

Research Seminars - Fall 2024

Time: 13:15-14:45

Room: R1-343

Zoom link: <https://mdh-se.zoom.us/j/6740265657>

The NOMP research group aims at co-creating cross-boundary knowledge about organizing processes with the purpose of contributing to responsible organizational, managerial and working life transitions. In so doing, the group explores contemporary organizational challenges related, but not limited to, different forms of management, gender and diversity, urban sustainability, leadership, the changing nature of work, and the implementing of new technologies. Examples of such approaches include sociomaterial perspectives, practice theory, posthumanism, discourse theory and other interpretative approaches. In their work, they advance engaged scholarly practices collaboratively with actors in and outside of Academia, in close proximity to practice, and with the ambition of including a plurality of voices.

Organiser:

Michela Cozza (michela.cozza@mdu.se), Associate Professor, Department of Organisation and Management, MDU

9 September 2024 - 13:15-14:45

Tommy Jensen (Stockholm University, Sweden)

Capitalism: The Organization of Inequality and Environmental Destruction

14 October 2024 - 13:15-14:45

Maira Babri (Mälardalen University, Sweden)

The Role of Place in Sustainability Research and Organizational Practice

11 November 2024 - 13:15-14:45

Thomas Wahl, Anette Hallin, Christoffer Andersson, Chris Ivory (Mälardalen University, Sweden)

Re-imagining humanness in the context of AI: The performative imaginaries of popular science discourse

9 December 2024 – 13:15-14:45

Nina H. Kivinen (Department of Civil and Industrial Engineering, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden)

Enchanting encounters in ordinary writing for children

9 September 2024

Tommy Jensen (Stockholm University, Sweden)

Capitalism: The Organization of Inequality and Environmental Destruction

Capitalism and class are two concepts that have once again become relevant – capitalism is expanding, and the human and ecological damages are escalating. It seems unstoppable and appears to be natural. However, this is not the case because capitalism is a human construct. This book aims to demystify capitalism by showing how it is organized. In this way, counter-strategies to overthrow capitalism can become possible.

Tommy Jensen is Professor in Business and Administration at the Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University and holds a PhD from Umeå School of Business and Economics. His research interests are in the areas of 'organization theory, power and ethics', 'method(s) and arts', 'capitalism, social justice and sustainable development', which might be summarized as: An interest in the intersection between private and public spheres and the social and environmental problems, as well as opportunities, that this intersection gives rise to.

14 October

Maira Babri (Mälardalen University, Sweden)

The Role of Place in Sustainability Research and Organizational Practice

While management and organization studies have discussed sustainability for decades, place has lost its natural place in these studies, creating a research field marked by an apparent groundlessness in relation to sustainability. In contrast, place offers a rootedness and a link to the natural and material world, that all organizational activities are dependent on. As the physical boundaries of the planet more and more are emphasized in sustainability research, place has the capacity to drive and deepen sustainability practices in organizations as well as management and organization studies.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of place in sustainability research and organizational practice. Place is a topic which, in sustainability research related to business organizations, has been rather poorly covered. By applying an abductive research approach building on theory but inspired equally by empirical insight, we conceptualize four paradigms for the relation between place and sustainability.

** The paper is a co-authored work in progress together with Per Carlborg and Frans Prenkert, both of whom are affiliated with the business school at Örebro University.

Maira Babri is Associate Senior Lecturer at Mälardalen University. Before joining MDU, Maira has been working at Umeå University and Örebro University. She has a broad interest in how sustainability and circular economy principles are translated into practice, and is also interested in the concept of selfhood and how this gets implicated in research practices. You can read more about her work here <https://www.mdu.se/staff?id=mbi03>

11 November 2024

Thomas Wahl, Anette Hallin, Christoffer Andersson, Chris Ivory (Mälardalen University, Sweden)

Re-imagining humanness in the context of AI: The performative imaginaries of popular science discourse

We will present a chapter accepted for publication in the book *The Inner World of Artificial Intelligence* (eds Fabio Morreale; Elham Bahmanteymouri; Mohsen Mohammadzandeh; Taylor & Francis). Our chapter addresses how the (future) agency of AI and Humans is imagined in popular science-literature on AI. Popular science as a genre is interesting in its ambition to translate inter-academic knowledge production about AI, while at the same time dramatizing it and making it relevant for business, politics, and the public. First, the chapter deconstructs the imaginaries of a future shaped by super intelligent AIs and discusses how this imagined future builds on particular and narrow definitions of humanness. Secondly, we turn to the construction of AI as a ‘floating signifier’; a thing that is devoid of meaning but subject to interpretation and re-interpretation. Instead of viewing AI as something mystical and unpredictable we approach it for its material existence, as a machine with relations and effects (Suchman 2023). In our examining of popular imaginaries about AI we critically scrutinize the idea of AI as singular and autonomous or beyond the scope of politics and democratic oversight. Behind such discourse there are significant arrangements in terms of feats of engineering, business acumen and large amounts of capital at play, and at the heart of the controversies between these two, we argue, are emergent and conflicting assumptions about what it means to be human, or rather, what defines *humanness*.

Reference:

Suchman, L. (2023). The uncontroversial ‘thingness’ of AI. *Big Data & Society*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517231206794>

Thomas Wahl is a researcher in sociology at HVV, member of the STS-group at MDU and as a visiting researcher at the Robert K Merton Center for Science Studies, at the Humbolt University. In addition to taking an interest in the social and societal consequences of AI, Thomas is also engaged in a research project on existential wellbeing among elderly.

Anette Hallin is professor of business studies at EST/MDU; more specifically in organisation and management. She is also the scientific director for AI and society within AI@MDU. Her research focuses on the consequences of digitalization – also with AI – on organizing and work.

Christoffer Andersson holds a postdoc-position at HVV/the Center for welfare change at MDU. His research interests concern the epistemic and epistemological consequences of AI and other advanced digital technologies.

Chris Ivory is professor of innovation management at IDT/MDU. He has vast experience of researching the innovation of technology and the effect of technology on work and human skills.

9 December 2024

Nina H. Kivinen (Department of Civil and Industrial Engineering, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden)

Enchanting encounters in ordinary writing for children

We invite you to explore with us the enchanting affects that move us, through ordinary moments in writing for children. Enchantment shows how we are entangled with the world, that which surprises us and builds a sense of wonder. A wind in the trees, a gentle smile, a look of horror. The smell of fresh coffee and the final words of a manuscript. We explore enchantment as mundane but gendered experiences which entail a promise and a potentiality, one that is part of power relations, and where an ethical possibility to engage in the world differently emerges. This paper shows how enchantment is not a detachment from, but a connection to the world. Through interviews with children's writers, we ask how enchanting affect can help us to see work through a different ethical lens.

*paper co-authored with Carolyn Hunter, School for Business and Society, University of York, Heslington, UK

Nina H. Kivinen is an associate professor of Industrial Engineering and Management at the Uppsala University, Sweden. Her research focuses on creative labor, gender and embodiment, spaces of work and materiality. Her work has also been published in Human Relations and Scandinavian Journal of Management.