

OPUS GRANT:

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The hidden curriculum of lawyers training. A theoretical and social analysis

The aim of this project is to analyse and critically appraise lawyers training in Poland as there has never been a comprehensive study of this area. Our objective is to fill this gap in our legal knowledge. Lawyers training occurs on two distinct levels – academic training and corporate training, carried out by professional corporations of lawyers. There are therefore two centres of lawyers training: university (Academia) and self-governing corporations (Practice).

The preparation for legal practice not only requires some co-ordination between training centres with respect to the effectiveness, methods and utility of the training offered, in other words, some planning and designing of social roles of embodied by legal professions. Against this background we can observe two distinct educational profiles: that of a lawyer –academic (Academia) and that of a lawyer- practitioner (Practice). In our opinion there also is a third possibility: lawyers training constitutes a distinct, hitherto unidentified and poorly researched, element of legal discourse separate from academic knowledge and practice. Aforementioned need for co-ordination can be put into effect not only within the official (overt) curricula, but also, and above all, through the so-called hidden curricula. The notion of a hidden curriculum is based on the premise that the means of achieving the official goal of an educational process are as important as the goal itself and its justification.

The initial hypothesis of this project is the proposition that the functioning of the hidden curriculum in lawyers training guarantees the effectiveness of education but is counter-productive in terms of its utility. Such training contradicts its official as well as political and philosophical claims. Thus, lawyers training, whose aim is to “shape” socially desirable competencies, becomes dysfunctional and often achieves the opposite results. This project is an attempt at finding out why this is the case.