

## Can Legal Science Be Empirical? On the Continuous Relevance of Alf Ross's Empirical Turn in Jurisprudence

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**English abstract:** Taking Alf Ross's legal realist project as its starting point the article discusses whether legal science is a discipline in its own right or whether it is ultimately to be considered a part of social science, in particular sociology. More specifically the article discusses this schism in Ross's work as it plays out in his criticism of the works of German legal sociologist Theodor Geiger. Here Ross makes the argument that in spite of becoming a respectable empirical discipline legal science remains different in principle from legal sociology. In the article it is argued that this claim cannot be sustained and that it rests, among other things, on an arbitrary delimitation of sociology as a discipline, both with regard to its method and with regard to its topic. The article's conclusions simultaneously has a bearing on the lines to be drawn from Ross's distinct version of Scandinavian legal realism to the noticeable empirical turn in present day legal science as witnessed by movements such as *New Legal Realism*, *Empirical Legal Studies*, *Law and Economics*, and the notion of *Naturalism* in jurisprudence.

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