

KNOWLEDGE AND ACTIVITY OF THE YOUNG GENERATION OF POLES IN THE SCOPE OF THE FUNCTIONING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to identify and assess the level of knowledge related to the functioning and budget of local government units among representatives of the young generation of Poles (aged 18-25), as well as to determine the degree of their activity in the socio-political sphere of regional and local communities.

Design/methodology/approach: The article identifies and assesses the level of knowledge related to the functioning and budget of local government units among representatives of the young generation of Poles, and determines the degree of their activity in the socio-political sphere of regional and local communities. The empirical material of the article is the results of original surveys among 613 randomly selected representatives, studying representatives of the young generation of Polish residents aged 18 to 25 years. The research was conducted in 2023, using the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) method, via an online panel. The empirical material collected and organised was developed in a descriptive and graphical form, using the comparative analysis.

Findings: The analysis of the results of the author's survey research confirmed the research hypothesis presented in the article, which assumes that despite the fact that the young generation of Poles is open to the whole world, mainly via the Internet, they are also interested in problems on a regional and local scale, participating in their diagnosis and trying to solve.

Originality/value: The originality of the work consists in the presentation of the results of original survey research on the state of knowledge of the young generation of Poles about the functioning and budget of local government units and its activity in the socio-political sphere of regional and local communities, which significantly broaden the state of knowledge on this subject and reduce the research gap in this regard. The work is addressed primarily to local government officials responsible for the functioning and development of local government units and for public local government finances.

Keywords: knowledge and activity, the young generation of Poles, local government units and their functioning and budget.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Local government is a key institution responsible for the implementation of many tasks that meet the needs of primary importance for residents and create socioeconomic development in the regional and local system. The essence and functioning of local self-government are related to the exercise of state power using administrative authority in the field of shaping public life in the commune, powiat, and voivodship. Local government units are nonstate and decentralized entities that have been granted tasks and competences in the field of public administration. Local government as a subject of public authority is the bearer of subjective rights assigned to it, and its essential function is to perform public tasks not reserved for other public law entities, i.e., primarily the state. The scope of tasks performed by the local government and their costs have a direct impact on the amount of financial resources it should have. Therefore, in order to carry out their tasks, local government units were equipped not only with their own property, but also obtained subjective rights to participate in public income according to the tasks assigned to them, to general subsidies and earmarked subsidies from the state budget, to determine the amount of taxes and fees, and to shape and implement public expenditure. In this context, one of the main aspects of the independence of the local government as a public authority entity is its financial independence, which means the right to independently conduct financial management. The limits of financial independence of local government units are determined by the scope of budgets and their competences in the field of shaping income and disposing of accumulated financial resources. Thus, financial independence understood in this way has an income and expenditure aspect as well as an aspect related to financial management based on the budget (Dębowska-Romanowska, 1995; Byjoch, Sulimierski, Tarno, 2000; Kotulski, 2000; Kornberger-Sokołowska, 2001; Glumińska-Pawlic, Sawicka, 2002; Jastrzębska, 2012; Grzebyk, Sołtysiak, Stec, Zajac, 2020; Kata, Czudec, Zajac, Zawora, 2022).

The basis for the financial management of a local government unit is, therefore, the budget. On the basis of its provisions, the unit implements the statutory objectives of its operation. Appropriate preparation of the budget, taking into account the social and economic needs of the local government unit, is the main duty of the commune head, mayor, or president. The basic rules and deadlines for the preparation and adoption of the budget, as well as its detail and necessary elements, are contained in the Public Finance Act. Regardless of statutory requirements, the preparation of the budget should take into account the principles of planning and management. Maintaining a purely administrative model of financial management is insufficient in light of the challenges faced by local government units. The appropriate analysis of the financial capabilities of a local government unit provides the basis for setting directions for its development and strategy of activities both in the budgetary perspective and beyond. The budget is the basic financial plan of a local government unit, combining income and expenses related to the implementation of both own and commissioned tasks. It is an act of

managing the financial management of a local government unit and, at the same time an instrument of implementing its policy (Dębowska-Romanowska, 1995; Gwoździcka-Piotrowska, 2012; Sołtysiak, 2017; Sołtysiak, 2018a; Sołtysiak, 2018b; Grzebyk, Sołtysiak, Stec, Zajac, 2020).

Local authorities must look for ways to increase the conscious involvement of citizens in shaping the socio-economic decisions they make. One such way is the practical use of a form of participatory democracy developed three decades ago, which is the participatory budget. Participatory budgeting is defined as a tool for managing the budget of a local government unit, with the help of which members of the local community can decide or contribute to decisions on how to distribute all or part of the available public funds. Participatory budgeting is also understood as a special form of social consultations in which residents decide annually on a part of the budget expenditure of a given local government unit in a direct vote. Therefore, participatory budgeting is one of the forms of civic participation, which in relation to public finances refers to the involvement of members of the local community in activities in three areas, i.e., creating and analysing the budget, tracking public spending, and monitoring the implementation of public services. Participatory budgeting as a tool for activating the local community is not a one-time event, but a complex, multistage process. This process should be cyclical and should be included in the normal cycle of functioning of the local government unit. Its implementation is based on a participatory budget draught prepared in detail by local government units, which should contain detailed information on the requirements for the submitted projects, the rules for verifying the submitted projects, the consultation procedure, and the rules for voting, determining the results, and making them public (Ebdon, Franklin, 2006; Pordes Bowers, Bunt, 2010; Sołtysiak, 2017; Sołtysiak, 2018a; Sołtysiak, 2018b; Wampler, 2007a; Wampler, 2007b).

It should be added that in a civil society, the knowledge and activity of its members, including representatives of the young generation of Poles, in the field of functioning of local government units, i.e. communes, poviats, and voivodeships, are very important. It is important for citizens to have an appropriate level of knowledge about the activities of these units, and above all about the rules and regulations on the basis of which their budget is developed and implemented. The authorities of local government units, as part of the dialogue with residents, should therefore make special efforts to familiarize them with these issues and stimulate their activity in this regard, as well as try to involve as many residents as possible in the implementation of their tasks. A good example of action in this regard is the activation of the local community by enabling it to participate in the creation of a separate part of the budget of a local government unit under the so-called participatory (civic) budget (Sołtysiak, 2017; Sołtysiak, 2018a; Sołtysiak, 2018b).

In the second quarter of 2024, local government elections are planned in Poland, which will determine who will manage local government units and shape their development over the coming years. Selected representatives of local communities will be responsible for creating

appropriate infrastructure, an efficiently functioning social assistance system and securing a number of social needs related to, among others, education, health care and culture. All these tasks must be carried out on available and usually limited financial resources.

Every adult citizen can indirectly influence the functioning of these entities by participating in the elections of the president, mayor, or commune head and in the election of councillors who, on behalf of the local community, adopt the budget of the local government unit and supervise the proper functioning of these institutions. He can also actively participate in these works if he is elected by the local community, e.g. as a councilor (Sołtysiak, 2017).

Therefore, it is extremely important to examine the level of knowledge about the functioning of local government units, and in particular about issues related to the budget of these units, among the young generation of Poles, who will now have the opportunity to vote for the first time or will be able to vote for the first time. candidacies for these bodies. The representatives of this generation that in the future will have the opportunity in the future to actively participate in the management of local government units.

2. Research aim, empirical material, and research methods

The aim of the article is to identify and assess the level of knowledge related to the functioning and budget of local government units among representatives of the young generation of Poles (aged 18-25), as well as to determine the degree of their activity in the socio-political sphere of regional and local communities.

The article presents a research hypothesis, which assumes that despite the fact that the young generation of Poles is open to the whole world, mainly via the Internet, they are also interested in problems on a regional and local scale, participating in their diagnosis, and attempt to solve them.

The empirical material of the article is the results of original surveys among 613 randomly selected representatives, studying representatives of the young generation of Polish residents aged 18 to 25 years. The research was conducted in 2023, using the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) method, via an online panel.

The research group included 367 women (59.9%) and 246 men (40.1%). Respondents who participated in the study were divided into five segments based on place of residence, four segments based on income per family member, and four segments based on the field of study. The structure of the research group is shown in Figure 1.

The empirical material collected and organised was developed in a descriptive and graphical form, using the comparative analysis.

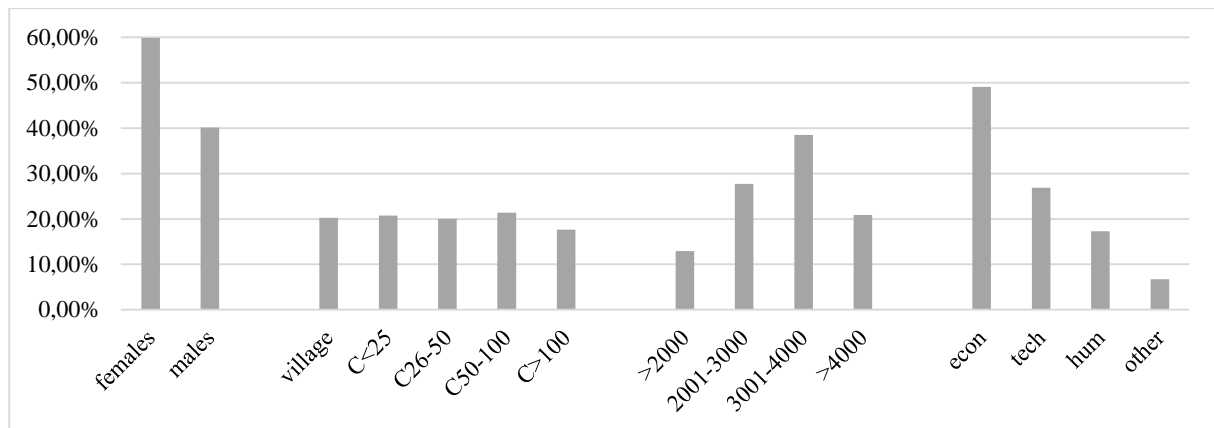


Figure 1. The structure of the research group.

Source: Own study.

It should be added that the results of the author's survey research presented in the article may be a supplement to the research conducted so far in this field. It should be emphasized that the research results presented in the literature on the subject concern primarily the analysis of the level of financial knowledge of employees of local government units (Skica, 2011; Analizy, 2012) or councilors (Nogalski, Kozłowski, 2013). To a limited extent, they concern the analysis of the level of knowledge of these phenomena in selected segments of Polish society (Sołtysiak, 2017; Sołtysiak, 2018a; Sołtysiak, 2018b). What is lacking, however, is the presentation of the research results, which would make it possible to assess the level of their knowledge among representatives of the young generation of Poles.

3. Results

The analysis of the survey results showed that only about 57% of the surveyed representatives of the young generation of Poles claimed that issues related to the functioning of local government units are not new to them. These declarations were made more often by women (59.6%) than men (53.7%). The largest percentage of respondents who believed they had knowledge on this subject was in the segments of residents of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (59.3%), respondents from families where the income per 1 family member was PLN 2,001-3,000 (62.4 %), respondents studying economics (69.1%).

It should be noted that these values were not confirmed during the self-assessment of the level of knowledge on the functioning of local government units (Figure 2). While doing so, only 34.1% of that respondents indicated the lack of knowledge was the answer, and 65.9% of the respondents (69.8% of women and 60.2% of men) chose a specific level of knowledge of these issues.

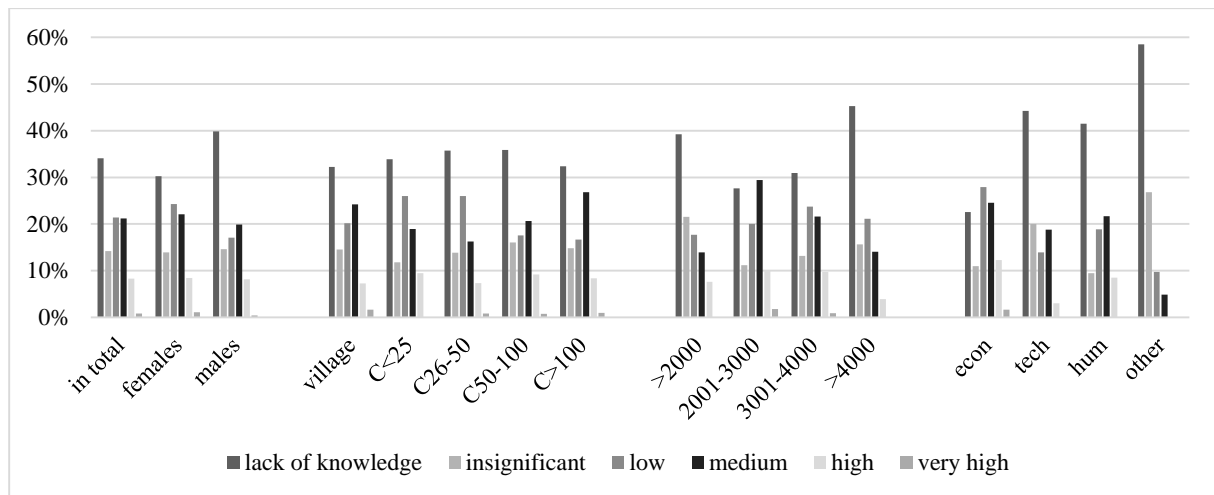


Figure 2. The level of respondents' knowledge on the functioning of local government units.

Source: Own study.

Analysing the level of knowledge on the functioning of local government units declared by the respondents, it should be stated that it was very low. 35.6% of the respondents (38.2% of women and 31.7% of men) indicated negligible and low answers. If we add to this the number of respondents who indicated lack of knowledge, it turns out that nearly 70% of the respondents (68.4% of women and 71.5% of men) do not have basic knowledge on this subject. The highest percentage of respondents indicating such a level of knowledge was in the segment of inhabitants of cities with 26-50 thousand inhabitants (75.6%), respondents with an income per family member of more than PLN 4,000 (82.0%) and respondents studying other faculties (95.1%).

Every fifth survey participant (22.1% of women and 19.9% of men) indicated an average level of knowledge about the functioning of local government units. This level of knowledge was most often declared by respondents belonging to the segments of inhabitants of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (26.9%), respondents with an income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000 (29.4%), and respondents studying economics (24.6%).

The analysed research group also included approximately 9% of the respondents (9.5% of women and 8.5% of men) who considered themselves experts in the field of local government units and declared that they had a high or very high level of knowledge on this subject. The largest percentage of experts was found among residents of cities of 50-100 thousand (9.9%), respondents whose income per 1 family member was in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000 (11.8%), respondents studying economics (14.0%).

Another issue that was examined was to determine the level of knowledge on the principles of creating and implementing the budget of a local government unit. 23% of the representatives of the younger generation participating in the study claimed to have knowledge on this subject (Figure 3). It should be emphasised that such a declaration was made by every fourth woman and every fifth man who participated in the study. The largest percentage of those who believed they had knowledge about the budget of a local government unit was among rural residents

(26.6%), respondents with an income per 1 family member in the amount of PLN 2,001-3,000 (31.2%), respondents studying economics (29.6%). However, the smallest among residents of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (19.4%), respondents with an income per 1 family member above PLN 4,000 (12.5%), respondents studying other faculties (4.9%).

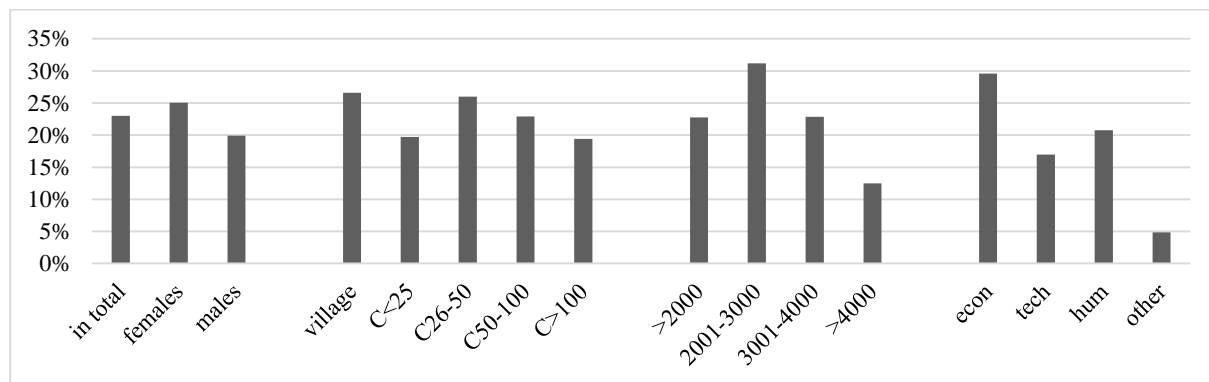


Figure 3. Opinions of respondents on having knowledge about the budget of local government units. Source: Own study.

The survey participants who declared having knowledge about the budget of a local government unit made a self-assessment of their level (Figure 4). It should be emphasised that the knowledge of the respondents on this subject is very low - 77% of the respondents declared a lack of knowledge on this subject, 14.7% of the respondents (15.5% of women and 13.4% of men) indicated a negligible or low level, and a medium level was chosen by 5.2% of the respondents (5.7% of women and 4.5% of men). Only 3.1% of the respondents (3.8% of women and 2.0% of men) considered themselves experts in the field of local government budgets.

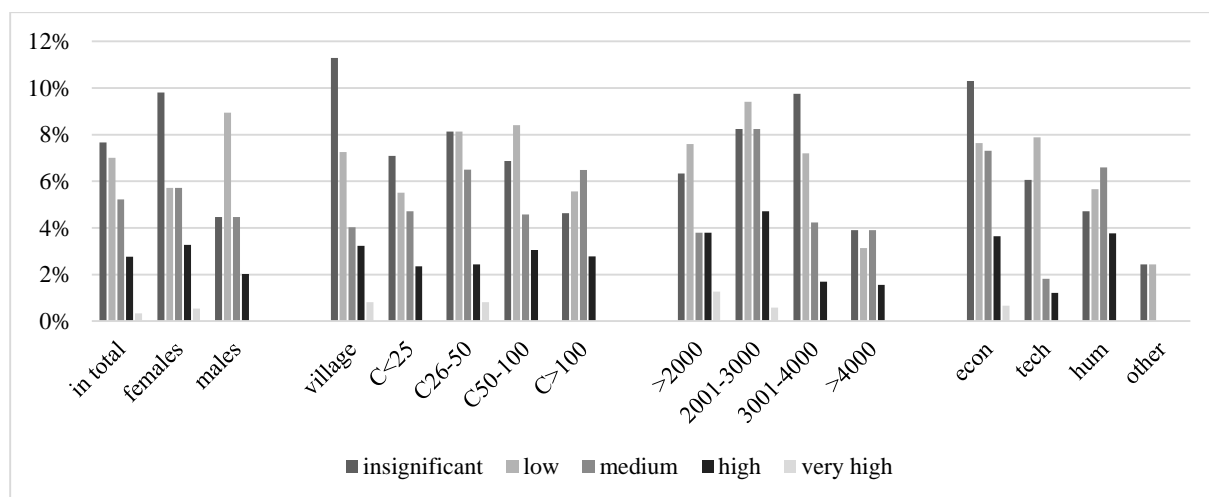


Figure 4. The level of respondents' knowledge about the budget of local government units. Source: Own study.

It should be noted that 14.2% of the respondents (18.0% of women and 8.5% of men) believed that they knew the procedures for adopting the budget of a local government unit. The largest percentage of respondents expressing such an opinion was in the rural residents (18.6%), respondents with an income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000 (18.8%), and respondents studying economics (22.3%).

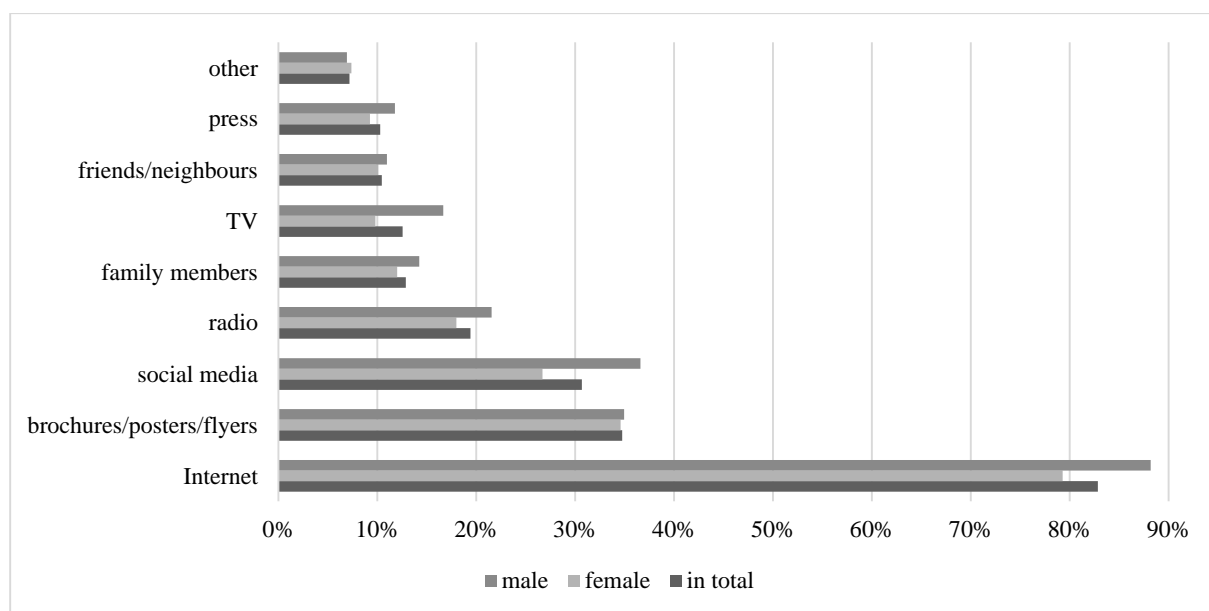


Figure 5. Sources of information obtained by respondents on the budget of local government units.

Source: Own study.

During the survey, the respondents indicated the sources from which they obtain information on the budget of the local government unit (Figure 5). It should be emphasised that, as befits representatives of Internet generation, the main source from which they obtained information was the Internet. The Internet was indicated by up to 82.9% of respondents (79.3% of women and 88.2% of men). Most often, this source of information was used by respondents living in cities with 25-50 thousand inhabitants (90.2%), having an income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 3,001-4,000 (93.6%), studying economics (93.4%). Each third respondent (34.6% of women and 35.0% of men) broadened their knowledge on this topic on the basis of information contained in brochures or leaflets. More than 30% of the respondents said that they found information on the budget of a local government unit on social networking sites. This source of information was most often used by residents of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (36.1%), respondents with an income per family member below PLN 2,000 (31.7%), respondents studying other faculties (53.7%). It should be noted that the participants of the study less often sought information on this subject in the classic mass media, the radio (19.4%), television (12.6%) and the press (10.3%).

In order to verify the actual level of knowledge of the survey participants on the functioning of local government units, the respondents were asked to indicate the persons who, in their opinion, are responsible for the preparation, approval, and implementation of the budget of these units (Figure 6, Figure 7).

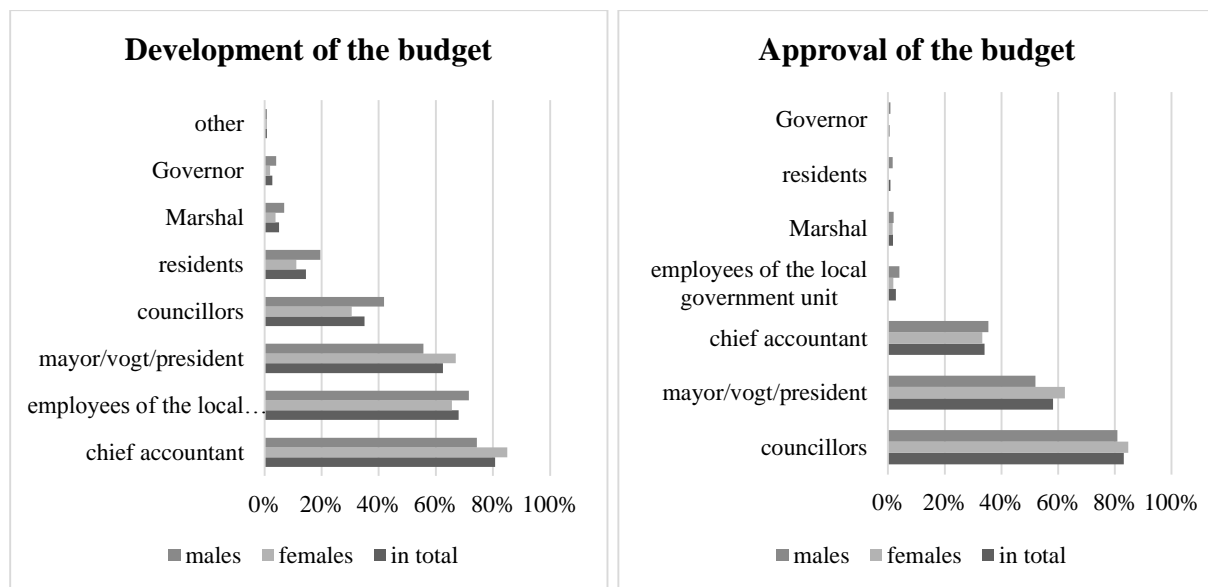


Figure 6. People responsible for developing the project and approving the budget of local government units in the opinion of the respondents.

Source: Own study.

The survey participants were of the opinion that the preparation of the draught budget is the responsibility of the chief accountant (80.8% - 85.0% of women and 74.4% of men) and employees of the local government unit (68.0% - 65.7% of women and 71.0% of men). Most often, such an opinion was expressed by respondents living in cities with 26-50 thousand inhabitants, respondents with an income per 1 family member in the range of 3001-4000, as well as respondents studying technical faculties. In the third place, the respondents placed the mayor/head of the mayor, he was indicated by 62.5% of the respondents (67.0% of women and 55.7% of men). It should also be noted that every third respondent (35.1%) was of the opinion that councillors participate in the work on drawing up the budget of a local government unit, and every seventh respondent (14.5%) that residents participate in these works. It is interesting that up to 26.9% of respondents living in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and 19.9% of those living in cities with 50-100,000 inhabitants indicated residents, and only 5.7% of rural residents and 6.3% of residents of cities up to 25 thousands of inhabitants. It may be related to the fact that in large and medium cities the idea of participatory budgeting in which residents participate has been used in practise for several years.

More than 83% of the respondents (84.7% of women and 80.9% of men) believed that approval of the budget of a local government unit is the responsibility of councillors. 58% of the respondents (62.4% of women and 52.0% of men) were of the opinion that this is the duty of the mayor, and 34% of the respondents (33.2% of women and 35.4% of men) combined this obligation with the chief accountant.

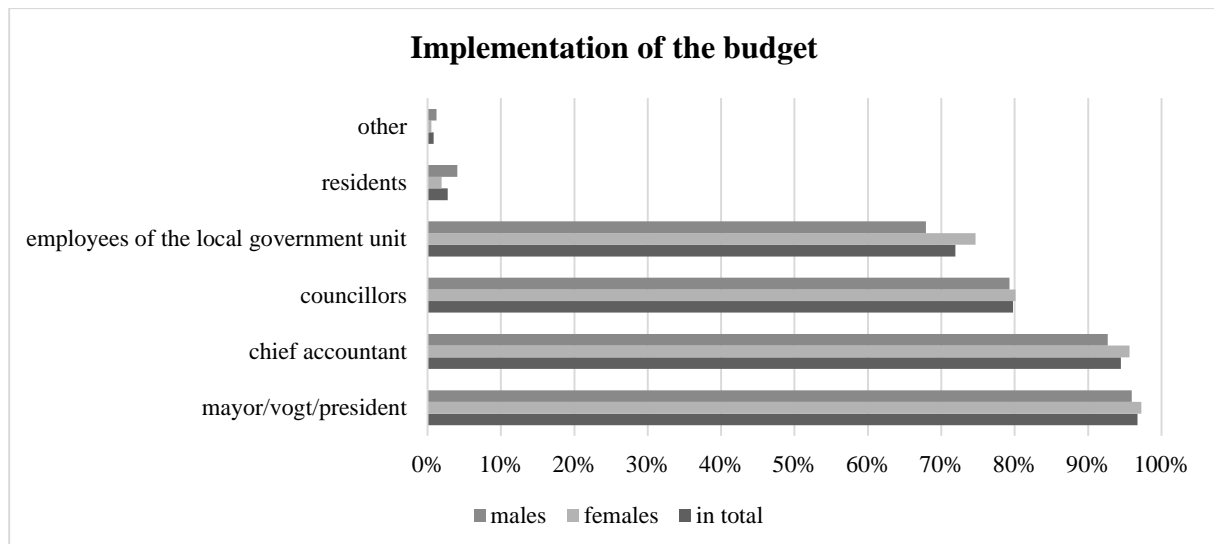


Figure 7. Persons responsible for the implementation of the budget of local government units in the opinion of the respondents.

Source: Own study.

However, the implementation of the budget of a local government unit, according to the respondents, is the task of the mayor/vogt/president and the chief accountant. 96.7% of the respondents (97.3% of women and 95.9% of men) indicated the mayor/head of office/president, and the chief accountant was indicated by 94.5% of the respondents (95.6% of women and 92.7% of men). The survey believed that this task is also the responsibility of the employees of local government units (79.8%) and the councillors (71.9%).

Then, the study participants determined from which sources the budget funds come from (Figure 8) and for what purposes they should be spent (Figure 9).

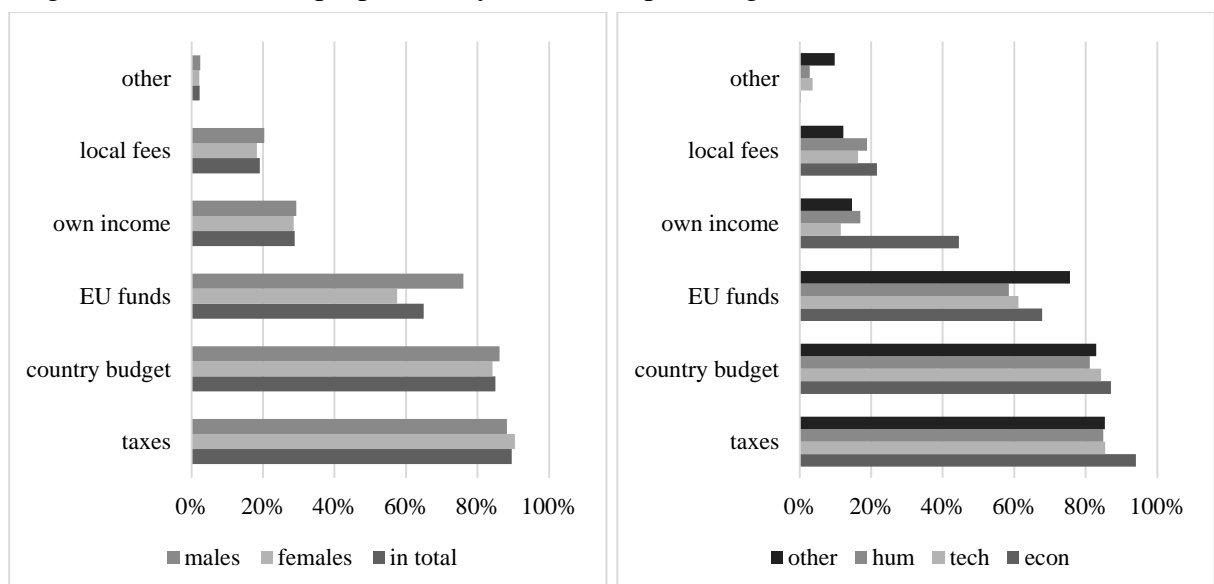


Figure 8. Sources of financial resources forming the budget of local government units in the opinion of respondents.

Source: Own study.

Representatives of the young generation of Poles believe that the funds forming the budget of a local government unit come from two main sources, i.e., from taxes and from funds provided by the state treasury. Taxes were indicated by 89.6% of respondents (90.5% women and 88.2% men), and the state treasury by 85.0% of respondents (84.2% women and 86.2% men). Both sources were most often indicated by respondents studying economics (94.0% and 87.0%, respectively). In third place, respondents will place funds from the European Union. They were indicated by 64.9% of the respondents. It should be noted that they were observed by 57.5% of women and up to 76.0% of men. They were most often indicated by residents of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (73.2%), respondents with an income per 1 family member below PLN 2,000 (67.1%), respondents studying other faculties (75.6%).

Almost 29% of the respondents (28.6% of women and 29.3% of men) were of the opinion that the budget of the local government unit is supplied with funds from their own income. And more than 19% of the respondents (18.3% of women and 20.3% of men) believed that they come from local fees. These two sources were most often indicated by respondents living in cities with a population of up to 25,000, respondents with an income per family member below PLN 2,000, and respondents studying economics.

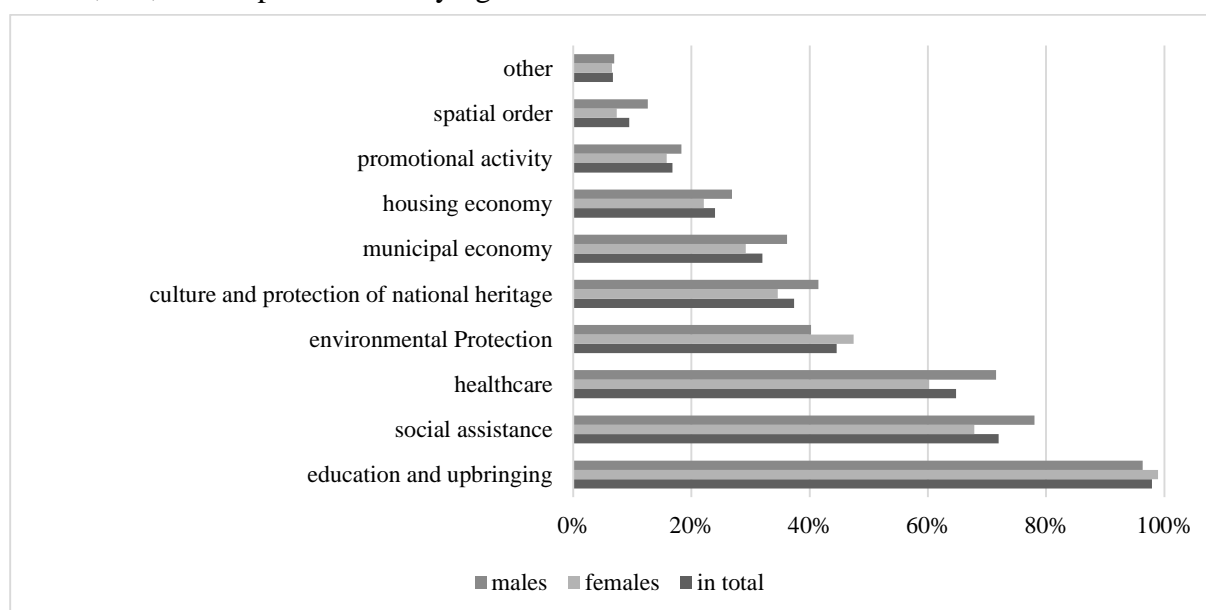


Figure 9. Objectives of allocating funds from the budget of local government units in the opinion of respondents.

Source: Own study.

Almost 98% of the respondents (98.9% of women and 96.3% of men) were of the opinion that funds from the local government unit's budget should be used to finance tasks related to education and upbringing. In second place, the respondents placed tasks in the field of social assistance. They were indicated by 71.9% of the respondents (67.9% of women and 78.1% of men). Most often, social assistance was indicated by residents of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (82.4%), respondents with an income per 1 family member below PLN 2,000 (89.9%), and respondents studying economics (74.8%).

Almost two-thirds of the survey participants (60.2% of women and 71.5% of men) were of the opinion that these funds should be spent on health care. Tasks from this group were most often indicated by residents of cities with 50-100 thousand inhabitants (67.9%), respondents with an income per 1 family member below PLN 2,000 (87.3%), respondents studying other faculties (82.9%).

More than 44% of the respondents believed that these funds should be used for environmental protection and over 37% of respondents would allocate them to finance tasks in the field of culture and national heritage. These tasks were most often indicated by residents of cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, with an income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000.

Every third participant in the survey believed that these funds should be used for tasks related to municipal management, and every fourth respondent for tasks related to housing management. It should be noted that men paid more attention to these tasks than women. Municipal management was indicated by 29.2% of women and 36.2% of men, and housing by 22.1% of women and 26.8% of men. It should be emphasised that the percentage of respondents who believed that funds from the budget of the local government unit should be allocated to housing economy increased with increasing size of the place of residence¹. On the other hand, it decreased with the increase in the respondents' income per family member².

In the further part of the study, the activity of representatives of the young generation of Poles was analysed in terms of participation in the functioning of local government units.

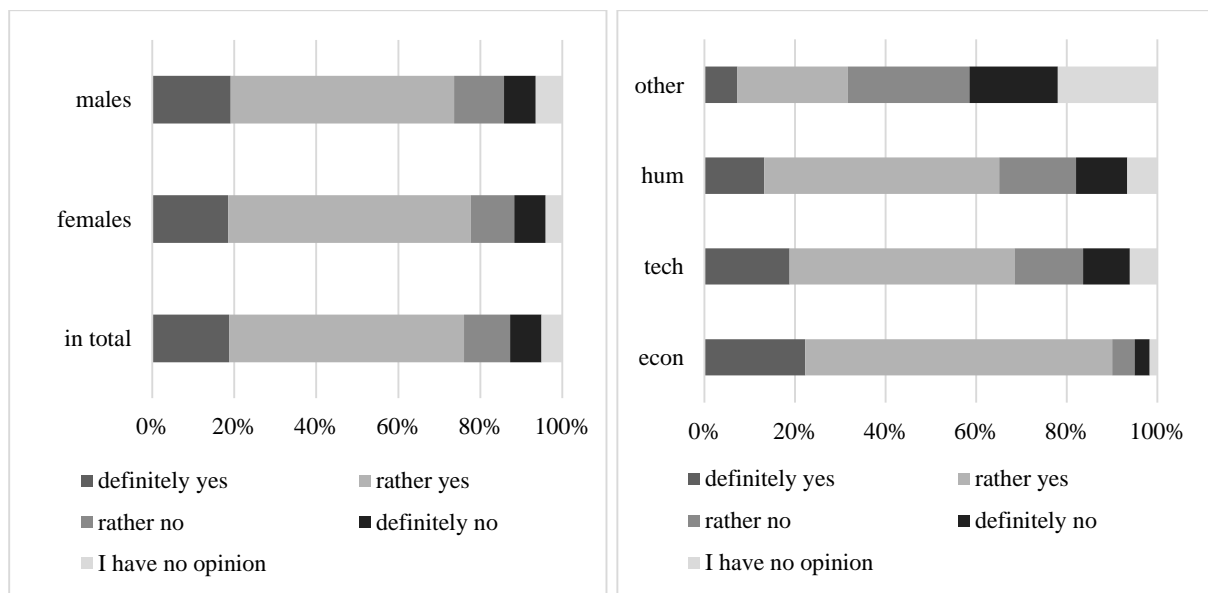


Figure 10. Opinions of respondents on the possibility of direct influence of residents on the budget of local government units.

Source: Own study.

¹ In the case of inhabitants of rural areas, it was 9.7%, and among inhabitants of cities over 100,000 inhabitants it was 37.0%.

² In the group of respondents with income per family member below PLN 2,000, it was 56.9%, and in the segment of respondents with income over PLN 4,000, only 7.0%.

At the beginning, it should be emphasised that 76% of the respondents (77.7% of women and 73.6% of men) were of the opinion that residents should have a direct impact on the budget of the local government unit in which they live (Figure 10). This opinion was most often expressed by respondents living in cities with 50-100 thousand inhabitants (80.2%), respondents with an income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000 (82.9%), respondents studying economics (90.0%). On the other hand, the largest percentage of opponents of such an opinion was among residents of rural areas (23.4%), having an income per 1 family member below PLN 2,000 (25.3%), studying other faculties (46.3%).

In the analysed research group, 69% of respondents confirmed knowledge of the idea of participatory budgeting (Figure 11). It should be emphasised that knowledge of this idea was declared more often by men (71.5%) than by women (67.3%). The level of familiarity with this idea increased along with the size of the town inhabited by the respondents. This is probably due to the fact that in larger cities the idea of participatory budgeting has been used in practise for several years and information campaigns were conducted during this period. It is interesting that the highest level of knowledge of this idea was in the segment of respondents with income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000 (74.7%) and the lowest in the segment of respondents with an income above PLN 4,000 (50.8%). Knowledge of the idea of participatory budgeting was most often confirmed by respondents studying humanities (70.8%) and economics (70.4%), and least often in other fields (65.9%).

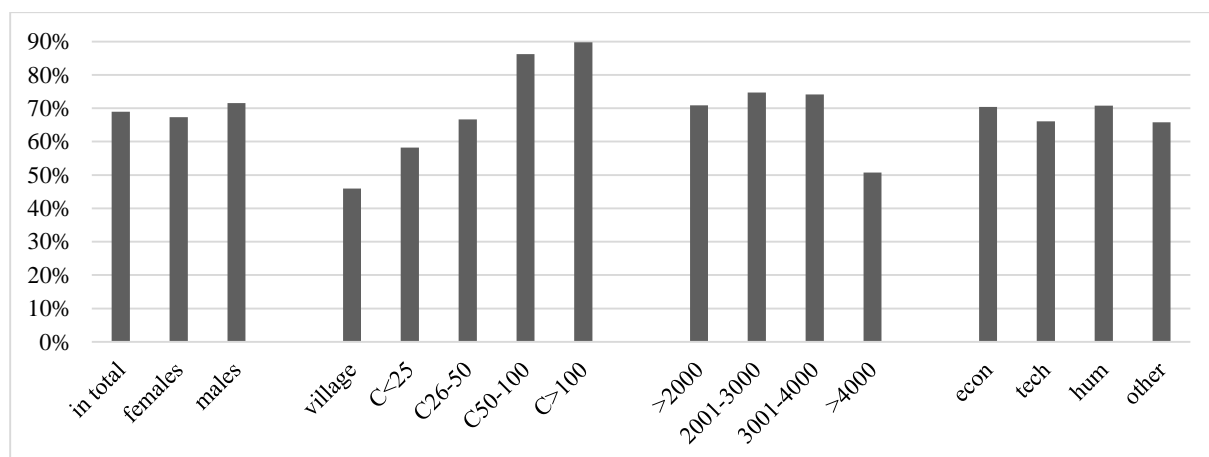


Figure 11. Opinions of respondents on the knowledge of the idea of participatory budgeting.

Source: Own study.

It should be emphasised that almost 69% of the respondents declared that more than 38% of the respondents (37.1% of women and 41.1% of men) declared that they had participated in previous editions of participatory budgeting organised by their local government units (Figure 12). The share of respondents who voted for this idea increased along with the size of the place of residence. This is due to the fact that in practice this idea is used by local government authorities in medium and large cities. However, what is interesting is the fact that the share of respondents who voted decreased along with the increase in their income per family member.

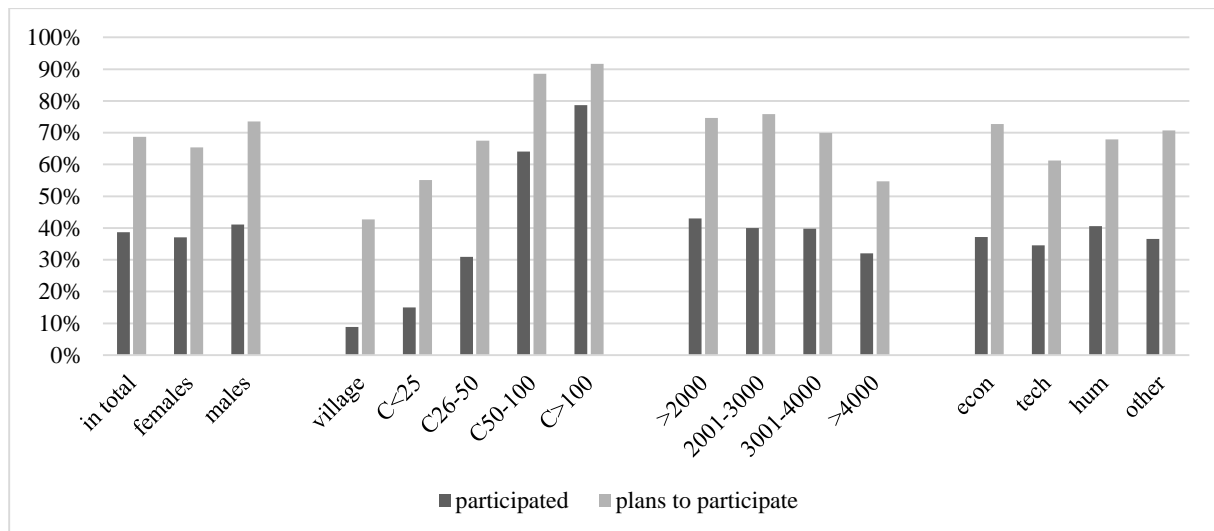


Figure 12. Participation of respondents in voting on the participatory budget.

Source: Own study.

It should be emphasised that almost 69% of the respondents declared that they would participate in future editions of the participatory budget. This declaration was made by 64.5% of women and 73.6% of men (Figure 12). The largest increase in interest in taking part in the vote, compared to people who had previously voted, was recorded among residents of cities below 25,000 inhabitants, respondents with an income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000, students of economics.

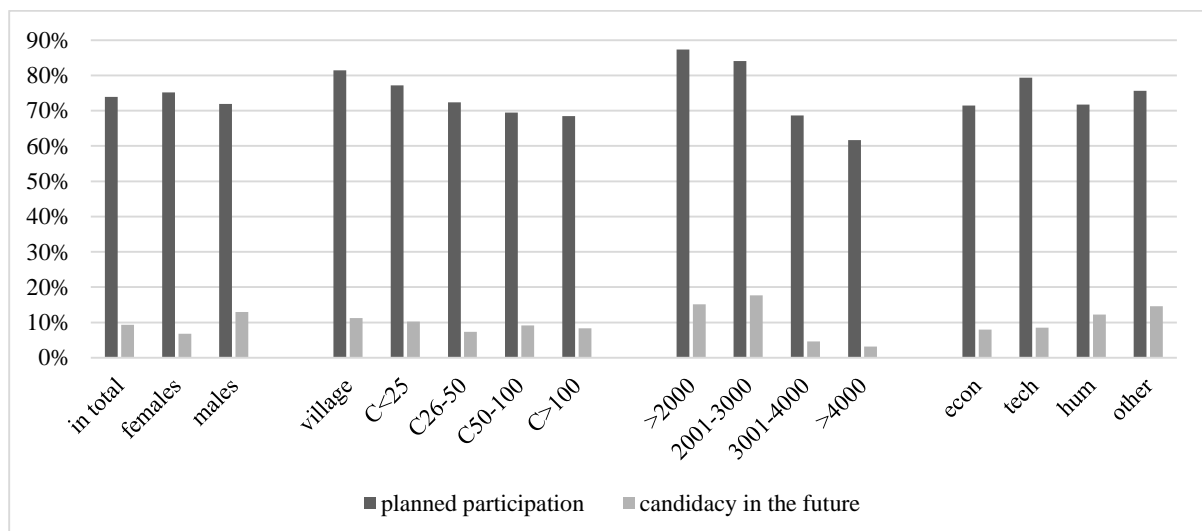


Figure 13. Planned participation of respondents in the next local government elections and willingness to run for councillor.

Source: Own study.

Almost 74% of the respondents declared that they planned to participate in the next local government elections (Figure 13). It should be emphasised that such declarations were made more often by women (75.2%) than by men (72.0%). It is also interesting that residents of smaller towns and respondents with a lower income per family member paid more attention to participation in local government elections. Among rural residents, 81.5% of respondents

planned to participate in local government elections, and 68.5% of respondents among residents of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. In turn, in the segment of respondents with an income per 1 family member below PLN 2,000, 87.3% declared their willingness to participate in the elections, and in the segment of respondents whose income was higher than PLN 4,000, 61.7% of respondents. It should also be noted that the highest percentage of those declaring planning to participate in elections was among students of technical faculties (79.4%) and the lowest among students of economic faculties (71.4%).

Among the representatives of the young generation of Poles participating in the survey, 9.3% of respondents who planned to run for councillor in the future. It should be emphasised that men (13.0%) declared higher activity in this respect than women (6.8%). The largest percentage of respondents interested in holding the mandate of a councilor lived in rural areas (11.3%) and in towns of up to 25,000 inhabitants (10.2%), had an income per 1 family member in the range of PLN 2,001-3,000 (17.7%) and below 2 thousand zlotys (15.2%), and also studied other faculties (14.6%) and humanities (12.3%).

4. Summary and conclusions

The respondents participating in the survey, i.e. representatives of the young generation of Poles (aged 18-25), belong to the generation referred to as the Internet generation. Its representatives are enterprising, have big plans for the future, are open to the whole world, and have a great need to change it and contacts with peers and the environment, and they gain knowledge mainly from the Internet.

Representatives of this generation are just entering the labour market and taking their first activities in the socio-political sphere. In a few years, they will constitute a significant social group deciding on the possibilities and directions of development of the local government units inhabited by them, i.e. communes, poviats, and voivodeships. However, in order to be able to fulfil their role in society well, they should have the necessary knowledge about the functioning of local government units and demonstrate a high level of activity in this area.

Knowledge is a resource, capital, an invaluable treasure, the key to success, not only on the market. Knowledge should be acquired, expanded, and deepened throughout life. Therefore, it is important to improve and improve the quality of education of young people, especially students, so that they can find themselves in the broadly understood society, both as its citizens and as employees or employers.

The research conducted showed that the issue of functioning of local government units is not yet a subject of interest among representatives of this generation. Although more than 60% of the respondents declare that they have knowledge of this subject, its level is very low. The situation is even worse in the case of knowledge about the budget of a local government

unit. More than 91% of the respondents either do not have it or declare that it is negligible or small. This leads to the conclusion that building a civil society in subsequent generations requires the introduction of content into the education system that will significantly increase the level of knowledge on this subject.

However, it should be emphasised that representatives of the surveyed generation of Poles declare their willingness to actively participate in the life of regional and local communities. More than 76% of respondents are of the opinion that decisions regarding the shape of the budget of a local government unit should be made by its residents. On the other hand, almost 39% of the respondents, despite their young age, have already cast their vote on participatory budgeting, and less than 69% of the respondents declare that they will do so in the future.

Furthermore, almost 74% of the respondents declared that they wanted to fulfil their patriotic duty by voting in the next local government elections. However, more than 9% of the respondents declared that in the future they want to be actively involved in the work of regional and local governments and plan to run for a councillor.

The conducted research allows us to confirm the research hypothesis presented in the article, which assumes that despite the fact that the young generation of Poles is open to the whole world, mainly via the Internet, they are also interested in problems on a regional and local scale, participating in their diagnosis and attempt to solutions.

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