

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND MORALITY IN THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF AN OFFICIAL

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**Abstract.** *The relationship between law and morality is important in the professional life of an official. An official must be aware of the importance of morality and find a balance between his or her own inner moral convictions and the law. He must be concerned with moral norms derived from custom, but they must not overshadow the importance of the law in his professional activities. The aim of this research is to show the importance of the relationship between law and morality in the professional activities of officials.*

*The review of literature sources and legal acts shows that in the Lithuanian legal system a law is an act issued in accordance with the Constitution and the Seimas, expressing the will of the legislator. The concept of law is very old, but the concept of law has not changed very much; since ancient times, law has meant a certain norm that must be followed. Understanding the concept of morality is important in order to determine the relationship between law and morality in the professional activities of an official. The concept is also an old one, but it is still relevant in our society today. Morality is the generally accepted rules of life, which are often not codified in law, but which are a very important part of social relations and an important part of the work of employees of statutory bodies.*

*An empirical study conducted to determine the attitude of officers towards the relationship between law and morality found that officers are guided by both the law and morality during their service. Many officers are willing to disregard moral values in certain situations, especially during their service. However, another part of them state that they would put moral norms above the law when the law is unjust, disproportionate, inhuman or when it concerns their family and close people. The results of the survey show that officials agree that laws are designed to ensure that moral values are upheld in society.*

**Keywords:** *legal, morality, officer.*

### Introduction

Both law and morality are important in everyone's life. In many cases, it is important for a person to obey the law, to not transgress and to be a moral person. This is especially important for an officer, because a law enforcement officer cannot be immoral or inhuman, he serves the state and must therefore be an example to all. After all, an officer is "a statutory civil servant, a natural person who has authority over persons under his or her authority. A person appointed or elected to act as an agent of the government or a person with organisational powers" (Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija 2023). Both law and morality are important in everyone's life. In many cases, it is important for a person to obey the law, to not transgress and to be a moral person. This is especially important for an officer, because a law enforcement officer cannot be immoral or inhuman, he serves the state and must therefore be an example to all. After all, an officer is "a statutory civil servant, a natural person who has authority over persons under his

or her authority. A person appointed or elected to act as an agent of the government or a person with organisational powers" (Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statutas 2003). The Statute of the Internal Service of the Republic of Lithuania defines an officer as "a statutory civil servant employed in statutory bodies, performing statutory functions which ensure the implementation of the tasks and functions laid down by law for the statutory body, exercising public administrative powers in respect of persons not under his/her authority, and (or) directing other officials (Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statutas 2003). Thus, an officer is required by law to carry out certain tasks, to comply with the rules and regulations laid down by law, and to perform certain functions assigned to them. Law and morality are closely related to professional activities. Laws are rules derived from moral norms, which are the basis of human life. And an officer has the right to ensure that these rules and laws are not violated, so that every citizen of Lithuania, and not only, can feel free and safe in his country. It is obligatory for an officer to observe moral norms, and by swearing to serve the homeland, an officer swears to respect the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Lithuania, swears to protect human rights and freedoms, the interests of society and the State, swears to perform his/her duties in good faith, and, of course, to protect the good name of the officer of the internal service system (Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statutas 2003). For officials to do their job properly, citizens and others must have confidence in the country's law enforcement system, in the officials and civil servants who do their job. In their professional activities, officers often have to make individual, conscious decisions that are just and fair to every citizen. After all, in their professional activity, officials are faced with many difficult situations in which they may be exposed to many different stimuli that may overwhelm their feelings and make them behave inappropriately. Therefore, an officer should not forget the moral norms, because the purpose of morality is to regulate human behaviour, to orientate oneself in the variety of feelings and emotions (Laurinavičius 2001, 30), which is an important part of an officer's work, and the officer's work requires managing emotions, which sometimes arise in many different forms. Officers must not forget the moral principles that are the basis of a decent and honest officer.

This article seeks to highlight the importance of morality in the professional life of an officer and to establish the relationship between law and morality. The relevance of the chosen topic is determined by the fact that there is no comprehensive scientific literature that analyses the relationship as such, rather than each element separately. Therefore, this article should help to reveal the relationship between morality and the law and its importance in the professional activity of an official.

The scientific literature often goes to great lengths to describe each object - law and morality - separately and to compare them, but the relationship between them is not analysed. Therefore, the problem of this article is formulated in the form of a problematic question: is every official able to maintain an appropriate relationship between law and morality when applying the law in his/her professional activity?

**Object of the paper.** The importance of the relationship between law and morality in the professional activity of an official.

**Aim of the paper.** To highlight the importance of the relationship between law and morality in the professional activity of officials.

**Tasks of the paper:**

1. To discuss the concepts of law and morality, their importance and influence in the professional activity of an official.

2. To analyse the attitude of officials towards the importance of the relationship between law and moral norms in their professional activity.

Descriptive, survey and data systematisation and graphical methods were used. The descriptive approach sought to clarify concepts by analysing national legislation, laws, codes of ethics and scientific literature. The survey method was used to reveal the attitudes of officials towards the relationship between law and morality. The methods of data systematisation and graphical representation were used to organise and calculate the results obtained from the survey and to present a graphical representation.

### **The concept of the law**

Laws are usually referred to as general rules, as acts that fix legal norms, and as a specific category of legal acts - "law in the strict sense" (Ragauskas 2005, 159). Law is also often identified with the legislative process, and it is not uncommon to hear that law is an instrument of justice, or that law is a set of general rules that ensure harmony and peace in society. Such statements are not incorrect, because certain rules have been followed since ancient times, when the law was only oral, passing from one generation to the next.

In the legal literature and other literature, law is usually defined as a primary legal act adopted by a representative authority in a special order, which establishes legal norms regulating the most important social relations and which has supreme legal force (Vaišvila 2001, Jarašiūnas 2005). The main and most important law of the Republic of Lithuania, which has the supreme power in the Lithuanian legal system, is the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, which was adopted by referendum on 25 October 1992. The law is usually a clearly formulated, specific and unqualified text. Similarly, Article 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789 declares: "The law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate in its making, either directly or through elected representatives. The law, whether it punishes or protects, must be the same for all" (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2007-2023). The concept of law as an expression of the general will was pioneered by Ž. Ž. Rousseau. The philosopher believed that the law was an act of the political community, imposed on itself. Several conclusions were drawn from the concept of the law as an expression of the general will: the will of all citizens is equal; the law must be applied to all (and to the representatives of the people who passed it); political factions are not recognised (Jarašiūnas 2006). Thus, the law has always been seen as an act of the common will, derived from the good and intended to maintain the common order.

Law is a social phenomenon, a historical trait derived from custom. According to the German jurist Zitelmann, every law is historically determined by the past and can therefore only be correctly understood through the mediation of history (Vaišvila 2000). The roots of the law are old, but the concept has not changed much. It is known that the Western legal structure began to take shape in ancient Rome, so the roots of the concept of law can be traced back to the realities and theories of ancient Roman legal practice (Jarašiūnas 2005). Many authors such as P. Ragauskas, E. Jarašiūnas and others argue that the law has always meant a certain norm that is intended for everyone and must be followed. Initially, the term *lex* (law) in ancient Rome referred only to a decision of the assembly of the people conferring certain powers (Jarašiūnas 2005). In late Roman history, with the proliferation of legal norms adopted directly or indirectly by the emperor, the concept of the word *lex* also changed. *Lex* came to refer not only to acts of the assembly of the people, but also to any written norm adopted by the emperor or his administration (Jarašiūnas 2005). Law is a social phenomenon, a historical trait derived from custom. According to the German jurist Zitelmann, every law is historically determined by the past and can therefore only be correctly understood through the mediation of history (Vaišvila 2000, 38). The roots of the law are old, but the concept has not changed much. It is known that

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So, even today, we consider the law to be a kind of decision by a government that was elected by the people. In the Lithuanian legal system, a law is an act issued in accordance with the Constitution and the procedure established by the Seimas, expressing the will of the legislator, and the legislator is supposed to be elected by the citizens of the state in order to enable everyone to participate in the governance of the democratic state.

### **The concept of morality**

Morality (Latin: *mos mores*, meaning *custom, habit*, from this *moralis*, meaning *right, moral*) is one of the most important social institutions and the main means of regulating the normative behaviour of human beings. At the same time, it is a special form of social consciousness and a type of social relations (moral relations), which is studied by the science of ethics (Pruskus 2003, 14). First of all, it is important to mention that morality is of great importance both in society and in the legal environment. "Morality, like law, sustains society, integrates individuals into it, and promotes useful patterns of behaviour that are necessary for society" (Bakševičienė and Beinoravičius 2004, 14). It has been argued that 'the term morality was first used by the 1st century BC Roman politician and philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero. It was he who found the equivalent of the Greek word *ethos* in Latin, *moralis*.' (Kanišauskas 2009, Ruzgytė 2017, Beržinskas 2006). In those days, *ethos* and *moralis* were identified and used synonymously. Beržinskas argues that ethics is morality based on cognition and mature reason, while morality is the essential norms of behaviour traditionally generally accepted in a given local culture, which are not codified in law (Beržinskas 2006). Morality can be said to derive from ethics, and ethics is like an umbrella term that encompasses a broad understanding of morality. Thus, the concept of morality is an old one, but it is still used in our society today. The Lithuanian dictionary defines morality as "morality - the rules governing human behaviour, morality" (Lietuvių kalbos žodynas 2018). The Commentary to the Civil Code defines morality as "Morality, as the totality of ideas and attitudes about right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust, right and wrong, is a philosophical matter" (Lietuvos Respublikos civilinis kodeksas: pirmieji dešimt metų galiojimo, 2013). Morality is thus essentially understood as a form of rules that define right and wrong, right and wrong. Vaišvila himself describes morality as a person's inner conviction to respect another person's interests (rights) and the voluntary expression of such respect (2000, 205). Philosopher, Lithuanian sociologist Valdas Pruskus said that "Morality is one of the most significant social institutions, a way of regulating normative human behaviour" (Pruskus 2010, 8). It is argued that morality emerged from human nature, developed as a kind of social phenomenon. "Morality is, of course, human. It did not come down to us from heaven. It grew out of human nature and is related to it." (Stace, 2017). It can be seen that the concept of morality can accommodate a wide variety of statements about norms of behaviour, ethics, humanity and other moral qualities that both civilians and public officials are expected to possess. As Laurinavičius argues, "a large part of the legal norms are derived from

basic moral principles, and those that are not included in the legal norms are called unwritten laws" (Laurinavičius 2001, 89–90). Unwritten moral norms could include respect for others, having a sense of conscience, telling the truth, opposing bullying, honesty, friendliness, etc. These are rules that are common in everyday life, but nowhere can we find them specifically stated. However, it should be acknowledged that many moral norms are enshrined in law, but may not be apparent.

"Let us agree that showing consideration and respect for every human being is a sign of humanity and civility. However, if we want others to believe this, we need to back it up with appropriate norms of behaviour." (Wrede-Grischkat 1996, 41). It is this statement that is important for law enforcement authorities. Courts, police forces and other statutory bodies must not undermine their reputation by behaving in an uncivil or inhumane manner. As already mentioned, officers are bound by codes of ethics, which essentially set out the moral values to which an officer must adhere in the course of his or her duties. Laurinavičius argues that certain rules must be observed in order to be able to live together and get along in various activities, for example, in the performance of the duties of a police officer or a customs officer (Laurinavičius 2001). It is sometimes said that a person's ethics, actions and manner describe their morals, values and beliefs - how a person or official behaves, what they say and do describes their inner self, and reflects their inner beliefs. If an official behaves in an unprofessional manner, is rude, unethical, how can he or she be moral in the public service.

In order for an officer to act appropriately, to assess the situation well, his or her personal beliefs about right and wrong, good and bad, must be in line with the requirements of the law. "<...> The challenge is to navigate between the law and ethics in order to do the job properly, as well as to implement the law itself and to understand what the limits of an officer's action should be" (Aleknavičiūtė and Paurienė 2022, 20). As in many other literatures, the authors here argue that the boundary between the law and the officer's limits of action, between the law and the officer's inner conviction, is not definitively clear.

It can be concluded that morality does play an important role in the professional activities of officials. As already mentioned, a wide range of legal provisions can be found both in codes of ethics and in other legislation which regulate the importance of morality in the professional activities of officials. It can be said that an official must be a moral and upright person, and that he or she must comply with a wide range of requirements and rules in his or her activities, in order to demonstrate that he or she is honest, fair, exemplary, professional and, above all, an upright and moral person.

### **The importance of the relationship between morality and the law in statutory bodies**

It is said that an officer must be moral, just and honest, but a look at an officer's job may raise the question of how much morality is required in such a job. After all, an officer's job is very specific, to prevent and detect crime, to take preventive measures to reduce crime, to provide assistance, to carry out pre-trial investigations and so on. It may seem that everything an officer has to do is listed in one law or another. However, it has already been mentioned that moral norms are often not codified in law, but are handed down from one generation to the next, by word of mouth, deeds and actions. It can be argued that in the professional life of an official, each situation is individual, and there are no repetitive factors that would allow an official to perform his or her work in an identical way without being guided by his or her own inner convictions or by moral norms. Therefore, when an official examines each situation individually, it may sometimes be difficult to determine the relationship between morality and the law. The author states that "morality is a historically conditioned social phenomenon, one



of the forms of social consciousness" (Laurinavičius 2001, 97). Laurinavičius also says that morality manifests itself through people's actions, and he argues that morality determines the style of action of various social institutions (Laurinavičius 2001). In the author's opinion, morality is one of the most important factors in the functioning of various institutions. One cannot disagree with this, if there is no morality, the officials occupying high positions will not follow moral values, will not observe the norms of honesty and justice, chaos will arise. Moral values are very important in the professional life of officials, and it is well known that officials have to obey the law, but there are situations in which officials can slip up and violate both the law and the moral standards.

Sometimes ethical, moral and moral issues are very important in the professional activities of officers, for example in operational activities, as this is a specific type of activity in the fight against crime (Mulevičius and Petrošius 2005). In implementing the tasks of operational activities, methods of gathering information of a non-public nature are used, which allow obtaining information against the will of the holder (deception), secret operations and operational combinations are performed. The authors question whether all these actions are justified from an ethical and moral point of view (Mulevičius and Petrošius 2005).

They question certain activities of officials. They and many officials, when carrying out covert actions such as secret surveillance or eavesdropping, or monitoring text messages, question whether this violates moral norms and whether it is right to interfere in a person's private life. Although it is argued that moral norms are not codified in law, even the Constitution itself mentions that "A person's private life is inviolable" (Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania 1992). Thus, the use of non-public procedural coercive measures is contrary to the Constitution itself and also violates moral norms. But a line must be drawn between what is legal, what is allowed, and what already violates individual rights and freedoms. The Law on Criminal Intelligence of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter - the Law on Criminal Intelligence) draws precisely this line. Article 5 part 1 of the Criminal Law states that "Criminal intelligence shall not infringe human rights and freedoms. Individual restrictions on these rights and freedoms shall be temporary and may be applied only in accordance with the procedure laid down by law, in order to protect the rights and freedoms of another person, property, or the security of society or the state." (Lietuvos Respublikos kriminalinės žvalgybos įstatymas 2012). Thus, although the use of procedural coercive measures of a non-public nature is contrary to certain norms, in order to protect people's rights and freedoms, property, society and its security, officials are allowed to overstep the boundaries by a decision of the prosecutor. In conclusion, the relationship between morality and the law becomes very important in the professional activity of an official in order to protect certain values. It is up to the official to understand the relationship between law and morality, the limit which he may cross at certain moments. Thus, in this context, it is possible to assess the opinion of the Lithuanian population on the performance of police officers in the country. Every year, surveys are carried out to determine whether the public has confidence in the police officers in the country. More and more people in Lithuania have a positive view of the criminogenic situation and feel safe, and trust in the police is above the European Union (EU) average - we are not far behind the Northern European countries, and we are eighth out of the 28 EU Member States (Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė 2020). And according to a 2022 public opinion poll commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior, 82% of the country's population trusts the police. This means that citizens believe that this statutory institution is still fulfilling its objectives and mission well. It can be concluded that the population of Lithuania trusts this statutory body, which means that officers do their job well and are able to behave morally in their professional activities.

It is well known that an employee of a statutory body may not abuse his or her authority and power even when off duty. The official must be able to distinguish between work and personal activities. As mentioned earlier in the paper, an officer has more duties and requirements than an ordinary citizen, which means that he cannot behave irresponsibly and negligently in his off-duty hours. He must strike a balance between his professional life and his personal life, and he must also strike a balance between the law and morality. Neither in his professional life nor in his private life may he cross the line and be immoral. He must always be an example to others, because one wrong act by an official can tarnish the whole name and reputation of a statutory body.

### **Study on the attitudes of officials towards the relationship between law and morals in their professional activities**

The aim of the study is to investigate the attitudes of officials towards the relationship between law and morals in their professional activities. It aims to reveal the importance of the law and moral norms in an officer's service.

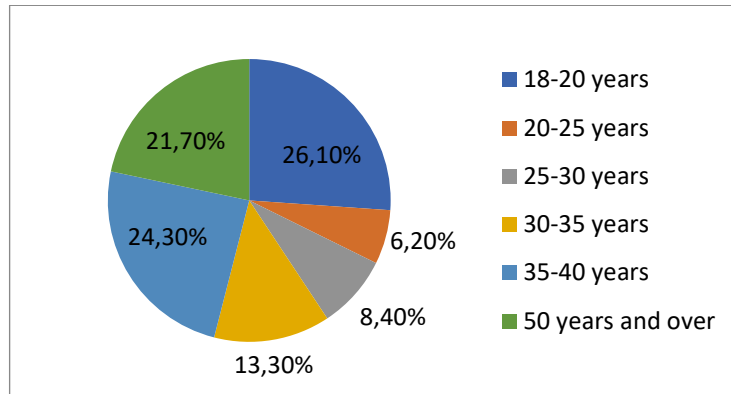
The questionnaire survey was addressed to officials of statutory institutions: officials of the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior, officials of the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior, officials of the Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior, officials of the Financial Crime Investigation Service under the Ministry of the Interior, officials of the Public Security Service under the Ministry of the Interior, officials of the Lithuanian Prison Service, officials of the Customs Department under the Ministry of Finance, and officials of the Headquarters Security Service under the Ministry of the Interior. Replies were not received from: the Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior, Financial Crimes Investigation Service under the Ministry of the Interior, Dignitary Protection Service under the Ministry of the Interior authorities.

A 17-question questionnaire was developed for the survey. Of the 17 questions, the survey consisted of 3 open-ended questions (where the respondent can write in his/her own answer) and 14 closed-ended questions (where the respondent can either choose an answer that has already been given or write in his/her own answer, which is expected to provide more complete, reliable and accurate data). The survey also included 5 demographic questions, which grouped respondents by gender, age, education, years of experience and occupation. The survey is exploratory and not representative of each statutory body individually.

### **Demographic data of respondents**

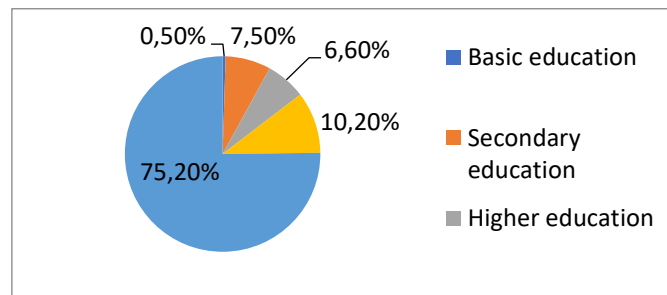
The questionnaire survey was completed by 226 officials. In terms of gender, men were more active in the survey - 60.6%, while women participated slightly less - 39.4%.

Looking at the age distribution of the respondents, the majority of respondents were officers aged between 18 and 20 years old - 26.1%, with a slightly lower percentage of respondents aged between 35 and 40 years old - 24.3%. A significant number of respondents aged 50 years and over made up 21.7%, 13.3% of respondents aged 30 - 35 years, 8.4% of respondents aged 25 - 30 years and the smallest group of respondents was made up of 6.2% of respondents aged 20 - 25 years (see Figure 1).



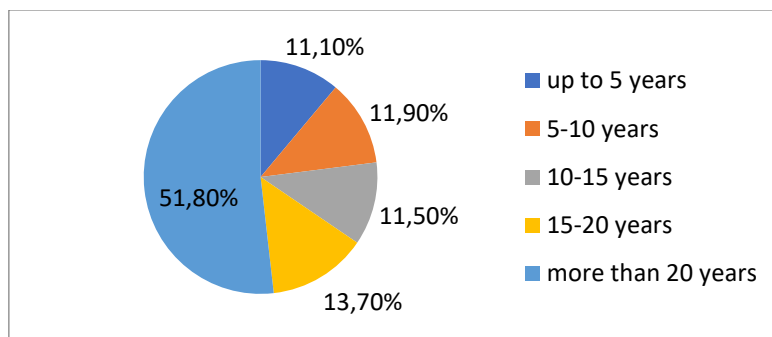
**Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by age**

Looking at the distribution of respondents by education, it can be seen that the majority of respondents have a university degree - 75.2% of respondents, 10.2% of respondents have a college degree, 7.5% of respondents have a secondary degree, 6.6% of respondents have a post-secondary degree, and 0.5% of respondents have a basic level of education (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by education.**

The survey responses on length of service show that the majority of officers - 51.8% - have been working in statutory bodies for more than 20 years, 13.7% have been working in statutory bodies for between 15 and 20 years, a slightly lower number - 11.9% - have been working in statutory bodies for between 5-10 years, 11.5% have been working in statutory bodies for between 10-15 years, and only 11.1% of the officers in statutory bodies have been in the statutory bodies for fewer than 5 years of service (see Figure 3).

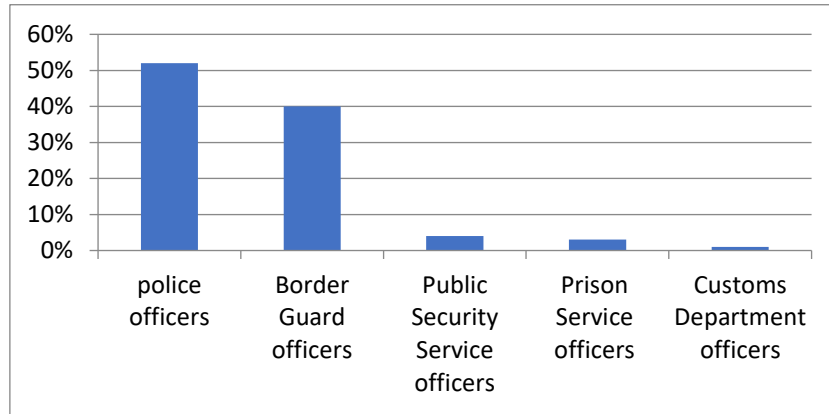


**Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by length of service**

The questionnaire was used to establish the precise occupation of the officials and their affiliation to a statutory body. More than half of the respondents are police officers - 52%, slightly less - 40% of the respondents are border guards, 4% of the respondents are officers of



the Public Security Service, 3% of the respondents are officers of the Prison Service, and only 1% of the respondents are officers of the Customs Department (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Distribution of respondents by position.**

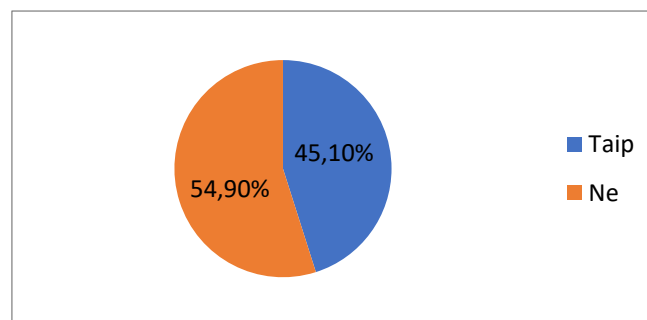
Thus, more men than women took part in the survey, with the highest number of respondents having a university degree and the lowest number of respondents having a primary education. The majority of respondents have more than 20 years of service and the largest proportion of respondents are police officers and border guards.

### Analysis of the survey results

The relationship between law and morality in the professional life of a public official is still an issue today. The study attempted to shed light on attitudes towards the relationship between law and morality and its relevance in the professional life of an official. The study tried to find out whether officials are guided by moral norms or obey the law.

Officials are obliged to be guided by both the law and moral norms in their professional activities. Although the work of an officer is quite demanding, officers often find themselves in stressful situations where they have to manage their emotions. However, it can sometimes appear that officers are indifferent and very serious people who are only interested in doing their duty. This raises the question of whether moral values are important to them in their professional activities and whether they are upheld by officers.

The first question to the respondents, which aimed to determine the attitude of the officers towards the relationship between law and morality in their professional activities, was formulated as follows: "Have you ever thought about the lack of morality in the course of your duties? A large majority of 54.9% responded negatively and 45.1% responded positively (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5. Respondents' views on the lack of morality in the profession.**

It can be concluded from the responses that more than half of the respondents do not have any doubts about the lack of morality in their professional activities, but it can be said that not all officers think about morality or the lack of morality in their official activities.

While it is well known that officials are expected to comply with all laws and regulations applicable to them and their profession, as well as with all laws applicable to civilians, it is sometimes reported in the media that an official of one or other statutory body has broken a law or a rule of law. In order to find out the reason for the misconduct of officials, the question was put to the officials - In which cases would you dare to break the law?

The results show that 55% said they would never break the law. A smaller proportion of respondents, 27%, say that they would break the law if they believe that the person subject to liability is 100% free from the law. Only 8% of respondents said that they would not break the law if it would help a family member, while 5% of respondents formulated their answer in the following way: they would break the law if they knew that there was a threat to human life, public interest or territorial integrity of the Republic of Lithuania, and that the legislation in force did not foresee this situation. Even fewer respondents, only 2%, say that they would disregard the provisions of the law if they saw that the level of punishment was disproportionate to the offence committed. Similarly, 2% of officials say that they have not encountered or thought about such a situation. The lowest, 1%, would break the law in case of necessity or necessary defence (see Figure 6).

Looking at the responses to the question, more than half of officials (55%) would not break the law in any way, but as many as 43% would find an exception to why they might not comply with certain rules of law.

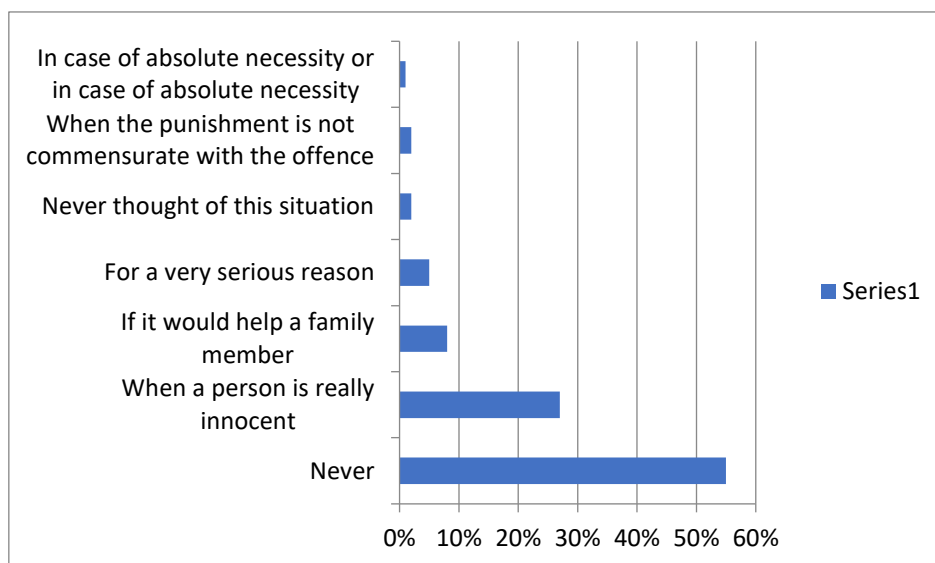


Figure 6. Officials' views on when they would dare to break the law

The importance of codes of ethics for statutory bodies has already been mentioned. Codes of ethics define the rules and various provisions to be observed by an official in the exercise of his or her professional activity. They often refer to rules which are not mentioned in the civilian legislation. For officials, codes of ethics often refer to rules such as: to be guided by the principles of justice, reasonableness, fairness, morality, ethics and professionalism, to uphold the reputation of the institution and to observe discipline. In essence, it can be argued that codes of ethics define more broadly the moral values that an official must uphold in the course of his or her duties. Thus, the question - Have officers ever violated the code of ethics of their

profession during the course of their work, for certain reasons - can help to understand whether officers, for their own well-being, for the well-being of others, or for any other reasons that are important to the officer himself, are nonetheless violating the internal (statutory bodies only) norms. The majority of respondents (63.7%) indicated that they had not violated the norms of the Code of Ethics, but it can be seen that more than a third, 36.3%, of officials have not complied with the norms of the Code of Ethics of their profession.

As already mentioned, officials are obliged to be guided in their professional activities by the law and legal norms. However, there may be situations in their work when the law seems too harsh for the misconduct committed, or when an officer's intrinsic moral values dictate that it is unfair to blame a person for an act committed. In the interview, officials were asked in which case they would put morality before the law.

Respondents could write in their answer, there were no multiple choice answers. Respondents were divided into 10 main groups. The largest group of respondents - 31% - said that they would put morality above the law when the law was contrary to normal moral norms, when it was manifestly contrary to justice, when "humanity clearly tells us to do otherwise". Fewer respondents (23%) chose not to answer this question, while 13% of respondents said that they would put moral norms above the law if the life and health of their relatives or others were at risk. There were also some respondents (12%) who answered that they would never put morality before the law, while 7% of officials gave a similar answer, stating that the law is above everything.

Only 4% of respondents gave the opposite answer, saying they always put morality above the law. Officials (3%) also said in the survey that they would only put moral norms above the law if a certain situation was not described in the law and they had to rely on their own inner conviction, and 3% said that moral norms become more important when the guilty blame the innocent. Slightly fewer (2%) said that they would put morality above the law if the offence was a minor, insignificant one. Similarly, 2% of respondents said that both the law and morality were equal. It can be concluded that many of the officers surveyed have various reasons for putting morality before the law, but there are also some who say that the law is above everything and that it should be obeyed no matter what.

As has already been established, many officials find reasons to put morality before the law. This may lead to the question of whether officials have reasons for putting the law before moral norms. To this end, respondents were asked a similar question - in which case would you obey the law in spite of moral norms/laws?

A higher proportion (30%) of respondents say that they always put the law before morality. Slightly fewer (29%) say that they would not follow moral norms and would obey the law for a specific reason, for example, "if the law is acting for the benefit and well-being of the state and society", "for the defence of the Republic of Lithuania", "in the performance of an official duty", "in the performance of an official activity". These officials argue that moral norms become partly irrelevant when it comes to the professional activity of serving the homeland. Some (19%) of the respondents chose not to answer this question. In the survey, a part (9%) of respondents say that they would disregard moral norms when they know that the law is 100% right. Also, as in the previous question, 7% said that the rule of law should be followed. A few officials (4%) said that they would never obey the law regardless of moral standards. And only 2% said, as in the previous question, that the law and moral norms are equal. The results suggest that many officers place the law above moral norms, and that officers put aside their own internal moral convictions and follow the rules of law in the course of their duties.

It is known from the survey results that many officials find various reasons to put morality before the law, many officials advocate that the law is more important and that moral values should not get in the way of service. In order to further explore the attitude of officials towards the relationship between law and morality in their professional activities, respondents were asked about the importance of morality in the professional activities of an official. Respondents were asked to rate the statement 'the importance of morality in an official's professional life' on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 indicating that morality is very important in an official's professional life and 1 indicating that morality is not at all important in an official's professional life. The vast majority of officials (70.8%) say that morale is a very important aspect of an official's job. A much smaller number of officials (22.1%) say that morality is important in the official's professional activities. Only 5.3% of respondents think that morale is necessary and 0.4% think that morale is not a very important aspect of an officer's professional activity. 1.3% of the officers surveyed support the view that morality is not at all important in an officer's professional activity.

In the light of the results of the survey, it can be concluded that, nevertheless, the vast majority of the officials surveyed see the importance of morality in the professional activities of an official and only a small proportion of the respondents consider that moral norms are not relevant in the performance of their duties.

Officials were also asked to rate the importance of the law in their professional activities on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 being very important in their professional activities and 1 being not important at all in their professional activities. The data obtained from the survey shows that 81.4% of the respondents consider the importance of the law in the professional activities of an official to be very important, while 17.3% of the respondents consider the law and its observance to be important in the professional activities of an official. A very small proportion of officials (0.4%) consider that the law is important in the official's professional life, while only 0.9% of respondents consider that the law and its observance in the official's professional life is very unimportant.

From the survey results presented above, it can be concluded that officials consider the importance of the law in their professional activities to be higher than the importance of moral values. The previous survey results also support this conclusion, and it can be concluded that compliance with the law and legal norms in the course of duty is very important to officers. It is only in exceptional cases, if the law is contrary to normal moral norms, that they are inclined to transgress and disobey it.

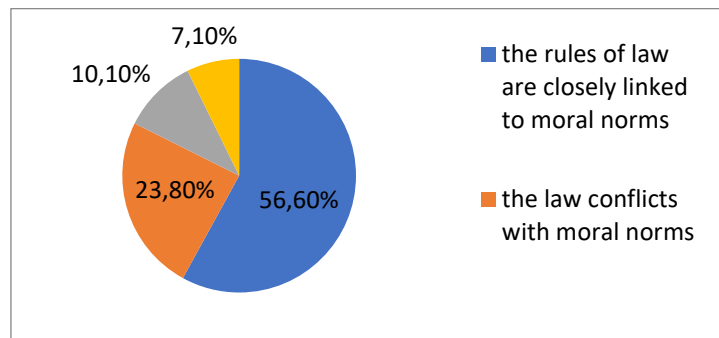
The codes of ethics of statutory bodies state that an official must be courteous, tactful, truthful, orderly and observe all the rules laid down in the code of ethics. It is also laid down that civilians must treat officers with respect and obey instructions. However, it is understood that all people are not created equal and many people, such as drunken persons, may behave inappropriately in different situations. This raises the question for officers - do they take into account a person's personal characteristics, behaviour, communication, etc., before punishing them (e.g. when stopping them for speeding, or when they encounter a drunken person in a public place). The survey results show that 51.3% of respondents say they do not take into account a person's inner qualities, but 48.7% say that a person's personal qualities determine their decision (see Figure 12).

It can be said that many officers follow the rule of law and no matter how polite and appropriate a person is, this does not make it possible to exempt him/her from responsibility.

In order to find out how officers view the relationship between morality and the law in their professional activities, respondents were allowed to choose from a number of statements. In the survey, the largest number of respondents (56.6%) ticked the first statement - the norms

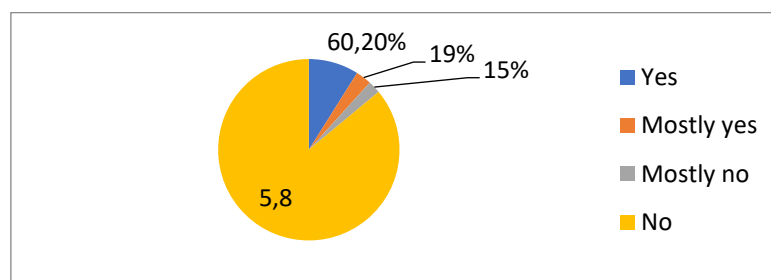
of the law are closely linked to the norms of morality. The results of the survey show that there were also some officials (23.8%) who thought that the law was in conflict with morality. Slightly fewer respondents (10.1%) said that the law is not in line with moral standards, while the lowest number of officials (7.1%) indicated that the law is only sometimes not in line with normal moral standards. There was no response from 2.4% of respondents (see Figure 7).

It can be noted that the most popular answer is "the law is closely related to moral norms". It is somewhat surprising that many officials believe that the law is at odds with morality, given that laws are often derived from moral values.



**Figure 7. Officials' views on the relationship between the law and moral norms.**

To determine the relationship between the law and moral norms, another similar question was put to the officials: do the law and moral norms always coincide? In the survey, respondents could choose from 4 possible answer options. The predominant answer (60.2%) was yes, law and morality usually always coincide. However, a much smaller number of officials (19%) said that law and morality usually do not coincide, while 15% said that law and morality do not coincide at all. The lowest number of respondents (5.8%) stated that law and morals always coincide (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Officials' views on the identity of legal and moral norms.**

Looking at the results of this question and the previous one, it can be assumed that many officials believe that the law and morality and its norms are closely linked. Although the results of the survey show that there are some officials who believe that the law and moral norms do not coincide at all. While there are philosophers and lawyers who argue that laws are born out of moral norms, officers who do practical work, who interact every day with victims of crime or those who have committed misdemeanours, think otherwise. There are those who argue that not all laws are closely related to morality and its norms.

Given the views of the officials, it must be assumed that morality and the law do not always coincide. It is also known that the law in Lithuania is not the same for all persons. Although there are a few known exceptions where the law does not apply to certain persons, in most cases it is still argued that the law is the same for all and that everyone must obey it.



Therefore, in order to understand the attitude of officials towards the relationship between law and morality from their practical point of view, a question was put to officials - should moral norms, like laws, be the same for everyone? It is argued that moral norms are derived from customs, it is argued that morality is about the inner qualities of a person, about decency. However, it must be acknowledged that in life all people are not always equal, because a person who has been convicted will never be on the same level as a person who has never been convicted, and in civil life, for example, a person who lies will never have the same level of trust from the people as a person who has never been convicted of lying. But a review of the results shows that the vast majority of respondents (88.1%) said that moral standards should be the same for all persons, while 11.9% said that moral standards should not be the same for everyone. It can be assumed that the majority of officials believe that all people should be treated equally without any exceptions.

Respondents were asked whether you agree with the statement that laws are designed to ensure that moral norms are upheld in society. The vast majority of respondents - 76.1% - agree that yes, laws are made to ensure that our moral values are upheld. However, there were also some officials - 23.9% - who believe that laws are made and created for other reasons.

It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents agree with the opinion of lawyers and philosophers that laws are based on moral values, and in order to protect them, it is necessary to create and legislate legal norms and acts.

While many officials agree that laws are created to ensure that moral norms are upheld in society, even more officials agree that laws and moral norms share a common goal. The majority of respondents (81.9%) agreed with the statement 'laws and moral norms share a common goal', and only 18.1% of respondents thought that morality and laws do not share a common goal.

Taking into account the results of this question as well as the previous question, it can be concluded that officials consider the relationship between morality and the law to be a close one, with many of them stating that they share a common goal - the law should ensure moral values in people's lives.

Summarising all the results of the study, it can be concluded that officials maintain a stable relationship between the law and moral norms in their professional activities. They are able to separate their work from their personal life, they are able to restrain their emotions and they are able to comply with the legislation that is relevant to their work. From the point of view of the officers, the relationship between law and morality is important in their professional activities and it can be said that many officers are aware of the need to be guided by the rules of law in the course of their duties, rather than by their own moral values, which may be compromised by the performance of their official duties. The results of the study show that officers are aware of what morality is in their professional activities and adhere to moral values to the extent that the law allows them to do so.

## Conclusions

Law is a successful social phenomenon. An analysis of the concept and notion of morality reveals that morality is a set of generally accepted rules of life that are not codified in law. As a result, various disagreements can arise over the observance of moral norms. It is argued that laws and legal norms derive from moral values. Moral values such as honesty, justice, respect for human dignity, etc. are the basis for the professional conduct of an official. He must observe moral standards in order to uphold the good name of the statutory body, to be professional and to be respectful to people at all times.

In their professional activities, the staffs of a statutory body and officials are confronted every day with the application of the law and moral norms. The analysis of the results of the study shows that officers are aware of moral values and tend to put them above the law in certain situations. However, many officials are guided by the principle of the rule of law and tend to follow the legal norms that are binding in their professional activities. Furthermore, officials agree that laws are rooted in moral values and the desire to protect them. Officials consider both the law and moral norms to be very important aspects of their professional activities.

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