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**The Scholarship of Integration: On the Pivotal Role  
of Centers of Advanced Study in the New Structure  
of Research-Intensive Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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**THE SCHOLARSHIP OF INTEGRATION:  
ON THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF CENTERS OF ADVANCED STUDY  
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UNIVERSITIES  
IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

Let us begin our considerations quoting an opening passage from a book edited by Peter Maassen and Johan P. Olsen *University Dynamics and European Integration* (2007), that allows us to sketch the broader context of our article: “European universities face demands for urgent and radical reform. A standard claim is that environments are changing rapidly and that universities are not able or willing to respond adequately. It is necessary to rethink and reshape their internal order and role in society simply because European universities do not learn, adapt and reform themselves fast enough. Reform plans comprise the purposes of universities, that is, definitions of what the University is, can be and should be, criteria for quality and success, the kinds of research, education and services to be produced, and for whom” (Olsen, Maassen: 2007: 3). Similarly Marek Kwiek stresses the growing complexity of the academic enterprise in Europe and he puts in the centre of our attention six contentious areas demanding a deepened discussion during the coming decade, such as the following: 1) university funding in mass higher education systems and the role of the cost haring; 2) the role of third stream funding; 3) changing university governance modes; 4) the delinking of

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<sup>1</sup> The first ideas leading to this paper - in the context of Boyer’s four domains of scholarship - I developed in my presentation *On Public Scholarship. Promotion and Tenure Policy in the Polish System of Higher Education*, during the NORPOL Seminar in Oslo (15-17 December 2010) – *Polish Higher Education and the European Higher Education and Research Areas. Comparative Analysis and the Transfer of Good Practices* – organized by prof. Peter Maassen and prof. Marek Kwiek. I’d like to thank both of them for the opportunity to participate in that interesting project, and also other colleagues involved in the abovementioned and other seminars, such as Romulo Pinheiro, Dominik Antonowicz, Mari Elken, Martina Vukasovich, Petya Ilieva-Trichkova and Sofia Ribeiro, for their inspiring remarks.

teaching/research activities; 5) the differentiation processes within the academic profession; 6) the question about the further expansion of higher education systems (Kwiek 2012a: 32).

Taking into account the abovementioned diagnosis of the circumstances surrounding the institution of the university and the dynamics of its inner evolution we develop in the presented article two thesis: first, on the need of integrative transdisciplinary research in contemporary academia, which will reshape and transcend the traditional boundaries of disciplinary divisions of scientific work, and second, that the best place to develop such an integrative transdisciplinary research are the centers for advanced study, separated from traditional faculties and departments and based on a project-hired (project-participating) faculty, normally employed in different departments of the parent university, but also representing external stakeholders in the projects, both coming from other institutions of higher education, or NGO-s, etc..

### **The Scholarship of integration**

In 1990 Ernest Leroy Boyer (1928-1995), the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, published the “most widely read and widely quoted book in recent years” (Wergin 2006: 37) *Scholarship Reconsidered. Priorities of the Professoriate*. He develops an idea of four forms of scholarship which should be recognized in the work of the professoriate and appropriately appreciated. First three forms are very well known as they originated in the gradual development of the institutions of higher education and traditionally are called as basic missions of a university. These are a scholarship of discovery, scholarship of teaching and scholarship of application, which match three traditional missions of a university: research, teaching and service to society. But Boyer went beyond this proposal, and anticipating soon later developed louder demands of the professoriate, and proposed the fourth form of faculty activity: *the scholarship of integration*. Of course the calls for integration of knowledge came out from time to time from the nineteenth century, but Boyer introduced it as an equally appreciated form of faculty activity within universities, regarded with the same esteem and – similarly as the three other forms of scholarship - took into account during the evaluation of the professional performance of faculty members.

The *scholarship of integration* has three dominant traits. Firstly, it is *interdisciplinary*: “By integration, we mean making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way [...], doing research at the boundaries where fields converge”, explains Boyer (Boyer 1990: 18-19)<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, the scholarship of integration is *interpretive*: it is rooted in the findings delivered by the scholarship of discovery, but approaches them with its own questions, as “What do the findings *mean*? Is it possible to interpret what's been discovered in ways that provide a larger, more comprehensive understanding?” (Boyer 1990: 19). It involves “serious, disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear on original research” (Boyer 1990: 19). Thirdly, the scholarship of integration is *integrative*, and this means that the interdisciplinary critical analysis and interpretation involves “fitting one's own research - or the research of others - into larger intellectual patterns” (Boyer 1990: 19).

The scholarship of integration sometimes also have an additional dimension: namely that of reaching a broader audience. As Boyer explains “The results of a scholar's integrative efforts might help shape public debate and broaden understanding of the issues at hand” (Glassick *et al.* 1997: 30). In our present analysis, we do not develop this aspect of the scholarship of integration, because in our opinion, on the present stage of the development of inquiries concerning the forms of scholarship, which went beyond Boyer's initial proposals, this part of integrative popular work should be separated in an analysis and called *public scholarship*. And there is no direct relation between them: although the scholarship of integration can sometimes take the form of public scholarship, and the public scholarship quite often plays an integrative role, nonetheless the main difference lays in a targeted audience: the scholarship of integration, at least as we refer to it in this article, addresses first the transdisciplinary scientific community of scholars, and the public scholarship focuses on the broader groups of interested and engaged public<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Boyer “researchers feel the need to move beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, communicate with colleagues in other fields, and discover patterns that connect” (p.20), and he provides the results of The National Survey of Faculty (afterwards NSF) confirming his opinion. 75% of all respondents ‘disagreed with reservation’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement that “Multidisciplinary Work Is Soft and Should Not Be Considered Scholarship”, including 78% in the Humanities, and 81% in the Social Sciences.

<sup>3</sup> There are a growing number of important books and articles discussing and developing the idea of public scholarship. The following could be a good starting point for deeper research: Peters and Jordan and Adamek and Alter (2005), Eberly and Cohen (2006), Mitchel (2008), Gastil John (2007: 12-22).

John M. Braxton, William Luckey and Patricia Helland in the book *Institutionalizing a Broader View of Scholarship Through Boyer's Four Domains* (2002) undertook an effort of classifying into groups all the professional behaviours of a faculty, so they fit into one of Boyer's four domains of scholarship. To characterize a narrow vision of the scholarship of integration I sketched above (excluding public scholarship activities) we can list the following typical scholarly activities (I strongly modified the list delivered by Braxton, Luckey and Helland excluding at least half of all the activities mentioned by them): an article that crosses subject matter areas, a book that crosses subject matter areas, a review of literature on a transdisciplinary topic, a review essay of two or more books on a similar topic, an article on the application of a research method borrowed from an academic discipline outside one's own, a book chapter on the application of a research method borrowed from an academic discipline outside one's own, an article on the application of a theory borrowed from an academic discipline outside one's own, a book chapter on the application of a theory borrowed from an academic discipline outside one's own, and a critical book review published in an academic or professional journal or in a newsletter of a professional association (Braxton *et al.* 2002: 144). This list should be in our opinion supplemented by various additional activities, such as for example: a lecture on a current transdisciplinary topic given at university or for a professional scientific association, a paper presented that reports the findings of transdisciplinary integrative research, and a report on transdisciplinary integrative research findings to a granting agency etc.

In the following considerations I will explain what I understand under the name of *transdisciplinary integrative research*, which name, in my opinion, in the best way describes the kind of research I refer to in the second part of this article. I would like to stress that *transdisciplinary integrative research* is a narrower concept than the *scholarship of integration* and stresses the research dimension of integrative work, while the second embraces also, very important but anyway the different, broad public dimension of scholarly activity, as for example included by some theorists into the main corps of scholarship of integration following activities: a talk on a current disciplinary/transdisciplinary topic given on a local radio station or a local television station or for a local service or business organization or for a local non-academic professional organization or for a group of alumni etc., writing an article or a book, or a textbook on a current disciplinary/transdisciplinary topic for lay readers or pupils etc. (see: Braxton *et al.* 2002: 143-145).

## Transdisciplinary integrative research

In fact, what Boyer means by the scholarship of integration during the last twenty years was carried out in collegial life under the banner of *transdisciplinary / interdisciplinary / multidisciplinary research*. David K. Scott points out that it is better to use the word ‘*transdisciplinary*’ to describe the emerging forms of integrative scholarship, than the words ‘*multidisciplinary*’ or ‘*interdisciplinary*’, as the latter are in long use as a description of connections and collaboration between disciplines already closely allied, and the former transcends those confinements and calls for a deeper synthesis of theoretical structures, research methods and modes of practice reaching far beyond the current disciplinary and interdisciplinary examples (Scott 2005: 49). Such a change is necessary because of “complexity, hybridity, nonlinearity, reflexivity, heterogeneity and transdisciplinarity” (Scott 2005: 49)<sup>4</sup> of knowledge production in contemporary times.

Such new *transdisciplinary research* can be conducted on two levels: either as the transdisciplinary integrative work of an individual scholar (which probably better fits Boyer’s description), or as the research based on the transdisciplinary integrative methodology of a new scientific discipline of knowledge.

The best example of the latter - and the closest to the subject of our considerations in this article – is *the discipline of higher education research* (although recognized as a separate discipline within the Western European and American higher education systems, in Poland it is still waiting for official recognition; anyway the research work of Marek Kwiek, who can be called the ‘founding father’ of higher education research as a separate discipline of knowledge in Poland, and the still growing number of his followers allow to find the discipline as *de facto* coming into existence).

As an example of the former - an interdisciplinary integrative work of an individual scholar – let us quote the following passage from the recently book *Knowledge Production in European Universities* (2013): „This book takes as one of its premises that the current dynamics of changes of European universities can no longer be discussed mostly within traditional, closed, monodisciplinary intellectual contexts. Consequently, universities are analyzed here from the

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<sup>4</sup> Scott refers to a broader analysis of that phenomenon in: Gibbons *et al.* (1994).

differentiated angles of educational studies, political economy, political sciences or sociology. This book also relies heavily on original empirical research, in particular on empirical qualitative and quantitative material produced in the course of various international comparative research projects in which we were participating in the last decade” (Kwiek 2013: 19). As we can see, clearly stated by an author both the conceptual framework and methodological assumptions, show a kind of research fully corresponding to the description of a scholarship of integration made by Boyer and his followers.

Of course, quite often both levels are intertwined and this invokes a question, where can such a work in the most conducive way be performed? Boyer noticed already over twenty years ago, that such an integrative research is often seen as very suspicious by representatives of traditional scientific disciplines. Hiding in the trenches of their disciplinary language and methodology, and feeling safe on well known ground, many representatives of the professoriate are not only personally uninterested in pursuing such research, but they also multiply difficulties for those, who move in this direction. The difficulties are connected not only or even primarily with human factors, but also with institutional arrangements. As Geoffrey Galt Harpham observed, in some higher education institutions just “the great range of disciplines represented actually constitutes a practical barrier to cross-disciplinary conversation” (Harpham 2004).

Anyway, it is worth noting, that everyone who had once the opportunity to participate in a multidisciplinary project could from the very beginning – usually during the realization of the work-package 1, namely the development of a methodological background to further research – realize, how difficult and challenging work it is, even if researchers coming from different academic disciplines previously agreed to work together and develop a conceptual framework within one paradigm (inestimable and fully successful challenge of that kind I had an opportunity to experience, as a member of the Center for Public Policy team led by Marek Kwiek, participating in two international projects founded by the European Commission through its 7th Framework Programme and coordinated by Hans-Uwe Otto (University of Bielefeld): **WorkAble** - *Making Capabilities Work* (2009-2012), and **EduWel** - *Education as Welfare. Enhancing opportunities for socially vulnerable youth in Europe* (2009-2013)).

## Centers of advanced study as the third stage in the production of knowledge

In a situation described in the former paragraph – experienced in many countries in many universities – as the best place to conduct integrative work manifested centers for advanced study<sup>5</sup>. Robert W. Connor, former president and director of the National Humanities Center<sup>6</sup>, already ten years ago proposed a thesis, that over the next few decades, as a result of the tremendous shift in the circumstances and conditions of the production of knowledge “centers of advanced study will become a primary locus for addressing new, especially transdisciplinary questions and for the development of new paradigms” (Connor 2003: 3). His direct successor in the chair of president of the NHC expressed the justification for this opinion, when he stressed the importance of creating the right atmosphere for common critical and innovative thinking, which is going to result in integrative cooperation: “When each can engage with any other - the medievalist with the architectural historian, the literary scholar with the philosopher, the anthropologist with the critical theorist-the sense of genuine scholarly community, as opposed to a mere aggregation of privilege, is strengthened” (Harpham 2004).

Connor proposes a thesis<sup>7</sup> that we are presently witnessing, the emergence of a third stage in the production of knowledge. According to him the first stage (late 12<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) embraces the birth of universities in the late Middle Ages and their further development focused on the transmission of knowledge by learning in the areas of traditional disciplines. The second stage (late 19<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century) is characterized by the emergence of research-oriented universities and the dynamic development of more and more

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<sup>5</sup> Certainly, the first, and the most famous centre of advanced study was established already in 1930 in Princeton, and it was an Institute for Advanced Study, a private, independent academic institution, which during the next eighty years made its significant mark on scientific research in the United States, becoming a prototypical institutional model for many other centres in the World. See: <http://www.ias.edu/about/mission-and-history> .

<sup>6</sup> NHC is the biggest in the United States structurally and financially independent institution supporting research in the humanities. It was established in 1973 from the initiative of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. See more about the activities of the NHC, which can be perceived as successful and role-modeling institution of support of research in the humanities at the website of the NHC: <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/>.

<sup>7</sup> In fact the authorship of a thesis is of dual origin, as Connor refers to his discussion with Francis C. Oakley, a medieval historian, who during this conversation “suggested that we may well be witnessing a third stage in the production of knowledge”, a thesis which Connor further develops in his article (Connor 2003: 3).

specialized new disciplines, for which the new departments and new institutional structures within the universities were continuously established, until finally the division of labour and “the pain of disconnection and isolation experienced by many in the academia today” (Scott 2005: 51) put the need for the scholarship of integration into the center of academic work. Connor advances a thesis that in the third stage, which we are entering now, “the most significant new scholarship will emerge in centers of advanced study, [...] since they do not depend on the departmental structures of the university, can identify and pursue promising new paths of inquiry, [...] they have great flexibility in deploying their resources to explore new paths, as well as to stimulate fresh approaches to old problems, [...] the sense of community they build encourages scholars to do their most creative work” (Connor 2003: 3-4).

### **External and internal circumstances of integrative research / cooperation**

The thesis developed by Connor and supported later by others (e.g. David K. Scott, Geoffrey Galt Harpham) involves, in our opinion, a necessity to single out and describe the two kinds of circumstances of integrative research and cooperation, external and internal, which can be conducive or disturbing for their unrestricted and dynamic development.

By *external circumstances of integrative research/cooperation*, I mean all these surrounding elements of researchers’ institutional environment, his/her broadly understood institutional setting, which influence his/her integrative and critical research, especially those which can hinder it or support it. This extends from the conducive or hampering institutional arrangements on the international and national levels concerning the possibilities of raising funds and participating in projects and grants supporting *transdisciplinary integrative research* (for example the kind of calls within Framework Programmes announced by the European Commission, etc.), till the possibilities of creating independent centers of advanced integrative study, both outside and inside public or private higher education institutions, and many others.

By the *internal circumstances of integrative research/cooperation* I mean all factors influencing *researchers capabilities* to develop integrative transdisciplinary research, starting with his individual and social abilities to transcend traditional modes of thinking, conducting

research, and writing, which can be also named *the capabilities to develop scientific integrative aspirations* (all those factors are still more important when we move from the researchers embedded in the world centers of scientific research to those working in the provincial systems of higher education and research).

Both kinds of the abovementioned circumstances have a pivotal meaning for the development of integrative research. First, if conducive, assure the institutional ramification and constitute the circumstances of opportunities for transdisciplinary integrative research. Second inspire the professoriate to undertake personal decisions concerning the inclusion of integrative research into the area of their professional interest. Both together they constitute a conducive environment to address new transdisciplinary integrative challenges, which is of crucial importance in contemporary academia, where usually, as Connor points out, “Questions that do not fit neatly into existing specialties are too easily deferred, unless there are strong incentives to address them” (Connor 2003: 3).

### **The role of the centers of advanced study in the world of permanent reforms of higher education**

But the phenomenon of the emergence of new centers of advanced study (within the best universities and also independent ones) has to be pondered in the context of a change of the role of universities in the contemporary world and new demands put against the institutions of higher education by old and new stakeholders. Summarizing the results achieved by their analysis of the current situation of the institution of the university in Europe and looking for the necessary future actions undertaken for successful reforms Ase Gornitzka, Peter Maassen, Johan P. Olsen, and Bjorn Stensaker state that there are five lessons which have to be done to make further research and reform viable. It is necessary to go: “1) Beyond routine, incremental change and reform, and conceptualize current dynamics as *search for a new pact* between the University and its environments; 2) Beyond a dominant concern for substantive performance and explore the possible independent importance of the *legitimacy* of institutions in the assessment and justification of existing arrangements, reforms and change; 3) Beyond functionalism and analyze change as processes of *contestation*; 4) Beyond a single-institution framework and take into account *inter-institutional tensions and collisions*; 5) Beyond explanations based upon environmental determinism or strategic choice and consider the more

*complex ecology of processes and determinants* in which the European University is currently embedded” (Gornitzka *et al.* 2007: 183).

In our opinion all these demands can be best fulfilled by the establishing of centres of advanced study, as they:

1. go beyond the routine of both traditional disciplinary research and even interdisciplinary efforts becoming a place of conceptualization and intensive original research open for the usually transdisciplinary demands of external stakeholders;
2. are in the vanguard of the transcending of existing fossilized university structures providing a new frame of reference and evaluation of performance;
3. are by definition the places of contestation of the traditional division of labour showing by exemplary flexible performance all its limitations and introducing to the university a strong demand for change and adaptation;
4. are the best places to overcome all the *inter-institutional tensions and collisions*, by creating an environment conducive to integrative interdisciplinary work;
5. by its intradisciplinary and usually project-hired faculty trained in integrative research are better than other institutions at university prepared for competition for external financial (and human) resources in a complex and highly competitive world of shrinking and concentrating research funds.

### **Finale: Let's remember, that expectations are not facts**

The development of centres for advanced study is a landmark of the new forms of integrative research conducted both in universities and as independent research institutions. At least it seems to be so, today. But we should not forget two important lessons from the history of the development of institutions of higher education in the past: first, as Johan Olsen points out in a well-known statement, which he calls *an institutional credo*, “there are no *universal and permanent* answers to how to best organize and govern formally organized institutions” (Olsen *et al.* 2007: 22), and second, that if we know anything about former predictions of the future of the development of societies and its institutions, only one thing is sure, that it is unpredictable, so maybe our current central issues, fears and hopes concerning globalization, the diminishing role of the welfare state, and shrinking funding for higher education and

research, etc. will completely miss the point of the challenges waiting for us in the nearby future.

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