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## **Multicentricity of the ethical standards system in public administration**

### **Summary**

In the last few decades throughout the world, and since 1989 in Poland, we have observed a growing role of ethics in public administration. The emergence of a postindustrial society, the processes of globalization and the convergence of administrative cultures have created a new perspective on the tasks of administration in accomplishing the needs of the society. In the new social environment there have appeared new categories of thinking about administration such as openness, transparency, social responsibility and citizen participation in executing powers. In this paper, a concept of an expanded or multacentral system of ethical standards in public administration has been formulated against these complex causes.

The reflections are focused on the theoretical as well as the normative level. In the case of the former it is argued that the complex system of standards can be explained on the basis of a cultural analysis, for example, the intellectual heritage of the western thought. This argument is based on the fact that, on the one hand, law as a certain system of norms is founded on the principle of non-contradiction, while on the other hand, the constituted law cannot be isolated from other regulators of social life. In accord with the applied social and cultural argument, the principle of non-contradiction refers to the whole axiological and normative system of a given culture. The cultural approach applied here points to both the diversity as well as the unity of cultural patterns and rules in social life.

On the normative level, and in accord with the accepted theoretical assumptions, the multacentral system of the source of ethical standards of public administration is identified as one that is based on the following sources: 1. legal regulations (acts or statutes), 2. soft law and codes of ethics, 3. standards of the organizational culture and mission of administration, 4. orders or recommendations of a superior, 5. social norms of morality, and 6. general human morality. In practice, due to the complexity and diversity of the system, different standards may lead to a conflict; at the same time however, the foundations and cultural identity indicate a method in which such conflict may be resolved.

**Keywords:** ethical standards of public administration – good administration – code of ethics