

Reimagining how the Critical Realist Ways of Methodological Triangulation Might Allow for Resolving Paradigm In/Commensurability in Research Methodologies

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Abstract: For a long time research methodology scholars have tended to adopt the diverse and non-convergent positions when it comes to the possibility of the paradigm in/commensurability. However, not much is well researched and thus evidenced in practice, about the potential ways of addressing the binaries. This paper will report on the recently completed project where the reviewers seemed to take contrasting positions on the particular case of research methods. While in practice, the research could have been declared as anchored on mixed methods and the power of methodological triangulation, it seemed that the positionality of the reviewers conditioned the ways they would assess the final research report and thus make them differ in ways that would call for the external assessor/adjudicator beyond the review stage. The case, as it were, seemed to pose risk to the project itself. This would be the case of a raw deal for the project and from the reviewers comments, which indicated their limited understanding about the philosophical or social basis for one's work. Based on this experience, the paper then suggests how engaging research as the idea of being/ontology and becoming/epistemology might allow for the potential resolution points about research especially from the perspective of educational management and development fields of study and of practice.

Keywords: Meta-research/theory, Multidisciplinary scholarship, Methodological triangulation, Paradigm in/commensurability, Retroductive reasoning

1. Introduction

“Human society has not developed in accordance with a prearranged plan, but empirically, in the course of a long, complicated and contradictory struggle” (Trotsky, 1986, pp.24)

To scholars of humanities and social sciences, in particular, also to those of business and management studies (BMS), perhaps, what can be declared as science in research needs to be a subject of whether such a science can withstand immanent critiques. That means, the question of whether such a science can be questioned as non-propaganda, as the default position in not answering such a question could be declared as pseudoscience! The claim about “propaganda” arises when the power relations and materialist interests about the subject of inquiry might already be delineated, or still remain complex, and thus constituting pseudoscience. In social science, Chris Argyris (year) refers to the latter as the challenge about the espoused values and the values of use. In more of the social realist scientists, namely, Margaret Archer, 1995, Dwayi, 2022, 2023, who draw on Rhoys Bhaskar, (1975) critical realist philosophy, the values laden concerns, claims and issues about social practices need to be delineated into the nexus of theory-practice, the theory-research, the research-development if any scholarly endeavour is to reach maturity. It is, therefore, the latter point that the axioms and postulations in this paper emerge as the main arguments for paradigm in/commensurability in research methodology (the philosophy about research, expressed in the research design, events and processes) and in research methods (the tools and techniques). In any watertight case about a social practice and its powerful explanations, perhaps the question about the methods (the meta-theory) needs to be foregrounded even in such fields of study as BMS. Such a question needs to have debates and conversations about the pursuit of ontology. The latter refers to how the matter of meta-methods needs to be foregrounded towards the required understanding of, and for the powerful explanation about, the philosophy/-ies of use. Some scholars have been grappling with this matter as the challenge of knowledge wars (Clegg, 2005), and of paradigm in/commensurability (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), which, for the critical realist philosophers (Bhaskar *ibid*, Archer *ibid*, Dwayi *ibid*) all such arguments point to the challenges of surface versus deep ontology, of epistemic relativism versus fallacy, and of judgemental rationality versus the actual collapse of the natural necessity (in the subsequent part of this paper, I try to explain what I mean by these concepts as forms of methods about methods, that is, as the meta-theory, in research).

In light of the observations about human development and as briefly alluded to by Trotsky (1986)'s assertions about the dialectical materialism and science, for example, while the plans about human development are always necessary, their limitations become emergent at the point of situational logics. Such can be the incompatibilities of the choices to be made against the original plan. Any research endeavour, therefore, needs to problematise the taken for granted claims about the application of research, when such claims can appear to

be drawing more from the de-ontological positions and the self-referential explanations about the subject of inquiry. This paper cites the case study, only for illustration purposes, by making theory and research practice as analytically distinct, only where research methodology, on one hand, is a structural system/arrangement, and the theory, thereof, on the other, is a cultural system of beliefs, norms, values and standards about the structure. The complexity then become more expressed when each of the two is enacted by agency (a human system of choices or none choices, projects or the absence of). Therefore, the value of the expositions from this paper are not only about the first two elements of the reproduction and understanding about the subject of inquiry, but about what might be the broadening and advancement of research in the BMS field, and thereby ensuring alignment in the Theory-Methodology-Practical Program chain!

In the rest of the paper, I, therefore, explain and discuss the reimagining the research methodologies in the critical realist ways of methodological triangulation, as structured below,

- The conceptual framework and context profiling from which the case emerges. This section refers to What-How-Why of research methodologies as the subject of contestation in contemporary times.
- The Case, an assessment practice that could be understood and explained as the case of knowledge wars, and thus a potential illustration of how to manage assessment by resolving paradigm in/commensurability. Part of this is to foreground how the critical realist perspective allows for the better understanding and explanation about of research methodology as constitutive of surface and deep ontology. The main argument and the main thesis emerges at this point, which allows for the value of meta-theory beyond the limitations of the inductive and deductive logic.
- The social realist explanation about the case where the dimensions of methodological triangulation (completion, confirmation and retroductive reasoning) are made explicit in order to explain the value of meta-theory (methods about methods).
- The call for transformative agency as the advancement of research about research methodology (the philosophy about methods), including why a focus on ontological realism as the idea of being and becoming ought to constitute progressive choices and the socially emancipatory and reconstructive projects, even for such research projects that focus on the BMS fields.

2. Surfacing the Ontological Assumptions About the Nexus of Theory and Research Practice

In the global space, what is central and peripheral about research, and thus of practice, and vice versa, has received much attention in recent years (cf. Harney, Hanlon and Mandarin, 2020; Gendron & Rodrigue, 2021). As such, the concerns, claims and issues about the dangers of tight boundary objects (Harney et al., *ibid*), and of tight boundary gatekeeping (Gendron et al., *ibid*) are not new to scholars who deal with the social world as the case of power relations and the materialist interests. These observations point to the rapidly-evolving interdisciplinary field of meta-research, the contestations about research methods as the subject of immanent critiques. The philosophy of research (research methodology) no longer needs to be understood as the uncontested truth. The need for scholarship which can foreground the cutting-edge multidisciplinary approaches in world that is fast becoming more complex and crisis prone is urgent. This is the world that public life needs to be understood and explained by means of not just clear policy and governance strategies and tactics, but also by agile and adaptive research leadership practices. The value for the advancement of knowledge ought to be beyond the straight bullet approach, the ability to manage the nexus of research and practice, engaging the power and knowledge dynamics, whose roots are the inherent contestations of research cultures and careers.

The concerns, claims and issues about the use of methods or limited use thereof in research practices are not new but as old as the research profession itself. The spread of use is not just research, as expressed in the daily research practices in the hallowed walls of university education, but also as evidenced in journal editing, in the journal editorial boards and by the reviewers. It is, therefore, quite imperative to recall why Kuhn (1970) popularised the matter of paradigm in/commensurability by claiming that science guided by one paradigm would be incommensurable with science developed under a different paradigm. By this statement he meant that there is no common measure for assessing the different scientific theories. However, the matter of paradigm in/commensurability becomes problematised in contemporary philosophies, namely, critical realist philosophy (to be described in the subsequent sections,) as the challenge of conflation and reification.

- Firstly, as the conflation challenge, the assumption that methods and methodology are mutually constitutive. Calling on the body of work by Huisman, (2024: 260), notes that methods are tools,

processes or used in research while methodology, the research designs, is about the overall strategy, guide or plan to arrive at the answer to the research question(s). The challenge of conflation emerges, then, when the two are understood and used interchangeably. Research methods don't necessarily equate to the methodology which need to serve as the basis of the former, as the base structure.

- Secondly, the failure to distinguish the methods from the methodology is to assume that methods constitute the answer to the methodology, which can then be the challenge of reification. Delineating the two as analytically distinct in ways that the methodology, or the philosophy of methods, upon which the research is designed, ought to be beyond the immanent critique, otherwise the exercise will be about debasing the structure.

These two point then to the value of the third layer about the scholarship about methods and methodology. The first, is the matters of the inability to understand the dichotomous nature of subject and objects. Contemporary scholarship in the latter, for example, Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009), and quite recently, Huisman (2024) argue about what they regard as the tight boundary objects and the tight boundary gatekeeping in research practice and determines what is to be treated as peripheral or as central. Of great interest, therefore, and for the purpose of the discussion in this paper, the second point, is what can be the default position and the faulty consciousness of being and becoming. That is, what can appear as de-ontological position and the self-referential explanations about research methods and thus its methodology.

2.1 The Reference Case About Knowledge Contestations

The case as briefly described below, was not only about the Research Methodology as the assessment and evaluation aspects, but the crisis moments which would be experienced at the levels of Doctoral Program Coordinator, the PhD Supervisor, and worse still by the PhD candidate.

Table 1: The Examiners concerns on the use of mixed methods and the challenge of paradigm in/commensurability in research methodology/philosophy

Does the project show that the candidate is sufficiently acquainted with the appropriate methods and techniques of research for the award of a degree?			
Examiner 1 (15/05/2022)	Examiner 2 (15/05/2023)	Examiner 2 (11/10/2023)	Examiner 4 (20/11/2023)
This remains the area of strength of the project. The student displays a <u>clear understanding of Critical Realism (Bhaskar) and Social Realism (Archer). Critical Realism acknowledges the challenges to the achievement of social justice.</u> Adequate and extensive references are made to historical powers in the generation of events and experiences in a historically black South African university. I also recognise the tensions and inconsistencies in understanding of experiences.	This is an important chapter that addresses the research design and methodology, therefore, it should provide clear methodology and data collection and analysis techniques use in the study to address the research questions. <u>Inability to articulate the research methodology and techniques negatively impact the interpretation of the findings.</u>	The candidate seems fixated on defending that this is 'not a mixed methods study', but then <u>failing to provide the reader with evidence on what it is then?</u> The candidate mentions the study being a 'single case study', but in the report itself this aspect is not adequately forthcoming, discussed and defended. Even though case studies are essentially interpretive in nature, the case study methodology broadly has proven to be quite flexible and can be used in somewhat <u>pliable paradigmatic permutations.</u>	In my assessment, I worked from the premise that <u>there is no such thing as 'the perfect thesis'.</u> Would I have approached this study/Report differently? Probably. Would I have responded differently to the examiners initial reports? Yes. But this is not my thesis and not my research journey. <u>Doctoral work is a form of researcher education that is (hopefully) ongoing even beyond the doctorate itself.</u>

The contents of Table 1 do not form the main focus of the discussion in this paper, except that they serve as reference in order to surface the main concerns, claims and issues about the methods about methods (meta-theory) in a social sciences oriented scholarship project. For example, in this case of examining a Doctoral Thesis, Examiner 2 (15/05/2022) seemed to maintain his/her standpoint in both cases of 15/05/2022 and 11/10/2022, by rejecting the corrections twice. which then invoked the arbitration process where Examiner 4 (20/11/2024) had to be called upon. The case for analysis, which is at the core of the main argument in this paper, refers to the problematics of measurements per Examiner 2, compared to Examiner 1 (15/05/2022) and Examiner 4

(11/10/2023). (Examiner 3 does not constitute part of the Table as the Report thereof concurred with Examiner 2).

As part of the arbitration process, Examiner 4 provided the context on what seemed to be the major concerns, claims and issues about the examination process, as indicated in the following extract (direct source about the extract is not provided in order to protect the researcher and examiner's identity),

"The study had been examined twice before by a constituted examination panel consisting of three examiners in the first round and two in the second round. Based on my understanding of the examination outcome and the information provided to me, the examiners could not reach consensus in either of the rounds of examination, which is why I was asked to provide an assessment based on a holistic understanding of the thesis work presented (both in the original and the reworked formats), the candidate's response to the initial examiner reports, and all the examination reports that were submitted in both rounds of examination (all of which were provided to me)".

The issue that then ensues is whether there could have been a resolution point between Examiners 4 and 1 at the point about the logic, the power matrix and the ontology about assessment process. To scholars of critical realist philosophy, such can be the case about methodological triangulation, that is, beyond the confirmation and completion of the concerns, claims and issues about the social practice at the point of research, which would constitute both the inductive and deductive logics), but the questions about the idea of being, which can be embedded in power dynamics. The immanent critique of the examiners' points then lead the critical realist researcher to the value of retroductive reasoning, which can therefore help unlock the tight boundary objects and gatekeeping about the assessment/evaluation process.

The Case is constitutive of the conversation about the examiners, with specific reference about the methodology (the philosophy of methods as the meta-theory). The hard data (about Examiner 2, on two cycles of assessment, and also as arbitrated by Examiner 4, can be argued as reflecting on the practice of science and the epistemic status of the knowledge it produces (Blackie 2022). This case allows for the potential understanding both of critical realism or social realism as the lenses from which to think about the social phenomenon as the subject of inquiry. Such a lens, preoccupies itself with the notion of a social practice, and thus as a subject of critical realist oriented research, as beyond what works and doesn't, but about the conditions of constraints and enablement in ways that can be delineating as the interplays of structural, cultural and human systems. A study that draws on the critical realist philosophy is there anchored on the transcendental question/argument,

What conditions must have influenced the Examiner/s to assess/evaluate the project in the way that they did?

In critical realist terms, such a question, and for making the transcendental argument, then seek to address beyond-ness as deep ontology, as against surface ontology, epistemic fallacy as against epistemic relativism, and judgemental rationality as against the actual collapse of the natural necessity. Beyond-ness in this case refers to engaging the default position and the self-referential explanations that can arise from being preoccupied with the methods at the risk of understanding the philosophy behind the methods. In that situation, while the claims by Examiner 2 would be necessary their logic, and thus the point about incompatibilities, is when such a logic is debased from Examiner 1 positionality about the value of meta-theory, and hence the potential resolution point by Examiner 4. The purpose of the analysis/description and discussion/developed insights for such a study is therefore, to challenge the mainstreamed ways of thinking-making-doing about research, and therefore, practice.

3. The Critical Realism Philosophy and Paradigm In/Commensurability

The main axiom about measurement, and thus assessment and evaluation of a social practice, which is drawn predominantly from the mainstreamed ways of thinking-making-doing about the idea of being is that whatever is measured improves, when it is reported it improves more! However, what if the measurement itself is problematised and let alone the object of measure?

For example, Kuhn's (1970) pioneering work on the notion of paradigm indicates intra-community rivalry when anomalies (i.e., empirical results that are not consistent with prevailing theories) take place on a growing frequency. This has been an interesting question for scholars of social; realist explanatory program who draw on critical realist philosophy. For them, the main issue around paradigm in/commensurability. The critical realist philosophers challenge the view that, "It should be obvious when we can see it!" But what if it's there but can't be seen? For example, the case of what can happen in the forest and the trees, when the tree can fall and one

can't hear about such an act? For critical realist philosophers, this ontological question is the matter of the transitive objects (those objects that, by their very nature, are available for our understanding and explanations) and the intransitive objects (the opposite, and thus the challenge in the idea of being and becoming).

As I explain elsewhere (Dwayi *ibid*), the three domains of reality are delineated in terms of the surface (the domain of the empirical and of the actual) versus deep ontology (the domain of the real). As also supported in the contemporary body of knowledge, for example by Boughey & McKenna, 2021, in critical realist studies the distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches falls away as researchers begin by using data that is empirical in nature to move to the level of the Real, the deepest layer of reality at which the mechanisms they are interested in are located. Data can be qualitative in that it consists of a record of observations and experiences obtained through, for example, interviews or it can be quantitative in that, for example, it describes the frequency at which events occur. Historically, quantitative studies have attempted to prove the existence of an ultimate reality through inferential statistics. Qualitative studies usually draw on relativism and thus acknowledge the existence of ultimate realities. Since Bhaskar's (1978, 1989) critical realism combines a relativist epistemology in the sense that it acknowledges we can all experience and observe the world in different ways with the existence of an absolute reality which can be reached using inference via empirical data. The empirical data used in a critical realist study can be qualitative or quantitative. The following brief description of the basic three basic tenets of critical realism, therefore, point to what can be the assessors or evaluators or examiners identity and their tight boundary positions about knowledge, with Table 1 as the frame of reference. With this introductory point as granted, I then move on to discuss the three points about the case above as deep ontology versus surface, as judgemental rationality versus the actual collapse of the natural necessity and as epistemic relativism versus fallacy in the dialectics of the Being and Becoming! Bhaskar *ibid*, argues for how the three holy sins about the idea of being (ontology) need to be understood against what he argues as the unholy trinity.

3.1.1 Judgemental Rationality, as opposed to the actual collapse of the natural necessity

Judgemental Rationality, as opposed to the actual collapse of the natural necessity, refers to the realisation that epistemological relativism does not preclude deciding "rationality" between rival theories about what is happening and why. Judgemental Rationality in this context (Table 1), refers to a form of assessment, which couldn't resolve the dichotomy of subject and object as the challenge of conflation and reification. In both cases, Examiner 2's views seemed to be falling into this trap of the default position and the faulty consciousness of being and becoming about the project. While the claims at this point could be described as the empirical data as the domain of reality, calling on the power of trans-factuality, cross checking Examiners 1 and 2 claims already pointed to what are the discrepancies of the examination processes, albeit as surface ontology. For Examiner 2, in both cases of 15/05/2022 and 10/11/2023, the balance between 'making a theoretical case' and 'making an empirical case' seemed to be the major challenge and hence the resolution point by Examiner 4. This point then take the discussion to the next two axioms out of the three un/holy sins as Bhaskar *ibid* postulates.

3.2 Epistemic Relativism, as opposed to Epistemic Fallacy

Epistemic Relativism as opposed to Epistemic Fallacy refers to the acceptance that what we know is bounded by time and place. Epistemology/Epistemic Relativism, the recognition of the constructed and partial nature of people's interpretation of the world. The Actual Domain at this level of reality point to the assessment process and events, where the Examiner 2 seemed to remain located, and hence epistemic fallacy. The challenge of the default position and the faulty consciousness of Being and Becoming. The de-ontological positions and the self-referential explanations about the subject, therefore, become more expressed at this level, which then challenges both the deductive and inductive logics at the points of surface ontology.

3.3 Ontological Realism/Deep Reality, as Opposed to Ontological Monovalence

Ontological realism refers to the recognition of the independent, material reality of the world! Ontological realism/deep reality as opposed to ontological monovalence is about the acknowledgement of an independent, multi-level and complex "reality" irreducible to human attempts to capture it in once-and-for-all discourses. The case therefore refers to what can be argued as the misses in the perspective of the impossible Examiner 2! This is the realist level in the domain of reality, and thus of meta-theory, where Examiner 2 is "missing the sound of a fallen tree in the forest" because there seems to be no evidence (the empirical and actual domains) thereof.

4. The Power of a Social Realist Explanatory Program Allows for Methodological Triangulation

The reality about the Case points to the possibility that there is hardly any singular approach or method, either rooted in theory or practice, to solving the current problems about research. It is a matter of reaching consensus, the logic about the case at the point of judgemental rationality. However, such rationality remains inadequate until it is aligned with epistemic relativism and with ontological realism. About the Assessor 2 case, such a situation, for a period of almost two years post submission, attests to the legacy of class, power and privilege in the age of the decoloniality. Solutions ought to be a combination of options, beyond the necessary (confirmation and completion phases), which can always, unfortunately, falter at the point of the inadequacies. This is the major point about dialectical relationship of a cultural and human systems, where research, as a practice, is thus values laden, is not neutral, apolitical and asocial. Therefore, an important point emerges about the contestations of research methodology and paradigm in/commensurability, how the matter of metatheory was being innovative and developmental about the project.

4.1 Abducting the Assessor Claims, a Deconstruction Exercise About the Methods About Methods

In order to move from the analysis of data that allowed me to identify observations and experiences at the level of the Empirical, and events at the level of the actual to identify mechanisms at play at the level of the Real, I used the inferential processes of retroduction and abduction. In response to a statement to the Assessor Report, for example, that, *"The candidate seems fixated on defending that this is 'not a mixed methods study', but then failing to provide the reader with evidence on what it is then?"*, led me to the use of retroduction involved asking the question,

'What must the world be really like for the Assessor as the social actor to identify the student's theses and its 'claims' as problematic?

In order to respond to this question, I needed to problematise the notion of 'the claims' as a social construct and acknowledge that 'the claims' could be understood and expressed differently by the three assessors. The identification of the claims as 'problematic' could simply be one reading of the assessors belief systems and norms about the project, which ought to be understood and explained as not neutral, value free, and detached from the power dynamics about knowledge as contested. Further to Palmer et al., (2018) and (Blackie 2019) about the authenticity and validity of assessment tasks, the challenge about the latter positions are always at the points, not just of judgemental rationality and epistemic relativism (surface ontology or de-ontological positions and their self-referential explanations), but of ontological realism (deep ontology as stratified, causally efficacious and emergent, read, Dwayi *ibid*). Based on Table 1 as the empirical data, there remained a disjuncture between Assessor 1 and 2 and (judgemental rationality at the domain of the empirical data) and further per the same position by Assessor 2 (epistemic relativism at the domain of the actual events and processes about the examination). Therefore, questioning the authenticity in assessment/examination/evaluation practices, can be the fallacy in the field (namely, the BMS field), the fallacy in the research procedure (Research) and thus surfacing the extent of unfairness (to the client) on the basis of assessment evidence which seem to feed into the de-ontological position about assessment and their related self-referential explanations!

4.2 Engaging Intellectual Laziness is to Question What Appears as Surface Ontology

The points about the necessary (methods in research and thus in any practice) and what can be the incompatibilities of the related claims as logic (judgemental rationality) thus ought to be at the core of any discussions about the problematics of methodological triangulation (confirmation, completion and retroductive reasoning). Such should be the call academic integrity as the point of the cultural capital in any scholarship project. Therefore, beyond deductive and inductive logics, both abduction and retroductive reasoning allow for new spaces that can question the validity of knowledge claims, the methods against methods, as engaging the epistemological positions which can easily play out as intellectual laziness. Therefore, Methodological Triangulation as the means to surface what is behind the silences and superficialities about the subject of inquiry as confirmation and completion through mixed methods (deduction and inductive logics). The main concern for social realist researcher and practitioner is to provide the compelling accounts for ontological realism (the realms of new possibility in what is always the nature of open, dynamic, complex social systems), as against epistemological relativism (time and space about the social world as a paradigm), and further to being /emergence and becoming/change over time.

Abduction involved using theory, mostly from the assessment and evaluation practices in higher education to 'see' the statements in the reports differently and, thus, identify mechanisms that might not otherwise have been apparent. Comments about the learner's engagement of methodology, for example, allowed me to use theory on evaluation in program/project management in order to identify mechanisms that contributed to the emergence of the statements themselves. In identifying mechanisms at the level of the Real, I was alert to the existence of structures (both macro and micro) and discourses. A statement such as, "*the candidate seems fixated on defending that this is 'not a mixed methods study', but then failing to provide the reader with evidence on what it is then*" allowed me to identify such a statement as informed by a structure, the tight boundary objects and gatekeeping tendencies about the examination practices, which could be "judged" as subscribing to the black box and its pragmatic logic. This then called for arbitration by Examiner 4, point to the credibility or the potency of retroductive reasoning (an account for the conditions of assessment) versus inductive and deductive inferences about the case.

4.3 The Power of Retroductive Reasoning and the Domain of the Real

As explained elsewhere, namely, Maya Lambovska (2023), the major concerns about research methodology, the critical realist perspective allows for surfacing what is behind the shine, as the silences and superficialities, as the dark side of program assessment and evaluation. Deep ontology/ontological realism allows for the notion of methodology as stratified, causally efficacious (that is, the weighted ways of the Thesis as a structure, its examination as contested in value systems, and the Agency both of the Examiner and the student with regard to the latter two points), and as emergent (PhD not only as the events and process, and how observed and experienced, but also as the product of the structural generative mechanisms, over time).

5. Surfacing Meta-Theory Allows for Resolving Paradigm In/Commensurability in Research Methodologies

Transformative agency in research methodology ought to concern itself with the value of research methods beyond what works and doesn't, which would be judgemental and thus a cul de sac, but consciousness about the conditions of enablement and of constraints. Improvement as the purpose of examination process ought to take place in ways that can resolve the nexus of theory and practice, of research and development, and thus of (assessment) policy and implementation. In this regard, the Examiner 2 must have been constrained at the points of the two domains and also at how thinking of realist reality can open up the new realms of possibilities. Therefore, such should be the value of Agency that seeks to question the tight boundary objects about assessment and thus the gatekeeping tendencies. Transformative and reflexive praxis in research methodology therefore ought to be about unlocking the boundary objects and the gatekeeping tendencies through what can be the iterative processes which are emergent about the domains of reality and in ways that can translate the unholy to holy trinity. Such processes ought to lead to researchers' increased consciousness about the trappings of research and practices, based on the questionable ontological assumptions about the idea of Being and of Becoming.

5.1 Advanced Scholarship In Research Methods Ought to Resolve the Current Concerns About Paradigm Incommensurability

While the dangers of tight boundary objects, and of tight boundary gatekeeping are acknowledged, the immanent critique thereof calling on the critical realist oriented techniques of abduction and of retroductive reasoning (beyond the deductive and inductive reasoning). The critical realist ways as reimagined is when such ways are anchored on the three basic tenets of ontological realism beyond the limitations of epistemic relativism and judgemental rationality, and without being too prescriptive and deterministic! Such holy trinity allows the analyst to engage the tranquilised obviousness (the tight boundary objects, the tight boundary gatekeeping) about assessment, which always derive from the mainstreamed ways of thinking-making-doing. While the dangers of tight boundary objects, and of tight boundary gatekeeping are acknowledged, the immanent critique thereof calls on the critical realist techniques of abduction and of retroductive reasoning (beyond the deductive and inductive reasoning).

6. Integration, Reflections and Conclusion

In this paper, I discussed what can be the challenges of research methodology and methods in the social worlds when the positionality of the examiner can derive from the de-ontological positions and the self-referential explanations. Such can be the case of the default-positions and the faulty consciousness of being and becoming in the social world, with research practices and the assessment thereof as the case in point. At the core of

university education, assessment becomes the currency for/of quality, and the assessors/examiners, as actors, the arbiters of quality. However, there needs to be initiatives that seek to problematise the taken for granted claims about the application of research, when such claims can appear to draw more from surface ontology than deep and ontological realism, For the latter to be effectively possible, there seems to be the need for abduction and retroductive reasoning beyond the mainstreamed ways of thinking-making-doing as deductive and inductive logics.

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