



*EMPIRICAL TAKEAWAYS*

# SCOPING REVIEWS

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**How to conduct a systematic literature  
review as a legal scientist**



# WHY WOULD YOU?

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Scoping reviews are common in other scientific fields, such as the medical and social sciences

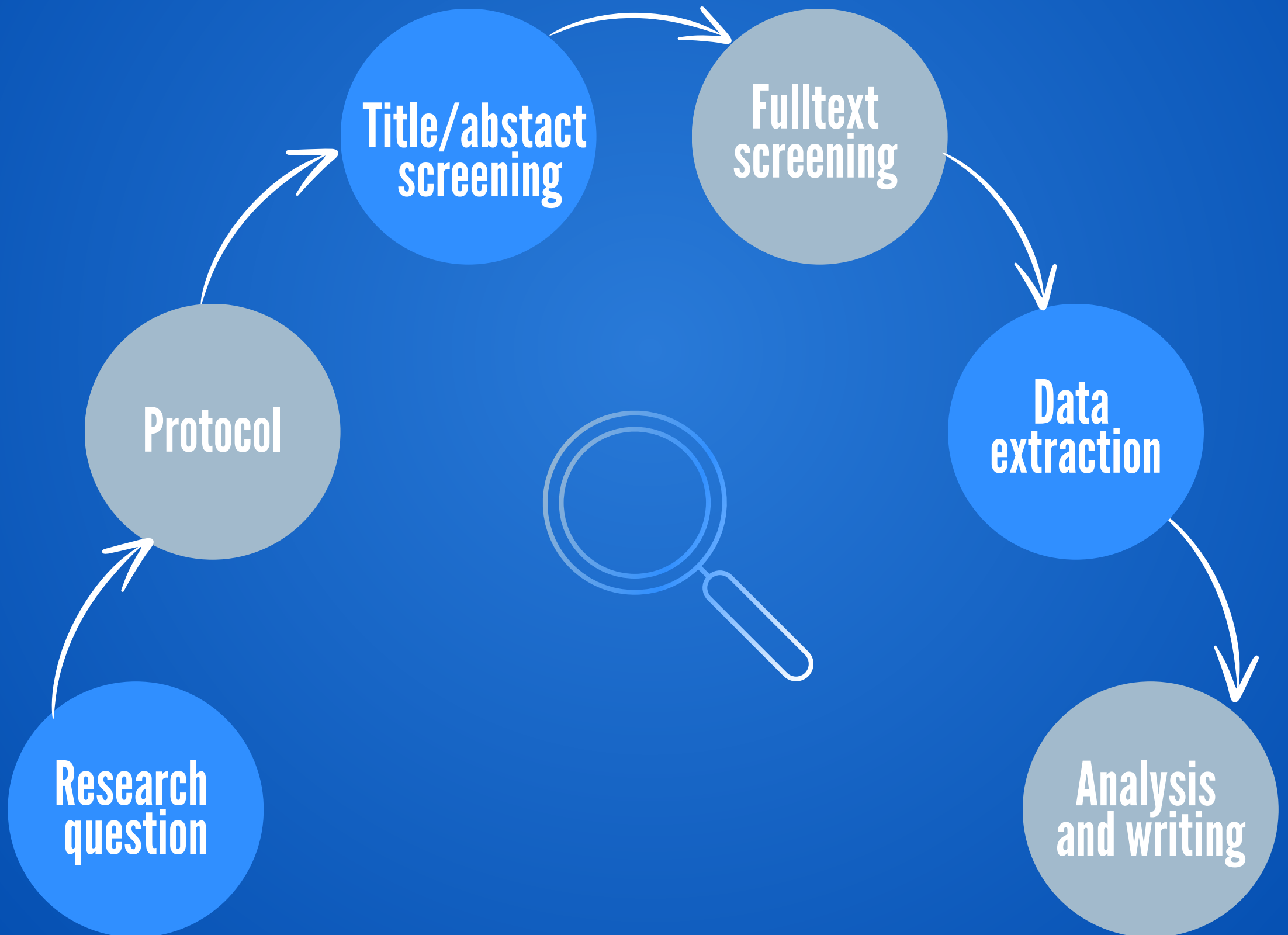
- A scoping review minimizes the risk of drawing incomplete conclusions.
- It is useful to answer an explorative research question, for example at the beginning of your research project.



**CONDUCT LITERATURE REVIEWS IN A  
MORE SYSTEMATIC WAY WITH THE  
SCOPING REVIEW METHOD!**



# SIX SYSTEMATIC STEPS



1

# RESEARCH QUESTION

**A scoping review is especially suitable for an explorative and broad research question as it can include different types of articles**



# WRITE A PROTOCOL

**A protocol involves a comprehensive research plan consisting of:**

- **theoretical framework**
- **research question and objectives**
- **justification of the method**
- **inclusion and exclusion criteria**
- **search strategy**
- **data management plan**
- **way of reviewing the literature**



2a

# WRITE A PROTOCOL: CRITERIA

*Inclusion and exclusion criteria* are very important as standards by which articles are selected (or not)

Consider *substantive criteria*  
that delineate and specify the topic  
as well as *practical criteria*  
such as language restrictions





2a

# CRITERIA EXAMPLE

## Inclusion-criteria

- The article focuses on (the impact on) children or adolescents; **OR**
- The article revolves around description of applicable law, a discussion of legal rulings, decisions, guidelines, or experiences; **AND**
- The article focuses on divorce-related relocation of a minor child with (at least) one of the parents; **AND**
- The article is written in Dutch or in English; **AND**
- The article concerns an internal relocation (relocation within a country).

## Exclusion-criteria

- The article does not focus on child abduction; **AND**
- The article does not focus on separation of families because of work-related reasons, like military actions; **AND**
- The article is not focused on grandparents or other family members. **AND**





2b

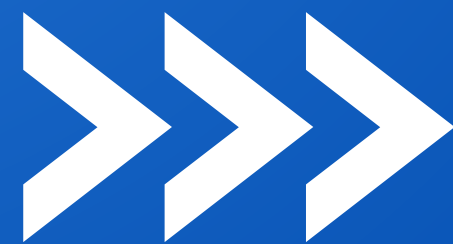
# WRITE A PROTOCOL: SEARCH SCRIPT

Based on these criteria, *a search script* can be written

Don't forget to decide on the databases you will be using for your literature search, in line with your research question



*examples please!*





2B

# SEARCH SCRIPT EXAMPLE

impact OR effect\* OR consequence\* OR interest OR development OR influence AND  
parental relocation OR relocate\* OR mov\* OR settl\* in a new place AND  
divorc\* OR separat\* OR break up OR split up AND  
child\* OR kid\* OR adolescen\* OR minor OR  
legislation\* OR law OR legal ruling OR guideline\* OR decision\* OR case law OR  
jurisprudence OR judge OR permission.



3

# TITLE/ABSTRACT SCREENING

Your search will yield a (high) number of articles that *might* be relevant for your research

You need to filter them by comparing the title and abstract to the criteria you've chosen

This is the *first* round of selecting articles



4

# FULLTEXT SCREENING AND SNOWBALLING

The articles that seemed relevant based on the title and abstract need to be read *fulltext* and judged again on their relevance related to the criteria you've chosen

At the end of this step, you have a selection of articles that are relevant for your research question!



5

# DATA EXTRACTION

**Extract the relevant data from the articles  
that you selected during the screening process**

**Make sure to do this in a transparent and systematic way  
by using tools such as Nvivo, Excel or ATLAS.ti**



6

# ANALYSIS & WRITING

**This last step involves analyzing all the data you've gathered,  
integrating and contrasting these with each other  
to ultimately answer your research question**

**Justify the steps you take and choices you make  
to enhance transparency and reliability  
and improve reproducibility and replicability**





# YOUR SCOPING REVIEW IS DONE!

You minimized the risk of overlooking information  
or drawing conclusions based on incomplete data

and...

you have answered your research question  
in a *transparent* and *systematic* way!







# WANT TO LEARN MORE?



Read Loran Kostense's recent (Dutch) article on conducting a scoping review. All the research steps are explained in more detail!



## ARTIKEL

# Systematisch literatuuronderzoek

## De toegevoegde waarde van een scoping review voor juridisch literatuuronderzoek

*Loran Kostense\**

### Abstract

*In some scientific fields, such as the medical and social sciences, systematic literature reviews are frequently conducted. A systematic search for literature minimizes the risk of overlooking information or drawing conclusions based on an incomplete overview. This article focuses on a type of systematic literature reviews, the scoping review method, that may be of interest to legal scholars. This method can be used to answer an exploratory research question aimed at identifying important concepts or knowledge gaps by systematically searching, selecting and synthesizing literature. In seven steps, following the PRISMA guideline, the scoping review method is outlined. Concrete examples are outlined using a case example: a scoping review on divorce-related relocations in the context of doctoral research at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.*