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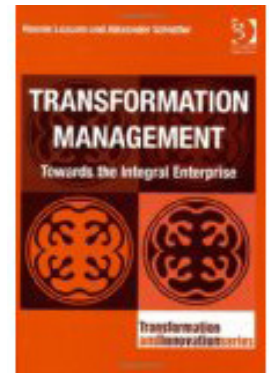


Review



Ronnie Lessem and Alexander Schieffer. *Integral Research and Innovation: Transforming Enterprise and Society*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Gower, 2010.

Ronnie Lessem and Alexander Schieffer. *Transformation Management: Towards the Integral Enterprise*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Gower, 2010.



Russ Volckmann

For starters, Ronnie Lessem is a white man, raised in Zimbabwe who now is the Director of the Centre of Business in society within the Business School at the University of Buckingham in the UK. Furthermore, the university website elaborates.

Professor Ronnie Lessem is a Reader in Trans-cultural Management and Director of the Social and Economic Transformation programmes at the University. He has a Master's in the Economics of Industry, from the London School of Economics, and an MBA from Harvard, majoring in corporate planning. His doctorate, from City University in London, was focused on action learning for enterprise development.

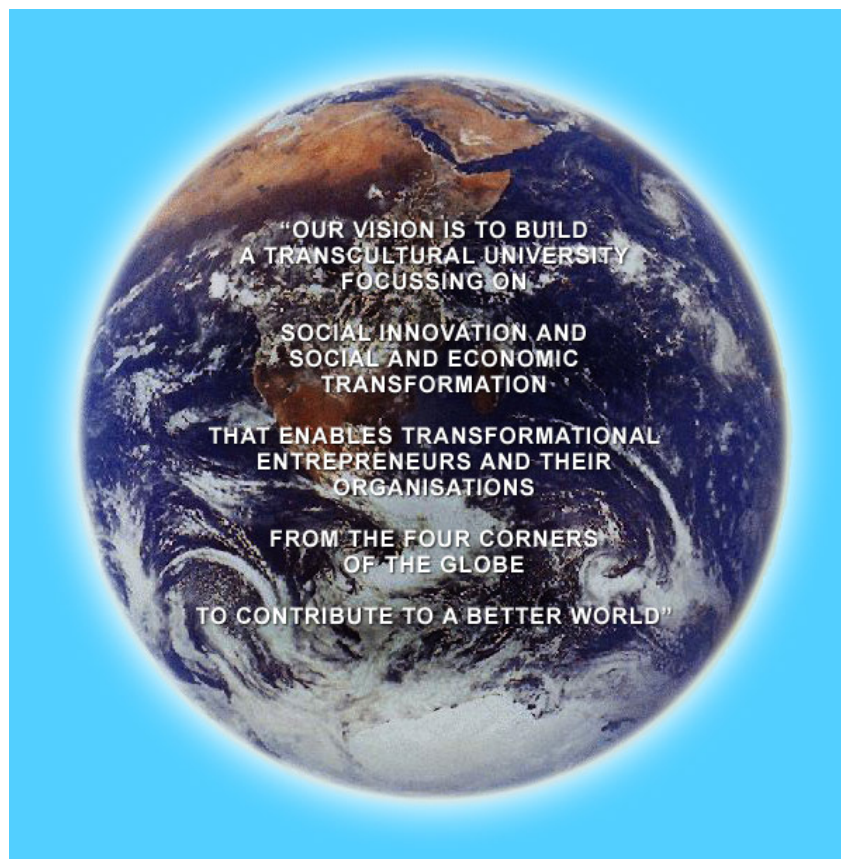
Professor Lessem's focus, at Buckingham, is on the conscious evolution of particular societies, through their local identity towards a global integrity. He has been involved in major research and development projects in Western and Eastern Europe, in Southern Africa, the Middle East and in India to integrate liberalisation with individuation and modernisation with civilisation. In the process he has written some twenty books on culture, management and learning and has consulted with companies around the world, focusing on the development of knowledge creating communities. At the core of all of this is the concept of the four worlds—pragmatic, rational, holistic and humanistic—which underpin the trans-cultural and developmental approaches that characterise transformation management.

Alexander Schieffer, Co-Founder of TRANS4M, is also Managing Partner of CELL—Center of Excellence for Leadership and Learning—(our consulting unit). The company is focusing on the innovative leadership and design of organisations, including organisational transformation, based on a systemic approach. CELL assists organisations internationally to

strengthen their capacity to co-creatively develop solutions for internal and external problems and challenges. Prior to CELL, he had founded and built up one of the leading special interest publishing houses in Singapore. Schieffer studied economics, business administration, social sciences and law at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland and did a doctorate on leadership. He lectures at St. Gallen University as well as at the CIDA City Campus in Johannesburg, South Africa. Schieffer is member of the Society for Organizational Learning and the World Business Academy. In the past 10 years he has published a large variety of articles on Leadership and Organizational Transformation and has developed an organisational transformation tool called ‘Semantic Mapping’ as well as a future oriented approach towards leadership called ‘Co-Creative Leadership’.

The two are partners in TRANS4M, The Four World Center for Social Innovation based in Geneva. It is a research and education oriented consulting firm started by these co-authors of the books I am about to delve into. Their site states—<http://www.trans-4-m.com/>:

Our transcultural approach and community builds on the knowledge of all four worlds (South, East, North and West). In our masters, doctoral and executive programmes we root education and transformation deeply in specific cultural contexts, and focus through programmes and projects on the most relevant transformational issues at the level of self, organisation, and society. We address leaders and organisations from the four sectors of society (business, politics, culture and environment), and from the four corners of our world. We enable them to move to centre themselves, individually, organisationally and societally, with a view to making a transformative impact. Together, we aim to contribute to societal and global integration.



“Each person, each organisation, each society and culture has a role to play in transforming the world.”

I have provided so much introductory material because the work of these two thought and practice leaders is significant, both in scope and in depth. This overview should give you a feel for what these increasingly prolific authors are up to. Here we will be taking a look at two of their recent books (*Another book due out this year is on **Integral Economics** and I am looking for an integrally-informed economist to write a review of it*). First is

Integral Research and Innovation: Transforming Enterprise and Society

There is a rumor that Lessem edited Beck and Cowan's *Spiral Dynamics* and may even have written some of the early chapters. In any case, he has published numerous books on his own and with other co-authors, notable Eliot Jaques and Stephen D. Clement, *Executive Leadership* and **Beyond Leadership: Balancing Economics, Ethics and Ecology** with Warren Bennis and Jagdish Parikh. All of Schieffer's books appear to be as co-author with Lessem.

So, more background than you ever wanted to know? Then here are the books.

The first I encountered was *Integral Research and Innovation*. Here the authors offer a model of cultural stances on meaning making, on sense making, in the world through research. Clearly, these authors have deep connections to contemporary thought philosophically and practically. Nevertheless, the connection between their work and leading authors in integral theory and adult development seems to be missing. As a preliminary move I went looking in the index for a few familiar names. For example, Wilber is mentioned once—in the last chapter—where the authors indicate he is doing important work. There is no mention of Bill Torbert, Robert Kegan and other developmentalists, including Graves, Beck or Cowan. No mention of Gebser, either. No reason to keep looking for what is not there. Better to get what is.

This book is really oriented to the university and the conduct of research. Their concern is the weak relationship between academic research and social innovation. Their hypothesis is that this is due to an over-reliance on Western (American) and Northern (North European) approaches and perspectives to the exclusion of the Southern (African) and Eastern (Asian). Each brings a different philosophical foundation, a different perspective, a different approach to research, and contributes to a whole that involves all of them. By moving into such shared participation the potential for social innovation will rival that for technical innovation.

...the roots as well as the main stem of being, becoming socially innovative need to be re-discovered...[which] can only be undertaken in relation to the particular cultural context... The ultimate objective we are trying to achieve with our new Integral Research design is to reformulate research in the social sciences in a way that leads to social innovation.

And they remind us that philosophy is the foundation of research. They cite philosopher Fals Borda who is a central proponent of participatory action research (PAR):

Historical experience calls for rethinking the meaning of social transformation for people's liberation. The dominant view of such has been preoccupied with the need for changing the oppressive structures of relations in material production—certainly a necessary task. But, and this is the distinctive view of PAR, domination of elites is also rooted in control over social power to determine what is useful knowledge, the one (knowledgeable) then reinforcing the other (material). In fact existence of the gap in knowledge relations can offset the advantages of reducing the gap in relations of physical production... People then cannot be liberated by a consciousness and knowledge other than their own. It is therefore essential that they de-

velop their own endogenous consciousness-raising and knowledge generation abilities. This requires the social power to assert this vis-à-vis elite consciousness and knowledge.

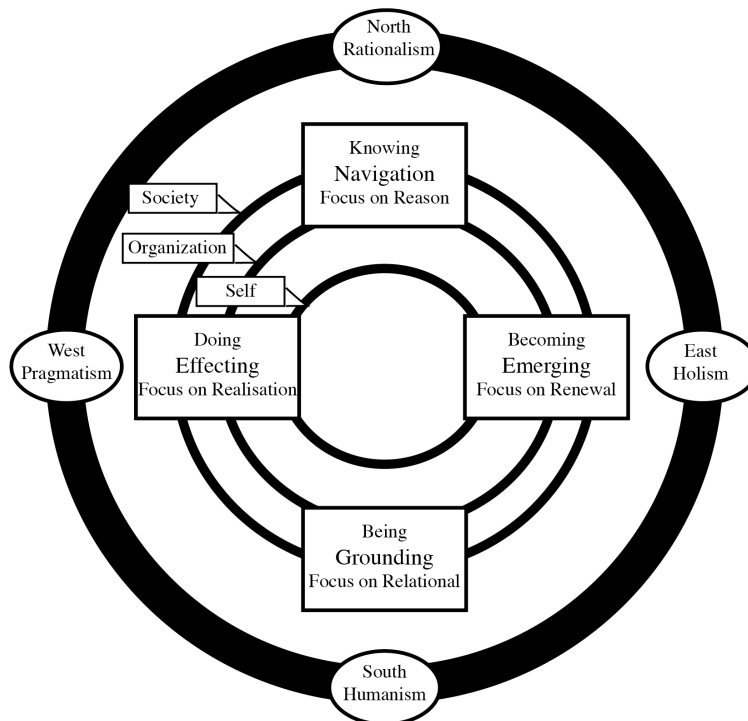
Social research has failed to integrate the four key epistemologies, according to the authors; these are central to the model they have developed and the approach to research they advocate. The epistemologies are: pragmatism, nationalism, holism and humanism. Each is based in the cultures of different world regions and each has a different implication for political and economic research and action. They note four research paths:

1. *relational path*, which is intrinsically Southern, aligned with humanism;
2. *path of renewal*, which is inherently Eastern, aligned with holism;
3. *path of reason*, which is innately Northern, aligned with rationalism;
4. *path of realization*, which is quintessentially Western, aligned with pragmatism.

These are not mutually exclusive paths; rather each represents a stage in social research. The sequences of these stages will vary, depending upon which one begins. Nevertheless, there is a double trajectory, a parallel trajectory between research and innovation. To get to integral research one travels through method, methodology, critique and action. The parallel path to social innovation is from origination to innovation to emancipation and transformation.

The problem with universities is that their work has been building on the Northern and Western approaches while excluding or depreciating the Southern and Eastern. This has resulted in fragmentation of knowledge and transcultural myopia. The authors argue for a “transformational, transcultural, transdisciplinary, and ultimately transpersonal” university for education and research.

Here is a rendering of a basic graphic that shows the elements of their maps and the relationships; imagine a spiral within the circle(s)—adapted from Figure 2.2: Becoming a Social Innovator – Releasing your GENE-ius [34]



There is a research para

them research moments

after the work of Denzin and Lincoln:

1. Positivist-quantitative Paradigm: The traditional quantitative period...is associated with the foundational 'positivist' paradigm which still exercises a strong empirical influence...and in which basic research methods, quantitative and qualitative, still predominate.
2. Modernist Quantitative-qualitative era: [This]...comes second; the quantitative positivist orientation is now split between the former empirical and the latter rational approaches, the one being inductive and the other deductive, at the same time the newly 'interpretive' approach becomes clearly distinguishable in its own right. It is at this point that Husserl heralds the phenomenological 'Crisis in European Sciences', and joins hands with the prior hermeneutic influence to make a qualitative stand on research methodology.
3. Interpretive Qualitative perspectives: In the 'blurred genres' contemporary era...new interpretive and qualitative perspectives are vigorously taken up. Examples of this include...not only hermeneutics and phenomenology, but also structuralism, semiotics, cultural studies, and for us, feminism, critical theory, postmodernism (discursive) and critical realism (stratified), as duly reformative.
4. Crisis of Representation: In the fourth era...the so-called 'crisis of representation' emerges. It becomes apparent that only a very small part of the world, geographically and philosophically is represented in the overall methodological story.

The authors' approach transcends these to offer a co-creative approach "that is ultimately transformative, thereby resolving the crisis through its cultural spread."

Ultimately the point is that theirs is a rich fabric for understanding foundations and alternatives in research methodology and methods leading to integral research that supports social innovation. This is a fascinating read through their path to their discussion of social innovation. Here are some elements that they point to:

1. There is an organic process for addressing a burning issue: this process is "transformational, transcultural, transdisciplinary and transpersonal, involvement the development of self, organization and society, each on in an integral direction.
2. The paths within this process are flexible and result in paradigm shifts from individual research to research communities, from social research to integral innovation, from isolated method to approaches that integrate all the elements represented in Figure 2.2 above.
3. This approach to research will lead to an integral university, not unlike what we are seeing in transdisciplinary programs reported on in the pages *of Integral Leadership Review*.
4. "Dedicated to releasing full GENE-ius the Integral University promotes, for a particular self, organization and society (or community) four rhythms: (1) being (self), community building (enterprise) and healing the planet (society); (2) becoming (self), conscious evolution (enterprise) and peaceful co-evolution between peoples (society); (3) knowing (self), knowledge creation (enterprise) and creating economic opportunity (society)."

While this book is essentially about the use of research for social innovation, it is a valuable read for all of us as we seek to understand how we make sense and meaning of the world and how we choose to invest that in making a generative difference. The companion work to this book focuses more on the latter.

Transformation Management: Towards the Integral Enterprise.

The authors present this as a companion book to the *Integral Research and Innovation* volume.

One of their goals is to make social science and the humanities explicitly relevant to social innovation. This means moving beyond the profit principle, but codes of corporate ethics are inadequate. These codes fail to address the particular organization or society wherever they may be in the world and in the nature and state of their economies. There needs to be a true evolutionary impulse that should serve the evolution of both micro and macro cultures and institutions. Further programs for entrepreneurship are still based on the neoliberal paradigm with its focus on self-regulating markets—the very paradigm that created the conditions for the latest economic downturn around the world. Even social entrepreneurship is still attached to that paradigm. What is needed is an entrepreneurship that addresses all of the developmental needs of society. The reliance on Western forms of management and the “leadership trap” will not help us get there.

Not only does such contemporary leadership lack a social scientific and indeed, professional base, but also its often sole emphasis on the ‘individual’ reinforces an individualist and materialistic paradigm as well as the consequent growing disconnection between organizational leaders and enterprises on the one hand, and communities and society on the other. This deficiency is what we seek to redress, through the transformation of Management.

The systems and structures of the enterprise have changed very little over the years. Mainly, the shift has been from entrepreneurship to management, “which reveal the limitations of a primarily monocultural and unidisciplinary, as opposed to transcultural and transdisciplinary approaches to management. In order to make this shift business needs to take to heart the idea of sustainable development. This needs to happen in the civic sector, as well as through the emergence of the eco-enterprise. Nothing less than the widescale rebuilding of our production and economic infrastructures is required. The emergence of a public enterprise is a significant aspect of this and is to exist along side traditional public sector and market driven business organizations. The purpose of the public enterprise is to assure “community goals are achieved by creating through engaging in social processes, including ‘public business’.” This includes the notion of the public citizen as an enterprising self. Transformational Management is the dynamic stabilizing synthesis between leadership and entrepreneurship, on the one hand, and management on the other.

Transformational Management requires revisiting our relationship with nature, culture and science, as well as management, itself. The latter is accomplished by developing transpersonal functions by moving past traditional notions of leadership, linking individual and community and bringing “exogenous knowledge” into Indigenous Soils.

The Four fundamentals of Transformation Management are:

1. Transforming Competitive Strategy into Strategic Renewal via *Transformational Flows*. This involves tapping into nature’s and humanity’s wisdom to build on natural and cultural vitality,
2. Transforming Organizational Development into Cultural Dynamics via *Transcultural Forces*. Building a sustainable and integrated organization through understanding of one’s own culture and that of other.
3. Transforming R&D into Social Innovation via *Transdisciplinary Fields*. Broadening the knowledge base to include North, East, South and West: economics, systems, spirituality and anthropology.
4. Transforming the Functions of management via *Transpersonal Functions*.” Business func-

tions go beyond the traditional and trait based approach to leadership to a segmented functional perspective a la today's organizations toward a transpersonal set of functions involving the interconnections among self, organization, society and globe.

Through social entrepreneurship and reorientations such as these we would be rebuilding society to meet contemporary worldwide needs.

I haven't time nor energy at this moment to report on all that they offer to show how they would go about this. Suffice it to say that their examples of how this is happening in the world are intriguing. One case in point that represents many major social and political challenges we face in the world today is that of The Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain. They show the development of these cooperatives in the Basque Region that play a central role, both in the economy and in the community. They use the notion of transformational topography of the cooperatives that have moved from Christian humanism to pluralist philosophies to cooperative enterprise and then to a co-operative movement, beginning in the 1930s. This was accomplished with the support of Don Jose Arizmendi through the combination of philosophy and business, sociology and economy. Yet the bedrock culture and values remain disconnected from the topsoil of the cooperative movement.

The authors outline the approaches they have developed over the years to address such issues. They point to a shift from research based on method and methodology as tool and technique, to research based on philosophies and paradigm. This involves transformative research that is action research to develop integral innovation. Here they trace through and provide examples of the four directions of philosophy and methodology and method: North, South, East and West. These deal with native and community, culture and spirituality, science and technology, economics and management, both locally and globally.

For anyone with an interest in management and leadership, organizations and communities, systems and the welfare of the globe. This is a must read.

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<http://www.integralleadershipreview.com>