

**Prawo, władza, pluralizmy. Myśląc ze Stanisławem Ehrlichem**  
**Law, power, pluralisms. Revisiting Stanislaw Ehrlich**

**Dates:** 16-17 October 2023

In English, a kick-off roundtable in Polish. In-person

**Organizers:** Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw; Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Warsaw; Polish Sociological Association's Section of Sociology of Law

**Venue:** Warsaw, TBC

Across the world, issues of law, legality, and legitimacy have recently emerged as increasingly important foci of democratic debates and political confrontations. The urgency of polemics over differing interpretations of the rule of law, constitutionalism, and checks and balances is not conducive to a deeper reflection on the power of law, its contested meaning, and diverse workings for various groups within society. Both historical perspective and critical concepts are needed in order to break the deadlock and refresh our thinking beyond the immediacy of handy clichés.

In this spirit, we propose to revisit and engage with the legacy of Stanisław Ehrlich (1907–1997), a leading legal scholar as well as one of the founders of the sociology of politics and political science in post-war Poland. His oeuvre, spanning over several decades, covered such themes as a critique of legal positivism, challenging the prevailing understanding of socialist legality, interest groups, pluralism, theory of norms and normative utterances, and decision-making processes, among others. In the spirit of interdisciplinarity, we invite contributions by sociologists, lawyers, historians, political scientists, feminist scholars, philosophers, and representatives of other social sciences. We invite both papers devoted to different aspects of Ehrlich's thought and to different facets of our contemporary predicament read through the lenses of other critical theories. Focus on Ehrlich and his writings is not mandatory, though priority will be given to proposals that will, to a lesser or greater degree, engage with his oeuvre.

Ehrlich believed that every political system can and must be pluralistic because of the inherent diversity of underlying interests. Despite numerous negative developments, including the worldwide consolidation of anti-democratic forces in the last decade, this idea still offers hope for curbing authoritarianism. It also invites exploration of the consequences of Ehrlich's thinking in both political and legal spheres. With this in mind, the conference invites contributions examining the manifestations of, opportunities for, and threats to all forms of pluralism in public life.

Possible, but not exclusive, list of topics that we want to cover:

- Revisiting Ehrlich's key concepts: inter alia, law in socialist states, theory of norms and normative utterances, decision-making;
- Ehrlich's oeuvre from a transnational perspective: links, references, debates;
- Rethinking the relationship between legal and political pluralism, critique of law, and applications of critical theory to legal issues;
- The various threats to all forms of pluralism in public life: past and present challenges;
- Sociology of law and historical sociology of law in East Central and South East Europe.

Keynote lecture: Prof. Laurent de Sutter, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (topic TBC)



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We expect your abstracts (max. 300 words) and short biographies (max. 200 words) by **31 July 2023** (notification of acceptance: **10 August 2023**). We will expect the conference presentations by **1 October 2023**.

There is no conference registration fee.

We are looking forward to receiving your abstracts via this online form:

<https://forms.gle/Bmu1adY7eN7HQTtU9>

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