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Workshop B: The methodological dilemma's of studying interethnic relations

PAPER PROPOSAL

Paper title:

An 'Insider' Looking 'In': Methodological Considerations of Auto Ethnography

Abstract:

My paper highlights a distinctive way to research and present issues within social sciences using metaphor and the qualitative narrative methodology known as auto ethnography. Conceived as a concept that captures the experiences and observations of social science researchers looking at the worlds of 'their own people', auto ethnographic research and writing links the personal to the cultural and is recognised as a methodology that explicates the personal story, or journey of the writer, within the culture in which the investigation, or experience, takes place. That said, my aim is to look at my own experiences in utilising auto ethnography method to investigate within a particular context, relating encounters and findings to personal knowledge and familiarity occurring within that particular research context. The research in question is that of my current post-doctoral research projects which investigates the return of the Portuguese second-generation to Portugal.

Being myself a second-generation Portuguese-Canadian return migrant researching second-generation return phenomenon, it can be said that I'm placed in a privileged possession, as I am able to delve on my own experiences to garner insights into the larger cultural or sub-cultural group which I am a part of. In fact, at the very centre of my auto ethnographic study resided my own self-awareness and the reporting of my experiences and introspections, as a primary data source. Thus, recognising that I am also a subject and an object of the research I'm carrying out, this places me in a position of an 'insider' looking 'in'. It is within this perspective that will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of my auto ethnography usage as applied to my 'research journeys' within the second-generation return migrant landscapes.