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**Key theme:**

**Reflection in Action:**
Taking Stock of 10 Years of Ethnography Symposia

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Where’s Cinderella? The Study of Emotions in Project Teams

Emotions, traditionally viewed as an irrational element of the rational organization, have protractedly been left out of organization studies; very much akin to the fictitious Cinderella who had to be hidden from the public eye at the ball (Mann, 1999). Since the mid-1990s, however, the tempo of research on the role of emotions at work has increased, reconciling emotionality with rationality, rather than dichotomizing them (Grandey, 2008). Surprisingly enough, this trend has stopped to be extended to the context of project teams, defined as a group of professionals coming from different disciplines to collaborate on assigned or original projects of temporary nature (Sundstorm et al., 1990). Indeed, project teams have turned into an integral part of the organizational arena as organizations have become increasingly ‘projecticised’ (Packendorff, 2002). An extensive body of research has burgeoned to address this phenomenal project orientation, but focusing on technical issues of projects. Hence, despite being previously noted as the key determinants of project outcomes, ‘soft sides’ of projects such as the team members’ emotions, are not yet fully included in the picture of project work (Scott-Young & Samson, 2008).

This prospective doctoral study is an attempt to redress such gap by investigating the nature of emotions in project work through the way emotions are enacted collectively over time in the network of project relations and experienced individually as part of every-day activities. Drawing on a social constructionist perspective, where emotions are viewed as social constructs rather than inborn biological phenomena (Lupton, 1998), this study will make use of observations on the project site, field notes and interviews as well as project documentation. Subsequently, thematic and narrative analyses will be conducted to analyze the data at the collective and individual levels respectively. At present, due to the early stage of this PhD study, the specific context of the investigation is not yet fully decided but will be negotiated in the spring to summer 2015. It is likely to become a study on a project team in the manufacturing industry in Iran or one in a global IT company, as both options are currently feasible. The study is expected to make valuable contributions both empirically and practically by responding to the unceasing calls for more comprehensive research on the ‘soft sides’ of project management (Scott-Young & Samson, 2008; Gu et al., 2013) as well as by identifying the potential reasons
underlying the high rates of project failure (Atkinson, 1999) to further provide possible solutions for struggling practitioners.

Key words: emotions, project teams, ethnography, organizational narratives

Bibliography:


