

THE ROLE OF LEGAL CULTURE IN BUILDING A CIVIL SOCIETY

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Abstract: This article analyzes the role of legal culture in the establishment of civil society. In particular, special attention is paid to the impact of digitalization, globalization, civil society, and legal education on the development of legal consciousness. The causes of legal nihilism, the role of mass media, and the cultural factors influencing the acceptance of legal norms are explored. Additionally, proposals are made regarding the cooperation between the state, educational institutions, and civil society organizations in solving existing problems.

Keywords: civil society, globalization, legal culture, legal consciousness, digitalization, legal education, legal nihilism

In the process of building a civil society, the legal culture of society is one of the most crucial elements of its social development, as it determines the level of legal awareness among citizens, the degree of law compliance, and the quality of interaction between the state and society. Modern trends in the development of legal culture reflect both positive and negative phenomena associated with globalization, digitalization, and changes in the social structure.

One of the key trends today is the growing role of digital technologies in shaping legal consciousness. The advancement of information technologies has expanded public access to legal information, thereby increasing legal awareness among citizens. However, the problem of unreliable or distorted information disseminated on the internet negatively affects the development of legal culture, leading to misconceptions about laws and civic responsibilities.

Another significant trend is the rise of globalization, which has led to the convergence of legal systems across different countries. This process creates new opportunities for improving national legislation while also posing challenges in adapting international legal norms to local cultural and social contexts. For instance, international law actively influences national legal systems through mechanisms of integration and standardization. However, the perception of such changes by society can be ambiguous, especially in countries with deeply rooted traditional legal systems.

Among the contemporary issues of legal culture, legal nihilism holds a prominent place, as it manifests in citizens' reluctance to comply with laws and trust state institutions. The causes of this phenomenon lie in both deficiencies in legal education and shortcomings in law enforcement practices. For example, inefficiency in combating corruption, bureaucratic delays, and selective justice undermine public trust in governmental institutions and weaken the foundations of legal order.

Special attention should be given to the formation of legal consciousness among young people, as they are the primary bearers of the future legal culture. Modern educational programs are

insufficiently focused on developing legal analysis and critical thinking skills among the youth, which hinders the establishment of a stable respect for the law. In this regard, targeted measures are needed to promote legal education, including the implementation of interactive learning technologies and the organization of mass events aimed at increasing legal literacy. To address existing issues, a combination of efforts from the state, educational institutions, and civil society is required to enhance legal awareness, strengthen trust in state institutions, and popularize the principles of legality and the rule of law.

Modern approaches to shaping legal culture involve the use of innovative teaching and educational methods. In particular, developing legal consciousness through interactive learning formats such as legal games, debates, and mock trials has proven highly effective. These methods contribute not only to the assimilation of fundamental legal knowledge but also to the development of skills for their practical application in real-life situations.

Another key area is the introduction of legal education at the early stages of socialization. Children and adolescents who encounter examples of fair law enforcement begin to perceive the law as the foundation of social order. However, achieving this goal requires active support from educational institutions, families, and the media. In the context of digitalization, it is also crucial to consider the influence of social networks, which have become the primary source of information for the younger generation. Regulating content and promoting legal values through online platforms can play a significant role in fostering legal literacy.

Government authorities play a crucial role in shaping legal culture, as they must set an example of adherence to legality and justice. In this context, it is important to improve law enforcement practices, ensuring their transparency and accessibility for citizens. Eliminating bureaucratic barriers, combating corruption, and strengthening the judicial system will enhance trust in the legal framework. For instance, implementing automation programs in judicial proceedings and public services can reduce corruption levels and improve citizens' access to legal assistance.

Cultural differences between regions within a single country can also pose challenges to the unification of legal culture. In multinational states, perceptions of laws may vary based on local traditions and customs. This necessitates considering the specificities of each cultural group when developing and implementing legal norms. An example of such an approach is the introduction of legal education programs in national languages, which promotes greater engagement of local populations in legal processes.

An important aspect of enhancing legal culture is the development of civil society, which plays a key role in shaping legal values and monitoring law enforcement. The activities of non-governmental organizations, public associations, and grassroots initiatives contribute to the protection of citizens' rights, the improvement of legal literacy, and the establishment of mechanisms for public oversight. However, to fully realize the potential of civil society, it is necessary to ensure its legal protection, transparency of activities, and collaboration with state structures.

Modern research shows that a high level of legal culture is fundamentally based on respect for human rights and democratic values. Countries with well-developed democracies demonstrate a higher level of legal consciousness, which is linked to the transparency of government institutions, equality before the law, and guarantees of citizen rights protection. In this regard, it is important to consider international experience, adapting it to national conditions to ensure the balanced development of the legal system.

Special attention should be given to the issue of limited access to legal assistance for socially vulnerable groups. In many countries, there remains a shortage of free legal consultations, which reduces citizens' ability to defend their rights. Expanding the system of free legal aid and developing online legal support services could significantly improve the situation by making legal services more accessible to all social groups.

In modern conditions, success in shaping legal culture is possible only through active cooperation among all stakeholders-government, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and citizens themselves. Overcoming existing challenges and leveraging modern opportunities, such as digital technologies and international experience, could serve as the foundation for creating a society based on respect for the law and human rights.

The development of legal culture is also closely linked to the level of legal literacy among the population. Legal education should be a continuous process, beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout life. Integrating legal fundamentals into school and university curricula, as well as creating specialized courses for adults, can be a significant step in this direction. Programs focusing on citizens' rights and responsibilities in the digital space are particularly relevant, as the advancement of technology has made issues such as data protection, cybersecurity, and digital law increasingly important.

The role of mass media in shaping legal consciousness must also be considered. While media serve as a crucial educational tool, they can also contribute to legal nihilism if they focus predominantly on the negative aspects of law enforcement. To address this issue, it is necessary to promote media literacy among citizens and implement quality standards for legal information in the media space.

Cultural and historical aspects play a vital role in the formation of legal culture. In societies with a strong collectivist tradition, the law may be perceived as an external regulatory tool, whereas in individualistic cultures, it is viewed as a means of protecting personal interests. These differences must be taken into account when designing educational programs and legal reforms to tailor approaches to the specific characteristics of each society.

Furthermore, the successful development of legal culture is impossible without increasing trust in law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. A crucial step in this direction is ensuring the transparency and accountability of government institutions. For example, open court proceedings, public discussions of legislative proposals, and access to information about law enforcement activities can help strengthen public trust in the legal system.

Conclusion. The formation of a strong legal culture is a complex and multifaceted process that requires the joint efforts of the state, educational institutions, civil society, and the media. Addressing existing issues through comprehensive legal education, technological advancements, and institutional transparency will contribute to building a society that values the rule of law and human rights. By integrating international best practices while respecting national cultural specifics, it is possible to create a more legally conscious and responsible citizenry, ultimately strengthening the foundations of civil society.

Legal culture is a fundamental element of the sustainable development of both society and the state. Contemporary challenges such as digitalization, globalization, and the decline in trust toward government institutions require special attention to enhancing legal consciousness and improving the legal system. The formation of legal culture is possible only with the active participation of all social institutions, including government structures, educational institutions,

civil society, and the media. The development of legal literacy, the fight against legal nihilism, and the strengthening of trust in judicial and law enforcement systems must become priority areas of state policy. Legal education should be integrated into all levels of the educational system, starting from early childhood and continuing through adulthood. Moreover, ensuring access to legal assistance for all social groups is crucial for fostering legal awareness and responsibility among citizens.

One of the key measures in strengthening legal culture is promoting transparency in legal and governmental processes. Open judicial proceedings, public participation in legislative discussions, and access to information on law enforcement activities are essential for fostering trust in legal institutions. Additionally, modern technologies, such as digital legal platforms and online legal consultations, can enhance public access to legal resources and contribute to a more legally aware society.

The role of mass media and digital platforms in shaping legal consciousness cannot be overlooked. While they serve as valuable educational tools, they also bear the risk of spreading misinformation, which may contribute to public skepticism toward legal institutions. Therefore, media literacy and the regulation of legal information quality should be considered essential components of legal culture development.

Cultural and historical factors also influence the perception and implementation of legal norms. Societies with strong collectivist traditions may view the law as an external regulatory mechanism, while individualistic cultures see it as a means of protecting personal rights. These differences should be taken into account when designing legal education programs and policy reforms to ensure they align with the unique characteristics of each society.

Ultimately, eliminating existing issues in legal culture will enable the creation of a just and law-abiding society that respects human rights and upholds the rule of law. This requires a collaborative effort from the state, educational institutions, civil society, and media organizations. By integrating international best practices, leveraging modern technologies, and fostering a culture of legal awareness, societies can build a stable legal framework that supports democracy, justice, and social harmony.

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