.6%).

Most people, in fact almost half (47.9%), said they did not know whether or not there is corruption in public sector organizations. In the group of those having no opinion on the matter, women dominate (at

49.1%, men – 44.9%) and employees of the municipal education (50.5%, including 51.2% women and 48.6% men), followed by offices employees (49%, including women 50.5% men – 45.6%) and employees of municipal enterprises (43.4%, including 44.7% of women and 40.4% of men). Among those who have no opinion whether corruption exists were the oldest groups aged 50-59, which dominated (50.3%), and over 60 (48.1%), which included the oldest employees working in schools (65.2%). Office workers were not aware of the existence of corruption, particularly in the group aged 50-59 (50.4%), those aged 18-29 (50.3%) and those aged 30-39 (49.1%). The smallest group of clerks having no opinion on this matter were the employees in the group of those aged over 60 (44.1%) and the group of those 40-49 years of age (47.6%). The employees of municipal enterprises at the age of 40-49 years (46.6%) and those aged 50-59 years (45.1%) had no opinion either. The lowest number of people who had no opinion on the existence of corruption was employees of municipal enterprises in the age group of 18-29 years (37.4%) and aged over 60 (36.4%). Among education employees, most people had no knowledge of corruption in the groups of older workers (65.2%), and those aged 50-59 years (53.8%). The youngest workers in education (46.8%) and those aged 40-49 years (49.3%) constitute the group of respondents with the lowest awareness of corruption. Regarding education, it can be seen that the highest number of people who had no knowledge of corruption in the public sector appears among those with primary education (55.6%), including up to 93.8% in education, 35.1% in offices and 30% in municipal enterprises. In the entire study population and among the various groups, people working at managerial positions have the smallest response rate indicating that they do not know whether there is corruption in the public sector organizations and this rate increases with the performance of their duties at a lower level in the hierarchy of employment. However, the lack of knowledge about whether the public sector is corrupt or not among people in leadership positions even at 41% (46.4% in education, 37.8% in municipal enterprises, and 41.4% among office workers) produces other questions about the knowledge of these people in general and perhaps their state of consciousness, including a possible lack of courage in presenting their opinions. People working in independent positions (48.4%) admitted more often that they have no knowledge of corruption, mainly teachers (50.7%), clerks (49.9%) and mid-level workers of municipal enterprises (43.4%). Employees in the lowest positions in the hierarchy admitted that they have no knowledge of corruption in the public sector (49.9%), mainly

employees of the municipal education (54.7%), followed by office workers (50.6%) and municipal enterprises (46.1%).

Analysis on the state of corruption in organizations allows for the drawing of some general conclusions:

- only every fourth respondent stated that there is corruption in organizations of the public sector, similarly; one in four said that corruption does not exist and the rest did not comment on this matter;

- the phenomenon of corruption in the public sector organizations was noticed by employees in managerial positions and the number of indications drops along with the performance of lower positions in the hierarchy;

- people working in managerial positions in public sector organizations are convinced that there is no corruption in the public sector and this conviction decreases together with the performance of jobs at lower posts;

- it can be assumed that caution in commenting on opinions about corruption grows together with the education and the performance of senior positions in the public sector organizations, especially in offices and municipal enterprises.

## **8. Recommendations**

Political changes over the last 27 years and the creation of a system of local government initiated the construction of the public sector according to the standards of New Public Management. However, the creators of the Polish model of local government and activists for local self-government raise the question of whether the municipality management model corresponds to an Eastern European rather than a Western Europe culture. Thus, in accordance with the European Charter of Local Self-government [44], self-government designates the right and the ability of local communities to control and manage a substantial part of public affairs at the local level. In municipalities where transparent management principles have been implemented, building a European model of local government is performed and vice versa, where citizens have difficulty in obtaining information, local government is still in the initial stage of development, deeply stuck in the post-communist formula. Therefore, analyzing the pathological phenomena in public sector organizations, it is worth distinguishing the organizations that have implemented in practice the principle of rational and democratic governance and those that are still in the pathologies-ridden patterns transferred from the previous system. It can

be assumed that despite the uniform state law defining rules on the use of resources of local governments, in practice there has been formed a management model (system and the situation shaped by local politicians) accompanied by a pathology that manifests itself by favoritism, nepotism and corruption.

It can be assumed that highly qualified and well-paid office workers, clear governing rules and the decision-making procedures guarantee success in the management of municipal self-government, whereas a departure from these rules supports the development of any pathology. Overcoming this bipolarity in the management of municipalities can be accomplished with the implementation of the following principles to decision-making procedures:

- increasing cooperation between the heads of public sector organizations, including municipal politicians and academics, to implement the achievements of science in local governance;
- implementing into the management system resources with transparent rules for planning and reporting based on task-oriented system of executing income and expenditures;
- higher qualification requirements as well as introducing a system of individual accountability (including criminal and financial prosecution) of local government officials and organization managers that perform local government tasks for the consequences of their decisions;
- introduction on the local level of an independent and systematic assessment of the implementation of short and long-term local development programs, including decision-making procedures;
- creation of a national platform of announcements on employment in the organizational units of the public sector, especially for office workers posts.

## **9. Conclusions**

Unacceptable phenomena in public sector management, such as favoritism, nepotism and corruption have existed from the first attempts to create a social hierarchy and extract resources for the common good. Even in ancient times, as can be seen in the works of Socrates and Plato as well as in the records of the Old and New Testaments and works of thinkers of the first and second millennium, attention to the behavior of unworthy rulers has affected citizens. It should be emphasized that despite problems associated with conducting research on the pathology of management in the public sector including local governments, on the basis of Polish

science there are many studies analyzing the different contexts of this phenomenon. The progressive changes in Polish law, including local self-government law are the consequence of this. Comparing local government law from 1990 with current law, it becomes noticeable that many changes were introduced that have significantly changed the functioning of municipalities.

Management of public sector organizations requires the adoption of solutions which define the procedures for protecting the resources of this sector from improper appropriation. Citizens who exercise power through their representatives in the legislative and executive bodies expect from them such management that leads to the increase of those resources for the common good to the benefit all people. However, due to the fact that elected bodies or people appointed to leadership positions in the public sector organizations often try to take advantage of their position and assign themselves the power to achieve illegal gain, it is necessary to establish procedures to eliminate the negative phenomena of corruption, nepotism and favoritism. The presented results of the research prove unambiguously that the area of pathological phenomena is a very large problem in the functioning of the Polish public sector and also in the organizations performing tasks on the local level.

Research has shown that the workers hired in municipal offices that support local authorities, that is, executive and legislative bodies, are convinced of the occurrence of pathological phenomena to a large extent. Due to that fact that these officials often control organizations performing municipal tasks, it is necessary to find systematic solutions in the field of management in the public sector. The phenomena of favoritism, nepotism and corruption indicated by persons with higher education and working in managerial positions underlines the need for such solutions.

The aim set before the research has been achieved. Not only was the occurrence of negative phenomena in the system of managing local governments in public sector organizations demonstrated, but also the range of these phenomena was specified along with measures proposed to eliminate these pathological phenomena from the public sector.

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- item 227 i 229, No. 98, item 625 i 626, No. 125, item 842, No. 127, item 857, No. 152, item 1018 i item 1021, No. 182, item 1228, No. 225, item 1474, No. 240, item 1602, 2011 No. 17, item 78, No. 24, item 130. No. 39, item 202, No. 48, item 245, No. 72, item 381, No. 94, item 549, No. 117, item 678, No. 129, item 734, No. 133, item 767, No. 160, item 964, No. 191, item 1135, No. 217, item 1280, No. 233, item 1381, No. 240, item 1431, 2012 item 611, 2013 item 849, 905, 1036, 1247, 2014 item 538, 2015 item 396, 541, 1549, 1707, 1855).
- [41] Kozłowski A. J., *Kwalifikacje radnych a zarządzanie zasobami gminy. Identyfikacja – Diagnoza – Kierunki zmian. (Qualifications councilors and management of the municipality. Identification – Diagnosis – Trends)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego (Publisher University of Warmia and Mazury), Olsztyn 2012.
- [42] There is a similar way of presenting the results of the research on corruption by ex. Kubiak A., *Opinia publiczna i urzędnicy o korupcji w samorządach – raport z badań (The public and government officials about corruption in local governments – research report)*, Program przeciw korupcji, Fundacja Batorego, (Program against Corruption, Stefan Batory Foundation), Warsaw 2002.
- [43] Surveyed population means a set of people, who take part in the survey, i.e randomly selected local government workers of municipal level of Warmia and Mazury region, compare: Babbie E., *Badania społeczne w praktyce (Social research in practice)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe (Scientific Publishing) PWN, Warsaw 2005, p. 210 and next.
- [44] European Charter of Local Self-government written down in Strasburg 15 Oct. 1985 ratified in Poland 26 Apr. 1993 (JoL 124/94 item 607).