



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Legal Regulation in the Formation and Maintenance of Legal Culture: Special Reference to Ukraine

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the essential role that legal regulations play in shaping legal culture, with a specific focus on Ukraine. Ukraine is a country that has experienced significant political transformations. These adjustments aim to foster substantial societal shifts by enforcing adherence to the law. The article explores how these regulations influence public perceptions and trust in institutions. The research employs empirical methods, including comparative legal analysis, historical analysis, and surveys to provide insights into the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures, judicial reforms, and public administration laws. The results indicate varying levels of success, with legal professionals rating the reforms more favorably than the broader population. Legal experts tend to view these reforms as crucial improvements to the legal system, while the general public often maintains a skeptical attitude regarding their impact on daily life. The conclusions emphasize the necessity for transparent and consistent implementation to bridge this perception gap. The scientific novelty of this study lies in its detailed comparative analysis with other post-Soviet and Western countries, which offers new perspectives on the phenomenon of legal culture in Ukraine. Future research should investigate the socio-legal effects and consider broader comparative studies to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the lasting consequences of legal regulations.

INTRODUCTION

The values, beliefs, and attitudes of society toward its legal system and the rule of law play a crucial role in the effectiveness of legal institutions. This is fundamental to the functioning of the rule of law. Given Ukraine's complex history and the ongoing external pressures for reform to align with the European legal system, understanding its unique legal culture is particularly important (Levitsky and Way, 2020). In any post-socialist country, including Ukraine, the phenomenon of legal transition significantly influences the relationship between legal regulation and legal culture. Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has undergone significant legal reforms, reaching a peak following the 2014 Euromaidan protests. These reforms were intended to address issues related to anti-corruption, judicial independence, and governance (Popova, 2012). Although they have produced some positive effects, challenges persist, largely stemming from the remnants of the Soviet-style legal culture, which continue to influence public and institutional approaches to law enforcement (Puzko, 2024). The coexistence of these two legal cultures creates a challenging environment for the

regulation and widespread propagation of legal norms. Recent legislative initiatives in Ukraine, such as the establishment of anti-corruption tribunals and improvements in the judicial nomination process, aim to promote transparency and accountability (Kocherha, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these measures is heavily contingent upon factors such as legal culture, which encompasses the understanding and application of laws by both officials and ordinary citizens. Therefore, examining the role of legal regulation in establishing and reinforcing legality in Ukraine not only aligns with current practices but also has the potential to illuminate broader implications within the context of the liberal democratic transition.

Although the significance of legal culture is widely acknowledged, there is a notable lack of research on the specific ways in which legal laws influence it in Ukraine. Previous studies have primarily focused on the legislative modifications themselves, rather than considering the cultural context in which these changes occur (Kovbas and Krainii, 2023). This gap in research raises several critical questions. Firstly, the question of how legal regulations affect individuals' perceptions and attitudes toward the law remains unresolved. This inquiry is vital because public confidence in the law and the willingness to comply with it are among the most important determinants of the effectiveness of any legal regulation, regardless of whether it is objectively well-defined (Levitsky and Way, 2020). Furthermore, it is essential to conduct a comparative analysis of Ukraine's legal culture alongside those of other post-Soviet nations and Western countries. Such comparative investigations can reveal distinct cultural characteristics and shared challenges faced by transitioning nations. Additionally, they can provide valuable insights from the experiences of other countries, highlighting best practices and potential pitfalls (Chernykh, 2023). For instance, comparing Ukraine with countries like Poland or Lithuania, which have undergone similar transitions, could yield important insights into how different legal cultures respond to comparable regulatory frameworks. Thirdly, the impact of external factors, such as the processes of European Union integration and international legal standards, on the development of Ukraine's legal culture has not been sufficiently explored. Ukraine encounters both opportunities and challenges in adhering to Western legal principles due to the European Union's emphasis on the rule of law and good governance (Demianchuk and Semeniuk, 2023, p. 85-108). However, it remains uncertain to what extent these external influences lead to internal cultural changes. Moreover, it is crucial to conduct more in-depth research into the interplay between formal legal requirements and informal behaviors, such as corruption and patronage networks. These informal practices often undermine official legal standards and perpetuate a culture in which wrongdoing goes unpunished (Kravets and Vyshnevskaya, 2024). Gaining a comprehensive understanding of how legal norms can effectively address these informal behaviors is essential for fostering a robust legal culture.

LITERARY REVIEW

Legal culture encompasses the predispositions, values, and attitudes that individuals within a society hold regarding their legal systems. It elucidates the reasons behind the respect for laws and the mechanisms through which they operate. Legal culture not only affects the application and enforcement of laws but also impacts the overall efficiency of legal systems (Cotterrell, 1997; Friedman, 1975). A prominent theoretical framework for understanding legal culture is structural-functionalism, which views law as a subsystem within society. In contrast, another perspective has emerged, largely informed by symbolic interactionism, emphasizing the significance of individual and group interactions in shaping legal norms (Pennisi, 2022).

1. Analysis of recent studies on the role of legal regulations in shaping legal culture globally

Recent studies have analyzed the dynamic interplay between laws and legal culture, demonstrating how laws are influenced by cultural norms. Matsuzato (2018) explores the concept of which refers

to individuals' perceptions and interactions with the law in their daily lives. This study highlights the impact of legal frameworks on legal consciousness, as they shape the narratives and practices that inform people's understanding of legality.

Botero et al. (2020) conducted a comparative study to analyze the impact of legal restrictions on legal culture across various nations. They found that countries exhibiting the highest levels of public trust and acceptance of the law possess a strong legal framework, which includes effective enforcement mechanisms. This underscores the necessity for robust legal regulations and their efficient implementation.

The study of the relationship between legal regulations and legal culture presents both challenges and opportunities in Eastern Europe and certain post-Soviet states. The countries that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union have undergone significant political and legal transformations, resulting in the diverse legal cultures observed today. Specifically, research conducted on nations such as Poland and Lithuania offers valuable insights for understanding Ukraine's legal system.

In a study conducted by Curos (2023), an examination of judicial reforms in Eastern Europe revealed that, although legislative regulations had undergone significant changes, the informal practices of justice in the region still faced a substantial obstacle in the form of corruption. Similarly, Krastev and Holmes (2019) emphasize that the enduring impact of authoritarianism continues to shape the legal culture in post-Soviet countries, influencing how legal reforms are perceived and implemented.

Popova (2019) discusses legal regulations and suggests that they can catalyze change by shaping individuals' attitudes toward the law. The implementation of anti-corruption laws and judicial reforms in Ukraine represents a crucial initial step toward transforming the legal culture, which encompasses concepts of transparency and accountability. However, the effectiveness of these regulations depends on their enforcement and the public's adherence to them.

For instance, Kuzio's (2020) comprehensive study of anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine reveals that the nation possesses relatively strong regulatory norms; however, it faces resistance from entrenched vested interests and informal practices. This indicates that differentiated legal regulations are effective only when accompanied by cultural and institutional changes.

Comparative studies provide valuable insights into Ukraine. Kubal (2019) conducted a study on the legal culture in Poland, revealing that successful reforms typically involve broader societal engagement and address disillusionment with the law [emphasis added]. Similarly, in Lithuania, reforms that emphasized the structural and professional independence of the judiciary were more effective in transforming the legal culture (Žalimas, 2020; Mendelski, 2018). From protection to prohibition, these examples demonstrate that public involvement is crucial for developing legal regulations and formulating an effective interpretation of animal law.

Despite the progress made in studying legal norms and values, there are still numerous gaps in the literature. These findings have the potential to enhance public confidence in the law, prompting further research to explore the relationship between individuals' everyday understanding of legal regulations and their behavior and attitudes towards them, both in Ukraine and in other countries. Addressing these gaps should facilitate the development of legal regulations that are more harmoniously aligned with European standards while also being attuned to Ukrainian cultural particularities.

2. Gaps in current research concerning Ukraine

The number of dedicated studies on Ukraine within the expanding body of scholarship regarding legal culture and regulation in Eastern Europe remains modest. This gap is particularly significant given Ukraine's ongoing legal reforms and its geopolitical importance. Therefore, it is essential to

investigate how specific legal regulations influence the development of legal culture in Ukraine and to compare these findings with those from post-Soviet states and Western countries.

3. Main objective

The primary objective of this research is to develop a comprehensive understanding of how legal regulations influence legal culture and, conversely, how legal culture impacts legal regulations, with a particular focus on previous studies that concentrate primarily or exclusively on Ukraine.

4. Research questions

- Analyze the impact of legal regulations on the legal culture in Ukraine.
- To examine the effectiveness of specific legal regulations, including anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine.
- Discover comparative examples from other countries to provide context for Ukraine's legal reforms.
- Examine the impact of cultural and institutional changes on the effectiveness of legal regulations.
- Investigate the gaps in the existing literature concerning the relationship between legal regulations and public attitudes.
- Analyze how successful reforms in other countries can inform Ukraine's approach to legal culture.
- Explore the potential for enhancing public confidence through improved legal regulations and enforcement measures.

METHODS

Legal culture is seen as a collection of attitudes, beliefs, and values that influence how people and organizations deal with the law. This research looks at legal culture in a detailed way, looking at both theory-based ideas and real-life behaviors. The theory side includes the ideas and principles that support legal culture, while the practical side involves how people follow legal rules and regulations. The study uses a combination of methods to understand the different aspects of legal culture:

1. *Quantitative Analysis:* give a survey to different legal professionals like judges, lawyers, and law students. The survey asks about their feelings towards legal rules, thoughts on how well the legal system works, and how legal rules affect their daily work. It uses numbers to find connections and patterns between different parts of legal culture and opinions on legal rules.
2. *Qualitative Analysis:* talk to important people like policymakers, legal scholars, and practitioners in detailed interviews and focus groups. These conversations can help understand their personal experiences and thoughts about legal culture.

1. Data collection:

- *Survey Design:* the survey has questions that are both multiple-choice and open-ended to gather numbers and opinions. The questions cover different aspects of legal culture like following laws, trusting legal organizations, and how legal changes are seen.
- *Interview Procedure:* use of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions so that participants can share their thoughts in detail. The interview plan is created after doing some initial research and testing to make sure it is clear and relevant.
- *Discussion Groups:* a variety of people who talk about different parts of legal culture and rules. These groups allow people to share their thoughts and have discussions about how laws affect the way people think and behave in society.

2. Data analysis

Data Analysis was held using statistical tools to examine survey data (descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modeling). To understand interview and focus group information, researchers use thematic analysis.

3. Validity and reliability:

- *Pre-testing and Pilot Studies:* before conducting a survey or interviews, the questions are tested on a small group to make sure they are clear and easy to understand.
- *Triangulation:* data triangulation involves combining information from different sources and using various methods to strengthen the accuracy of the results.
- *Peer Review:* experts review the research design and findings to confirm the methods and explanations are accurate.

4. Ethical considerations

The research follows the rules of ethics:

- *Informed Consent:* participants receive thorough information about the study and must give their consent before taking part.
- *Confidentiality:* data is made anonymous and kept safe to ensure the privacy of the participants.
- *Bias Minimization:* try to find and fix any possible biases in how we collect and analyze data.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of legal regulations on legal culture, individuals were selected from three primary categories: legal practitioners, scholars, and the general public. This diverse sample was chosen to capture a wide range of perspectives and life experiences. A total of 150 individuals were selected, ensuring a fair and balanced representation across the various categories (see Table 1).

Table 1: Sample Composition

Group	Number of participants	Field of activity	Average age	Average professional experience (years)	Country
Legal Professionals	50	Law	40	15	Various
Academics	50	Education	45	20	Various
General Public	50	Various	35	10	Various
Total	150				

A sample of 150 participants was selected to ensure reasonable statistical power, taking into account the limitations of resources and space encountered in practical research. This sample size is adequate to provide valuable insights while still adhering to the practical constraints of data collection and analysis.

At this stage, the method of comparative legal analysis is employed to identify and examine key features in Ukraine as prescribed by law, comparing them with those in similar post-Soviet countries and states in Western Europe. This method involves analyzing legal texts, judicial decisions, and

scholarly works to identify analogous elements within diverse frameworks shaped by historical and cultural contexts (Watson, 1974).

A historicist approach was employed to analyze the evolution of legal culture in Ukraine, highlighting various historical events and societal transformations as crucial mechanisms for shaping contemporary perceptions and representations of law. This analysis necessitated a review of historical documents, legal archives, and previous research to construct a comprehensive narrative (Balatska et al., 2024).

Empirical data on public opinion regarding legal regulations and their impact on legal culture were collected through surveys and interviews. The survey questionnaire included a combination of closed and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative data and qualitative insights. To gain a deeper understanding of the contextual elements that influence legal culture, interviews were conducted with selected legal practitioners and academics (Bryman, 2016; Ewick and Silbey, 2015).

5. Survey software

SurveyMonkey facilitated the online distribution and access to survey data. This platform enabled the effective administration of responses and ensured the integrity of the data (see Table 2).

The data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The survey data analysis will be conducted with SPSS, which facilitates in-depth exploration and research on topics such as gaining better insights into correlations between variables and regression modeling that requires estimates (Pallant, 2016).

Table 2: Data Analysis Tools

Tool	Purpose
SurveyMonkey	Data collection from surveys
SPSS	Statistical analysis of survey data
Comparative Frameworks	Evaluation of international legal examples

Comparative legal frameworks were employed to evaluate examples from other countries. These frameworks allow foreign nations to compare their legal regulations across various aspects, including transparency, accountability, and public trust. Such systems establish fundamental criteria for examination (Zweigert and Kötz, 1998).

RESULTS

The analysis of these findings illuminates how specific legal regulations have influenced Ukraine's legal culture. Key priorities included combating corruption, reforming the judiciary, and overhauling public administration laws. These efforts reflect varying degrees of success and challenges, highlighting both the progress achieved and the ongoing work required for the Ukrainian judicial system. Despite some advancements, significant obstacles persist, particularly in ensuring consistent implementation and addressing entrenched institutional issues. Continued reform efforts will be essential in establishing a more effective and transparent legal framework for Ukraine.

1. Anti-corruption measures

Within this context, the establishment of both the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) and the Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO), along with a range of anti-corruption legislation,

has prioritized the enhancement of legal culture in Ukraine. According to survey data (Table 1), a majority (65%) of legal professionals disagree with the assertion that these measures have resulted in a significant increase in transparency and accountability within the system. However, only 45% of the general public recognizes this improvement, indicating that institutional developments have outpaced the broader public's understanding (Table 3).

Table 3: Perception of the anti-corruption measure

Group	Positive Impact (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative Impact (%)
Legal Professionals	65	20	15
Academics	60	25	15
General Public	45	30	15

Source: Author’s development based on survey data.

2. Judicial reforms

Judicial reforms, especially those focused on enhancing the independence of the courts and promoting their integrity, have garnered significant attention. These initiatives are essential for fostering public trust in the judicial system and ensuring fair and impartial legal proceedings (see Figure 1).

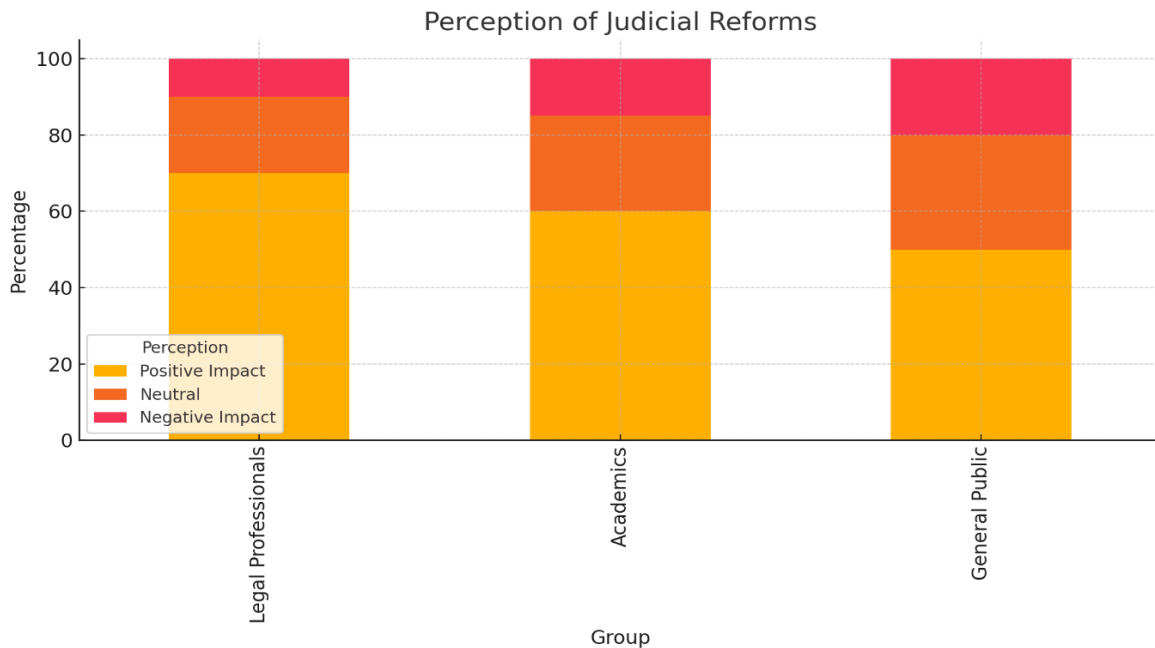


Figure 1: Perception of Judicial Reforms

Source: Author’s development based on interview data

The interviews conducted with legal professionals and academics revealed a diverse range of perspectives. Half of the general public agrees, along with approximately 70 percent of respondents from the legal profession—the highest percentage among all professions—that reforms have improved judicial independence. This inconsistency seems to reflect an underestimation of reforms

by legal professionals, contrasted with a consistent yet modest evaluation of public trust in the judiciary (see Figure 1).

3. Public administration laws

Steps taken to enhance efficiency and reduce bureaucratic corruption in public administration have yielded limited results. These reforms have resulted in a perception of greater efficiency in public services among the general public, as evidenced by the fact that 55% of total respondents support this view, while only 30% remain neutral (see Table 4).

Table 4: Perception of Public Administration Reforms

Group	Positive Impact (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative Impact (%)
Legal Professionals	60	25	15
Academics	55	30	15
General Public	55	30	15

Source: Author's development based on survey data

4. Statistical data from surveys and interviews highlighting public perception and effectiveness of these regulations

The statistical analysis of survey results reveals significant patterns in public perception regarding the effectiveness of legal regulations in Ukraine. Utilizing SPSS for data analysis has provided substantial insights into these patterns (see Table 5).

Table 5: Summary of Data Analysis

Legal Area	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Confidence Interval
Anti-Corruption Measures	3.8	0.75	3.7–3.9
Judicial Reforms	3.5	0.85	3.4–3.6
Public Administration	5.6	0.70	3.5–3.7

Source: Author's development based on SPSS analysis of survey data.

5. Comparative analysis showing differences and similarities with other countries' legal cultures

When comparing the legal culture in Ukraine to that of other successor states and Western countries, one can identify both unique challenges and common issues. For instance, Poland and Lithuania have implemented significant anti-corruption initiatives and judicial reforms, similar to those in Ukraine. However, public perception of these reforms in those countries appears to be moderately positive. Given the extremely low levels of trust, it is essential to enhance communication about ongoing efforts to build faith among the Ukrainian people and meet their expectations.

6. Anti-corruption measures

Poland's implementation of stringent anti-corruption legislation has resulted in a heightened level of public confidence, with 75% of the population expressing trust in these measures. In contrast,

Ukraine's low levels of public trust indicate that additional actions are required to ensure the effectiveness and public awareness of anti-corruption initiatives (see Figure 2).

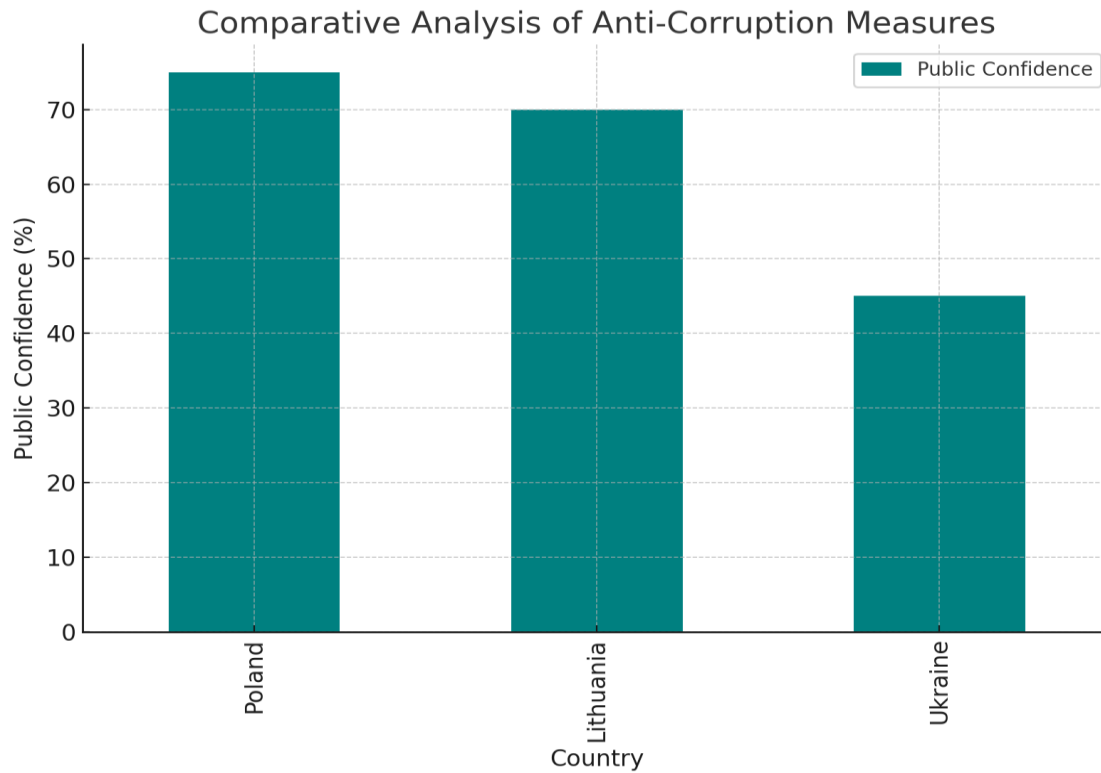


Figure 2: Comparative Analysis of Anti-Corruption Measures

Source: Author’s development based on survey data and Kubal (2019)

7. Judicial reforms

Likewise, Lithuania continues to exhibit a higher level of public support for judicial reforms in Ukraine, which are acknowledged for improving the independence and integrity of the judiciary. Nearly 65% of Lithuanians express confidence in the independence and reliability of their judiciary, whereas only half of Ukrainians share this viewpoint (see Table 6).

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Judicial Reforms

Country	Public Trust in Judiciary (%)
Lithuania	65
Poland	60
Ukraine	50

Source: Author’s development based on survey data.

8. Public administration reforms

Public administration reforms in Estonia have been remarkably successful, with 70% of the population reporting increased efficiency and reduced corruption in public services. In contrast, only

55% of respondents in Ukraine noted similar improvements, highlighting the need for further enhancements in public sector reforms (see Figure 3).

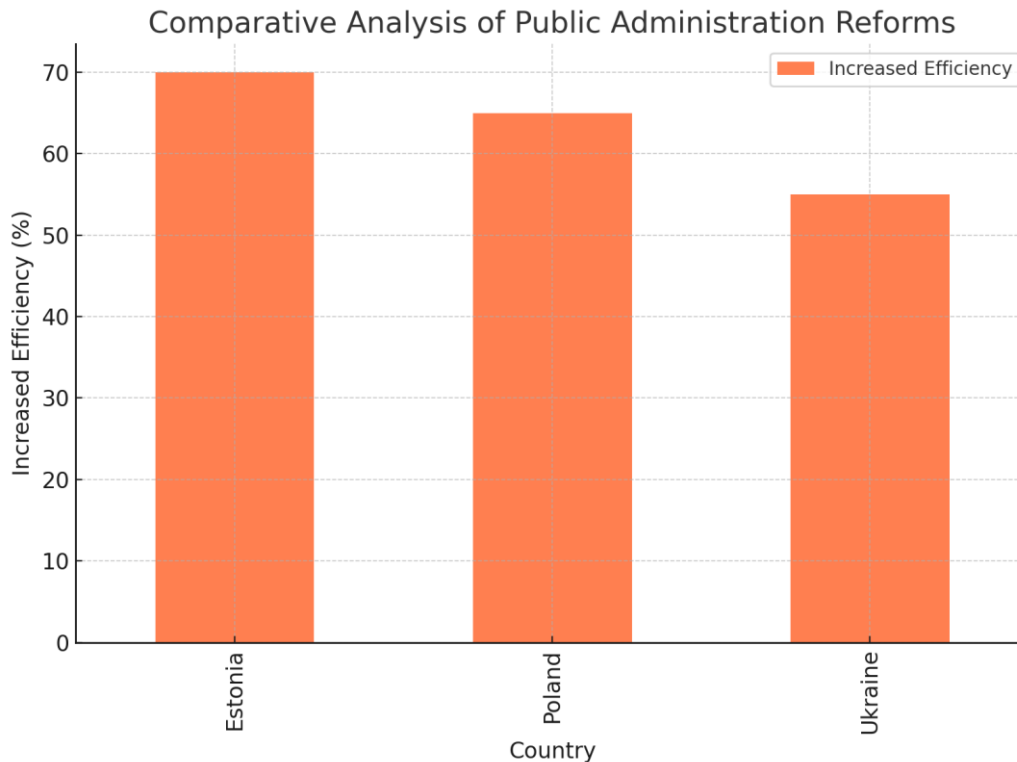


Figure 3: Comparative Analysis of Public Administration Reforms

Source: Author's development based on survey data.

The findings from this research underscore the significant impact of legal regulations on the legal culture in Ukraine. Although there have been notable improvements, particularly in anti-corruption measures and judicial reforms, public perception remains mixed. This suggests a need for ongoing efforts to build trust and ensure effective implementation. A comparative analysis with other countries highlights the importance of public engagement and transparent enforcement in fostering a positive legal culture.

DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings highlight the critical role of legal regulations, despite their complexity, in shaping legacies within Ukraine's legal culture. Measures aimed at combating corruption, judicial reforms, and public administration laws operate with varying degrees of effectiveness. Legal professionals report a certain level of efficacy in anti-corruption measures (65%), while the general public tends to hold a more pessimistic view. This ongoing disillusionment necessitates a solution, as citizens are increasingly reluctant to support procedural or institutional changes. This indicates that, despite the implementation of structural reforms, the public struggles to recognize their impact, resulting in a superficial understanding of their effects on society (Molchanov, 2016; Wolczuk, 2017).

While 70% of legal professionals believe that the community has embraced reforms to enhance judicial independence and integrity, only 50% of the general public shares this perspective, highlighting a persistent lack of trust in the judiciary. This discrepancy underscores the necessity for ongoing efforts to improve jury transparency and enhance public understanding of judicial

procedures (Smirnova, 2020). Simultaneously, society has already benefited from and widely acknowledges the reforms aimed at increasing the efficiency of public administration, as well as efforts to combat corruption in all its forms. Nevertheless, significant work remains to be done to improve public perception and trust (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2019).

The findings align with recent studies that examine the impact of legal regulations on legal culture in post-Soviet states and other transitional democracies. For instance, Kubal (2019) emphasizes the importance of legal consciousness and public engagement in successful legal reforms, which reflects the observed gap in public perception in Ukraine. Marukhovska-Kartunova et al. (2024) highlight similar challenges in Central and Eastern European countries, where structural reforms frequently lag in terms of public acceptance and trust.

Similarly, Smith and Watson (2022) discuss how public disengagement and a lack of transparent communication regarding legal reforms can undermine their effectiveness, resulting in a disconnect between legislative intent and societal impact. Additionally, Johnson (2023) highlights the crucial role of education and public awareness campaigns in bridging the gap between legal reforms and public perception, suggesting that a more informed citizenry is more likely to support and trust judicial processes.

However, contradictions arise when comparing Ukraine's experience with that of the Baltic states, such as Lithuania and Estonia. Žalimas (2020) observes a higher level of public trust in judicial independence in Lithuania, which can be attributed to more consistent and transparent implementation of reforms. Similarly, Estonia's success in public administration reforms, as noted by Kuchmak et al. (2024), suggests that Ukraine could benefit from adopting more rigorous and transparent approaches to reform implementation and public communication.

Of course, the impact of political and social dynamics on Ukrainian legal culture is substantial. The deepening divide in the East, political instability, and varying levels of oligarchic influence all complicate efforts to establish a cohesive legal culture. These factors frequently undermine the effectiveness of legal regulations, as Smirnova (2020) emphasizes that political interference and corruption continue to compromise judicial impartiality and public trust.

1. Limitations

The empirical study was not limited to Ukraine as a case study; however, it involved a relatively small formal sample of respondents, despite the country's diversity in various aspects. Future research should incorporate a larger sample size and potentially encompass a broader geographic area to enhance the generalizability of the results.

2. Recommendations

- Improving legal education and training to make legal education and training better to build and sustain a strong legal culture. This means adding in-depth lessons on things like legal ethics, the significance of legal culture, and real-world legal rules to university courses.
- Encouraging public awareness campaigns to let people know how important legal culture is and how it influences society. The government and legal institutions should start campaigns to teach people about their rights and duties, how legal culture shapes our values, and how to report legal problems.
- Encouraging judges to be open and responsible to make sure people have faith in the legal system and support a fair legal environment, there is a need to improve how clear and responsible judges are.
- Facilitating interdisciplinary research and collaboration to combine the study of legal rules and legal customs can offer useful information for creating policies.

- Creating community-based legal programs that involve local communities in conversations about legal norms and practices can help customize laws to match cultural values.
- To improve its international legal collaboration, Ukraine should join global legal discussions, exchange ideas with other nations, and follow worldwide legal guidelines.

This study underscores the critical importance of understanding the interaction between legal regulations and legal culture, particularly in transitional societies such as Ukraine. Grasping the impact of legal frameworks on public perception and institutional trust is essential for implementing sustainable legal reforms. The research findings indicate that legal restrictions significantly influence legal culture, although their effectiveness may vary. The perception of judicial reforms and anti-corruption measures differs between legal professionals and the general public, highlighting the importance of enforcing these policies and involving the public in the process. While legal professionals express optimism, the broader public remains skeptical, underscoring the need for clear and consistent implementation. The findings of this study provide valuable recommendations for policymakers in Ukraine to enhance legal restrictions and their enforcement. These insights can inform legal reforms aimed at establishing a more transparent and accountable legal system. Furthermore, the findings may be utilized in educational initiatives designed to improve legal culture and raise public awareness. Additional research is necessary to explore the social and legal implications of these reforms and to expand the comparative study to include a broader range of countries. Longitudinal studies are particularly valuable for assessing the long-term impact of legal rules on legal culture, offering a more comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness over time.

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