

## LEGAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THE DREAM OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

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### SUMMARY

There are increasing calls for academics to abandon "traditional" disciplinary research and to engage in multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research. The argument is that this will serve to break down working in "silos" and somehow lead to more innovative research. This article examines the concepts of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research to determine if this kind of research is possible in legal research. The basic premise is that science is unified by the need for some kind of justification, arguably in the form of falsifiability of theories. But science is also divided into natural, social and human sciences and this article argues that this division is based on methodological differences. Whilst the natural sciences employ a mostly empiricist methodology and the human sciences employ a mostly rationalist methodology, the social sciences seem to employ a mixture of the two methodologies. Law is a human science and moreover a professional discipline. Some argue that this professional nature militates against multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary (MIT) research as it requires law students to be taught how to "think like a lawyer". The article concludes that most law researchers engage in multidisciplinary research on a regular basis, but that interdisciplinary research is highly unlikely and transdisciplinary research almost never happens.

**KEYWORDS:** Philosophy of science; Multidisciplinary research; Interdisciplinary research; Transdisciplinary research; Methodology

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