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INTEGRAL REVIEW
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Research

Across Boundaries

Advances in
Theory-building

16 – 19 June 2010

International Symposium



"Meta-tree" © 2009 Markus Molz

Research

Ernest Boyer argued 15 years ago that

"in the coming century, there will be an urgent need for scholars who go beyond the isolated facts; who make connections across the disciplines; and who begin to discover a more coherent view of knowledge and a more integrated, more authentic view of life".

In the context of an unprecedented proliferation of research specialisations and more and more pressing problem-solving needs in society, Boyer, among others, emphasized the dire need for connecting knowledge and research approaches across boundaries. This "scholarship of integration" is thought to complement the traditional scholarships of discovery, teaching and application inside specific fields. And indeed, major advances in integrative theory-building across the boundaries of paradigms, disciplines, cultures and contexts have been made in many places in recent years, e.g. through multiparadigm and multi-method research, cross-disciplinary meta-theory or cross-cultural or cross-sector participatory research. Various theory-driven attempts have been deployed to bridge, among other boundaries, the sciences and the humanities, face-to-face settings and virtual networks, societal needs and the dynamics inherent in research itself.

The contemporary boundary-crossing frameworks discussed on the symposium are ranging from quantum theoretical inspirations to cybernetics and complexity approaches, from action theory to cybersemiotics and integrative meta-theorising. The philosophical underpinnings will cover meta-paradigms like transdisciplinarity, integral theory, critical realism, relational contextualism, and participatory and emancipatory worldviews. These frameworks will shed light on each other and on specialised research, thus stimulating profound dialogue and reflection.

Regarding these advances in boundary-crossing research many new questions are emerging, among them the following: How "real" are the boundaries delimitating research fields and approaches? How consensual or controversial are boundary-crossing attempts in academic and policy discourse? Do they share specific characteristics with each other? How might they challenge some of the assumptions that unduly limit widespread research practice? Which new research avenues are boundary-crossing approaches opening up? How do they link to specialised theory and research practice? How can they catalyse innovative ways to tackle the hyper-complex local and global challenges of our era? How can they best be legitimated, communicated and institutionalised?

Advances

Across Boundaries

Issues of boundary-crossing research paradigms and communities, of sense-making tools and theory families, institutional barriers and opportunities will be as much part of the dialogues as the relation between values and facts, playfulness and usefulness, parts and wholes, levels and domains, presence and absence. Further questions very likely to be addressed from a methodological perspective relate to method and creativity, contexts and generalisation, subjectivity and objectivity, reductionism and emergent complexity, and of course theory and practice. This international symposium is proposed to consider these and other topics on the boundary-crossing opportunities afforded by integrative theory-building. On three subsequent days it will bring together for the first time internationally leading proponents of boundary-crossing frameworks from philosophy, physics, social sciences and humanities, originating from different continents, countries and cultural backgrounds.

An excellent opportunity will thus be co-created to uncover convergences and divergences, challenges and successes of boundary-crossing theories and meta-theories. Furthermore, the requirements and opportunities for cross-connections between frameworks and further reflexive development will be discussed. Particular emphasis will be placed on capturing insights and supporting suggestions for collaborative ventures between different streams of boundary-crossing research. Several sessions of focused exchange and deep dialogue will be facilitated between the invited lead researchers of a variety of boundarycrossing research streams along the lines of their shared interests, possibly giving rise to a joint statement.

Face-to-face participation in the interactive sessions will be limited to a restricted number of selected contributors and further participants in order to ensure substantial discussions. The keynotes will be open to a larger public. The entire symposium will be well documented and resulting in original publications of high added value. The language of the symposium is English.

The University of Luxembourg, built since its foundation in 2003 upon principles of interdisciplinary, international and cross-cultural collaboration, is a most appropriate host for this symposium on advances in boundary-crossing research, the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg offering a remarkably cosmopolitan context for it.

In Theory-building

Invitation to the International Symposium

Research Across Boundaries

Advances in Theory-building

16 – 19 June 2010

Scientific Committee and Facilitators

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Mark EDWARDS (Australia), PhD in organisational transformation, Lecturer in Business Ethics, University of Western Australia, International Advisory Board Member of the Institute for Integral Studies, Author of "Organisational Transformation for Sustainability: An Integral Metatheory" (Routledge, 2010) and many other publications on integral meta-studies.

Jonathan REAMS (Norway), PhD in leadership studies, Associate Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, International Advisory Board Member of the Institute for Integral Studies, Editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal "Integral Review: A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Theory and Practice".

Charles MAX (Luxembourg), Doctoral degree in educational sciences, Professor for Learning with Educational Media, University of Luxembourg.

Markus MOLZ (Luxembourg), Young Researcher, Founding member and governance board member of the Institute for Integral Studies, PhD project on "Beyond Fragmentation: Toward an Integral Pluralism in Sociocultural Research" at the University of Luxembourg (2006-2010).

Helmut REICH (Switzerland), Doctoral degrees in physics, engineering and psychology of religion, Professor emeritus, Senior Research Fellow emeritus, Institute of Educational Sciences, Fribourg University / Switzerland, Former researcher at CERN, International Advisory Board Member of the Institute for Integral Studies, Author of "Developing the Horizons of the Mind: Relational and Contextual Reasoning and the Resolution of Cognitive Conflict" (Cambridge University Press, 2002), and many other publications on cognitive and religious development.