

Re-Examining the role of Spaces in Collaborative Work

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Project description:

In today's working environment that requires organisations to attract the best minds and bring together people from different sectors, backgrounds and fields, the number of nomadic workers has rapidly been increased. Organisational and inter-organisational members are able to work from different locations and time zones responding to their roles and achieving the organisational aims (Fayard and Weeks, 2011). This decrease of work ties to a specific location calls for a 'spatial turn' (van Marrejick and Yanow, 2010) and re-examination of the role of space within organisations and between collaborating organisations.

This PhD research project will re-examine the concept of space in organisations. Some organisational studies suggest that there are physical, social and physiological spaces (Hernes, 2004), some others physical and psychosocial spaces (Kourti, 2017) while other studies propose the existence of mutual, restricted and negotiating spaces (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). We are particularly interested in a conceptualisation of space as a multiple space which emphasises the co-existence of different types of spaces. This may include a consideration of the physical and material organisation or architecture of space, and the relational aspect of space as lived and experienced by the actors (i.e. social and psychological characteristics of the relationships, interactions and experiences that happen in space). We are also interested in proposals that examine how spaces facilitate or obstruct intra- and inter-organisational collaborative work. Our use of intra-organisational spaces includes work spaces and relationships within an organisation (e.g. Ngoasong & Grove, 2016); while inter-organisational spaces include partnerships and alliances (e.g. Ngoasong, 2011). We are also open to proposals that challenge current perceptions of space and offer innovative theoretical and/or methodological ways to explore the concept of space in intra- and inter-organisational collaborative settings.

The successful candidate will demonstrate a good understanding of the relevance or value of the context(s) of their proposed research. Potential contexts include, but are not limited to:

- industry sectors, such as social/healthcare, tourism, housing, education, agribusiness
- geographic focus, such as developed or developing country and international perspectives (e.g. international agencies collaborating with national/local organisations).
- multi-stakeholder or inter-organisational collaborations that are either public service oriented, commercially-driven or hybrid in nature

Proposed Theory and Methodology

The final theoretical framework and methodology will reflect the detailed research topic, research questions and strengths of the candidate. It is most likely that a qualitative research approach will be used based on focus groups, in-depth interviews and participant observation. However, we are open to proposals that incorporate mixed method approaches.

About the supervisors:

Isidora's current research focuses on organisational and inter-organisational settings and follows a practice-based perspective to explore issues, such as identity development, traditional and emergent working designs, working spaces and knowledge creation; and examines their theoretical and practical implications for the management of organisations and collaborative work.

Michael's research interest is in the links between entrepreneurship, community/collective action and development. He has examined global public-private partnerships for access to medication, the nature of stakeholder participation in the development of tourism and energy industries and the resilience of organizations.

References / readings:

- Fayard, A.L. & Weeks, J. (2011). Who Moved My Cube? Creating workspaces that actually foster collaboration. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(7): 103-110.
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- Ngoasong, M. Z. & Groves, W. N. (2016). Determinants of personal resilience in the workplace: nurse prescribing in an African work context. *Human Resource Development International*, 19(3): 229-244.
- Ngoasong, M. Z. (2011). Transcalar Networks for Policy Transfer and Implementation: The Case of Global Health Policies for Malaria and HIV/AIDS in Cameroon, *Health Policy and Planning*, 26 (1): 63-72.
- Van Marrewijk, A. & Yanow, D. (2010). The spatial turn in organizational studies. In, A. Van Marrewijk and D. Yanow (eds.), *Organisational spaces: Rematerializing the workaday world*, pp. 1-18. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishers.