

Interdisciplinarity by Example: Call for Interest

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With this call, we would like to invite FASoS faculty to indicate whether they are interested in contributing to an edited volume provisionally entitled “Interdisciplinarity by example”. Below, we will explain the ideas behind the project (initiated and supported by the FASoS Research Institute).

Why?

The most recent SEP research evaluation panel of 2017 recommended the Faculty Board to do more with the interdisciplinary experience and potential of FASoS researchers. We propose to do this by making a book that would create a portfolio of the ways in which FASoS colleagues do interdisciplinary research, and present this in such an attractive and transparent way that it inspires not only experienced researchers, both within and beyond FASoS, but also students at BA and MA levels.

About what?

What we have in mind is a book that presents interdisciplinary research by examples, in relatively short chapters (5000 words including references), and as practiced by FASoS researchers. We would like to invite FASoS researchers to mentally return to and write about situations in which an idea, concept, theory, method or style in a discipline other than the one(s) they were originally trained in, helped them to redefine or solve a particular research problem. They might also wish to describe and reflect on situations in which they had their own work reach out to a neighbourly discipline, or to refer to situations in which interdisciplinary training suddenly clashed, productively or not, with disciplinary conventions. Once the book is there, it might function as an emerging canon of instructive interdisciplinary “moments” in FASoS research.

We aim to present examples across several modes of interdisciplinarity as well as across the substantial combinations of fields of research characteristic for FASoS. We take the notion of ‘modes of interdisciplinarity’ from Andrew Barry, Georgina Born and Gina Weskalnys (2008) who distinguish between a service-subordination mode, an integration-synthesis mode and an agonistic-antagonistic mode. In the service-subordination mode, one discipline contributes to another discipline in a heuristic way, without changing the rules within the discipline to which it has a service to offer. The integration-synthesis mode, in contrast, refers to cases in which a symmetric relation between disciplines evolves through a genuine integration of theories, methods, concepts and/or styles, to which the rules of both disciplines apply. In the agonistic-antagonistic mode, researchers in one particular field aim to alter the assumptions of another or even several other disciplines in fundamental ways, by questioning the conventional disciplines’ ontologies.¹

The substantial combinations could be humanities-social sciences combinations, but also connections between the sciences and the humanities, the sciences and the social sciences, or intra-humanities and intra-social sciences, whatever best reflects what FASoS researchers do. We also aim

¹ Barry, A., Born, G. & Weskalnys, G. (2008). Logics of interdisciplinarity. *Economy and Society*, 37(1): 20-49.

for proper distribution of authors from the four FASoS research programs AMC, GTD, MUSTS and PCE.

By whom?

We would like to invite all FASoS scholars to contribute. They may do so as single authors or as co-authors, but the leading author should be beyond PhD level, and act as our contact person. The leading author is not necessarily the first author as author-order cultures may vary across disciplines. FASoS scholars can collaborate with scholars outside our faculty. We need a leading FASoS author, however, as a contact person to keep the communication lines short. Our current invitation is not a conventional call for abstracts though. We would instead like to ask those who feel the enthusiasm to contribute to send us a **one-line email** as an expression of interest. After having received these emails, we will meet for coffee with all leading authors and their co-authors—in corona-proof conditions—and “interview” them while drawing on a set of questions to open up their memories of the kind of interdisciplinary moments (or extended processes, of course) we are after. We will also talk about whether they have time and materials available for writing a chapter. Only after that meeting, we will decide, in collegial spirit with the potential authors, whether they will really submit an abstract or not. This procedure helps us as editors to get to know better those FASoS researchers whom we do not yet know well. We hope we will have a max of 20 chapters, around 5 per research group, which would lead to a book of around 100,000 words (285-300 pages).

By when?

You are invited to drop us the one-line email **before August 31, 2020**. We will start meeting interested colleagues as of September. Selected abstract submissions are due early December and we will have responded to them by the end of January. We may also contact colleagues who do not drop us a line but whom we hope to seduce to contribute after all. The first full draft of the chapters is due by June 1, comments by July 1, and final drafts by the end of September 2021, which leaves us several months for adding an introduction and finalizing the manuscript by the end of 2021.

Which publisher?

We prefer to have the edited volume published open access, and seek a contract with a leading publishing house that has the option to publish open access (Springer could be one of these). The Faculty Board has promised to provide the funding necessary for an open access book.

Why now?

This plan was developed by the research institute before the start of the Covid-19 crisis. We are fully aware of the fact that under the current conditions writing is even more challenging than it normally is. However, the good thing of this project is that you are explicitly invited to reflect and draw on projects that you have already done or publications you have already written. There is thus no need to do new interviews, archival work, literary analysis or other forms of new research. It starts with granting yourself some time to look back on your experiences of interdisciplinarity. We are very much looking forward to hearing from you!

Kind regards, Karin Bijsterveld (k.bijsterveld@maastrichtuniversity.nl) and Aagje Swinnen (a.swinnen@maastrichtuniversity.nl)