

Beyond Disciplines: Foundations for a Collaborative Future

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Welcome to a new and exciting international journal that explores the transformative potential of collaboration and integration across disciplines, such as science, technology, humanities, and social sciences.

Across disciplines and cultures, people have long recognized that the most consequential innovations rarely arrive as isolated inventions. They arrive as recombinations: a method borrowed and reimagined, a concept carried across institutional borders, a practice adapted to a different social ecology, or a partnership that turns rival priorities into shared constraints. In 2025, the need for such recombination became visible in hard numbers. The International Energy Agency projects that global energy-sector investment will reach about USD 3.3 trillion in 2025; around USD 2.2 trillion is headed to renewables, nuclear, grids, storage, low-emissions fuels, efficiency and electrification—roughly twice the USD 1.1 trillion going to oil, natural gas and coal. Solar alone is expected to attract about USD 450 billion, and battery storage about USD 66 billion. Yet grid spending remains near USD 400 billion per year, far below what is needed to connect new generation, manage demand from data centers and AI, and keep electricity reliable ([International Energy Agency, 2025](#)). Meanwhile, an Ember analysis reported that renewables generated 5,072 TWh in the first half of 2025, overtaking coal at 4,896 TWh for the first time ([Małgorzata Wiatros-Motyka, 2025](#)). These shifts open extraordinary possibilities for prosperity—cleaner air, new industries, productivity gains—but they also surface bottlenecks in permitting, community consent, labor transitions, finance, and geopolitical risk. No single discipline, ministry, or firm can solve that bundle. Synergy is founded for the integrative work it demands.

For the 2026 call for papers, Synergy invites submissions that treat integration as more than a virtue and more than a buzzword. We publish interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed scholarship that explains how cooperation and cross-domain integration shape innovation, governance, resilience, and inclusive prosperity. In scope are manuscripts that do at least one of the following: (1) develop or test theory about collaboration, coordination, and collective action across sectors and cultural contexts; (2) identify mechanisms linking institutions, technology, culture, and inequality; (3) introduce or validate measurement strategies that make complex social phenomena comparable across settings; (4) evaluate interventions, policies, and designs that depend on multi-actor coordination; (5) synthesize, replicate, or re-examine influential findings to clarify what is robust and what is contingent. Topical arenas include (without being limited to) climate and sustainability transitions; AI and automation; public health and biosecurity; education systems and workforce change; migration and demographic shifts; urban governance and infrastructure; humanitarian response; and the reorganization of

global supply chains. We welcome qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches—provided the logic of evidence is explicit and the claims are proportional to what the data can support.

A journal devoted to synergy must also be candid about why integration is difficult. Disciplines are not merely toolkits; they are social worlds with histories, hierarchies, and gatekeepers. Pierre Bourdieu's work on fields and symbolic power reminds us that authority is unevenly distributed and that apparently “neutral” standards can quietly encode accumulated forms of cultural capital ([Bourdieu, 1988, 2018](#)). Andrew Abbott's work on professions likewise shows that boundaries are defended through jurisdictions, credentials, and claims of expertise ([Abbott, 1988](#)). Integration therefore is never only a cognitive task; it is also an institutional and political one. It requires translation across vocabularies, incentives, and identities, and it requires a willingness to confront how power shapes whose evidence is heard, whose methods are trusted, and whose problems are treated as central ([Li et al., 2025](#); [Liu & Li, 2024](#)).

Synergy is designed as a platform that goes beyond traditional academic and professional boundaries, not by diluting standards but by strengthening them. Too many interdisciplinary spaces become lowest-common-denominator arenas: complexity is praised, but constructs remain underspecified; mechanisms are invoked, but not traced; evidence is cited, but not tested against alternatives. Synergy rejects that path. Our vision is integration with rigor: research that connects theories and methods across domains while staying precise about constructs, assumptions, and inferential limits. Translation is hard; collaboration is harder; but when done carefully, it can produce knowledge that is broader and also more reliable.

Synergy invites work on collaboration in scientific teams, public-private partnerships, cross-sector coalitions, international organizations, community-based initiatives, humanitarian operations, and the everyday coordination that holds organizations and neighborhoods together. We are interested in how collaboration generates innovation, but also in how it generates blind spots, new inequities, and unintended consequences.

Depending on translation, the journal also welcomes scholarship on the infrastructures that make translation possible. Coordination often proceeds through partial alignment: “boundary objects” that are flexible enough to travel yet stable enough to coordinate across communities ([Star & Griesemer, 1989](#)); “trading zones” where shared practices emerge without fully shared worldviews ([Galison, 1997](#)); and networks through which ideas move via weak ties, brokers, and intermediaries ([Granovetter, 1973](#)). Actor-network and translation traditions in STS further remind us that knowledge travels by enrolling allies and building durable links between people, artifacts, and institutions ([Callon, 1984](#); [Latour, 1987](#)). Synergy welcomes research that traces those links—and research that asks who benefits from them, who is excluded, and what forms of evidence are made legible or invisible along the way.

Synergy's aims and scope are a commitment to a particular kind of intellectual labor: credible integration. We publish research that shows how interconnected approaches promote innovation, how the interplay among science, technology, humanities, and social sciences can produce new understanding, and how the gap between theory and practice can be narrowed without compromising truth-seeking. We are especially interested in work that bridges local and global perspectives, connects individual-level experience with system-level structures, and translates scholarly insight into forms that can inform policy and professional practice. Many of today's high-stakes problems fit what some scholars call “post-normal” conditions: facts are

uncertain, values are contested, stakes are high, and decisions are urgent ([Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993](#)). In such settings, integration is not optional. It is a responsibility.

We invite theory that builds new conceptual frameworks for understanding integration, cooperation, and cross-domain change. We also invite theory that travels: frameworks explicit about scope conditions, grounded in mechanisms, and open to disconfirmation rather than protected by ambiguity. We are interested in how institutional rules shape collaboration; how norms and identities enable or block collective action; how networks diffuse ideas and practices across sectors; how organizations learn; how conflicts become productive or destructive; how governance systems adapt; and how power and inequality structure who gets to participate in “collaboration” and who bears its costs. Here, Bourdieu’s insistence that power saturates fields and Merton’s attention to the reward structures of science remain practical reminders that integration is never neutral ([Merton, 1973](#)).

Reproducibility is central to that trust. Synergy therefore emphasizes reproducible research practices whenever ethically and legally feasible. We encourage authors to share data, code, and research materials; to document preprocessing and analytic decisions; to report robustness checks and sensitivity analyses; and to clarify which parts of the workflow can be reproduced by others. We recognize that many important datasets cannot be fully open due to privacy, confidentiality, political risk, or proprietary constraints. In those cases, we still expect transparency: clear documentation, carefully described procedures, and creative solutions such as sharing synthetic data for code testing, using secure access mechanisms, or providing detailed appendices that allow readers to evaluate the research process.

Synergy is committed to interdisciplinary integration, we especially welcome research that bridges fields already converging into hybrid domains. Many of the most vibrant frontiers sit at intersections of sociology, psychology, political science, economics, anthropology, history, public policy, public health, education, data science, and computational social science. These intersections are where new measurement tools meet old theoretical puzzles; where institutional analysis meets behavioral science; where historical context meets contemporary data; and where ethical questions meet technological design. Synergy welcomes work that builds from these intersections to produce knowledge that is both explanatory and usable.

Synergy also encourages the responsible use of advanced artificial intelligence methods when appropriate to the question. We welcome computational approaches such as machine learning, natural language processing, network modeling, causal machine learning, and other forms of algorithmic measurement that can expand the empirical reach of social science. But advanced methods are not a substitute for conceptual clarity. AI tools can amplify bias if data are unrepresentative; they can harden measurement error if constructs are poorly defined; they can produce impressive predictive performance without explanatory insight; and they can tempt researchers into black-box claims that are difficult to audit. Synergy therefore welcomes AI-enabled research that is transparent about data provenance, measurement validity, model selection, and robustness, and that connects algorithmic outputs to theory, mechanism, and real-world implications. We view AI as an instrument that can make social inquiry more precise, more scalable, and more testable when used well.

We welcome randomized experiments, field experiments, natural experiments, quasi-experimental designs, regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, synthetic control methods, instrumental variables,

matching and weighting strategies, panel and longitudinal models, mediation and mechanism analysis, and sensitivity analysis. We also welcome qualitative approaches to causal explanation, including process tracing, comparative historical analysis, and carefully argued causal narratives grounded in rich evidence. The common standard is not a particular technique, but intellectual honesty about what the evidence can establish. Causality in social systems is often complex and context dependent. A journal committed to synergy must be committed to clarifying such complexity.

We welcome systematic reviews and meta-analyses that assess the cumulative state of evidence across studies, identify where findings converge or diverge, and clarify what is known and unknown. In a field fragmented across disciplines and publishing venues, synthesis is especially valuable because it allows insights to travel. Systematic reviews can map where concepts align across traditions, where measurement differs, where designs vary in credibility, and where evidence is thin. Meta-analysis can quantify effect sizes, reveal heterogeneity, and test for biases in the literature. We welcome reviews that are transparent about inclusion criteria, coding decisions, and analytic strategies, and that use synthesis to generate sharper questions rather than merely to summarize.

We also welcome case studies, including in-depth qualitative and mixed-method investigations. We believe that even a single case, when selected thoughtfully and analyzed rigorously, can produce new insight. Case studies can reveal mechanisms that large datasets cannot capture, illuminate institutional details that determine whether interventions succeed or fail, and provide grounded understanding of cultural meanings and lived experiences. We ask authors to be clear about case selection, evidence collection, interpretation, and scope conditions, and we encourage case research to connect to broader theory and to propose testable implications.

Since Synergy is an international journal, we take seriously the global distribution of both problems and knowledge. Many of the world's most creative and urgent innovations are emerging in settings that are underrepresented in mainstream publishing. At the same time, communities facing the greatest risks often have the least capacity to broadcast their evidence. Synergy is committed to research fairness in a substantive sense. Generalizability is an empirical question, not a prestige label. We resist the tendency to treat research from the Global South or marginalized regions as merely "contextual" while treating research from wealthy institutions as implicitly general. Scholarship from different regions can reveal mechanisms and assumptions that dominant theories overlook. Raewyn Connell's "Southern Theory," for example, reminds us that what becomes "general" often reflects where journals, funding, and epistemic authority are concentrated ([Connell, 2007](#)). Boaventura de Sousa Santos similarly argues that epistemic diversity is not a courtesy but a resource for collective learning ([de Sousa Santos, 2015](#)).

Humanistic concern is not separate from methodological rigor; it is part of what makes rigor meaningful. Social research is ultimately about people living within institutions, technologies, economies, and cultures that shape opportunity, dignity, health, and belonging. When we study collaboration, we are studying who is invited into decision-making and who is left out. When we study innovation, we are studying who benefits and who bears risk. When we study sustainability transitions, we are studying whose livelihoods are protected and whose are disrupted. When we study technology and society, we are studying how autonomy, privacy, and democratic voice are reconfigured. Synergy aims to be a journal where the human stakes remain visible even as analysis becomes more technical. We encourage authors to write with clarity about why a question matters,

what values are implicated, and how evidence can serve communities rather than merely describe them ([Zhang et al., 2025](#)).

To support this mission, Synergy encourages research that crosses levels of analysis. We welcome micro-level research on individual decision-making, identity, cognition, and interaction. We welcome meso-level research on organizations, networks, communities, markets, and professions. We welcome macro-level research on institutions, political regimes, cultural change, demographic shifts, economic structures, international systems, and historical trajectories. We especially welcome work that connects these levels—showing how individual choices are shaped by organizational constraints, how organizations are embedded in political economies, how policies reshape community life, and how cultural frames mediate the adoption of technology. In many contemporary problems, the most important causal pathways are cross-level: an algorithm changes an organization’s incentives, which changes frontline behavior, which changes public trust, which changes governance, which changes the next generation of technology. Synergy welcomes scholarship that can trace such pathways with conceptual discipline and empirical care.

We also welcome scholarship that is reflexive about the production of knowledge itself. Interdisciplinary work often fails not because problems are too complex, but because collaborators lack shared definitions and shared standards. Differences in epistemic culture, publication incentives, and methodological training can make collaboration fragile. We invite research on research: studies of interdisciplinary teams, boundary work, translation practices, scientific networks, and knowledge governance. Karin Knorr Cetina’s notion of “epistemic cultures” is a useful reminder that laboratories and disciplines do not simply accumulate facts; they produce facts through distinctive practices and norms ([Cetina, 1999](#)). Synergy welcomes work that examines how evidence circulates from academia to policy and practice, how narratives become “facts” in public discourse, and how institutional incentives shape what is studied and what is ignored. Understanding synergy requires understanding the infrastructures that enable it.

In practical terms, Synergy is intended as a resource for multiple audiences. For scholars, it is a venue where ambitious integrative work can be evaluated fairly and read widely across fields. For practitioners, it is a repository of evidence and conceptual tools that can inform design, implementation, and evaluation. For policymakers, it is a space where findings and arguments are presented with transparency about uncertainty and with attention to constraints. For each audience, the promise of Synergy is the same: knowledge that is rigorous enough to trust and integrative enough to matter.

The journal’s editorial stance is built around a set of commitments that we invite authors to take seriously. First, rigor: methods must be appropriate and transparent; claims must be proportional to evidence; limitations must be acknowledged. Second, integration: manuscripts should engage relevant neighboring literatures through genuine conceptual and methodological dialogue. Third, reproducibility: workflows should be auditable and shareable when possible, and constraints should be explained when not. Fourth, openness to early discovery: novelty is not a gatekeeping criterion, and null results and replications are valued when well-executed. Fifth, pluralism and fairness: different kinds of insight are judged by consistent standards of credibility, and diverse voices are welcomed and respected. Sixth, human relevance: authors should make clear how their work helps us understand or address the challenges that define our time.

The contemporary knowledge ecosystem often rewards speed and spectacle over careful accumulation. Yet the problems that motivate Synergy are too consequential for a publication culture built on fragile findings and isolated disciplines. We need a journal that treats integration as a method, an object of study, and a public responsibility. We need a venue that can host collaboration among social scientists, humanists, engineers, data scientists, clinicians, educators, designers, administrators, and policymakers without flattening their differences. We need to respect local specificity while still asking for mechanisms that travel. We need to make room for careful replications and incremental progress, because progress is often incremental even when headlines are not.

To those considering submitting to Synergy in 2026, we offer a straightforward invitation. Bring your best interdisciplinary work, especially the work that does not fit comfortably elsewhere. Bring research that integrates theory and practice, local and global, individual and systemic. Bring papers that use advanced AI methods responsibly, apply causal inference with explicit assumptions, test classic theories against new data, discover new patterns through data-driven approaches, and treat measurement as a core scientific task. Bring systematic reviews and meta-analyses that help the field see what it knows and what it does not. Bring replications that strengthen the evidentiary foundation of social science. Bring case studies that reveal mechanisms, institutions, and lived experience with depth and rigor. Bring perspectives from regions and communities that are too often underrepresented. Bring insights that challenge dominant narratives—or confirm them—as long as the work is careful, transparent, and credible.

Synergy is ultimately a bet on a particular idea of progress: that durable prosperity is not only technological, not only economic, not only political, and not only cultural, but relational. It depends on our capacity to coordinate across difference, to translate knowledge across boundaries, to build institutions that can learn, and to design technologies that serve human ends rather than redefine them without consent. A journal cannot solve the world's problems. But it can shape what is thinkable, what is measurable, what is contestable, and what is credible. It can help create an evidence base strong enough to support difficult decisions, and broad enough to include the voices most affected by those decisions. That is the mission of Synergy.

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