

# DESIGNING A GOOD LEGAL RESEARCH

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# What is a (legal) research design?

A research design is a general **plan** or **strategy** for conducting a research to **examine** specific **research questions** that will be **tested** throughout the research

# Research Process I

1. Selection of the research subject
2. Formulation of the research problem
3. Review of related theories, former research, literature
4. Preparation of the research question
5. Selection of the research methods (qualitative/ Law in the books – black letter: descriptive; analytical; normative)

# Research Process II

6. Collection of research data (primary and secondary legal sources)

7. Analysis of collected research data

8. Interpretation of research data

9. Writing of research (article, dissertation, report)

# Research Process III

10. Footnoting, abbreviations, citations

11. Bibliography/annex of laws & reports

(12. Index of authors)



# TIMELINE

RESEARCH PROCESS I

RESEARCH PROCESS II

RESEARCH PROCESS III

Pre-research : finding a good legal research topic, literature review and formulation the research question and sub-research questions



In-depth research: a lot of reading, thinking and writing



Finalisation of the research: checking footnotes, citations and preparing the bibliography



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RESEARCH  
PROBLEM/TOPIC

# Research Problem

- Identification of a clear research problem
- Justification of its selection
  - *In particular in relation to any alternatives that could have been used*
- Example:
  - *my PhD research: the criminalisation power of the European Union*



# Chose your topic/research 'problem'

1. Take a field you are interested in
2. Take a field you are comfortable with
3. Take a field that you know

# Formulate the problem

1. What do you think needs to be researched?
2. What do you want to better understand?
3. What do you want to explain?
4. What do you want to solve/improve/propose?

What would be a legal topic that could be of interest in Laos?

What topic might not be suitable to be applied in the Lao context?

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# LITERATURE REVIEW

# Literature Review

- Review of previously published literature associated with *your* problem
- Have other authors published in that area before?
- Does your research have anything to add?
- What is the **added-value** of your contribution  
→ will you approach the problem from a different angle?

- You should explain why and how your research will complement existing research on that topic, and
- Why and how new research in this field is needed, e.g. because old research is outdated

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# THE RESEARCH QUESTION

# Formulate the question

This is the most important part.

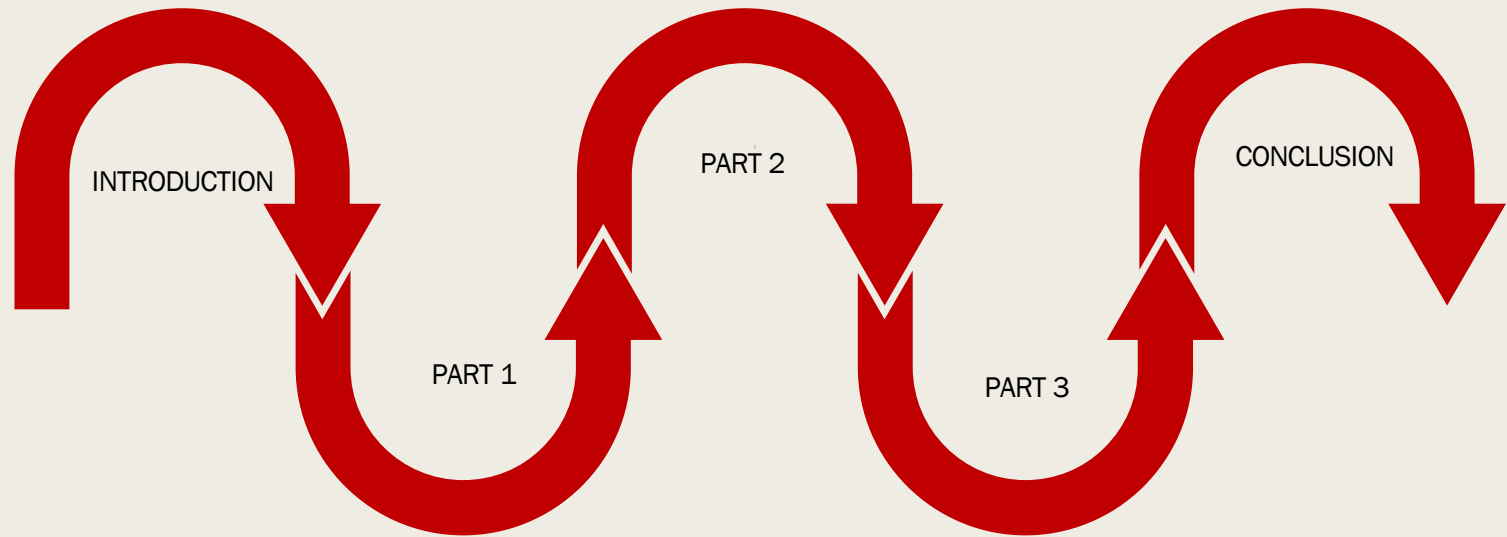
You must have this question in mind all the time.



# Research Question

- Clearly and explicitly specify hypotheses/research question central to the research problem
- Take into account that this research question should be used as a **'red thread'** throughout your entire research (article, thesis, report)
- Consider that you should be able to answer to the research question, be it to the positive or the negative
- For that, try to structure the chapters/parts of your article/dissertation around the research question

# THE RED THREAD



UNROLL THE RED THREAD DURING YOUR WHOLE RESEARCH



# Ask yourself about your research question

- What is the overall research question of your research?
- Do you have more than one research question?
- Will you be able to incorporate the question at all stages of your research?



HYPOTHESIS

# Formulate the hypothesis

- What is your prediction of the solution/conclusion?
- Do you already have an answer in mind?
- Do you think you will be able to prove your hypothesis?

# Summary

1. Take a topic of your interest
2. Formulate your research 'problem'
3. Formulate your research question
4. Formulate your hypothesis: your prediction

# Start the research!

- Analysing the information/data that you collected
- Start answering your question
- Verifying/denying your hypothesis with arguments



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

For any questions, you can contact me at:

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