Exploring the Attitudes of Local Government Officials Towards Residents' Involvement: An Affect–Behaviour–Cognition Approach

Hryciuk-Ziółkowska Patrycja

National Institute for Local Governments, Łódź, Poland

Abstract: The effectiveness of local government largely depends on its employees, whose primary role is not only to ensure the effective implementation of municipal tasks, but also to mediate between local authorities and residents.

In this paper, drawing on a nationwide survey of 8,666 local government officials in Poland, we propose a framework for studying their attitudes. Using the classical social psychological model of attitudes — as consisting of affect, behaviour, and cognition (e.g., Breckler, 1984; Wojciszke, 2005) — we analyse their opinions and beliefs regarding the preferred scope and level of residents' involvement in decision-making processes.

Relating these views to their work-related feelings, we explore how job (dis)satisfaction, and the sense of burden may influence the attitudes towards residents' involvement and participation in decision-making (as possible additional burden).

As these attitudes could influence the quality and direction of their work engagement and interactions with residents, we argue that systematically monitoring the working conditions and job satisfaction of local government employees, as well as acting to improve them, would be essential for the effectiveness of local government and its relationship with residents.