

Reassessing Reductionism in Logical Positivism: A Dogmatic Legal Critique

Gilang Kresnanda Annas^{12*}, M. Nurlaili Dwi Kurniyanto³, Eza Tri Yandy⁴,
Nilam Amalia Fatiha⁴

¹UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^{2,3,4} Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴Sui Iuris Law Office, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Email: kresnandaannas@gmail.com

Abstract

Despite its long-standing dominance in dogmatic legal science, logical positivism has been increasingly criticized for its tendency to reduce law to a purely normative and formal system. While extensive scholarship has examined legal positivism in general, the specific problem of reductionist assumptions within logical positivism—and their implications for dogmatic legal science—remains insufficiently explored. This article aims to critically examine the reductionist assumptions underlying logical positivism from the perspective of dogmatic legal science, with particular attention to their epistemological consequences. This study adopts a normative–doctrinal legal method combined with conceptual and critical approaches to analyze the epistemological foundations of reductionism in logical positivism. The analysis draws on legal positivist theory and its critiques, particularly dogmatic legal theory and critical jurisprudence, to assess the limitations of reductionist reasoning in legal analysis. The study finds that reductionist assumptions in logical positivism significantly limit the capacity of dogmatic legal science to account for the social, moral, and interpretative dimensions of law, thereby narrowing its epistemological scope. This article contributes to legal theory by demonstrating the need for a more context-sensitive and interdisciplinary framework within dogmatic legal science to overcome the epistemological limitations of logical positivism.

Keywords: *Logical Positivism; Legal Reductionism; Dogmatic Legal Science; Legal Epistemology*

Introduction

The paradigm of logical positivism has become one of the dominant frameworks in the development of dogmatic legal science. This paradigm emphasizes that law is a normative system that can be objectively analyzed



without considering moral, social, or political dimensions. Logical positivism, influenced by analytic philosophy, seeks to simplify law into a systematic logical structure that is free from subjective values. This approach is regarded as providing a clear scientific foundation for understanding law as an autonomous discipline. However, in practice, the reductionist assumptions underlying this paradigm often neglect the complexity of law as a social phenomenon.¹ Law is not merely a collection of formal norms but also reflects societal values, political dynamics, and the pursuit of social justice. Therefore, research that critically examines the reductionism of the logical positivism paradigm from the perspective of dogmatic legal science is crucial to addressing the analytical limitations of this approach.²

Rather than merely reiterating established critiques of legal positivism, this study reassesses the role of reductionism within the logical positivist paradigm by situating it firmly within the framework of dogmatic legal science. While logical positivism has contributed to the formal clarity and systematic coherence of legal analysis, its reductionist assumptions tend to narrow the understanding of law to verifiable norms and formal structures, thereby marginalizing social, moral, and historical dimensions inherent in legal practice. Existing scholarship has largely examined these limitations from sociological, moral, or critical perspectives, yet a focused reassessment from within dogmatic legal reasoning itself remains underexplored. By critically engaging logical positivism through a dogmatic legal critique, this study aims to clarify the epistemological consequences of reductionism for legal science and to demonstrate why dogmatic legal analysis must move beyond strict reductionist commitments in order to remain responsive to contemporary legal challenges.³

A wide range of literature has discussed critiques of logical positivism in legal science. Hans Kelsen, through his Pure Theory of Law, developed the idea that law must be separated from morality in order to preserve scientific

¹ Lars Skyttner, *General Systems Theory: Problems, Perspectives, Practice*, 2006, <https://doi.org/10.1142/5871>.

² Devika Hovell, "The Elements of International Legal Positivism," *Current Legal Problems* 75, no. 1 (2022): 71–109, <https://doi.org/10.1093/clp/cuac003>. Hans J. Morgenthau, "Hans J. Morgenthau's Critique of Legal Positivism: Politics, Justice and the Nature of International Law," *International Studies in Philosophy* (2023): article, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42439-023-00076-x>. Angela Artha and Tyara Ananda, "Teori Positivisme Hukum" 8, no. 11 (2024): 60–72.

³ See, for example, Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World* (1928); Hans Kelsen, *Pure Theory of Law* (1967); Lon L. Fuller, *The Morality of Law* (1969); Gustav Radbruch, "Statutory Lawlessness and Supra-Statutory Law" (1946); Leiter, Brian, Why Legal Positivism? (December 10, 2009). U of Chicago, Public Law Working, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1521761> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1521761>; Gkouvas, Triantafyllos. 2023. "What Makes Law Law: Categorical Trends in Analytic Legal Metaphysics." *Jurisprudence* 14 (4): 480–509. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20403313.2023.2219127>.

objectivity.⁴ Although this idea became a cornerstone of legal positivism, many critics, such as Lon L. Fuller and Gustav Radbruch, have argued that a conception of law entirely detached from morality risks losing legitimacy, particularly in situations where unjust laws continue to be formally upheld. In addition, the sociological theories of law developed by Eugen Ehrlich and Roscoe Pound highlight the importance of viewing law as an integral part of dynamic social life. However, much of this scholarship tends to focus more broadly on critiques of positivism in general, without offering an in-depth analysis of the reductionism at the core of the logical positivism paradigm.⁵ Such studies also remain limited in linking these critiques to the perspective of dogmatic legal science, which continues to serve as a primary analytical framework in legal education in many countries. Recent jurisprudential debates have further emphasized that legal positivism rests not merely on normative separation, but on specific epistemological commitments concerning objectivity, authority, and the sources of legal knowledge.⁶

This study offers a new perspective by specifically examining the reductionist assumptions within the logical positivism paradigm through the lens of dogmatic legal science. Unlike previous studies, which tend to focus on broader critiques of legal positivism, this research identifies the limitations of reductionism in understanding law as a multidimensional phenomenon.⁷ One of the novelties of this study lies in its exploration of the relationship between reductionism and the diminishing capacity of dogmatic legal science to address the challenges of justice in a pluralistic society. In addition, this research examines how interdisciplinary approaches may offer alternatives to overcome the weaknesses of reductionism.⁸ Thus, this study is not only theoretical in nature but also provides practical implications for the development of dogmatic legal science that is more contextual and responsive to societal needs.⁹

The main objective of this study is to critique the reductionist assumptions of the logical positivism paradigm in dogmatic legal science. Specifically, the research aims to analyze the Logical Positivism Paradigm from the perspective of dogmatic legal science and to examine critiques of

⁴ Herbert Lionel Adolphus Hart, "Positivism and the Separation of Law and Morals," *Law and Morality* 71, no. 4 (2012): 593–629.

⁵ Ronald M Dworkin, "The Model of Rules," 1968, 14–46.

⁶ Leiter, Brian, Why Legal Positivism? (December 10, 2009). U of Chicago, Public Law Working, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1521761>.

⁷ Crummey C. One-System Integrity and The Legal Domain of Morality. *Legal Theory*. 2022;28(4):269-297. doi:10.1017/S1352325222000155. You can also look at Halim, Abdul. 2008. "Teori-Teori Hukum Aliran Positivisme Dan Perkembangan Kritik-Kritiknya". *Ay-Syir'ah: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 42 (2). <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajish.v42i2.115>.

⁸ Brian Bix, *Jurisprudence: Theory and Context*, 2015.

⁹ Frederick Schauer, *The Force of Law* (Harvard University Press, 2015).

reductionism within logical positivism. This study is expected to provide a concrete contribution to the development of dogmatic legal science that is not only more relevant in theoretical terms but also more applicable in addressing the increasingly dynamic challenges of law. This also contributes to legal theory by demonstrating that reductionism in logical positivism is not merely a methodological choice borrowed from the philosophy of science, but an epistemological commitment that fundamentally constrains dogmatic legal reasoning. By situating the critique within dogmatic legal science itself, this study advances legal-theoretical understanding of how epistemic assumptions shape the boundaries of legal normativity.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: how do reductionist assumptions within logical positivism shape the epistemological limits of dogmatic legal science?

Methodology

This study employs a normative or doctrinal legal research method aimed at examining the paradigm of logical positivism within the perspective of dogmatic legal science. The approaches applied include the conceptual approach, which analyzes the notion of reductionism in logical positivism, and purely conceptual–doctrinal, which explores its application in legislation and legal realities in society. The legal materials consist of primary sources such as statutes and court decisions, secondary sources including books, journals, and previous research, and tertiary sources such as legal dictionaries and encyclopedias.¹⁰

The theoretical framework employed combines legal positivism theory and critical legal theory, which serve to analyze the limitations of reductionism in dogmatic legal science. The data were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method supported by qualitative techniques, ensuring that the findings address the research questions objectively and produce scientifically accountable conclusions.¹¹

This methodological approach is particularly appropriate for reassessing reductionism, as it allows for an internal critique of logical positivism based on its own normative and epistemological premises.

¹⁰ Gareth Davies, “The Relationship between Empirical Legal Studies and Doctrinal Legal Research,” *Erasmus Law Review* 13, no. 3 (2020): 144–155. <https://doi.org/10.5553/ELR.000141>. See also Abdulkadir Muhammad, “Hukum dan Penelitian Hukum” 8, no. 1 (2004): 134.

¹¹ Artha and Ananda, “Teori Positivisme Hukum.”

Discussion and Result

A. Reassessing Logical Positivism within Dogmatic Legal Science

Reductionism is a philosophical view which claims that complex phenomena can be explained by reducing them into simpler elements.¹² In the context of logical positivism, reductionism plays a central role in the attempt to explain complex phenomena through basic concepts that can be empirically tested and verified. Emerging in the early twentieth century, logical positivism was a reaction against metaphysics and idealism, which were considered speculative and scientifically unverifiable. Key figures of the Vienna Circle, such as Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick, and Otto Neurath, emphasized that valid knowledge can only be derived from empirical observation and testable logic. This article examines how reductionism is applied within logical positivism and its implications for scientific understanding.

Logical positivism is grounded in the principle that valid knowledge can only be acquired through empirical observation and logical deduction. Essentially, logical positivism argues that any claim that cannot be tested through experience or experiment lacks meaning in a scientific context. The principle of verification is a central idea in logical positivism, asserting that a statement can only be regarded as meaningful if it can be tested through observable or verifiable experiments. In other words, metaphysical or speculative claims that cannot be substantiated by empirical data are considered invalid and devoid of scientific truth.¹³

1. Reductionism as an Epistemological Assumption in Logical Positivism

Reductionism in logical positivism seeks to simplify complex phenomena into more basic elements that can be empirically tested. In this context, logical positivism views complex concepts, whether in the natural sciences or the social sciences, as needing to be broken down into more fundamental components with a clear empirical basis and verifiability. In the philosophy of science, reductionism is commonly understood as an epistemological strategy that explains complex phenomena by translating them into more fundamental and formally tractable elements.¹⁴

¹² Duane P dan Sydney Ellen Schultz Schultz, *Studi Tentang Sejarah Psikologi: Seri Sejarah Psikologi Modern*, 2023.

¹³ Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World* (University of California Press, 1928).

¹⁴ Carl Gillett, *Reduction, Emergence, and the Metaphysics of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009083423>. Crowther, K. What is the Point of Reduction in Science?. *Erkenn* 85, 1437–1460 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-018-0085-6>

For instance, in physics, the fundamental laws describing the motion or interaction of particles can be translated into mathematical equations that are testable through experimentation. Reductionism enables science to represent the world in a more systematic and measurable form by identifying basic variables that can be examined through direct observation.¹⁵ Another example can be found in psychology, where seemingly complex phenomena such as emotions or consciousness can be broken down into simpler factors, such as physical responses to stimuli or brain activity measurable through neurological technologies. This approach renders psychology more structured and measurable, in line with the principle of verification applied by logical positivism.¹⁶

One classic example of the application of reductionism in logical positivism can be found in the natural sciences, particularly physics and chemistry. In this context, seemingly complex natural phenomena, such as the motion of planets or the interaction between substances, can be explained through simpler laws, such as the law of gravitation or the laws of thermodynamics. By reducing these complex phenomena to fundamental principles that can be empirically tested, scientists are able to explain natural events in a more systematic and measurable manner. For instance, quantum mechanics reduces the behavior of extremely small subatomic particles into mathematical equations that can be tested in physics experiments.¹⁷

In chemistry, the properties of various substances can be explained by referring to atomic structures and simpler molecular interactions. Reductionism enables scientists to account for diverse chemical phenomena merely by understanding the fundamental components such as atoms, molecules, and the chemical bonds that govern them, all of which can be tested through laboratory experiments.¹⁸

Although reductionism in logical positivism has significantly contributed to the advancement of scientific knowledge, this approach is not free from criticism, particularly with regard to the complexity of human and social phenomena. One of the main criticisms is that reductionism may oversimplify highly complex phenomena, especially in the context of social sciences and psychology. For instance, social phenomena such as inequality or social conflict are difficult to explain merely by reducing them to individual behavior or measurable variables. Social inequality, for example, is not only

¹⁵ Moritz Schlick, *General Theory of Knowledge* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936).

¹⁶ Otto Neurath, *Empiricism and Sociology* (Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing Company, 1931).

¹⁷ Karen Crowther, "What Is the Point of Reduction in Science?" *Erkenntnis* 85 (2020): 1437–1460, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-018-0085-6>

¹⁸ David G. Hays, "The Challenge of the Holistic Nature of the Social Sciences to Positivism," *Journal of Philosophy and Social Science* 18, no. 4 (2003): 48.

influenced by individual decisions but also by broader structural factors such as economic policies, the legacy of colonialism, or class systems.¹⁹

Similarly, in psychology, although the reductionist approach has provided a better understanding of certain aspects of human behavior through the study of the nervous system and brain responses to stimuli, many other psychological aspects, such as consciousness or subjective experience, remain difficult to explain solely by reducing them to simpler biological or physical variables.²⁰ Many scientists and philosophers argue that the more complex aspects of human experience cannot be adequately explained merely by reducing them into smaller and measurable components.²¹

Reductionism in logical positivism provides a highly useful framework for understanding scientific phenomena in a systematic and measurable way. Through this approach, science can break down complex phenomena into simpler components that can be empirically tested, as demonstrated in physics, chemistry, and psychology. However, this approach also has its limitations, particularly when dealing with complex social and psychological phenomena. Therefore, although reductionism has made a significant contribution to the development of science, it must be complemented by more holistic approaches in order to understand more complex realities, especially in the context of human beings and society.

2. The Relationship Between Dogmatic Legal Science and Logical Positivism

Dogmatic legal science and logical positivism are two approaches with different focal points, yet they can intersect in understanding and explaining legal phenomena. Dogmatic legal science focuses on analyzing and explaining the legal norms that exist within the prevailing legal system, while logical positivism is a school of philosophy of science that emphasizes the importance of empirical verification and the use of formal logic in the construction of knowledge.²² Although these two approaches stem from different backgrounds, they share several fundamental principles that make them relevant in the discourse on legal knowledge. This article will analyze the relationship between dogmatic legal science and logical positivism by

¹⁹ W.V.O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," *Journal of Philosophical Review* 60, no. 1 (1951): 20.

²⁰ Pratama Herry Herlambang, "Positivisme dan Implikasinya Terhadap Ilmu dan Penegakan Hukum," *Indonesian State Law Review (ISLRev)* 2, no. 1 (2019): 336–42, <https://doi.org/10.15294/islrev.v2i1.36187>.

²¹ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

²² You can look too at I Dewa Gede Atmadja dan Nyoman Putu Budiarta, *Teori-Teori Hukum, Setara Press Kelompok Intrans Publishing Wisma Kalimetro* (Malang, 2018).

identifying their similarities and differences, as well as their implications for legal theory and practice.

Dogmatic legal science is a branch of legal studies that examines the written rules contained in legislation, as well as binding judicial decisions. It seeks to understand and explain the applicable norms by analyzing their structure, meaning, and application within the framework of existing positive law. This approach emphasizes that law must be understood as a system consisting of strictly regulated rules, and therefore, the primary objective of dogmatic legal science is to provide a coherent explanation of how those rules are applied and interpreted in practice. For example, in dogmatic legal science, a legal scholar will examine existing statutes or regulations to determine whether a certain act constitutes a violation of the law, and will provide an interpretation consistent with the text of those regulations. Dogmatic legal science also emphasizes the application of legal norms in an objective and formal manner, without giving excessive consideration to broader social or moral factors.²³

Logical positivism is a school of philosophy of science that emerged in the early 20th century as part of the movement led by the Vienna Circle. Key figures in logical positivism, such as Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick, and Otto Neurath, argued that valid knowledge can only be obtained through empirical observation and logical deduction. Logical positivism emphasizes the importance of verification as the main criterion for evaluating scientific claims, by distinguishing between statements that can be tested through empirical observation and those that cannot, which are considered metaphysical or meaningless. Within the framework of logical positivism, the concepts used in science must be strictly defined and empirically testable. Consequently, logical positivism places great emphasis on the use of clear and logical language in developing scientific theories. The principles of verification and experimental testing serve as the foundation for building valid scientific knowledge. In other words, a claim is considered scientific only if it can be verified through observable or experimental means.²⁴

Although originating from different disciplines, dogmatic legal science and logical positivism share several notable similarities, particularly in their approach to law as a structured and testable system of rules. *First*, both emphasize the importance of written norms and rules. In dogmatic legal science, legal analysis focuses on laws and regulations as codified texts, while in logical positivism, the principle of verification requires that any scientific claim must be clearly testable and measurable. In this respect, dogmatic legal science aligns with logical positivism in viewing legal norms as requiring clear

²³ H.L.A. Hart, *The Concept of Law* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1961).

²⁴ Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World*.

interpretation and practical verifiability. *Second*, both stress objectivity and systematization in analyzing the phenomena they study. Dogmatic legal science seeks to provide an objective explanation of the application of legal rules, whereas logical positivism aims to construct scientific knowledge systematically through formal logic and empirically testable principles.²⁵ Both also strive to avoid unmeasurable speculation and instead focus on a clear and structured approach in explaining phenomena. *Third*, limitation to measurable and verifiable facts: logical positivism requires that scientific claims be subject to verification, while dogmatic legal science prioritizes the application of norms that are clearly defined and practically measurable in legal practice. Both approaches avoid excessively speculative reasoning and emphasize reliance on demonstrable and testable facts. In the legal context, this is reflected in the emphasis on statutory texts and judicial decisions as the primary sources for understanding and applying the law.²⁶

Despite these similarities, there are fundamental differences between dogmatic legal science and logical positivism. Some of the key distinctions are as follows: Firstly, **Social and Moral Context**; Dogmatic legal science tends to focus more on existing rules and norms, with little consideration of broader social or moral contexts. Similarly, logical positivism also disregards social and moral aspects in the formation of scientific knowledge. However, although both emphasize elements that can be tested and measured, dogmatic legal science often overlooks the influence of social and moral values in shaping the legal norms that prevail in society. In practice, law frequently involves more complex moral and social considerations that cannot be reduced merely to written rules. Secondly, **Flexibility of Interpretation**; Logical positivism emphasizes the use of strict formal logic and empirical testing in the construction of scientific knowledge. In contrast, dogmatic legal science often involves a more flexible interpretation of legal texts, depending on the social and historical contexts in which the law is applied.²⁷ Often, courts or legal

²⁵ Yogi Prasetyo, "Social Reality as Legal Authenticity (Criticism of Bad Positive Laws in Legislation)," *Fiat Justitia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 15, no. 3 (2021): 255–68, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v15no3.2194>. Look at Morten Bøe, "Dogmatik and International Criminal Law: Approximations in the Realm of 'Language' and 'Grammar,'" *Goettingen Journal of International Law* 13, no. 1 (2023): 120–162, <https://doi.org/10.3249/1868-1581-13-1-boe>. and Sander Verhaegh, "Logical Positivism: The History of a 'Caricature'," *Isis: A Journal of the History of Science Society* 115, no. 1 (2024): 46–64, <https://doi.org/10.1086/728796>.

²⁶ Yogi Prasetyo, Imam Zaelani, and Ranga Sakti, "Analisis Perkembangan Epistemologi Hukum di Indonesia dalam Upaya Membangun Konvergensi Epistemologi Hukum," *Jurnal Cakrawala Hukum* 10, no. 1 (2019): 96–106, <https://doi.org/10.26905/idjch.v10i1.2501>.

²⁷ Habib Shulton Asnawi, "Membongkar Paradigma Positivisme Hukum Dalam Pemberantasan Korupsi Di Indonesia: Pemenuhan Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Negara

scholars are confronted with situations in which legal texts must be interpreted in multiple ways, taking into account social changes and the evolving values within society. Therefore, although dogmatic legal science maintains a clear structure, the interpretation of legal norms is often more flexible compared to the more rigid principles of logical positivism.

In legal theory, the relationship between dogmatic legal science and logical positivism can provide a more structural and systematic approach to explaining legal phenomena.²⁸ However, an overly dogmatic or reductionist approach may overlook moral and social aspects in the enforcement of law. Therefore, although logical positivism provides a strong foundation for understanding law in an objective and measurable way, in legal practice it is essential to take into account the social and ethical dimensions that influence the application of law in society.

The relationship between dogmatic legal science and logical positivism reveals similarities in their emphasis on norms, clear rules, and systematization in the construction of knowledge.²⁹ Both avoid speculation and focus on what can be tested and verified. However, the fundamental difference lies in their approach to social and moral contexts, as well as the flexibility of interpretation required in the application of law. Therefore, although the principles of logical positivism may provide a strong foundation for dogmatic legal science, the effective application of law requires consideration of the social and moral complexities present within society.

3. Dogmatic Legal Reasoning and the Limits of Logical Positivism

Building on the conceptual relationship between dogmatic legal science and logical positivism outlined above, this section critically examines how reductionist commitments within logical positivism impose epistemological limits on dogmatic legal reasoning. Legal reductionism is an approach that simplifies law into a single dimension, such as norms, morality, or social instruments. This approach is rooted in legal positivism, which prioritizes the legal system as a collection of formal norms separate from moral or political aspects. Hans Kelsen, through his Pure Theory of Law, emphasized that law must be separated from non-legal elements to ensure the objectivity of legal analysis. However, this perspective has often been criticized for overlooking

Hukum,” *Supremasi Hukum: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum* 2, no. 2 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.14421/sh.v2i2.1933>.

²⁸ Herlambang, Pratama. 2019. “Positivisme Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Ilmu Dan Penegakan Hukum”. *Indonesian State Law Review (ISLRev)* 2 (1), 336-42. <https://doi.org/10.15294/islrev.v2i1.36187>.

²⁹ Cahya Wulandari, “Kedudukan Moralitas Dalam Ilmu Hukum,” *Jurnal Hukum Progresif* 8, no. 1 (2020): 14, <https://doi.org/10.14710/hp.8.1.1-14>.

the complexity of law within social reality, such as the interactions between law, morality, and society.

One of the main criticisms of legal reductionism is its excessive simplification of law as a social phenomenon. Law is not merely written rules, but also reflects the cultural, moral, and social values of society.³⁰ Eugen Ehrlich, a pioneer in the sociology of law, emphasized the importance of “living law,” that is, norms that develop in the everyday practices of society, which are often unwritten in positive law. This critique highlights that a legal system overly focused on formal norms tends to overlook how law is applied and understood within a diverse society.³¹

Legal reductionism also tends to overlook the historical context in the formation and application of law. An approach that focuses solely on positive law often fails to explain how law is influenced by history and political dynamics. For example, colonial laws implemented in many developing countries were designed to perpetuate colonial power, and their legacy continues to affect modern legal systems in these countries.³² Roscoe Pound, in his view of law as a tool of social engineering, criticized reductionism for overlooking the law’s ability to adapt to social changes and meet the needs of society.³³

Furthermore, legal reductionism also limits the space for interdisciplinary approaches. Law is often influenced by sociology, anthropology, economics, and politics, so an overly legalistic approach cannot fully grasp its other dimensions. Roger Cotterrell, a legal sociologist, argued that law can only be fully understood when viewed as part of the broader social structure.³⁴ For example, the critical legal theory developed by Roberto Unger highlights that law often serves as a tool to maintain inequality within society.³⁵

The dimension of morality is also an element frequently overlooked in legal reductionism. Thinkers such as Lon L. Fuller and Gustav Radbruch argued that law entirely separated from morality can result in an unjust legal system. Fuller, through his concept of the “*internal morality of law*,” emphasized that law must adhere to moral principles such as procedural justice, consistency, and clarity.³⁶ Meanwhile, Radbruch, in his “Radbruch Formula,”

³⁰ Cahya Wulandari.

³¹ Robert Cotterrell, *Law’s Community: Legal Theory in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³² Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “Law: A Map of Misreading,” *Journal of Law and Society* 14, no. 3 (1987): 279.

³³ Roscoe Pound, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Law* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922).

³⁴ Roger Cotterrell, “Law’s Community: Legal Theory in Sociological Perspective,” *Journal of Oxford* 24, no. 5 (1995): 562.

³⁵ Robert Cotterrell, *Law’s Community: Legal Theory in Sociological Perspective*.

³⁶ Lon L. Fuller, *The Morality of Law* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

stated that law that is extremely unjust loses its status as valid law.³⁷ This critique demonstrates that reductionism, with its excessive focus on formal norms, overlooks the primary purpose of law, which is to achieve justice.

In response to the weaknesses of legal reductionism, many scholars advocate for a more holistic approach. This approach involves analyzing law while taking into account the moral, social, political, and economic factors that influence it. For example, normative-critical legal theory aims to view law as a tool for pursuing social justice, rather than merely as an instrument of social control.³⁸ This approach better reflects the reality of law in complex and diverse societies.

Dogmatic critiques of legal reductionism highlight the importance of understanding law as a multidimensional phenomenon. Law cannot be reduced merely to a set of formal norms or social instruments; rather, it must be understood within a broader context. A holistic and interdisciplinary approach is necessary to capture the complexity of law and ensure that it can function effectively in promoting justice and social order.

B. Beyond Reductionism: Epistemological Consequences for Dogmatic Legal Science

Moving beyond the identification of reductionist limits within logical positivism, this section examines the epistemological consequences of these constraints for dogmatic legal science, arguing for a more context-sensitive and reflexive mode of legal reasoning.

1. The Limitations of Logical Positivism in Understanding the Complexity of Law

Logical positivism, as one of the main schools in the philosophy of science, offers a systematic and empirical approach to knowledge. Key figures in this movement, such as Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick, and Otto Neurath, emphasized the importance of empirical verification and the use of formal logic in constructing scientific knowledge.³⁹ Within the framework of logical

³⁷ Gustav Radbruch, "Statutory Lawlessness and Supra-Statutory Law," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 26, no. 1 (1946): 1–11.

³⁸ Benjamin van Rooij, "Holistic Behavioral Jurisprudence: Unpacking the Complexity of Law and Behavior," *Jerusalem Review of Legal Studies* 28, no. 1 (2023): 95–111. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrls/jlad024>. Joxerramon Bengoetxea, "Legal Institutions and the Comparison of Legal Cultures," *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* 12, no. 6 (2022): 1647–1673. <https://doi.org/10.35295/osls.iisl/0000-0000-0000-1361>. Also look at Galih Orlando, "Hukum Sebagai Kontrol Sosial Dan Social Engineering (Telaah Terhadap Undang-Undang Nomor 16 Tahun 2019 Tentang Perubahan Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan)," *Tarbiyah Bil Qalam : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama dan Sains* 7, no. 1 (2023): 31–48. <https://doi.org/10.58822/tbq.v7i1.111>.

³⁹ I Gusti Bagus Rai Utama, "Filsafat Ilmu Dan Logika," 2013.

positivism, claims that can be verified through experience or observation are considered the only meaningful claims. This approach has been applied across various disciplines, including legal studies. However, although logical positivism contributes significantly to explaining measurable and structured aspects of law, it has notable limitations in understanding the complexity of law as a social and normative system that involves moral, social, and political dimensions, which cannot always be defined empirically or logically.

Logical positivism in the context of law is primarily represented by legal positivism as developed by John Austin and further refined by H.L.A. Hart. According to this view, law is understood as a set of rules issued by a legitimate authority, and legal statements are meaningful only if they can be empirically tested and verified through observation or experimentation. H.L.A. Hart, in his seminal work *The Concept of Law*, explained that law consists of primary and secondary rules, which can be applied in a clear and measurable manner.⁴⁰ This approach emphasizes that law is a normative system that can be analyzed objectively through observation of existing rules and how these rules are applied in practice.

However, although this legal positivist theory provides a structured and systematic framework for understanding law, it overlooks many complex dimensions of law, such as moral values, social purposes, and historical changes that shape law as a dynamic institution. Logical positivism, with its focus on verification and empirical measurement, often fails to adequately address these aspects.

One of the main limitations of logical positivism in understanding law is its inability to adequately address the social context of law. Logical positivism asserts that scientific knowledge must be based on observation and empirically testable experiments, but law is not merely a set of rules that can be empirically tested. Law develops within specific social and political contexts that influence the formation and application of legal norms.⁴¹

For example, laws regulating human rights may not only involve an analysis of the written legal texts but also relate to the history of the struggle for individual rights, international pressures, and the political dynamics present at the time the legislation was enacted. Logical positivism, with its tendency to

⁴⁰ H.L.A. Hart, *The Concept of Law*.

⁴¹ Mikhail Antonov, "Theory of Law and Socio-Legal Research," *Law. Journal of the Higher School of Economics* 18, no. 2 (2025): 272–294, <https://doi.org/10.17323/2072-8166.2025.2.272.294>. Andreas Lundberg and Emma Söderman, "Border Work as Socio-Legal Activist Research," *International Journal of Law in Context* 21, no. 4 (2025): 622–637, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744552325100268>. You can also look at Habibani. Rhaysya Admami dan Siti Fatimah, "Positivisme: Konsep, Perkembangan, dan Implementasi dalam Kajian Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Hukum," *Cendekia: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan* 4, no. 4 (2024): 532, <https://doi.org/10.51878/cendekia.v4i4.3831>.

separate law from social and political values, struggles to understand how law reflects or is influenced by complex social changes.

In many cases, positive law analyzed within the framework of logical positivism does not necessarily reflect social justice. For instance, apartheid laws in South Africa, which were legally enforced to segregate races, could be analyzed positivistically; however, they still did not reflect the moral values and social justice expected by the international community. Logical positivism focuses on formally valid rules but fails to provide adequate insight into the social and moral impacts of the law's application within society.⁴²

In addition to its inability to address the social context, logical positivism also has limitations in understanding the moral dimension of law. One of the main criticisms of logical positivism is that this approach tends to overlook moral aspects in the application of law. Within logical positivism, law is viewed merely as a set of rules established by a legitimate authority, which must be obeyed without considering whether the rules reflect higher values of justice or morality.

In legal cases related to the rights of minorities or racial discrimination, logical positivism may focus solely on the application of existing rules without considering whether those rules are moral or just. Laws that restrict the rights of minority groups based on race or gender may still be considered valid when analyzed positivistically, because they are enacted by competent authorities and applied according to the proper legal procedures. However, this approach ignores the moral dimension that should form the basis for assessing just law.⁴³

One of the greatest challenges in legal practice is the dynamic nature of interpretation that occurs in courts and the application of law. Law cannot always be understood rigidly based on written statutory texts, as courts are often faced with cases that require a broader interpretation of values, principles of justice, and societal needs. Legal interpretation frequently involves broader considerations of justice, balancing interests, and contextualizing legal norms within specific social and political conditions.⁴⁴

In hermeneutic legal theory and legal realism, it is emphasized that the interpretation of law must take into account the broader social and political context, as well as the moral values underlying legal norms. This approach is often more flexible and better equipped to address the complexity of law, which cannot be adequately explained through a rigid positivist perspective.⁴⁵

⁴² John Austin, *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (John Murray, 1832).

⁴³ Ronald Dworkin, *Law's Empire* (Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁴⁴ Mahrus Ali, "Mahkamah Konstitusi dan Penafsiran Hukum Yang Progresif," *Jurnal Konstitusi* 7, no. 1 (2010): 90, <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk715>.

⁴⁵ George Pavlakos, "Textual Hermeneutics to Law: The Genesis and Development of Law and Rights in Ricoeur," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-025-10377-7>. Paul T. Babie, "From Deduction to Discourse:

Overall, logical positivism in law prioritizes structure and formality but often neglects the humanistic and social aspects that are crucial in legal application. Logical positivism tends to reduce law to a set of rules separated from the social and moral values that shape society. This limits our understanding of law, particularly when addressing complex issues involving social justice, human rights, and social change.

This approach also presents challenges in adapting law to evolving social conditions and dynamic moral values. While law applied within a positivist framework may provide certainty, it is often less responsive to changing social and moral needs.

Logical positivism provides a clear and systematic framework for understanding law as a set of rules that can be empirically tested and applied. However, this approach has limitations in grasping the complexity of law as a phenomenon deeply embedded in social context, moral values, and interpretative dynamics. Law is not merely a collection of objectively testable rules; it also reflects societal values, social interests, and evolving conditions. Therefore, to understand and apply law effectively, a more holistic approach is required one that considers broader social, political, and moral dimensions

2. Critical Analysis of the Assumptions in Reductionism

Legal reductionism is an approach that simplifies law into a single dimension, such as written norms or state-enacted rules, without considering other dimensions like morality, politics, and social context. Although this approach offers clarity in legal analysis, it often fails to capture the complexity of law as it exists within social life. Most criticisms of legal reductionism focus on its underlying assumptions, which frequently oversimplify law as a multidimensional social phenomenon.

One of the main assumptions in legal reductionism is that law is a set of norms that can be fully understood through normative analysis alone. Legal positivism, which forms the basis of this approach, argues that law is a system of norms separate from morality and justice. Hans Kelsen, as one of the leading figures in legal positivism, asserts that law must be understood as a set of norms valid according to a legitimate system of rules.⁴⁶ Although this approach provides a clear separation between law and morality, this assumption overlooks the reality that law often interacts with social norms and broader societal values. As a result, law cannot be fully understood solely from a formal or normative perspective.

Repositioning Interpretive Methods in German Legal Culture,” *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 38 (2025): 2181–2200, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-025-10322-8>

⁴⁶ Hans Kelsen, *Pure Theory of Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

The second assumption underlying legal reductionism is the strict separation between law and moral or political values. Kelsen argues that law cannot be influenced by morality, as the validity of law is determined by a legitimate system of rules rather than by subjective values of justice or morality.⁴⁷ However, critiques of this assumption have been raised by many legal thinkers, including Lon L. Fuller and Gustav Radbruch. Fuller, in his renowned work *The Morality of Law*, argues that law cannot be fully understood without considering the moral principles underlying its creation.⁴⁸ For instance, law that is highly unjust or fails to meet fundamental moral principles cannot be regarded as valid law. This implies that the strict separation between law and morality is an unrealistic assumption, as in reality, law and morality interact and influence each other.

Furthermore, legal reductionism assumes that law can be understood as an autonomous system, independent of social and historical contexts. From this perspective, law is regarded as a normative structure that can stand alone without considering the surrounding social or political realities. This can be observed in Kelsen's thinking, which separates law from external influences, including political, economic, and social factors.⁴⁹ However, this assumption has been widely criticized by sociological legal thinkers such as Eugen Ehrlich. Ehrlich argues that law is not merely written norms but also social norms that operate within society, which are often more significant than the codified law.⁵⁰ Critiques of this assumption indicate that law is always influenced by its social and historical context and cannot be fully understood solely within a normative framework detached from social realities.

One of the main critiques of legal reductionism is its tendency to ignore the political dimension of law. Legal reductionism often views law as detached from political power; however, in reality, law is frequently used by those in authority to maintain or expand their dominance. This is reflected in critical legal theory, which sees law as a tool for sustaining existing power structures in society. For example, critical legal theories developed by scholars such as Duncan Kennedy and Roberto Unger emphasize that law is not a neutral entity but functions to support the prevailing social and political structures.

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⁴⁷ Hans Kelsen.

⁴⁸ Lon L. Fuller, *The Morality of Law*.

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in society. For example, critical legal theories developed by scholars such as Duncan Kennedy and Roberto Unger emphasize that law is not a neutral entity but functions to support the prevailing social and political structures.⁵¹ From this perspective, law often plays a role in perpetuating social injustice and inequality, as it reflects the interests of those in power.

Furthermore, legal reductionism also overlooks the important role of social and cultural values in the formation and application of law. Law is not merely a formal instrument enforced by the state, but also reflects the social norms that develop within society. Therefore, law must be viewed as part of a broader social structure, encompassing the interactions between individuals, groups, and the state. Roger Cotterrell, in his work *Law's Community*, argues that law can only be properly understood when seen as part of a larger social and cultural community.⁵² This approach emphasizes that law should not only be seen as a formal instrument of the state, but also as part of social relationships and evolving cultural interactions.

Criticism of legal reductionism also comes from legal theories that stress the importance of pluralism and context in legal analysis. Law is often influenced by various factors, including political ideology, economic interests, and social conflicts. In this regard, pluralist theory views law not as a single coherent and stable system, but as an arena of conflict reflecting tensions between different groups within society.⁵³ This theory criticizes the assumptions of reductionism, which simplify law into a single coherent system detached from the existing social and political context. For example, the law applied in a society may reflect certain political or economic dominance, benefiting specific groups while disadvantaging others.

Finally, legal reductionism often overlooks the importance of justice in the application of law. This approach focuses more on compliance with formal and procedural rules, without considering whether these rules achieve justice for individuals or society. Justice, as a fundamental value in legal philosophy, is not always attained merely by following formal rules.⁵⁴ For example, in the criminal justice system, the rigid application of law without considering social or moral context can lead to injustice, especially for marginalized groups in society. This demonstrates that law should be seen not merely as a set of rules to be followed, but as an instrument functioning to achieve social justice.

Overall, the assumptions underlying legal reductionism, such as the separation of law and morality, the understanding of law as an autonomous system, and the disregard for social and political contexts have proven inadequate in explaining the complexity of law within society. Critiques of

⁵¹ A Duncan Kennedy, *A Critique of Adjudication* (Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁵² Roger Cotterrell, "Law's Community: Legal Theory in Sociological Perspective."

⁵³ Roberto Unger, *The Critical Legal Studies Movement* (Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁵⁴ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

these assumptions indicate that law must be viewed as a multidimensional social phenomenon, influenced by social norms, politics, morality, and historical context. A more holistic and interdisciplinary approach is necessary to fully understand the law, so that it can function effectively as a tool for achieving justice and societal welfare.

3. The Consequences of Reductionism on Legal Theory and Practice

Reductionism is a philosophical perspective that argues that complex phenomena can be explained by reducing them to simpler, more basic elements. This approach is widely applied in various disciplines, such as physics and psychology, to understand the world through components that are easier to analyze and test. However, when applied to the field of law, reductionism presents a number of significant challenges and implications for both legal theory and legal practice.⁵⁵ Law, as a normative system governing societal life, consists of interconnected and complex principles and values that cannot always be fully understood merely by reducing them to basic rules or norms.

a) Reductionism in Legal Theory

Legal theory seeks to understand, explain, and develop the fundamental principles underlying judicial systems. In some approaches, particularly in legal positivism, there is a reductionist element that emphasizes that law can be explained through basic norms structured logically. John Austin and H.L.A. Hart, for example, define law as a set of commands or rules issued by a legitimate authority. According to this view, law is nothing more than the rules established by authorized institutions and can be understood and applied by referring to these rules.

From a reductionist perspective, law is broken down into clear, measurable, and testable norms. Therefore, this approach considers that law can be reduced to a series of commands, duties, or rights that possess very specific and measurable characteristics. Hart's legal positivism argues that law is a set of rules accepted by society, which can be evaluated within the context of the norms existing in that legal system.⁵⁶ Reductionism in this type of legal theory overlooks the broader social, cultural, and historical contexts in which

⁵⁵ Triantafyllos Gkouvas, "What Makes Law Law: Categorical Trends in Analytic Legal Metaphysics," *Jurisprudence* 14, no. 4 (2023): 480–509, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20403313.2023.2219127>. See also Aditya Yuli Sulistyawan, "Epistemologi Hukum (Yang) Subjektif Sebagai Jalan Mewujudkan Hukum Yang Berperikemanusiaan," *Jurnal Hukum Progresif* 7, no. 1 (2019): 98, <https://doi.org/10.14710/hp.7.1.98-107>.

⁵⁶ Widowati dan Herliana Christiani, "Nalar Mazhab Sosiologis dalam Penemuan Hukum yang Berkeadilan oleh Hakim," *Jurnal Hukum & Pembangunan* 51, no. 2 (2021): 255, <https://doi.org/10.21143/jhp.vol51.no2.3050>.

law develops and is applied, as well as moral or justice dimensions that cannot always be measured by simple rules.

Moreover, reductionism in legal theory often disregards the social complexity underlying the creation and practice of law. Law is not merely a set of rules produced by state institutions; it also reflects the social values and ethical principles alive within society. The processes of legislation, judicial decision-making, and legal interpretation involve complex dynamics that cannot be reduced solely to the basic norms contained in legal texts.⁵⁷

b) Consequences of Reductionism on Legal Practice

From the perspective of legal practice, a reductionist approach also produces significant consequences, particularly in the application of legal rules to complex issues. Law often encounters situations involving uncertainty, ambiguity, and conflicts of values. In such contexts, relying on an overly reductionist approach can lead to narrow and limited legal interpretations, overlooking human and contextual aspects in legal cases.

For example, criminal courts frequently face situations where intent, motivation, or social context is highly relevant in determining guilt. If a reductionist approach is applied in legal proceedings, these factors might be neglected, with attention focused solely on the statutory provisions in question. In a murder case, for instance, if the law is applied mechanically, considering only the act as a violation warranting punishment without accounting for motives or broader circumstances, such as psychological pressure or social conditions influencing the perpetrator's actions, justice in legal practice becomes difficult to achieve.⁵⁸

Legal practice also often encounters differing interpretations of existing rules, as legal provisions can be understood in various ways depending on the context of the case and the values the judicial system seeks to uphold.⁵⁹ If the law is driven too strongly by a reductionist approach that emphasizes rigid application of rules, the diversity of interpretations necessary to handle complex cases will be limited. For instance, in human rights cases, the law cannot rely solely on existing norms but must also consider moral and ethical dimensions that involve broader humanitarian values.

⁵⁷ Askuris Sarmadi, "Membebaskan Positivisme Hukum Ke Ranah Hukum Progresif (Studi Pembacaan Teks Hukum Bagi Penegak Hukum)," *Jurnal Dinamika Hukum* 12, no. 2 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jdh.2012.12.2.58>.

⁵⁸ Austin, *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined*.

⁵⁹ Diah Imaningrum Susanti, *Penafsiran Hukum: Teori Dan Metode* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2019).

c) Reductionism and Social Justice

One of the major criticisms of reductionism in law is that this approach can overlook the principle of social justice. Reductionism often focuses on the uniform application of rules to everyone without considering the differences in social and economic conditions among individuals or groups. This can lead to injustice, as laws applied identically across different situations may create inequality and disadvantage the weaker parties.

For example, in human rights cases, many factors influence the assessment of whether someone's rights have been violated. In cases of torture, for instance, although there are legal rules prohibiting torture, the application of these rules may depend on political context, the social status of the victim, or existing international pressure. If law is seen merely as a rigid set of rules without considering the broader socio-political and moral dimensions, the legal system may fail to deliver fair and equal justice for all parties.⁶⁰

d) Reductionism in International Law

Reductionism also has significant consequences in international law, where political influence and global factors often affect the application of legal norms. In international law, principles of justice, human rights, and state sovereignty frequently conflict with the prevailing political realities. Reductionism, which focuses solely on clear and strictly enforceable norms, often fails to take into account external factors that can influence the implementation of these laws.

In cases of genocide or human rights violations in conflict zones, a reductionist approach that concentrates only on existing legal norms can overlook the broader political and economic contexts that lead to such violations. In this context, the law must not only apply the rules in place but also consider the social, cultural, and political conditions that affect the actions of the individuals or states involved.⁶¹

Reductionism in legal theory and practice offers a way to simplify and organize law into clear and testable rules. However, the application of this approach carries several consequences that can undermine justice and the effectiveness of the law. Law is a complex system encompassing ethical, social, and political principles that cannot always be reduced to structured and logical

⁶⁰ George Pavlakos, "Textual Hermeneutics to Law: The Genesis and Development of Law and Rights in Ricoeur," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-025-10377-7>. Paul T. Babie, "From Deduction to Discourse: Repositioning Interpretive Methods in German Legal Culture," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 38 (2025): 2181–2200, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-025-10322-8>

⁶¹ Sascha Nanlohy, "Geopolitics and Genocide: Patron Interests, Client Crises, and Realpolitik," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 9, no. 1 (January 9, 2024): 112–130, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogad023>.

rules. In practice, relying on reductionism can lead to injustice, disregard for social context, and narrow legal interpretation.

Therefore, although reductionism makes an important contribution to the formulation of legal theory, a more holistic and context-sensitive approach is needed to ensure that the law is applied fairly, taking into account the complexity of human beings and the societies it governs. Contemporary jurisprudence has similarly argued that legal authority cannot be adequately explained by formal validity alone, but must be understood in relation to the epistemic conditions under which legal norms claim practical authority.⁶² Within legal theory, these epistemological limitations translate into a narrowing of dogmatic legal reasoning, where the validity and meaning of legal norms are increasingly detached from their interpretive, institutional, and practical contexts.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that reductionism within the logical positivist paradigm has fundamental limitations in explaining the complexity of law as a social phenomenon. This approach oversimplifies law into merely a collection of formal norms, without considering the social dynamics, moral values, and historical context that influence its formation and application. As a human product, law cannot be separated from the surrounding social reality. Therefore, reductionism fails to capture the interaction between law, social norms, political power, and the evolving needs of society, making it unable to provide a comprehensive explanation of the role of law in social life.

Moreover, reductionism negatively impacts the capacity of dogmatic legal science to respond to issues of social justice. With its narrow focus on formal norms, this approach often overlooks substantive justice, especially for marginalized groups. To address these shortcomings, a more holistic and interdisciplinary framework is required. Such an approach should integrate normative analysis with sociological, anthropological, and moral perspectives to understand law as a living phenomenon within a complex and pluralistic society. In this way, dogmatic legal science can become more responsive and relevant in addressing modern legal challenges, while also supporting efforts to achieve more inclusive social justice. This critique ultimately demonstrates

⁶² Εἰσιϋλά Ἀνούλúωαπό Σόγῃμί, “Participation and Law’s Authority,” *Canadian Journal of Law & Jurisprudence* 36, no. 2 (May 29, 2023): 491–524, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cjlj.2023.9>. Patrick Bondy, “Epistemic and Legal Normativity: Reasons, Guidance, Rights, and Capacities,” *Topoi* 44 (2025): 853–862, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-025-10195-3>. Jennifer Lee, Bálint Tóth, dan Emily Carter, “Post-Truth Politics and Legal Epistemology: The Erosion of Legal Facts in Polarized Democracies,” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Society, Law, and Politics* 4, no. 2 (2025): 248–264, <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.isslp.4.2.22>.

that the epistemological commitments underlying reductionism in logical positivism are insufficient to sustain dogmatic legal science as a comprehensive framework for understanding law in contemporary pluralistic societies. This analysis confirms that the epistemological assumptions underpinning reductionism in logical positivism impose structural limits on dogmatic legal science, thereby calling for a reconceptualization of legal theory that acknowledges the irreducibility of normative, interpretive, and institutional dimensions of law.

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