

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

METHODOLOGY:

RESEARCHING HUMANLY / RESEARCHING AS BEING HUMAN

PhD seminar, in English, online, free of charge, 29 November-1 December 2021

In a forthcoming book, Monika Kostera (2022) describes the imaginoscope, a device for observing and experiencing objects and events taking place with diverse uses of the imagination. This seminar will build on the idea of co-constructing human researching and will examine available possibilities for identifying imaginative and inspired potentials of organizing and organizational life.

The scientific approach we shall use to systematically achieve this aim is phenomenal complexity theory (Letiche, 2000), a perspective on social science that prioritizes human experience and consciousness. Concerned with understanding complex relationships more than with uncovering causes and effects, it sees societies, organizations and communities, foremost as the shared experience of the Other. Phenomenology puts an emphasis on the “lifeworld”. Research rooted in this perspective reveals and describes how people make sense of the world. Unlike much of modernist social science, phenomenal complexity theory does not disregard human consciousness --- the great embarrassment for functionalist theories. On the contrary, it seeks to both understand human being and to tap into it, to understand the world.

Ethnography is a research stance and methodological approach particularly well suited to the purpose of such an approach. The word “ethnography” comes from the Greek *ethnos*, which signifies “a people” and *graphy*, which means “writing” - ethnography means writing about people (Kostera and Harding, 2021). The methods favored by ethnographers aim at seeing, experiencing, and understanding human interactions and relationships. The researcher then needs to make sense of the collected material, by connecting cues derived from the field to frames and stories that serve as connecting devices (Weick, 1995). Every situation has many possible meanings which can crystallize in interpretation.

While the more conventional approaches privilege looking for patterns, structures, and emerging categories, this is not the only possible choice. A more radically phenomenological stance calls for researchers to focus on understanding over explanation (Feyerabend, 1975). This seminar will aim at supporting and nurturing this latter direction, not necessarily intended to replace more traditional theorizing, but as an interesting, and insightful enhancement. We will guide the students in what the poet John Keats calls ‘negative capability’, positioned as an approach to ethnographic reflection and interpretation. It is a way of abstaining from the drive to explain what we do not understand. Instead, we can remain attentive and focused. This way it is possible to gain new insights, by way of refusing to immediately recognize and know.

Participants will develop the skills and awareness needed to engage in an Ethnography of Looking. Art theorist and artist John Berger has explained that seeing is more than just taking in something by the sense of sight; ‘seeing’ establishes our place in the world. We see and we are aware that we can be seen. Looking at images and more generally, at all objects, can bring the observer into a conversation with the observed and with other observers. The ethnographic method called ‘non-participant observation’ is about active looking and focusing on the immediate moment as intensely as possible, wherein “seeing comes before words,” which is a good example of negative capability used as a research methodology, whereby all things can be seen afresh, without their names, and then, narrated anew, not necessarily in the same way as usually and not necessarily with the use of the everyday categories.

The three-day online workshop will consist of lectures interspersed with discussion sessions and exercises, aimed at showcasing and problematizing phenomenological ways of undertaking research, making sense of the field, and writing up the research experience in ways which privilege complexity, relationality, and engagement.

TO REGISTER & TAKE PART: You need to send a message to jean-luc.moriceau@imt-bs.eu, CC: antonia.heriot@univ-evry.fr, indicating your doctoral school, academic discipline, and proficiency in English language (poor/average/good). An attestation of participation will be delivered to Phd students participating to the three days.

References:

Feyerabend, Paul (1975) *Against Method*. London: New Left Books.
 Kostera, Monika (2022) *An Imaginoscope for Organizers*. Washington: Zer0 Books/ John Hunt, forthcoming.
 Letiche, Hugo (2000) Phenomenal Complexity Theory as informed by Bergson. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13(6): 545-557.
 Kostera, Monika and Nancy Harding (eds, 2021) *Organizational Ethnography*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

Convenors:

	<p>Monika Kostera is Professor Ordinaria of Organizational Sociology at University of Warsaw (PL) and Professor at IMT-BS. Her research interests include organizational imagination, disalienated work and organizational ethnography.</p>		<p>Jerzy Kociatkiewicz is Professor of HRM at IMT-BS. His research focus is on the experience of work and questions of organizational aesthetics.</p>
	<p>Hugo Letiche is Professor at IMT-BS and Research Professor at Nyenrode Business University. His research is focused on the ethnography of accountability and research methodology.</p>		<p>Jean-Luc Moriceau is Professor of Research Methods at IMT-BS. His research focusses on the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of qualitative research.</p>