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CLIENT WELFARE IN PSYCHOLOGISTS' ETHICS CODES

For when this point is once settled in philosophy . . . , everything is settled

*Cicero**

The principle of caring for the client's welfare is the most pervasive of all the ethical principles in the profession of psychology, recognized in almost all of the psychologists' ethics codes. Although recognized as an overarching value, the norm of client welfare is not formulated with sufficient precision. Its philosophical background is unclear, and the principle itself is of an aspirational rather than regulatory character. Psychology came a long way from the 1952 American Psychological Association Ethics Code to the 2008 Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists. From the beginning of the 21st century, the European and North American ethnocentrism of Western ethics codes is being increasingly challenged and is gradually giving way to the universalization of ethical principles, based on respect for common human dignity as well as for cultural diversity.

Keywords: professional ethics in psychology, client welfare, ethics codes.

The superior standard of professional ethics in psychology is caring for the welfare of those who are recipients of the psychologist's professional work. The essence of most moral dilemmas in psychology is the question of whether professional action (or lack of action) will be of benefit to the recipient (client¹,

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* Cicero (1963). *On the chief good and evil*. In M. Clagett, *Greek science in antiquity*. New York: Collier.

¹ In the Polish version of the article the term *odbiorca* ("recipient") is used instead of the term *klient* ("client"). This is justified by the fact that in the Polish psychological literature the term *klient* seems to have a narrower meaning in Polish than "client" does in English – the Polish

patient, student, supervisee) or whether it will bring harm to him/her (the choice between good and evil). Some of these dilemmas emerge in situations of choice between alternative actions, where the aim is to achieve “a greater good” or “a lesser evil.”

At the same time, it seems that there has been little in-depth reflection concerning those issues in professional psychology; nor has a coherent definition of client welfare been formulated which psychologists could refer to when resolving the ethical dilemmas of their profession. Claiming that psychologists have not yet considered the issues of client welfare would certainly be unfair. These considerations, however, seem to be marginalized, since contemporary discourse on professional ethics in psychology appears to be dominated by detailed rather than general issues. The ethics codes of psychologists’ organizations, which have acted as a kind of oracles on matters of professional conduct over the last half century, still seem to dominate the field of ethical discourse in psychology.

References to the philosophical concepts of good and evil, although potentially inspiring, appear rather rarely in codes of professional ethics. References to philosophical ethics as a discipline are equally rare – making it seem as though psychologists treat the concepts of good and evil as simple ideas, whose definitions do not exist. One exception is the ethics code of the British Psychological Society (BPS), which refers explicitly to both formulations of Kant’s categorical imperative. BPS Code also draws on the *British eclectic tradition* (BPS 1986/2006, I/j).

Given the variety of concepts of good in ethics, it is difficult to determine what client welfare means in psychology. The situation is also complicated by the diversity of forms that psychologists’ work takes and by the variety of theoretical paradigms of psychology itself, manifesting itself especially in the area of psychological practice. In this situation, even if codes are not the only sources of knowledge concerning the psychologists’ understanding of client welfare, they are still the sources in which the concept is most clearly formulated.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the ethics codes of psychologists in search of various ways of defining the concept of client welfare, both in the context of how ethical principles are codified by psychologists’ associations in different countries and in the context of attempts to universalize those principles.

term is used almost exclusively in the field of psychotherapy. The author’s intention was to extend the range of subjects referred to by introducing a new term: *odbiorca* (“recipient”). In the English version of the article, the term “client” is used because of its broader meaning in the English language.

THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION
OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' CODES OF ETHICS

The codification of ethical principles in psychology seems to be a relatively recent phenomenon, even given the short history of the discipline. During the more than half century between the announcement of the first code of ethics by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1952 and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists in 2008 by the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), many changes took place both in the discipline of psychology as well as in its perspective on the significance of ethics codes and even on the rationale for the codes' very existence. The first ethics code in psychology, APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists, was created in response to reports of psychologists' unethical behavior; it was therefore a kind of "catalogue of sins." As such, it became the model for many of the original codifications by national psychologists' associations.

Reflection on the meaning of codes of professional ethics in psychology – on their function and significance – is several decades behind the very formulation of the codes. Sinclair and colleagues (1987) identified four major functions of ethics codes. These are: (1) establishing the identity of psychology as a profession, (2) giving guidelines and providing support to professionals, (3) providing help in coping with the requirements of the profession of public trust, and (4) providing standards that are to help individuals in resolving ethical dilemmas. Fisher (2003) listed several features of the codes, namely: establishing the identity of the profession and familiarizing its practitioners with expectations that have to be met to build trust between society and the professional group. Pettifor (2004) considers ethics codes as aspirational lists of rules formulated in order to provoke reflection and to facilitate ethical decision making within a certain set of standards. In her opinion, ethics codes serve as useful tools for regulating professional conduct.

In this perspective the function of ethics codes is not so much to prohibit or condemn professional misbehavior as to give the right direction to ethical practice. Codes can fulfill their function only in the context of a specific professional community and in the context of the relationship of that community with the public. The profession of psychologist, though incomparably younger than the professions of physician or lawyer, is – to the same degree – based on trust. One of the indicators of this trust-based character of the profession is its need to formulate its own system of values and ethical standards, which stems from the special nature of the relationship between representatives of the profession and their

clients – both as regards individual interpersonal relationships and in the broader perspective of the relationship between the professional group and society.

The profession–society relationship can be described in three ways. John Kultgen (1988) distinguishes two opposite perspectives: *the conflict perspective* and *the functionalist perspective*. In the former view, the relationship between professionals and society tends to be characterized by mistrust, professional groups being charged with abandoning the pursuit of the client's welfare for the sake of professional solidarity. Kultgen (1982) is rather pessimistic about the possibility of building full trust between professionals and society. The functional perspective that he proposes is based on a realistic view of the modern world as characterized by the division of labor, social roles, and experience. It is no longer possible, as it was until the Renaissance, to possess complete knowledge. From the functional perspective, the existence of self-governing professions protects the public from the consequences of uncontrolled practice. Nonprofessional members of society are not able to control the work of professionals; therefore they are forced, as it were, to permit professionals to monitor their own work.

The third approach, namely *the contract perspective* (Newton, 1988), can shed some light on this rather depressing picture. In this perspective, society or potential clients are not in such a weak position as they appear to be in the two previously mentioned perspectives. Also in this case it is admitted that the work of a physician can only be judged by another physician, the work of a lawyer – by another lawyer, and the work of a psychologist – by another psychologist. The client can only **rely** on the professional, trust him/her, but it is also emphasized that without the client's trust the professional will not be able to perform his/her work at all! If the public does not trust professionals, the profession loses its status and possibly also its *raison d'être*. Professionals thus enter into a kind of unwritten contract with society. They promise to adhere to standards of professional ethics, to monitor their work, as well as to familiarize trainees entering the profession not only with technical but also with ethical aspects of their work. They also promise to impose penalties for unethical conduct, the most serious of which is exclusion from the professional community. In exchange, they receive the public's confidence, the high status of the profession, and the right of self-government. Professional ethics codes serve as contracts, helping to build trust between the profession and society, with professionals acting as guarantors of ethical practices.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CLIENT WELFARE
IN THE ETHICS CODES
OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

The standard of caring for the client's welfare appears – in a variety of formulations – in most psychologists' ethics codes in the world (Schuler, 1982). However, it is worth noting that this majority is not an overwhelming one: the comparison of twenty-four national codes examined by Leach and Harbin (1997) for their compliance with the 1992 version of the APA Ethical Principles for Psychologists and Code of Conduct indicated that only 68% of them explicitly stated the standard of caring for the welfare of the client, and 79% contained the standard of respecting human rights and dignity. The exceptions are the ethics codes formulated by psychologists' organizations from collectivistic cultures, especially the Chinese Psychological Society code, in which the client welfare issue does not appear. This is related to cross-cultural differences and to the relative isolation of Chinese psychologists, at least at the stage of professional identity formation. Above all, it should be noted that the structure and function of the Chinese code are different from those of American and Western European codes – from the very beginning the Chinese code was a document of a purely regulatory character, not aspirational (Quian et al., 2009).

In the majority of ethics codes, the very concept of client welfare is not sufficiently clarified, and the standards referring to client welfare are formulated with a high degree of generality. They are located mostly in the preambles of codes, as a matter of aspiration rather than regulation, and they take the form of statements, both positive (to maximize the client's welfare) and negative (to avoid damage) (Schuler, 1982). Examples of statements of that kind, taken from ethics codes of the most prominent psychologists' organizations, are given below.

The code of the American Psychological Association states in its preamble that “psychologists strive to benefit those with whom they work” (APA, 2010). The common code of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie (DGPS) and Berufsverband Deutscher Psychologinnen und Psychologen (BDP) says that the aim of psychologists' work is to commit their knowledge and skills for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole (DGPS/BDP, 1999, Preamble). The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) calls on its members to care actively for the welfare of every individual, family, group, or community that they address as professional psychologists (CPA, 2000, Principle II). Societe Francaise de Psychologie (SFPsy) states that psychologists' mission is to get to know and respect the person in his/her psychological dimension (SFPsy, II/I/art. 1). Simi-

larly, the issues of respect come to the fore in the code of British Psychological Society.

The words most commonly used in this context (in the original English texts and in English translations) are *benefit*, *welfare*, or *well-being* – terms referring to the client's benefits and well-being rather than to the philosophical concepts of good and evil. The very general formulation of the basic principles is justified by the fact that they are meant to refer to the profession of psychology in general, including all forms of professional practice.

It should be noted that the ethics code of Polish Psychological Association (Polskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne, PTP, 1992) differs from other codes in the formulation of the client welfare principle. The Polish code is not an adaptation of the APA Code: it was developed “from scratch.” The formulation of the standard of care for the client's welfare is more precise and detailed: “For the psychologist the paramount consideration is the welfare of the other person. In his professional capacity the objective is to help the other person in resolving life problems encountered and in achieving a better quality of life by developing the individual capabilities and improving interpersonal contacts” (PTP, 1992, Preamble). Although client welfare is not explicitly defined, it can be identified as coping with life's difficulties, improving interpersonal relations, and enhancing the quality of life, which is supposed to result from the development of individual potential. The Polish Psychological Association's Code of Ethics does not refer to any particular philosophical background, but it does contain a reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (PTP, 1992, Preamble).

Still, is the sole finding of similarities between the codes sufficient to justify the claim that the ethics of psychology around the world is based on the same standard? Similar formulations may be based on totally different concepts of professional identity, on various concepts of good and evil, and even on different understandings of who the client is. Leach and Harbin (1997) found that the only ethical norm really shared by psychologists (i.e., appearing in all ethics codes around the world) was the principle of confidentiality – being an issue of professional conduct rather than a general ethical standard. Analyzing the codes of the APA, the CPA, and the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA), Gauthier (2003) found four fundamental ethical principles of psychologists' profession: (1) respect for human rights and dignity, (2) concern for the client's welfare, (3) competence, (4) integrity, and (5) professional, scientific, and social responsibility. This consistency should not be surprising, since CPA's code as well as a majority of Western European codes on whose basis the EFPA Meta-Code of Ethics was formulated had been modeled on APA's ethics code.

So, what is the concept of client welfare, emerging from the analysis of the preambles of ethics codes? It seems that, in their official statements, professional psychologists' associations define client welfare primarily in terms of respect for human rights, then in terms of well-being and development. Client welfare is commonly defined positively (maximizing good) and, less often, negatively (avoiding harm). The use of terms such as welfare, well-being, or benefit seems to indicate, that the underlying concept of good is of utilitarian nature, but such a conclusion can only be formulated with the greatest caution. It is worth noting that the category of welfare (well-being) already has a history in the field of psychological research. The psychological concept of well-being is commonly associated with the philosophical concept of happiness. It may therefore be asked whether the psychologist is to take into account the happiness of his/her client. If the answer to this question is affirmative, then another question can be posed: how – hedonistically or eudaimonically – should the client's happiness be understood? In most ethics codes, no answer to this question will be found. The passages from Polish Psychological Association's code quoted above seem to indicate, that Polish psychologists favor the eudaimonic concept of happiness: the aim of psychologists' work is the client's achievement of better quality of life through the development of his/her individual potential. The fact that aspirational parts of ethics codes are formulated in a very general and ambiguous way does not facilitate precise definition of basic concepts. Nevertheless, the analysis of ethics codes shows that the main standards of professional ethics are in fact universal. This belief underlies the pursuit of formal universalization of ethical standards in psychology, mainly in the form of international codes of ethics.

THE UNIVERSALIZATION OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN PSYCHOLOGY AND CLIENT WELFARE ISSUES

The process of universalizing ethical principles in professional psychology began in the last decade of the twentieth century. The first international code of ethics was EFPA Meta-Code of Ethics (EFPA, 1996/2006) and the first – and so far the only – global document of this kind remains the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists (IUPsyS, 2008).

First attempts at formulating international agreements were accompanied by a discussion on the very foundations of professional ethics and even on the issues of general ethics. The first problem faced by the authors of the Universal Decla-

ration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists (UDEPP) was to choose a starting point for further work. Pettifor (1996, 2004; Pettifor & Horne, 2001) recalls the international team considering two strategies. The first would be to start with naming the universal values of the profession, based on the overarching value of being human (*shared humanity*), and to determine the very identity of the profession. The second strategy considered was again to start with a “catalogue of sins,” i.e., with the analysis of cases of obvious malpractice, and to find – through the analysis of those cases – the core values of the profession and its identity. The second perspective was considered as posing a risk of getting stuck in a vicious circle of ethical reasoning – the identity of the profession would have been recognized on the basis of violations of professional standards.

Questions were also posed concerning the possibility of a full consensus of individual judgments in specific situations and the formulation of detailed rules of conduct. Moreover, even if such a consensus could be reached, there would be no international instance to legitimize it. Pettifor also notes that the existing documents of international organizations are dominated by the Western value system – mainly for the reason that psychology as a science is a product of the West, and so are professional associations and the very idea of a code of ethics.

Therefore, the first of the perspectives mentioned above was adopted as a starting point for creating the UDEPP and an international (and multicultural) committee of psychologists was established.² The committee members were expected to discuss the foundations of professional ethics, abstracting from detailed deontological issues. The aim of their work was to find a common global basis for the national and international codifications of ethical standards in psychology. This perspective can also be challenged: who and on what basis would have the right to decide about the “set of core values of the profession?” The sole establishing of an international committee does not guarantee freedom from the domination of the Western value system: the members of the committee, actually coming from all continents, were educated in their countries but their education was based on the Western academic model, or they even studied at European and American universities. The possibility of the existence of a nonacademic psychology has not been raised in the literature concerning the UDEPP; nor have the issues of diagnostic and clinical practice based on psychology other than scientific been addressed. It should be recognized, however, that the aim of IUPsyS

² The members of the IUPsyS Committee were: Janel Gauthier (Canada, the chairperson), Rubén Ardila (Columbia), Lutz Eckensberger (Germany), Nasrin Jazani (Iran), Hassan Kassim Khan (Yemen), Catherine Love (New Zealand), Elizabeth Nair (Singapore), Kwadzi Nyanungo (Zimbabwe), Paul B. Pedersen (USA), Tuomo Tikkanen (Finland), Ann Watts (South Africa), and Kan Zhang (China).

committee's work was not to set up a new framework of professional identity but to formulate common ethical principles of psychology within the status quo.

Whatever the starting point of ethical discourse in psychology may be, the issues of multiculturalism cannot be avoided. The basic question here concerns the possibility of establishing a universal set of ethical standards, independent of the culture in which psychologists works. The fact that psychology all over the world is rooted in the Western model of knowledge and most ethics codes are – more or less accurate – adaptations of the ethics code of APA was judged by some critics as a case of unethical and unauthorized absolutization of Western values (cf. Pedersen, 1995). They postulated changing the status quo, paving the way for a paradigm shift, especially in the field of psychological practice. The postulated departure from the Western absolutism was expected to result in the recognition of specific, culturally conditioned forms of diagnosis and therapy. Rejecting the Western absolutism as the basis for professional ethics leads to a new question: what should replace it? Relativism, being a natural opposite of absolutism, seems not to be an option, given the great responsibility associated with professional practice. The adoption of the relativistic perspective in its extreme form would hamper international debate on the ethics of the profession and impede the cooperation of professional psychologists.

Is there a third way? Paul Pedersen (1995, 2001) rejects both relativism and absolutism in professional ethics and proposes instead the universalist position – founding ethics codes on the universal values derived from the common value of being a human. This does not preclude the simultaneous recognition of differences arising from cultural, religious, or political backgrounds. The authors of the UDEPP seem to adopt this perspective, as already at the starting point it was decided that the Declaration would be founded on the universal human rights. Comparing the UDEPP with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Gauthier (2009) found that, despite some differences in the “register” (the UDEPP is mostly aspirational and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – regulatory), these two documents are virtually unanimous. It is worth noting, however, that the committee that formulated the UDEPP in its current form, deliberately avoided any literal references to “human rights,” realizing that the very use of that concept could result in the rejection of the Declaration by official psychologists' associations in countries where human rights were violated (Gauthier, 2009, p. 30).

How, then, is the principle of caring for the client's welfare formulated in the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists? The term “welfare” appears first in the preamble: “Psychologists are committed to placing the

welfare of society and its members above the self-interest of the discipline and its members” (IUPsyS, 2008, Preamble). It seems that from the very beginning the issue of client welfare was viewed in the perspective of conflict rather than contract. This interpretation, however, may be flawed, since the sentence quoted above is in fact preceded by statements defining ethics as the core of every discipline and pointing out the inextricable bonds between people and communities as well as between people and their environment: “psychologists recognize that the lives and identities of human beings both individually and collectively are connected across generations, and that there is a reciprocal relationship between human beings and their natural and social environments” (IUPsyS, Preamble). The relational model of the human person seems to dominate in the Declaration, which makes this document unique. It goes beyond the Western individualism and moves towards recognizing the unique values of collectivistic cultures.

In the Declaration, the human person is always mentioned in the plural and always together with the broader community. In the original English version of the Declaration the term *peoples* was selected for community/society. *Peoples* is not the same as the public, the nation, society, or community – it seems that the term *peoples* was used in order to emphasize the natural character of interpersonal relationships and the relationships between people and their environment. Moreover, the expression *persons and peoples* seems to define the recipients of psychologists’ work. They are human beings connected with social bonds, they are people in a relationship with the world in which they live. A person’s good is recognized both as his/her freedom and human rights as well as his/her social and cultural background, but none of these has been granted a superior position. Situations in which these two “goods” come into conflict with each other should be resolved with special care: not in favor of one of them but in favor of both, since the violation of any of them would affect client welfare: “respect for the customs and beliefs of cultures is to be limited only when a custom or a belief seriously contravenes the principle of respect for the dignity of persons or peoples or causes serious harm to their well-being” (IUPsyS, 2008, Principle I). In this formulation, again, in an inevitable vicious circle of argumentation, a certain weakness of the Declaration can be found that stems from its aspirational nature and from the lack of any other regulatory power than that resulting from the general consensus within the professional group.

Psychologists (also referred to in the plural in the Declaration) declare four general ethical principles: I. Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples; II. Competent care for the well-being of persons and peoples; III. Integrity; IV. Professional and scientific responsibilities to [sic!] society. The Declaration consists

of a preamble and the four principles mentioned above, with a brief commentary on each of them, which makes the document strikingly brief in comparison with other codes of ethics. The issue of client welfare is explicitly mentioned in the commentary on Principle II. It should be noted that Principle II is a combination of two “traditional” principles of professional ethics in psychology: the principle of caring for the client’s welfare and the principle of professional competence.³ The notion of competent care emphasizes the professional character of support and care in the psychologist-client relationship. It may seem that the authors of the Declaration adopted the *primum non nocere* principle as the basis for professional ethics – the principle of avoiding harm being rated higher than the principle of maximizing welfare. In fact, however, the principle of maximizing client welfare, both in the formulation of four principles and in the commentary on them, is mentioned before that of avoiding harm, probably due to the aspirational nature of the Declaration.

So, what does client welfare really mean to the authors of ethics codes for psychologists? What is the content of that concept? What is its relationship with the main disputes within general ethics: the issues of absolutism vs. relativism, naturalism vs. non-naturalism, or objectivity vs. subjectivity in ethics? The last two issues appear to remain unchanged from the very beginning of ethical discourse in psychology: firstly, the naturalistic position seems to be proper to psychology as a science, whereas considering client’s ‘good’ in terms of the welfare and benefits experienced in contact with the psychologist is – at least to some degree – subjectivistic.

There has been a significant change, if not evolution, in psychology regarding the absolutism/relativism dimension. In general, the direction of the process of ethical codification in psychology may be described as follows: from deontology to axiology (from standards to values), from the regulatory to the aspirational character of documents, from specific standards to general rules, from absolutism towards universalism. It appears that the process can be divided into stages. The first stage, covering the second half of the twentieth century, may be described as a time of naturalism and absolutism as well as a period of relative restriction of ethical discourse by the context of Western culture. The second stage, the end of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, is a time of the formulation of first international agreements, still within Western culture. The year 2008, when the Universal Declaration of Ethical Prin-

³ “Competent caring for the well-being of persons and peoples involves working for their benefit and, above all, doing no harm” (IUPsyS, 2008, Principle II).

principles for Psychologists was announced, may be considered as the beginning of the third stage in the development of ethical codifications in psychology – namely, the time of confronting the issues of intercultural differences and re-asking the question about the identity of professional psychology in a situation of new challenges to the primacy of Western culture.

The understanding of the principle of caring for the client's welfare has been subject to similar evolution. Psychologists are increasingly aware that the *primum non nocere* principle must be complemented by the principle of maximizing clients' welfare, and that this means respecting not only their individual dignity and rights but also their social and cultural heritage as well as their beliefs and value systems related to that heritage, which should not be judged from the Western point of view.

Western absolutism, however, is being replaced not by radical relativism but by a more universal perspective. Taking cultural differences into account, psychologists search for a common background of various value systems and of the variety of ethical decisions. By establishing the ethical standard of "respect for the rights and dignity of persons and peoples," psychologists express the hope⁴ that the very fact of *being human* means (1) sharing the same aspirations and values in the universal scale, and (2) respecting common human dignity and rights. Referring to those universal values, psychologists implement them in the field of professional practice, thus defining the framework of their commitments to humanity.

However the crucial role of ethics codes and declarations may be, some weaker points of those documents remain vivid. Rooting the codes of ethics in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be honored only in countries where human rights are respected. The very adoption of any declaration by any psychologists' association may be valid only where this association is respected and trusted by society. Although some passages from the UDEPP may suggest its worldwide validity, it should be noticed, again, that every declaration or code of

⁴ This hope, however, is sometimes questioned by those psychologists who underline that cultural differences always influence professionals' work. Okasha (2000) notes the absence of the concept of malpractice in Arabic languages. Olatawura (2000) points to the pointlessness of the requirement of obtaining informed consent in some African countries, where women and children are considered incapable of expressing consent or refusal (rather than merely as not having the right to do so). Indian (Clay, 2002) and Pakistani (Murray, 2002) psychologists question the legitimacy of the very institution of ethics code, recommending meditation as a way of resolving ethical conflicts in professional settings.

ethics is a set of rules established by a community of professionals and that its position is inextricably linked with the status of the profession in society.

Any code of professional ethics in psychology may be considered as a kind of agreement: firstly, as an agreement within the group of delegated representatives of the profession; secondly, as an agreement between a professional community and society. The validity of such an agreement is an issue especially troubling in countries where the profession of psychology does not exist in the legal sense, or where, as in Poland, the legal codification of the profession is inefficient. The profession of psychology is legitimized only by clients' trust, making the precise formulation of professional ethics rules extremely important. According to EFPA and IUPsyS guidelines, the codes of national psychologists' associations (also the code of the Polish Psychological Association) should comply with international agreements. In spite of its weaknesses (the code in its present form is outdated and not adapted to modern forms of practice), Polish psychologists' ethics code has some advantages, undeniable from the perspective of modern codification style. As has already been mentioned, the detailed formulation of the standard of care for the client's welfare makes the Polish ethics code unique. The code is also sufficiently concise and less regulatory, compared, for example, with that of the APA. The conciseness of this type of document is nowadays considered an asset rather than a drawback. Meeting the demands of EFPA and IUPsyS but at the same time preserving the individual character of the Polish Psychological Association's ethics code will undoubtedly be of benefit to Polish psychologists as well as for all those they meet in the course of their professional practice.

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