

VISTULA UNIVERSITY

PhD Thesis

Public administration employees.
Management in the context of ethics
codes

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Justification for the choice of topic

The issue of using the code of ethics in management in public administration is current, multifaceted and important for science in the cognitive sense. The growing number of pathological phenomena among public officials and changes in the social and administrative environment contribute to the growth of interest in professional ethics. The relationship between officials and citizens is also becoming increasingly important. Identifying problems related to the construction of the code of ethics and the practical use of its provisions to shape employees' attitudes is also important for practice, and the results obtained can be used for changes in management in public administration. An attempt was made to combine two issues: analysis of existing legal provisions defining the features of the document – the code of ethics and a public administration employee (theoretical aspect) and analysis of field research carried out allowing to determine the perception of these features by the persons they concern, i.e. administration employees (empirical aspect – internal assessment in the Poviát Starosty in Pruszków) and direct recipients of services provided by the authorities administration, i.e. the local community (empirical aspect – external assessment of the inhabitants of the communes of the Pruszków poviát).

The issue of values that should guide public administration employees will also be discussed in more detail. In order to determine them, it was considered necessary to take into account the right of citizens to good administration. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which in Article 41 introduces the right to good administration, and the European Code of Good Administration, which is a development of this right, were considered extremely important when discussing ethical issues. The norms contained in these documents set standards for the conduct of administrative employees and relations with citizens. These solutions are also included in Article 24 of the Act on Local Government Employees.

Analysis of the initial state of research on the subject matter. Critical analysis and evaluation of literature/source base

Human resources management is an issue very well developed in the literature. This is particularly evident in the case of the role of the leader (manager, manager) in shaping employees' attitudes using tools such as the motivation system or the code of ethics. This is related to the specificity of public administration and its low flexibility in adapting to changes in the environment. In public administration, a special role is played not only by the legally defined hierarchical organizational culture, but also by the legal legitimacy of all administrative employees. The third – after the hierarchical legal legitimacy and the principle of legalism –

factor significantly influencing the issues of human resources management is the mission and purpose of public administration. All these issues are discussed in the literature, and the richness of the achievements in this area makes it impossible to indicate the most significant items.

In this work, management issues are related to the issue of ethics in public administration and the citizen's right to good administration. The issues of ethics and codes of ethics, their role and significance for the functioning of public administration have been discussed quite extensively in the literature on the subject. Individual ethical values and their significance for building trust in public administration and the rule of law are also discussed in detail. There is a lack of empirical studies on the market that would refer to the assessment of specific solutions used by local governments and which could be a source of good practices for managers. All the more so because the issues of ethics at the level of local governments have not been regulated in the applicable law, and each head of the office creates his own solutions included in the codes of ethics. It can therefore be said that with the rich literature indicating the benefits of introducing codes of ethics and other ethical infrastructure tools, there is also a lack of solutions in the field of practical guidance. As a good practice in this area, one can recall the research conducted in 2013 by Izabela Seredocha (*Ethical attitudes of local government employees in the assessment of employees and clients of offices – research report*). Research on the ethical attitudes of employees is carried out independently by individual offices of territorial units as part of monitoring compliance with ethical codes, but they are not of a general nature (limited to the office), and their practical significance raises doubts – mainly due to the representativeness of the research sample.

Taking into account all the above remarks, this work has become part of the literature's interests and fills the gap in existing knowledge: between what managers need to know and what they learn from various studies and the level of expectations of the environment and the possibilities of practical application of this knowledge. The knowledge gap is understood as the difference between the available knowledge of public administration staff about the importance of ethics in management and the level of its practical application, as expected by the right to good administration. In the opinion of the author of this work, the undertaken considerations will allow to create a solution to the problem of the gap between knowledge and its practical application, and the solutions indicated in the work will create a kind of bridge between the knowledge of the importance of codes of ethics, the willingness of managers to use them in shaping the attitudes of local government employees and the actual action aimed at creating an ethical office ensuring the implementation of the right to good administration.

Subjective, objective, temporal and spatial scope

Codes of ethics are not objects that exist in themselves, but are carriers of specific values of a given professional group whose members have recognized as their own. In the study conducted for the purposes of the work, selected codes of ethics were examined, limited to documents used by employees of local government administration, which – from the functional and organizational point of view – deals with public affairs and satisfying the needs reported by local communities.

The considerations apply only to local government employees employed in district and municipal offices. It was considered that the exercise of the right to good administration in the context of the application of ethical principles should be assessed by the persons directly affected by this right. The assessment of the functioning of the administration and the attitudes of its employees (by assessing the implementation of the principles fulfilling the right to good administration, including the rule of law, impartiality, selflessness, objectivity, reliability, openness) was left to the inhabitants of the analyzed municipalities. In this way, areas where changes need to be made and which the leader should take into account in management have been identified.

The results of the study were discussed. The topic of creating codes and their importance in shaping employees' attitudes is often raised in the literature, but the considerations are theoretical or based on the analysis of the content of codes. There is a lack of field research devoted to the issues of using these codes in practice – both in the opinion of local government employees and members of local communities. The survey carried out in the Pruszków powiat was carried out in two stages. The survey with residents of four municipalities of the Pruszków district was conducted in May 2022. 202 surveys were obtained in the municipality of Brwinów, 200 surveys in the municipality of Michałowice, 191 surveys in the municipality of Piastów and 169 in the municipality of Raszyn. A survey was also conducted among employees of the Powiat Starosty in Pruszków – 104 questionnaires were obtained. During the discussion for the purposes of the work, the results of the review and monitoring of codes of ethics of local government employees from selected municipalities throughout Poland were also recalled. In this way, an attempt was made to demonstrate the superficiality of local governments' activities in the field of survey of their assessments, resulting from too small a research sample and unreliability of the results obtained (inference based on a survey with several residents of the commune).

The scope of the empirical study was limited to the Pruszków powiat. It includes four communes: Brwinów, Michałowice, Piastów and Raszyn (the other two municipalities –

Nadarzyn and the city of Pruszków – did not introduce codes of ethics) and the Powiat Starosty in Pruszków. The Pruszków district was considered to be a representative area for a given population (local government offices, local government employees, members of the local community). Such treatment of the selected area is supported by the results of research conducted in the Pruszków powiat on the characteristics of public administration (in 2020-2021), human resources management (in 2021-2022) and the local labor market (in 2022). The joint conclusion of the conducted research was to determine that the results obtained in the Pruszków powiat do not differ significantly from the average results for the whole country and the results obtained in other administrative units with a level of development comparable to the Pruszków powiat. These projects highlighted issues that were not taken into account in national surveys or that were addressed in a very general way – which is an added value for science. This work also plays a similar role.

A query of literature and codes of ethics created in local government offices and an analysis of the applicable law – also in relation to officials employed in state offices and in the civil corps – allows us to claim that the solutions used in the codes of offices of the Pruszków district can be considered representative for all local governments. The analysis covered documents that were created in the period 2005-2021, which allows to indicate changes taking place in the environment and functioning of public administration. This also applies to changes in the applicable law, including in particular the scope of duties of local government employees regulated in the Act on Local Government Employees.

Work methodology (research methods and techniques)

The implementation of the main objective required a combination of dogmatic and legal methods, monographic, case study, diagnostic survey and examination of documents. **The monographic method** allowed to identify the structure of the studied phenomenon and propose solutions (concepts) for its development. The analysis concerns codes of ethics as normative acts in force in a specific place and time (the spatial scope of the study will be limited to the area of the Pruszków powiat), and therefore it can be considered that the research undertaken took the form of **a case study**. The subject of research are specific phenomena, and the effect – to develop their diagnosis and indicate the actions necessary to introduce changes.

Due to the subject scope of the study, three basic research methods have been established: the dogmatic-legal method in the theoretical part, the diagnostic survey method and the document examination method in the empirical part. **The dogmatic-legal** method is a method proper to legal sciences, important due to the research problem undertaken. It was supplemented

by a doctrinal and axiological analysis, in which special attention was paid to legal solutions constituting the basic carrier of values determining the functioning of public administration and the quality of standards applicable in public life. In the theoretical part, the sources of ethics were analyzed in formal terms (normative acts, recommendations and good practices as well as judicial decisions) and material (social circumstances affecting the formation of clerical ethics). This method allowed to answer the question: Should professional ethics be codified, and if so – does it have any practical significance? **The survey method (diagnostic survey)**, in turn, allows you to gather knowledge about the subject under study based on the opinions of selected communities – a specially selected group that can be called representative of a given population. A research technique in the form of a questionnaire was used, and the results obtained during the study were discussed and objectified. The obtained results were confronted with material from other sources using other research methods. At this stage, the basic technique was the method of examining documents in the form of applicable legal solutions, statistical data and media information.

Work structure

The first part of the work is devoted to general considerations on human resources management and building human capital. This section seeks to determine whether the organization's model has an impact on the leader's responsibilities and activities. The factors of human resources management were also discussed, with particular attention to elements specific to administration, and which at the same time are related to the formation of the ethical attitude of a local government employee. Efforts were also made to show the role of the manager, emphasizing his special importance in the context of shaping ethical attitudes. Efforts were also made to draw attention to the importance of improving employees' knowledge and competences as part of training and various forms of professional development.

The second part of the work deals with ethical issues. Attempts were made to present the importance of ethical principles in human resources management, with particular emphasis on the place of these principles in clerical ethics. It was recognised that ethical values should be regarded as a key element in the exercise of the right to good administration, and this part of the deliberations began with the establishment of the link between good administration and the ethical values of public administration. These considerations were the basis for determining whether the code of ethics can be an instrument for building the ethical attitude of an employee. To this end, after defining the basic concepts, values, principles and ethical standards that fall within the law of officials were presented and attempts were made to determine what impact

they could have on the attitude of an official. This part of the work ended with determining how unethical behavior of employees should be understood.

The third part is empirical. The codes of ethics that were created in the offices of the Pruszków district were analyzed. Five offices were analysed: the Powiat Starosta in Pruszków and four municipal offices in the Pruszków powiat (Brwinów, Michałowice, Piastów and Raszyn). The conducted research was to answer the question: Are and how are codes of ethics for local government employees used to shape employees' attitudes and promote the principles shaping the right to good administration? In this context, codes of ethics were treated as one of the tools used by the leader (manager, employer) in the process of human resources management, with attention being paid to the issues of shaping attitudes and the impact of these attitudes on promoting the principles of good administration. After the general characteristics of public administration in the context of human resources management, a multi-criteria assessment of codes of ethics was carried out: their content was analyzed, paying attention to the issues of implementation of the right to good administration, and the opinion of local government employees (in the case of the Powiat Starosta) and residents of communes in the Pruszków powiat on the attitudes of employees and the impact of ethical codes on the functioning of administration was presented.

The analysis made in the third chapter was discussed in the last, fourth part of the work. The discussion referred to theoretical considerations, applicable law and the results of assessments of codes of ethics in selected offices (municipal and powiat) throughout Poland. Reference was also made to the solutions adopted in the civil service, trying to establish good practices in the use of codes of ethics and propose specific actions that could – by shaping the attitude of local government employees – affect the implementation of the right to good administration.

Methodological issues of the doctoral dissertation and their implementation

The Code of Ethics should fill the space between the provisions on the functioning of local governments (the so-called package of local government acts) and the regulations regulating the work of local government employees (the Act on local government employees) and the provisions contained in the statutes of local government units and the organizational regulations operating in them. This behaviour is essential for the realisation of citizens' right to good administration. The aim of the deliberations was **to learn about the possibility of using codes of ethics of local government employees by local government leaders to shape employee attitudes and the scope of using codes of ethics as tools to promote the principles shaping the right to good administration.** The cognitive goal was to describe the codes of ethics used in offices and their impact on the attitude of a local government employee. Achieving this goal

required an analysis of the content of the codes and getting to know the opinions of residents on their application and impact on the attitude of officials. It was also necessary to get to know the opinions of public administration employees. Determining the impact of the contained codes of rules and principles on the attitudes of employees required clarification of specific dependencies and their assessment. This was a theoretical goal. An attempt was made to develop general principles and good practice in the formulation of codes of ethics. This assessment was the basis for formulating conclusions and recommendations, and as a result, for evaluating codes of ethics. Therefore, the practical goal was to develop practical guidelines (directives, recommendations, recommendations) addressed to managers and public administration employees. The indicated objectives have been achieved, and the analysis of the content of the codes and the results of the survey allowed us to conclude that ethical codes can be a good tool for shaping the attitudes of local government employees, but local government leaders do not use their potential to promote ethical attitudes and shape the right to good administration.

The general problem of the work took the form of a question: Are and how are the codes of ethics of local government employees used to shape the attitudes of employees and promote the principles shaping the right to good administration? At the same time, it was assumed that the norms contained in the code of ethics should be a codification of moral convictions existing in a given professional environment. In other words, the purpose of the code of ethics is not to repeat the legal basis for performing work, but to persuade employees to act in accordance with the provisions of the code of ethics – regardless of their moral attitudes. In this way, by forcing specific actions, the code of ethics can influence the formation of expected attitudes. This is particularly important in the case of employees characterized by the lack of their own moral predispositions, because they can be replaced by ethical code dispositions. In order to answer this question, it was necessary to identify specific problems in the form of five questions.

The first question sought was: **What is the specificity of human resources management in public administration?** It was found that the model of functioning of modern administration was based on the achievements of many concepts, and each of them played an important role in the currently functioning public administration. The changes in governance were to contribute to the creation of a citizen-friendly administration, and as a result, the links between the political and administrative spheres were strengthened through political and administrative leadership and political control. In theoretical assumptions, the appropriate quality of the administration creates the conditions necessary for cooperation and development of agreements

based on an open and transparent policy. Transparency results from the rule of law and democratic state of law, efficiency and accountability, as well as transparency of the processes carried out. Public administration – despite many positive changes – is still very inflexible, and the transition to managerial administration did not mean a departure from strict compliance with procedures and routinized activities regulated by law still prevail. In local government administration, the employer is an office in which management takes place within a multi-level structure – the entity managing at the highest level is the head of the office (head of the commune, mayor, president of the city, starosty), and at lower levels – heads of organizational units and managers of task teams of employees. The issue of the organization and principles of functioning of offices has been left at the disposal of the bodies of individual units – they define the organizational regulations granted by the executive body by way of an ordinance. In the organizational regulations created in individual units, the manager and official superior as well as the entity responsible for activities in labor law matters may appoint a person to perform specific activities. Such a person acts only on the basis and to the extent determined by the power of attorney granted, and his powers are limited to giving instructions to a specific group of employees. The third – after the hierarchical legal authority and the principle of legalism – factor influencing the issues of human resources management is the mission and purpose of public administration, i.e. the provision of public services. Therefore, in human resources management in administration, efficient (professional, timely, reliable) handling of the matter is of the greatest importance. The specificity of administration means that the formation of human capital should play a very important role in human resources management, because the action of administration is associated with the need to create the image of a given office, the authority of the state and public administration as a whole. Not only formal qualifications resulting from education and experience are important, but also the appropriate personality and moral and ethical values presented by the administration employee, which make up the attitude of an official. The combination of these three factors determines the efficiency and development of administration, but at the same time significantly limits the possibility of managing human resources. The specificity of the public sector is created by a bureaucratic management system (low flexibility and limited independence of personnel activities), well-established principles of human resources administration (legal and social services for employees) and the formal authority of the head of the office who has no competence in the field of human resources management.

What role does a manager play in shaping human capital in public administration?

The role of a modern manager in a local government office should be based on the managerial

model and linking formal authority in the power structure with his actual responsibility for the management process. In public administration, the status of a manager and the scope of his tasks are shaped by his formal authority and authority over the managed unit. The action of the leader is limited by the applicable legal framework and is associated with the authority of the manager and the formal authority possessed by him. This is the lowest level of leadership, because employees carry out orders as a complement to power. The method of selecting the executive body in the municipality, and thus – the head of the office, means that managerial skills, including in the field of human resources management, do not have any meaning. As a rule, the head of the office is not a specialist in human resources management, so as a result, not only does he not deal with employee management himself, but also does not initiate the modernization of the HR process. Therefore, pursuant to Article 5 of the Local Government Employees Act, the head of the office may appoint a Secretary and authorise him to perform tasks on his behalf in the implementation of human resources policy (paragraph 4). Direct management of human resources lies in the hands of the heads of units separated in the structure. It should be emphasized, however, that formally all HR processes in the office are the responsibility of its manager, in fact the work of the office is organized by the secretary (HR management specialist), and these tasks are carried out by lower-level managers. As a rule, neither the manager nor the secretary initiate new solutions and changes allowing for the modernization of human resources (human capital) management beyond the framework specified in the regulations. The head of the office, on the other hand, is not involved in the development of human capital, and human resources management is treated as legitimately secondary. The aforementioned specificity of management in public administration means that the rules resulting from the pragmatics of service dominate, and personnel decisions are concentrated in the management of offices. The secretary and the personnel units appointed in the offices – despite being fully concerned with human resources management – perform only an auxiliary function. Neither the secretary nor any manager makes independent decisions. The scope of competence in this area results directly from the organizational structure of the office and the regulations in force in it (organizational regulations, work regulations). In the case of department managers, the competences are limited to supervising the daily work of their employees, determining the requirements imposed on them and reporting staffing needs.

Is there – and if so to what extent – a link between the right to good administration and ethical values? Title V of the Charter of Fundamental Rights regulates citizens' rights, which include the right to good administration (Article 41). Thanks to this location, the right to good administration has become a common standard of democratic states and the so-called positive

procedural principle and a set of public procedural rights applicable to administrative procedures before EU bodies. Many of these principles have already been regulated in national law – as the duties of employees employed in state offices (Article 17 of the Act on employees of state offices), employees of the civil service corps (Article 76 of the Civil Service Act) and local government employees (Article 24 of the Act on local government employees) and the rules of procedural procedure expressed in the Code of Civil Procedure (e.g. Articles 6 and 7 – the rule of law, Article 8 – Principle of impartiality and equal treatment, Articles 12 and 35 – Principle of timeliness). The realization of the right to good administration requires the formation of an appropriate attitude of the employee. The right to good administration requires ensuring not only substantive competence, but also ethical competence. They are articulated in the European Code of Good Administration. The right to good administration is based on the principles of the rule of law and impartiality, which allow the trust of the parties to proceedings in the public administration to be built. The third value that allows you to implement this principle is responsibility. Customer orientation requires a change in human resource management in all its areas, but ethical values should not be limited only to shaping the attitude of officials to customers, but should also be taken into account in the system of motivation and employee evaluation. The employee's attitude affects the assessment of the quality of his work, shapes a positive image of the office and builds trust in public administration and affects the possibility of exercising the right to good administration. The incentive system should promote professionalism and high quality of customer relations and behaviour in line with ethical values promoted by the office. A tool supporting the formation of such an attitude may be a code of ethics.

Can codes of ethics for local government employees be a tool for promoting the principles shaping the right to good administration, and if so, to what extent? Ethical issues include principles that promote good practice and introduce rules and regulations relevant to the area in question. By shaping the attitudes of officials, clerical ethics allows for building public trust in public administration and practical implementation of the right to good administration. Norms forming the basis of ethics understood in this way may be informal or may be included in the code of ethics. This document allows you to organize the behavior of employees in accordance with the catalog of ethical values applicable in public administration. Changes are taking place in modern administration, which are also visible in the approach to the expectations set for local government employees and their implementation of applicable standards. The Code of Ethics becomes a tool supporting the implementation of the principles of good administration and ethical conduct of public administration employees. Its

effectiveness results directly from the way it is prepared and implemented, and this in turn is conditioned by the principles of good governance. An effective code of ethics is a document shaping the obligations of public administration employees resulting from the applicable law (the rule of law), taking into account the principle of open policy of managers and transparency of actions taken for the public good. The principle of participation is based on the cooperation of management bodies with employees employed in the office and the broadly understood environment – all entities to which the code may apply. The implementation of the principle of coherence and accountability requires the introduction of solutions enabling the implementation of the right to good administration – expressing opinions and influencing good governance. The principle of openness, on the other hand, is closely linked to the flexibility and transparency of the code of ethics. This requires the wording of the document in such a way that changes can be made to it in accordance with the expectations of the persons concerned. Transparency should also be referred to the transparency of the document itself – it should contain clear standards, directing attention to the most important and specific values for a given professional group, while taking into account general norms.

Can codes of ethics for local government employees be a tool for shaping ethical attitudes of employees, and if so – what ethical values should be regulated in codes of ethics? The Code may shape the ethical attitudes of employees, but it should present values important for the entity and indicate to employees the appropriate (desirable) model of behavior. It should be flexible, and therefore should always correspond to the current situation and the requirements of the environment. At the same time, it is necessary to maintain a balance among the rules that prescribe certain behaviors and limit ethically incorrect behavior – while taking into account the principles of monitoring compliance with the principles of the Code. The standards of the Code of Ethics should apply to all officials, regardless of their position. They concern the performance of official duties and include relations with other employees (colleagues, superiors and subordinates) and with citizens reporting to the office or cooperating with it. The codes may also include regulations obliging employees to behave outside the office in a specific way – most often this applies to dignified behavior and representation of the office outside. The introduction of a code is not enough for the principles it contains to be respected by employees. Ethical behavior of employees requires the introduction of ethical management principles, i.e. managing the organization in a way that affects the ethical actions of employees. The manager (leader, manager) should introduce into the organizational culture such principles as honesty, openness, honesty and clarity of the reward and punishment system. The code of ethics should indicate the appropriate ways to deal with different situations and take into

account the consequences in the form of unethical behavior and the employee's personal responsibility for such behavior.

Answering the research questions allowed us to conclude that codes of ethics of local government employees can be a tool for shaping employees' attitudes and promoting principles shaping the right to good administration. The specificity of public administration and human resources management, the way the work of the office is organized and the roles played by managers at various levels mean that codes of ethics do not perform such a function. Managers (leaders, managers) did not create conditions in which the code of ethics was treated as one of the essential elements of internal law. The analysis of the content of the codes allowed us to conclude that the ethical values set out in them, as well as the principles and standards of conduct set out in them, can be a good starting point for shaping the ethical attitudes of employees. However, this does not happen, because the content of the codes lacks important elements regarding monitoring and sanctions for unethical employee conduct, and even if they are – they are treated in a manner inconsistent with the assumptions. As a result, codes of ethics are dead documents.

The main conclusions of the doctoral dissertation and its significance

The main conclusions of the dissertation can be grouped into three groups. The first concerns the literature analysis carried out. It has been shown that the code of ethics performs internal and external functions, allows for the introduction and dissemination of values important for the organization among employees and for the dissemination of the ethical dimension of the functioning of public administration among citizens. An effective code should be based on general moral principles and principles important for the public sector and take into account the specific circumstances and needs of the local authority. Only then can it support local government employees in meeting changing social expectations, and thus enable building a good public image and increase the confidence of residents in the services provided by public administration. In order to create an ethical dimension of public administration, it is not enough to create a code of ethics – its effectiveness is determined by linking it with other documents creating internal law (procedures, regulations) and solutions creating ethical infrastructure (training system, evaluation system, remuneration system, reward and penalty system). An important role in shaping the ethical attitude is played by the manager. Meanwhile, in public administration, human resources management is divided between the head of unit (formal responsibility for the functioning of the office), the secretary (formal responsibility in the scope of entrusted competences and actual management of personnel matters) and heads of individual

departments or teams (responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of tasks and shaping competences). As a result, the responsibility for the lack of appropriate solutions in the field of human resources management is blurred.

The second group of conclusions is related to the answer to research questions and verification of the hypothesis. In the doctoral dissertation, a hypothesis was put forward in which it was assumed that **the solutions used in local government offices in the field of shaping the ethical attitude of public administration employees did not meet the expectations of residents, which negatively affects the possibility of exercising the right to good administration.** The discussed doctoral dissertation and the research carried out in it led to the confirmation of the hypothesis. Empirical research used in this work (both carried out for its needs and secondary research) allows us to conclude that employees of municipal government offices and district offices are not fully convinced whether ethical codes affect the clerical environment in the expected way. A significant part of officials obliged to familiarize themselves with the content of the code and apply its principles in practice – as it results from the monitoring carried out in offices and the survey in Pruszków – do not know the provisions of the document. The survey shows that almost 40% of the employees of the Poviast Starosty in Pruszków do not know where the code of ethics is available. Employees also directly indicated the lack of knowledge of the rules and standards contained therein. The Code is also not properly promoted, there is a lack of regular training and a lack of control over compliance with ethical principles. The problem is not only the lack of knowledge of the code, but also the attitude of managers to its provisions. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the monitoring carried out by local governments. The code does not fulfill its role, because residents not only do not know where to look for the code, but also to whom to report that the official does not follow the code. Above all, residents lack provisions regarding the responsibility of employees for the lack of a friendly and professional approach – and thus the implementation of the right to good administration and the application of ethical principles by employees. For a code of ethics – containing formalised guidelines on the applicable values and expected standards of conduct – to be effective, it is necessary to create it with the principle of engagement, with the participation of a wide range of future recipients (with the participation of debates with residents and employees), link it with other documents of internal law and monitor compliance with the principles contained therein. The introduction of the Code will not replace systemic solutions whose primary objective will be the provision of services at a high level, in accordance with the requirements arising from the right to good administration.

Positive verification of the hypothesis allows you to move on to the third group of conclusions. The analysis of codes of ethics and the results of a survey with residents of four municipalities and employees of the Poviast Starosty allowed to conclude that ethical codes do not fully implement any of the internal and external functions provided for them in the field of dissemination of ethical values and ethical functioning of public administration. It is true that the analyzed documents are based on principles relevant to the public sector, but they do not support the process of good governance. They have not been linked to other internal law documents, and the lack of monitoring solutions limits the possibility of assessing the application of the Code and its actual impact on employee attitudes. As a result, codes of ethics have a limited impact on the ethical attitude of local government employees. Employees and residents are not familiar with the principles of codes of ethics to the extent that they can understand the importance of the code of ethics and the benefits of promoting it, and employees adhere to ethical principles to a limited extent in their activities – including those that constitute their statutory duties, including responsibility and courtesy, legality and commitment. This means that the codes of ethics in the analyzed offices do not play the role of a "living" document, there is a lack of involvement of employees in creating the content of the code, monitoring compliance with the principles indicated in it and the lack of evaluation of its content – despite changes in the environment. Local government offices lack solutions to monitor and report any unethical activities, to the extent necessary to ensure that compliance with the code is enforced. Therefore, there is no room to share concerns about the code of ethics and creating a culture of open communication, especially since the lack of knowledge of employees about the availability of the code and insufficient knowledge of ethical principles is the result of the lack of commitment of management to promote ethical attitudes and lack of a sense of responsibility for unethical behavior of employees.

The paper signals solutions reaching into the future, because their implementation would require changes not only in human resources management, but also in the legal system of public administration. In broad terms, such a change should include the inclusion of the obligation to create and enforce compliance with ethical principles in legislation.

The dissertation has a theoretical significance because it fills the gap in the current state of knowledge and manifests itself in offering science a synthesis of issues related to the use of ethical codes not only in shaping the attitudes of local government employees, but also in the implementation of the right to good administration. In the presented work, a comprehensive study of this issue was made, starting from the legal level, through the presentation of the

practical functioning of public administration, to the formulation of postulates and presentations necessary for further changes in this area.

The dissertation has a practical significance, which is visible primarily in the formulated recommendations. The identified problems in the field of creating and using codes of ethics were presented in the context of their importance for the proper functioning of the administration and the implementation of the right to good administration. In this sense, the hearing can provide the basis for changes in the functioning of the administration.

The dissertation also has a social significance, which is related to the issue of ethical behavior of local government employees as a factor influencing the proper implementation of the right to good administration and the change of law in general. Such changes may affect the formation of social attitudes in the field of building efficient public administration.