

Hans Kelsen is considered as one of the most prominent thinkers in legal philosophy. He was even named „the legal philosopher of 20th century”. This is quite adequate description. In the 20th century, especially in the first half, there were not many as influential legal scholars in Central Europe. Kelsen’s legal career was impressive. He was the architect of the European model of the constitutional courts. His Neopositivistic vision of law, called Normativism, where a hierarchical structure with the constitution on the top, dominated legal thinking in many European countries, including Poland. Until today Kelsen’s impact on Polish legal culture is strong. To the extent that Marek Zirk-Sadowski called Polish legal culture “Soft-Kelsenism”. However, in the 21st century, Kelsen’s conception of law, which is bound with state can seem outdated. Nowadays, legal systems seem to be much more sophisticated than the reduction to simple top-down processes. Hence, in the legal doctrine the conviction exists that Kelsen’s theory ceased to be capable of providing adequate description of law. As a result, Kelsen’s theory, despite its strong coherency, and original solutions, which reveal some important aspects about the legal realm is not the equal participant in legal debates. Normativism mostly serves the example of the wrongful approach to the legal problematic. As a result, it seems that the general discourse misses some valuable and unique elements, which can be found in Kelsen’s doctrine, such as separation of law from the facts or the basic norm.

In order to reintroduce Kelsen as an equal option worth discussing in legal doctrine, his theory should be interpreted in a manner applicable to the 21st century. The aim of this project is to provide such dynamic interpretation. The idea founding the dynamic interpretation is to depart from reconstructing directly what Kelsen meant about law in the 20th century and start reconstructing what Kelsen could have potentially meant about law in the 21st century. Dynamic interpretation has a potential of pairing two compatible theories from different domains, which will lead to better understanding of both

In order to provide such dynamic interpretation of Kelsen’s theory, first the publication opened for such research had to be found. Kelsen’s best known version of the theory, which is Neokantian, would be too challenging of a starting point. Thus, the best candidate is Kelsen’s last book *General Theory of Norms* from 1979, which was not finished due to Kelsen’s death in 1973. This book, interpreted directly loses the consistency of the previous versions of Normativism allowing more freedom of interpretation. In the second step, the contemporary theories were chosen which could be compatible with Kelsen’s final version of Normativism and potentially could shed more light on it. Firstly, *General Theory of Norms* will be analysed in the hermeneutical paradigm, in which Kelsen’s theory appears to be the description how lawyers understand the law. Understanding typical for social science and humanities is contrasted to scientific explanation, characteristic for natural science.

Secondly, understanding of the law means the ability to recognise it and distinguish it from the facts. Kelsen’s most famous claim was that the law and facts are separated. However, in the last book Kelsen is less radical in his claims. Hence, the question arises, what kind of link and what kind of rules bind the realm of law and the realm of facts. It will be claimed that such relation is supervenience, which is defined as “there is no A difference without B difference”. This link is weak enough to leave Kelsen’s intentions intact.

As a main result, Kelsen’s theory should be brought back to the general legal discourse. Moreover, new elements have a potential to reveal something interesting about the law. Since supervenience sets the rules on behalf of which the connection between law and facts occurs, it is capable to reveal or support elements, previously invisible in Kelsen’s theory. For instance, it reveals the rule of formal equality or it supports the rule of legal certainty. On the other, the relation of supervenience in the context of Kelsen’s theory is interesting alternative for the positivistic claims that law is a fact. Supervenience sheds light on the problem of the separation of law and fact thesis, indicating weak connections, which must occur, what Kelsen admitted himself. Otherwise the legal realm would be not accessible to human being rooted in the realm of facts. Interpretation of Kelsen’s *General Theory of Norms* as a theory explaining how lawyers understand the phenomena of law, how lawyers think about law, opens new options in the legal debates about the fundamental features of law, and casts new light on fundamental categories for Kelsen’s studies, such as mentioned before basic norm.