Kinship in Public Office (KPO)

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U4's Proxy Challenge Competition

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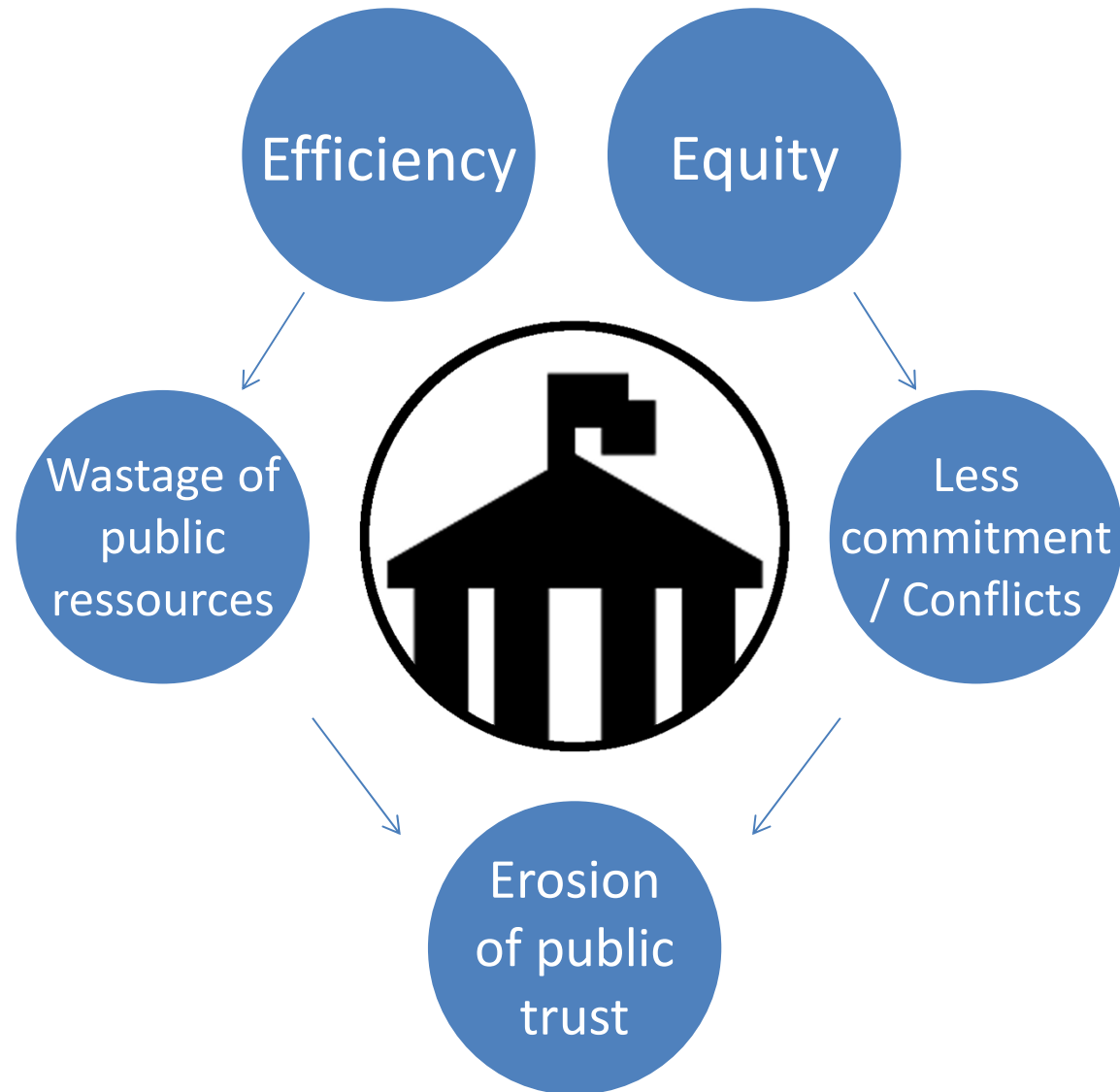[3] Ph.D. candidate, *CERDI, France,* frederic.lesne@etu.udamail.fr

What is nepotism?

Nepotism in the workplace describes situations in which a person exploits his or her power and authority to procure jobs or other favours to relatives (U4).

Nepotism is a form of **corruption** that can take place in all types of social entities and at all hierarchical levels.

Why is nepotism in the public sector a problem?

Efficiency

Equity

Wastage of public ressources

Less commitment / Conflicts

Erosion of public trust

Why so little is done to tackle nepotism?

In a number of societies, nepotism is **socially accepted**.

Researchers aiming at evaluating the effect of nepotism on organisational performance have been constrained by the issue of **measurement**.

Measuring nepotism

➢ Measuring nepotism directly requires detailed information about hiring practices in order to detect positive discrimination towards candidates with familial connections.

➢ Such information is generally out of reach.

➢ Proxy indicators can provide useful indications on the level of nepotism, its evolution over time and assess whether anti-nepotism initiatives are successful.

The KPO indicator

➢ The indicator we propose as a proxy measure of nepotism in the public sector captures kin connectivity among government officials.

➢ The KPO is defined as the number of existing family connections in a given organisation relatively to the universe of possible connections, scaled by 100.

➢ The KPO coefficient, ranging from 0 (no connection) to 100 (every single person is connected with everyone else), is a proxy indicator for the prevalence of nepotism in that organisation.

KPO: a mathematical formulation

➢ The KPO indicator is given by the following formula:

$$KPO = 100 \, \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N} f_i}{N(N-1)}$$

With f_i the number of individuals in the organisation with a family tie to person i and N the total number of people in the organisation.

➢ The KPO indicator can be interpreted as the percentage of possible connections that materialise:

$$KPO = 100 \, \frac{number\ of\ existing\ connections}{number\ of\ possible\ connections}$$

An illustration of the KPO indicator
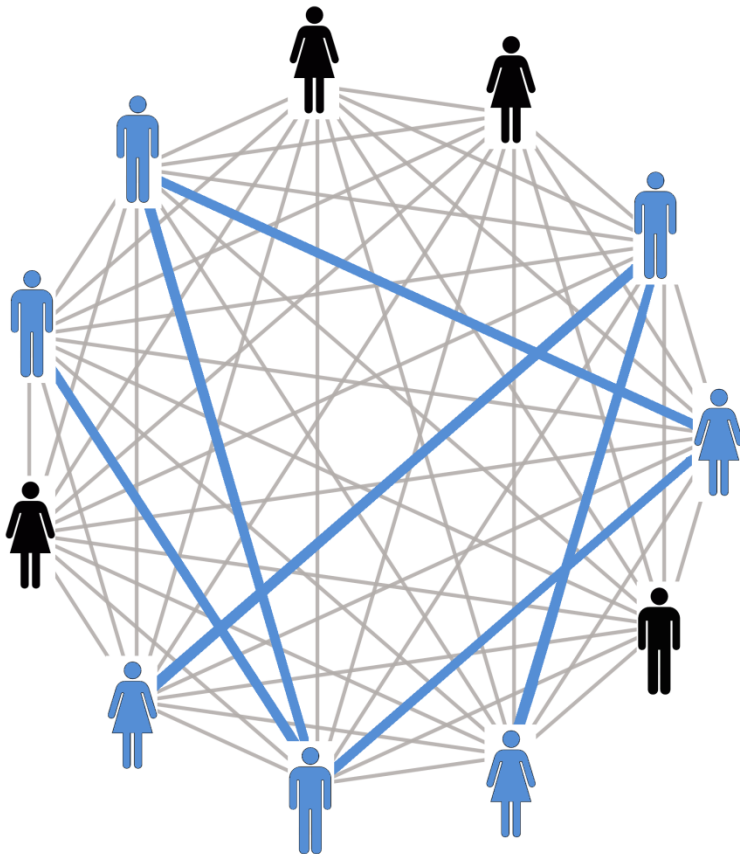
To illustrate the KPO indicator, let us consider a system (e.g. a police station, a health centre) composed of 11 people.

The number of possible connections in that system, represented in grey in the diagram, is: (11*10)/2 = 55.

Out of 55 possible connections, 6 are observed. The KPO score of this system is therefore: 100*(6/55) = **10.91**.

Construction of the KPO indicator

Desk research and broad stakeholder consultations will assess how the methodology of the indicator can be tailored to local conditions.

Data collection relies on **self-administered questionnaires** handed out to all public officials in the investigated system.
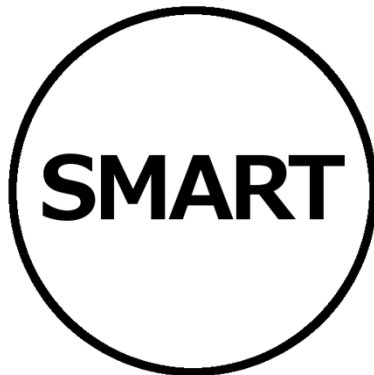
In addition, **targeted audits** are carried out to detect misreporting.

Properties of the KPO indicator

CREAM

➤ **Clear**: precise and directionally unambiguous.
➤ **Relevant**: appropriate for measuring nepotism.
➤ **Economic**: relatively inexpensive to implement.
➤ **Actionnable**: grants basis for decision-making.
➤ **Monitorable**: amenable to external validation.

SMART

➤ **Simple**: easy to understand and implement.
➤ **Measurable**: fact-based rather than subjective.
➤ **Adaptable**: can be tailored to different contexts.
➤ **Reproducible**: can be replicated independently.
➤ **Timed**: measures short and long-term change.

Scope of the KPO indicator

➢ The KPO indicator is a proxy rather than a direct measure of nepotism.

➢ The indicator could be applied to other forms of favouritism (e.g. cronyism, ethnic nepotism) and political patronage to form a "basket" of indicators.

➢ The indicator allows for comparison of units of any size and is able to track behavioural change over time.

➢ The KPO indicator is particularly suited to measure the outcomes of anti-corruption initiatives.

Measuring the impact of anti-corruption reforms
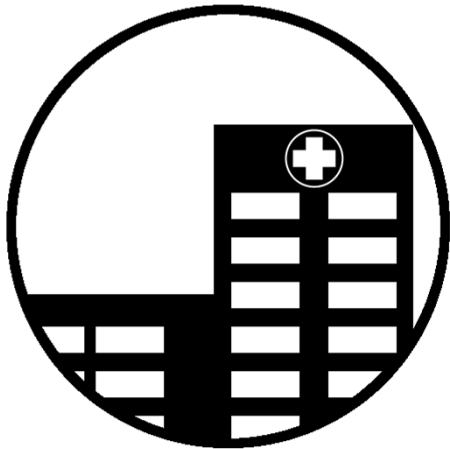
A donor finances a recruitment campaign for health centres in a country, but is worried that nepotism will undermine the selection processes. The donor implements an anti-corruption initiative to tackle this issue and seeks to test its effect.

1 The KPO indicator is computed for all health centres in the country.

2 A training of managers on recruitment procedures is undertaken in a random sample of health centres prior to the hiring campaign.

3 The KPO is computed on new recruits in all health centres a year later to assess the impact of the intervention on the treated centres.

4 In addition, a survey is performed in health centres to measure the impact of the anti-nepotism reform on the quality of healthcare.

Conclusion

➢ By using information on kin relationships between public employees, the KPO indicator aims to inform decision-makers about the prevalence of nepotism in the public sector.

➢ The indicator is highly adaptable and can be applied to a wide range of public organisations.

➢ The KPO indicator may be used to track progress of anti-nepotism initiatives.

Thank you.

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