

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC (IN ENGLISH)

Purpose of research, research hypothesis

A fundamental practical objective of the project is, first, to make a diagnosis of legal consciousness of Polish society after nearly 30 years of political, economic, and social transformation, to separate its individual types, and also to examine the paths of how the individual types of legal consciousness have developed. The project, too, has a significant theoretical objective: it is to combine major theoretical currents in the analysis of legal consciousness to show it as a dynamic phenomenon, developed in the process of acquiring and using knowledge of law and legal convictions, as well as images of law on the basis of a sociological concept of agency and a theoretical concept of law as a phenomenon that materialises in the process of communication. Hence, rooted in the traditions of Polish sociology of law, primarily in research on legal consciousness by Maria Borucka-Arctowa and the sense of law by Adam Podgórecki, empirical and theoretical objectives and ambitions of this project go beyond those traditions in an important way.

According to the basic research hypothesis, legal consciousness is developed over multiple paths: through information about law obtained in the process of informal relations- including the process of socialisation - via the traditional mass media, information from the so-called “new media”, and through personal relations and experience with applied law. In light of the next hypothesis, the type of legal consciousness is correlated with a source of information on law on the one hand and with deeply rooted beliefs and personal experience, on the other, provided that search for information on law may be value-oriented or problem-solving oriented. According to the third hypothesis the deeply rooted, stereotyped beliefs and convictions concerning law depend on personal interests, goals and contacts with law. In light of that hypothesis, personal experiences with law have an impact on the development of a practically oriented and pragmatic knowledge of law, and, above all on the competences regarding the use of law or obtaining information on the law. The last research hypothesis relates to the field of relations that are subject to legal regulations. In light of it, legal consciousness is differentiated depending on whether it concerns public (state-citizen) or private relations. Activities in the public field and in the area of private relations are of substantial importance here.

Research method (methodology)

Quantitative and qualitative research is planned, while applying a triangulation method, and thus multi-level data analysis using mutually supplemented methods of its collection. The quantitative method (survey of a nation-wide sample in the form of a standardised interview) is to be used to formulate a general diagnosis of legal consciousness of Polish society, to separate its individual types, and to obtain information about most frequent sources of knowledge of law and relations with the applied law. Qualitative research shall concern the content of messages about law (content analysis) in the traditional media and in the “new media” and the development of legal consciousness by way of personal relations and experience with law (in-depth interviews).