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The Phenomenon of "Pseudolaw": Preliminary Characteristics

Fenomen „pseudoprawa". Wstępna charakterystyka zjawiska

ABSTRACT

The subject of this research is the phenomenon of "pseudolaw" in the form of sovereign citizens movements and so-called Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Arguments (OPCA). These are ideologies that deny the legitimacy of a democratic state governed by the rule of law and replace statutory law with their own absurd interpretations of legal concepts. The focal point of this research endeavor is to elucidate the mechanisms through which these movements adapt in Poland, a nation where this phenomenon remains underappreciated by state authorities and within the corpus of legal literature. The primary argument of this study is that pseudo-legal ideologies, despite their present limited scope in Poland (with several thousand active adherents), demonstrate a worrisome upward trend. This trajectory, as evidenced by Western experiences, has the potential to compromise the effective functioning of the justice system and public safety. The objective of the present study is to furnish a preliminary description of the origins, evolution, and manifestations of the phenomenon in the Polish context, with particular emphasis on social media. The study's novelty stems from its exhaustive examination of the phenomenon within the Polish context, which significantly expands upon the scope of previous sporadic observations. The research is international in scope, covering a comparative analysis of practices in the United States, Canada, Germany (Reichsbürger), Austria, and other European countries, with application to the specific Polish context. The cognitive value of this approach pertains to two distinct yet interconnected domains. Firstly, from the vantage point of legal science, it facilitates the identification of novel threats to the legal order. Secondly, from the perspective of the practice of state authorities, it fosters the development of strategies to counteract these threats in accordance with democratic values.

Keywords: pseudolaw; sovereign citizens; OPCA; negation of the rule of law; legal disinformation

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies are experiencing a crisis of confidence in scientific knowledge[1] and the institutions of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. This phenomenon takes various forms, from anti-vaccination movements and the promotion of so-called alternative medicine, through the denial of climate change, to a kind of historical revisionism.[2] The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the scale of this problem, demonstrating how easily pseudoscientific narratives can paralyze public health efforts and lead to measurable losses in the lives and health of citizens.

In this perspective, manifestations of attitudes that deny the foundations of the legal system, its sources, the hierarchy of norms, and basic legal institutions are particularly disturbing. Movements referred to as "sovereign citizens" and supporters of so-called Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Arguments (OPCA) question the legitimacy of the statutory legal system and replace it with their own (usually absurd) interpretations of legal concepts and fictitious pseudo-legal constructs.

This phenomenon is not merely an academic curiosity. As evidenced by the experience of Western countries, proponents of these theories have the potential to compromise the effective functioning of the justice system, public administration, and, in extreme circumstances, public safety.[3]

In Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, this phenomenon remains relatively underrecognized by both state authorities and legal literature. The present article endeavors to address this lacuna by offering a preliminary investigation into the origins, evolution, and manifestations of this phenomenon within the Polish context, with a particular emphasis on its manifestation in social media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employs a methodological approach that is characteristic of legal sciences, incorporating elements of sociological and communication analysis. The initial approach is a dogmatic-legal analysis, which enables the identification of

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[1] P.J. Hotez, *The Deadly Rise of Anti-Science: A Scientist's Warning*, Baltimore 2023.

[2] See A. Wójcik, *Fantazmat Wielkiej Lechii. Jak pseudonauka zawładnęła umysłami Polaków*, Oświęcim 2019.

[3] Cases of violence by "sovereign citizens" in the United States, including shootings of police officers and bomb attacks, have made this movement one of the main subjects of interest for the American FBI. See FBI, *Sovereign Citizens: A Growing Domestic Threat to Law Enforcement*, September 2011, https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/sovereign-citizens-a-growing-domestic-threat-to-law-enforcement (access: 14.12.2025). For more, see P. Król, *Ruchy antypaństwowe w Polsce i ich wpływ na sektor publiczny oraz bankowy*, "Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego" 2025, no. 32, pp. 119–152.

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substantive errors in the arguments of supporters of the sovereign citizens theory and demonstrates their contradiction with the fundamental principles of the legal order.

This approach was further enriched by the implementation of a comparative method, entailing a comparative analysis of the phenomenon across various countries and a detailed examination of German practices concerning Reichsbürger movements. The comparative analysis facilitated the identification of common patterns and local adaptations of pseudo-legal theories. Furthermore, an investigation was conducted into Polish-language groups on social media platforms, including Facebook, Telegram, and websites. Preliminary data regarding the reach, number of users, and nature of the content published in November 2025 have been collected. This analysis necessitates particular methodological caution due to the closed nature of many groups and the limited access to certain platforms.[4]

The source material for this study encompassed legal and sociological literature, reports from research institutions, social media materials, and journalistic sources. This study found the Canadian court ruling in *Meads v. Meads*[5] to be of particular value. The present study thoroughly systematizes the OPCA movement and the work of D.J. Netolitzky on the history and characteristics of the phenomenon.[6]

RESEARCH AND RESULTS

1. The origins and evolution of the "sovereign citizens" phenomenon

The concept of "sovereign citizens" originated in the United States during the 1970s, representing a confluence of radical libertarianism, extreme right-wing

[4] In the case of publicly available sources, it is worth noting the reach of the YouTube channel "PorozmawiajmyTV" (Let's Talk TV), which has 140,000 subscribers. Number of views of sample materials: *Law of the Sea and Natural Law in Polish Books – Ar_jan*, https://youtu.be/VSbHO5lVXFA – 62,056 views; *The Decree of Alexander the Great and Declared Law – Olga Puszczyńska*, https://youtu.be/kZ0BwexjjwE – 34,000 views; *Natural Law: Home Births, Lack of Child Registration, and Home Schooling*, https://youtu.be/l8IfsdsMVEM – 24,000 views; *Understand Who You Are and Start Taming the Legal and Banking Matrix – Aleksander Berdowicz*, https://youtu.be/9uQDwWVuW9k – 40,000 views.

[5] Ruling of the Alberta Supreme Court of 18 September 2012, *Meads v. Meads*, 2012 ABQB 571.

[6] See D.J. Netolitzky, *The History of the Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Argument Phenomenon in Canada*, "Alberta Law Review" 2016, vol. 53(3), pp. 609–653; idem, *Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Arguments in Canadian Inter-Partner Family Law Court Disputes*, "Alberta Law Review" 2016, vol. 54(4), pp. 955–996; idem, *Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Arguments as Magic and Ceremony*, "Alberta Law Review" 2017, vol. 55(4), pp. 1045–1088; idem, *The Dead Sleep Quiet: History of the Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Argument Phenomenon in Canada – Part II*, "Alberta Law Review" 2022, vol. 60(3), pp. 795–832; D.J. Netolitzky, R. Warman, *Enjoy the Silence: Pseudolaw at the Supreme Court of Canada*, "Alberta Law Review" 2019, vol. 57(3), pp. 715–768.

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racist ideology, and anti-tax activism.[7] The movement has its origins, in part, in the tradition of the so-called Posse Comitatus. The Posse Comitatus are far-right militias that proclaim the local sheriff to be the highest authority in the county and that federal authority is illegal.[8] The ideology of the sovereign citizens is predicated on several fundamental beliefs. Adherents of this ideology are convinced that the United States federal government is devoid of legal legitimacy and is, in fact, a private corporation. The aforementioned group subscribes to the notion that citizens possess the capacity to "withdraw" their consent for governance by the state, a process that is facilitated by the submission of specific declarations. A critical component of this analysis involves the differentiation between a "human being" and a "natural person"[9] (a concept often referred to as the "straw man theory"), with the latter being the sole entity subject to statutory law. In conclusion, the assertion is made that admiralty law or commercial law has been unlawfully applied in terrestrial contexts. This unlawful application, according to the claim, enables the "opting out" of the established legal system.

The theoretical framework under discussion was developed during the 1980s and 1990s by the so-called "redemption movement", which was founded by Roger Elvick.[10] The subject advanced the hypothesis that each citizen possesses a clandestine financial account amounting to millions of dollars, which can be accessed through the decoding of the legal system by means of specialized legal language and documentation.[11]

In Canada, the dissemination of analogous concepts commenced around 2000 under the designation "freeman on the land".[12] This movement amalgamated American concepts of sovereign citizens with pseudo-legal interpretations of British common law and the medieval Magna Carta. In 2012, Canadian judge John D. Rooke issued a landmark ruling in *Meads v. Meads*. This ruling is significant because it comprehensively analyzed the movement's arguments and created the term "Or-

[7] See Anti-Defamation League, *The Lawless Ones: The Resurgence of the Sovereign Citizen Movement. An Anti-Defamation League Special Report*, 9.8.2010, https://archive.org/download/pdfy-RAXFhCjIMPnf90ne/sovereign_citizens_movement_report.pdf (access: 14.12.2025).

[8] M. Ligon, *The Sovereign Citizen Movement: A Comparative Analysis with Similar Foreign Movements and Takeaways for the United States Judicial System*, "Emory International Law Review" 2021, vol. 35(2), p. 300.

[9] This perspective is predicated on a misinterpretation of the legal concept of a person and a fundamental misunderstanding of the distinction between a legal person and a natural person.

[10] For more, see C.L. Matheson, *Psychotic Discourse: The Rhetoric of the Sovereign Citizen Movement*, "Rhetoric Society Quarterly" 2018, vol. 48(2), pp. 187–206.

[11] D.J. Netolitzky, *The History…*, pp. 615–620; J. Babcock, A.J. Cohen, I. Gershon, *Semiotic Determinacy: Sovereign Citizens' Approach to Legal Language*, "Signs and Society" 2025, vol. 13(1), pp. 102–121.

[12] S.A. Kent, *Freemen, Sovereign Citizens, and the Challenge to Public Order in British Heritage Countries*, "International Journal of Cultic Studies" 2015, vol. 6, pp. 1–15.

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ganized Pseudolegal Commercial Arguments" to describe the entire spectrum of the phenomenon.[13]

The ruling identified key features characterizing OPCA arguments. First, they are considered to be of a "commercial" nature, insofar as they are presented as schemes designed to yield financial benefits to their purchasers, such as tax avoidance and debt cancellation. Second, these groups are considered "organized" due to their ability to form coherent social movements characterized by distinct structures, hierarchies, and belief systems. Third, they are considered "pseudo-legal", a term denoting the utilization of legal terminology in a manner that is wholly divorced from the genuine signification of these concepts within the legal framework. These arguments are characterized by their complexity and the use of intricate, often Byzantine logical constructs. These constructs are intended to resemble legal reasoning, but in reality, they are devoid of any legal foundation.

2. Europe – the case of Reichsbürger

The ideology of sovereign citizens has also found fertile ground in Europe, where it has taken on local forms adapted to the specific characteristics of individual countries. In Germany, the Reichsbürger (Reich Citizens) movement has emerged, asserting the illegitimacy of the Federal Republic of Germany and maintaining the belief that the German Reich persists within the boundaries of 1937 or even 1914. According to the movement's supporters, the contemporary FRG is merely a "company" (GmbH, or limited liability company) and the Grundgesetz is not a true constitution because it was never approved in a nationwide referendum.[14]

The Reichsbürger movement, which, according to German internal intelligence data, has between 23,000 and 26,000 members, is characterized by a number of specific practices and beliefs. The members of the movement are known to issue their own identity documents, passports, and license plates. These individuals have adopted a systematic approach to their noncompliance, which includes the refusal to pay taxes, fines, and other public dues. They assert that they are not subject to the jurisdiction of an illegal state. These entities establish alternative "state" structures, accompanied by their own "governments", "monarchs" and "administrations". In certain radical cases, weapons are amassed and plans for acts of violence are formulated.[15]

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[13] *Meads v. Meads*, 2012 ABQB 571, paras 1–2.

[14] For more details, see C. Schönberger, S. Schönberger, *Die Reichsbürger. Eine Geschichte von Macht und Ohnmacht*, München 2023. Cf. J. Rathje, *Reichsbürger. Verschwörungsideologie mit deutscher Spezifik*, "Wissen schafft Demokratie. Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Demokratie und Zivilgesellschaft" 2017, vol. 1, pp. 238–249.

[15] Particularly disturbing was the conspiracy of the Reichsbürger group, revealed in December 2022, which planned a coup d'état, an assault on the Bundestag, and the overthrow of the demo-

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The emergence of analogous groups has also been observed in other European countries. In Austria, the Reichsbürger movement has adopted forms that bear a striking resemblance to those observed in Germany. This phenomenon can be attributed, at least in part, to the shared linguistic and legal cultural heritage between the two nations. A study commissioned by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior has demonstrated the existence of close ideological affinities and analogous patterns of radicalization among the German and Austrian movements.[16] In Italy, movements such as the Popolo della Terra Madre (People of Mother Earth) should be mentioned.[17] A series of movements have come to the fore, encouraging their respective adherents to discontinue the payment of utility bills, taxes, and fines, and to repudiate official passports and driver's licenses. In the Netherlands, security services estimate that the number of Dutch sovereign citizens is "tens of thousands". This estimation is based on the observation of disturbing cases of attempts by members of the movement to illegally obtain weapons. This is an exception to the traditionally peaceful nature of Dutch radical movements.[18] In the Czech Republic, the government has observed a surge in individuals submitting "sworn declarations of life" and petitioning for the dissolution of their contracts with the "Czech Republic corporation".

cratic constitutional order. As part of a large-scale counterterrorism operation, around 50 people were arrested, including individuals of high social standing, such as a former judge and a former member of the Bundestag from the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. See M. Götschenberg, H. Schmidt, *Prinz Reuß und sein Netzwerk vor Gericht*, 21.5.2024, https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/gesellschaft/prozess-gruppe-reuss-100.html (access: 14.12.2025).

[16] M. Possard, M. Kollegger, *Das Phänomen der Reichsbürgerinnen und Reichsbürger. Zwischen rechtsphilosophischen und soziologischen Erklärungsansätzen und technischen Möglichkeiten der Risikominimierung*, "SIAK-Journal – Zeitschrift für Polizeiwissenschaft und polizeiliche Praxis" 2024, vol. 2, pp. 47–54. Cf. Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, *„Reichsbürger" und „Selbstverwalter". Staatsfeinde, Geschäftemacher, Verschwörungstheoretiker*, https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter/2023-06-reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter-staatsfeinde-geschaeftemacher-verschwoerungstheoretiker.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=20 (access: 14.12.2025).

[17] Popolo della Madre Terra, https://popolodellamadreterra.org (access: 14.12.2025).

[18] National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, *With Your Back to Society: An Analysis of the Sovereign Movement in the Netherlands*, April 2024, https://english.nctv.nl/binaries/nctv-en/documenten/publications/2024/05/02/an-analysis-of-the-sovereign-movement-in-the-netherlands---with-your-back-to-society/24403680_RO_B5_Fenomeenanalyse+soevereinen+ENG_323201_V4_TG.pdf (access: 14.12.2025).

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3. Adaptation of the ideology of sovereign citizens in Poland

3.1. Pseudo-legal interpretation of admiralty law

A hallmark of the sovereign citizens ideology is the belief in the unlawful application of admiralty law (also referred to as maritime law) on land. In this fanciful narrative, maritime law is purported to be a mechanism for the systematic enslavement of citizens by a clandestine "corporate state" operating in collusion with international financial elites.

In Poland, this theory has encountered a receptive environment, as evidenced by its active promotion on social media platforms. For instance, in October 2023, a widely circulated Facebook post asserted that "we reside within an artificially constructed system of so-called admiralty law, wherein states are regarded as corporations and individuals are designated as PERSONS".[19] The post was published on 24 October 2023 and rapidly disseminated among Polish-language conspiracy groups, potentially reaching several thousand users. Admiralty law (maritime law) was contrasted with "natural law", whose principles were said to be reduced to two fundamental commandments: the principles of "do no harm" and "do not cheat" were considered the only legitimate laws that humans were obligated to adhere to. In contrast, the laws enacted by the state were regarded as instruments of oppression.

The notion of maritime law as a mechanism of governance exemplifies the so-called "etymological fallacy". This fallacy occurs when individuals erroneously assume that the contemporary significance of a legal term is exclusively derived from its etymological origins or historical development. This assumption disregards the actual significance the term has acquired throughout the evolution of the legal system.[20]

3.2. The fictitious distinction between "human being" and "natural person"

Another salient element of the sovereign citizens ideology is the promotion of a distinction between a "human being" understood as a natural, living biological entity and a "natural person" or "legal person" understood as an artificial, fictitious legal construct created by the state. In the prevailing narrative, every citizen is said to possess two distinct "identities": a genuine, living human being endowed with inalienable natural rights and an artificial "natural person" purportedly created by the state through the issuance of birth certificates and other official documents.

[19] Facebook post from 24 October 2023, quoted in Demagog, *Prawo morskie sprawia, że państwa to korporacje? Fałsz*, https://demagog.org.pl/fake_news/prawo-morskie-sprawia-ze-panstwa-to-korporacje-falsz (access: 14.12.2025). The Facebook group "Natural Law" has 2,600 users.

[20] J. Pometto, *Sovereign Citizens: Deconstructing, Decoding and Deflating the World's Most Notorious Anti-Government Movement*, Pittsburgh 2020, pp. 78–82.

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This secondary identity, frequently termed a "straw man" within the American legal context, is subject to the provisions of statutory law and all associated legal obligations. In contrast, the so-called "human being" is purportedly entirely free from any legal obligations imposed by the state.[21]

Within the context of Polish conspiracy discourse, this notion has evolved to manifest in a distinct, localized form. Proponents of this theory systematically claim that the use of the term "person" instead of "human being" in law is a deliberate attempt to dehumanize and enslave people. An erroneous etymological belief that has gained significant popularity is the notion that the Latin word "person" is derived from the term "persona", which is believed to mean "slave".[22] This pseudo-etymology, which is widely reproduced and disseminated in Polish-language sources promoting the ideology of sovereign citizens, is accepted uncritically by these sources as "proof" of the existence of a conspiracy.

3.3. "Sovereignty declarations" and alternative documents

A consequence of the pseudo-legal concepts described above concerning the alleged distinction between a "human being" and a "natural person" is the practice of submitting so-called "sovereignty declarations" and creating fictitious identity documents. In the Polish context, this phenomenon, although still relatively new and limited in scale, takes various forms inspired by practices observed in other countries.

An exemplary illustration of such commercial activity can be observed in the website operating at the address jestesczlowiekiemnieosoba.pl (which translates to "you are a human being, not a person"). This website offered for sale a book and various educational materials on the alleged "true" meaning of the legal system, including issues of "natural law" and "law of the sea". These materials promised potential buyers the disclosure of deeply hidden "secrets" of the legal system, which would allegedly allow them to free themselves from the authority of the state and the banking system. The procurement of these materials was characterized by a deliberate complexity and a series of stipulations. According to the users, these stipulations were intended to convey the impression of the "uniqueness" and "mystery" of the knowledge offered, as well as to cultivate a sense of belonging to an elite group of initiates.[23] This case exemplifies the practices of so-called "gurus"

[21] R. Krzyształowski, *Henryk Gaszkowski – W Autonomii Ossowek bronimy praw człowieka, jako nadrzędne w relacjach między ludźmi…*, 21.6.2021, https://barwybezprawia.pl/2021/06/21/henryk-gaszkowski-w-autonomii-ossowek-bronimy-praw-czlowieka-jako-nadrzedne-w-relacjach-miedzy-ludzmi (access: 14.12.2025).

[22] Facebook user comment under a post from 24 October 2023, quoted in Demagog, *op. cit*.

[23] User report on the porozmawiajmy.tv portal, comment under the article: *Law of the Sea and Natural Law in a Polish Book – Ar_jan*, 2021.

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operating within the OPCA framework, who strategically market deceptive legal concepts as commercial products, capitalizing on the legal uncertainty and distress of individuals confronted with challenging life circumstances.

Polish social media also feature sporadic reports and discussions about the creation of alternative, unofficial identity documents that are purported to replace or supplement official documents issued by the Polish state. The magnitude of this phenomenon in Poland remains challenging to ascertain with precision due to its clandestine nature and the paucity of systematic research. However, there are evident imitative tendencies, manifesting in the adoption of practices that have been extensively documented in other countries, notably in Germany (Reichsbürger). A press article published in September 2022 documented cases of automobiles bearing non-standard yellow license plates on Polish thoroughfares. These vehicles were purportedly intended to symbolize their proprietors' "sovereignty" and to serve as a form of non-compliance with Polish regulations.[24] Though they are currently in the minority, these cases serve as a testament to the gradual permeation of the sovereign citizens ideology into Polish society.

It is also characteristic that Polish proponents of the sovereign citizens theory often refer to specific historical acts, attributing to them a meaning completely detached from their actual content and historical context. A particularly frequently cited example is the decree issued by the President of the Republic of Poland, Władysław Raczkiewicz, on 30 November 1939.[25] It has been asserted that this bears fundamental significance for the contemporary legal system and is purported to demonstrate the illegality or occupational nature of the present-day Polish state.[26] In essence, this decree was issued under the extraordinary conditions of occupation and formed part of Polish law created by the government in exile. The concept under discussion bears no relation to the principles of maritime law, the distinction between "man" and "person" or any other theories advocated by sovereign citizens. Its invocation in this particular context represents a historical abuse and manipulation.

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[24] M. Trepczyńska, *Widzisz taką tablicę rejestracyjną? Dzwoń na policję!*, 13.9.2022, https://www.auto-swiat.pl/wiadomosci/widzisz-taka-tablice-rejestracyjna-dzwon-na-policje-to-szur/vwx55f0 (access: 14.12.2025).

[25] Decree of the President of the Republic of Poland of 30 November 1939 on the invalidity of legal acts of the occupying authorities (Journal of Laws 1939, no. 102, item 1006).

[26] This regulation was referred to, e.g., by Jan Zbigniew Potocki, who since 2009 has been presenting himself as the "legitimate President of the Second Republic of Poland in exile". Potocki claims that he was appointed as successor by Juliusz Nowina-Sokolnicki (1925–2009), the self-proclaimed president since 1972. One of Potocki's activities was the issuance of alternative identity documents – "sovereign ID cards" in the form of plastic cards with holograms and the pre-war emblem of Poland. Potocki claims to have issued "tens of thousands" of such documents. See Money.pl, *Uważa się za prezydenta Polski. Sprzedaje prawa jazdy i dowody osobiste*, 7.11.2023, https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/uwaza-sie-za-prezydenta-polski-sprzedaje-prawa-jazdy-i-dowody-osobiste-6960471214774816a.html (access: 14.12.2025).

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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon of sovereign citizens and OPCA may pose a growing challenge to the legal and social order. In Poland, the phenomenon is still in its nascent stages, with an estimated reach of several thousand active recipients of content on social media. However, there is a concerning upward trend, particularly evident during periods of social crisis, such as the ongoing pandemic or the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These events have led to a heightened distrust of institutions and a greater susceptibility to conspiracy theories.[27]

International experience from countries where this phenomenon has reached a larger scale clearly indicates that it can pose a real and serious threat to the proper functioning of the justice system and obstruct proceedings, the efficient operation of public administration, and, in the most extreme cases, also public safety. An exemplification of this threat can be found in the planned coup d'état by the German Reichsbürger.

However, efforts to counteract this phenomenon are hindered by the inherent conflict between the need to protect the democratic legal order and the protection of fundamental constitutional values, particularly freedom of expression and freedom of access to information. The most promising and consistent with democratic values are preventive and educational strategies that combine comprehensive legal and media education of society with systematic efforts to build justified trust in state institutions through their real, effective, and citizen-oriented functioning.

The emergence of sovereign citizens and OPCA is indicative of a more profound and pervasive crisis in contemporary societies. This crisis is characterized by a deterioration in the public's trust in science, experts, specialized knowledge, and democratic institutions. In an age characterized by pervasive Internet access and the preeminence of social media, where virtually anyone can present themselves as an expert, and where disinformation and conspiracy theories disseminate with greater rapidity and efficacy than reliable facts and balanced analysis, the effective protection of the democratic constitutional order necessitates not only the development of appropriate legal and institutional instruments, but above all the systematic cultivation of social resilience through universal civic education and the cultivation of critical thinking skills.

[27] An analysis of the spread of sovereign citizen ideology in Europe points to disturbing links with Russian disinformation campaigns. The Russian Federation officially recognizes so-called "cognitive warfare" as an integral part of warfare, allocating between two and four billion dollars annually to it, according to various estimates. See Commission for the Investigation of Russian and Belarusian Influence on the Internal Security and Interests of the Republic of Poland in the Years 2004–2024, Report of the Disinformation Team, Warsaw, 10.1.2025, https://www.gov.pl/attachment/c8ad4e5e-01ee-49d3-ab8a-7ab4d51ab067 (access: 14.12.2025).

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ABSTRAKT

Przedmiotem badań jest zjawisko „pseudoprawa" w postaci ruchów *sovereign citizens* i tzw. *Organized Pseudolegal Commercial Arguments* (OPCA) – ideologii negujących legitymację demokratycznego państwa prawnego i zastępujących prawo stanowione własnymi, absurdalnymi interpretacjami pojęć prawnych. Problem badawczy koncentruje się na mechanizmach adaptacji tych ruchów w Polsce, gdzie zjawisko pozostaje słabo rozpoznane zarówno przez organy państwa, jak

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i w literaturze prawniczej. Główna teza głosi, że ideologie pseudoprawne, choć obecnie w Polsce ograniczone w skali (kilkanaście tysięcy aktywnych odbiorców), wykazują niepokojącą tendencję wzrostową oraz – jak dowodzą doświadczenia zachodnie – mogą stanowić realne zagrożenie dla funkcjonowania wymiaru sprawiedliwości i bezpieczeństwa publicznego. Cel badań obejmuje wstępną charakterystykę genezy, rozwoju i przejawów tego fenomenu w polskich realiach, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem mediów społecznościowych. Oryginalność wyników polega na kompleksowej analizie zjawiska w kontekście polskim, wykraczającej poza dotychczasowe sporadyczne obserwacje. Badania mają zasięg międzynarodowy – obejmują analizę porównawczą praktyk w USA, Kanadzie, Niemczech (Reichsbürger), Austrii i innych krajach europejskich, z aplikacją do specyfiki polskiej. Wartość poznawcza dotyczy zarówno nauki prawa (identyfikacja nowych zagrożeń dla porządku prawnego), jak i praktyki organów państwa (wypracowanie strategii przeciwdziałania zjawisku, zgodnych z wartościami demokratycznymi).

Słowa kluczowe: pseudoprawo; *sovereign citizens*; OPCA; negacja państwa prawa; dezinformacja prawna

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