

## EDITORIAL

### A Space for Interdisciplinarity

Whether we understand them as specialities of sociology or as disciplines with their own episteme and method, legal sociology and political sociology face a shared dilemma within the scientific endeavor. The research problems they encounter are often situated on the frontier between different disciplinary knowledge and seem to present the researcher entering the universe of socio-legal and socio-political issues with a panorama which, in principle, could be perceived as somewhat confusing, and difficult to find paths to guide him across this frontier and allow him to keep a broad vision of them on the horizon. On the contrary, it could be more feasible that the choice of these paths is due to personal affinities or to multiple contextual variables from which it is difficult to escape, leading him little by little to an immersion in a specific discipline that distances him from that boundary where the encounter of knowledge is possible.

Thus, research problems that demand the construction of dialogues within scientific knowledge in order to offer deeper and more pertinent answers, can easily be diverted in a direction where the need to impose a worldview from hermeticism is the one that claims and imposes its epistemological commitments to the object of study. In this order of ideas, it is worth asking: ¿How to approach an object of study whose particularities awaken the attention of a multiplicity of knowledge? The answer lies in the paradigm of interdisciplinarity.

The academic community has tended to accept that, in the context of the social sciences, interdisciplinarity obtained its foundations in the 1920s and was consolidated in the literature as a reference in the scientific field in the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Since then, it is possible to observe academic efforts focused on defining and delimiting interdisciplinary studies. Paradoxically, this exercise of subjecting the interdisciplinary to a series of

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Miller, "Interdisciplinarity: Its Meaning and Consequences", *Oxford Research Encyclopedias* (August, 2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.92>

static rules of the game, typical of the contemporary scientific frenzy to transform the social into measurable units, can lead to its denaturalization.

However, if we review the postulates of the father of complex thinking, Edgar Morin, on interdisciplinarity, we know that this is a category that can lend itself to a wide epistemic and methodological vagueness.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to think of interdisciplinarity beyond identifying that there are multiple explanations that the sciences can give to shared social phenomena and to give value to this diversity of possible interlocutions. Therefore, perhaps an adequate way of defining interdisciplinarity would be to situate it as a discourse.

Let us recall that, whether we start from a formalist or functionalist vision and despite the multiplicity of interpretations of the discursive phenomenon,<sup>3</sup> discourse responds to the need to transmit and give meaning to a message. Thus, we could think of interdisciplinarity as a discourse that carries within itself the intention of signifying a message in the form of an invitation to a pendulum game.

Interdisciplinarity, situated on the frontier between knowledge, oscillates between disciplines. It is located between particular and historically structured knowledge, without losing sight of the diversity of knowledge. An effort made in the direction of one discipline implies the transmission of the same effort to another. The equilibrium and the possibility of movement that favors the dialogue of knowledge and that opens paths through epistemic dogmatism is the image idealized by this discourse.

However, the ideas developed so far are in no way intended to undermine the historical process of scientific knowledge consolidation.<sup>4</sup> Rather than a critique or a frontal struggle against a supposed disciplinary unidimensionality, as has already been established, interdisciplinarity is an open door that invites us to think, from a complementary perspective, about the production of knowledge; an approach that makes it possible to inaugurate new debates and encourages methodological innovation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Edgar Morin, "Sur l'interdisciplinarité" en *Carrefour des sciences. Actes du Colloque du Comité National de la Recherche Scientifique. Interdisciplinarité*, dir. François Kourilsky (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Deborah Schiffrin, "Definiciones de discurso", *CPU-e, Revista de Investigación Educativa*, núm. 13 (July-December, 2011): 3.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Eduardo Andrés Perafán del Campo, "Estética, ideología y espacio público", *Utopía y praxis latinoamericana* 24, núm. 4 (July, 2020): 68.

In turn, as those who are dedicated to the study of epistemology might point out, if there are epistemic commitments identified as problematic in exclusively disciplinary knowledge, interdisciplinarity cannot escape such conditionings that would seem to be connatural to the individual of knowledge. If we were to identify an epistemic commitment in interdisciplinarity, it would be based on dialogue as the founding and structuring archetype of scientific knowledge. In this sense, without intending to reduce the debate, a dialogic principle that justifies itself from the complexity of social phenomena could be sufficient to show the scope of such a discourse.

It is necessary to contribute with new spaces that allow exploring the opportunities offered by interdisciplinarity. In this context, *Novum Jus* is positioned as a frontier space, a place to think the universe of socio-legal and socio-political issues from the pendulum game. It is a journal that reaffirms its interdisciplinary vocation and opens its doors to invite the dialogue of knowledge that allows a more complex reading of social phenomena.

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