TITLE: CREATIVITY, REFLEXIVITY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN ORGANIZATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Convenors:

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Organizational Ethnography (OE) nowadays faces a threefold challenge: to creatively explore changing and multifaceted organizations; to reflexively question the choices and assumptions which sustain the researchers’ relationships with people they interview and follow; to responsibly consider the relevance and impact of the research on the organizations and their members.

Creativity is “having the sense or quality of being created rather than imitated” (Janesick, 2001, 532). Researching creatively thus implies finding ways to see differently and discovering something new or unusual; using multifold sources of knowledge – mind, body and emotion – but also questioning taken-for-granted research practices by maintaining a critical approach (Breunlin & Regis, 2009).

Reflexivity means not only examining how researchers’ assumptions and actions influence others (Koning & Oio, 2013. Mahadevan, 2011), but also how the researchers’ body, feelings and emotions impact their interactions and engagement in the field (Turner & Norwood, 2013). From a critical perspective, finally, reflexivity requires researchers to be aware of their culture, discourse and ideology, and make explicit whether and why some individuals and groups might be marginalized by their research.

Responsibility implies to be sensitive to the ongoing constructed relationship between researchers, participants and other stakeholders, in a way that guarantees transparency, equity, and integration of divergent interests (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). Responsibility also means considering the impact of researchers’ accounts on the organizational practices, on their development or change.

The subtheme aims to provide room for discussion about these challenges and their impact on the OE headwork, fieldwork and textwork (Van Maanen, 2011). We therefore invite both theoretical and methodological papers that focus on the challenges of being creative, reflexive and responsible at all stages of an OE research. We would be interested in papers with a much more critical approach than traditional ethnography. Among others, we welcome contributions on the following issues:

- How to deal with creativity, surprise and discovery in approaching problems, using research tools and writing OE?
- What does it mean to be reflexive in OE headwork, fieldwork or textwork? Are there specific tools and settings for enhancing reflexivity? How do feelings, emotions and body facilitate or impede the researcher’s reflexivity?
- How to address responsibility and ethical issues in designing, conducting and writing OE? How to responsibly deal with the research relevance and impact on the participants’ and other stakeholders’ agenda?
References

Biographical notes
Laura Galuppo is Assistant Professor in Work and Organizational Psychology at the Psychology Department, Catholic University of Milan, Italy. Her current research focuses on social sustainability in organizations, organizational learning and collaborative management research. Recent publications are contributions to Social Responsibility Journal, Systemic Practice and Action Research and the European Journal of Psychology of Education.

Geneviève Musca is Associate Professor in Strategy and Organization, Department of Management, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense (France). Her research focuses on competences dynamics, sensemaking and team management in unexpected and fast-changing environments, as well as on issues related to qualitative research methods. Geneviève coordinated the "Darwin" research project sponsored by France’s National Research Agency (an in situ, real-time ethnographic study of a climbing expedition across the Cordillera Darwin range in Patagonia, www.projet-darwin.com). She has published in academic peer reviewed journals, such as m@n@gement, Revue Française de Gestion, International Journal of Project Management.

Linda Rouleau is Professor at the management department of HEC Montreal. She teaches strategic management and organization theories. Her research work focuses on middle managers, strategic sensemaking and strategy tools in pluralistic contexts. She is co-head of the GéPS (Study Group of strategy-as-practice, HEC Montreal). In the last few years, she has published in peer reviewed journals such as Academy of Management Review, Organization Science, Journal of Management Studies, Human Relations, etc.