**Title:** Researching Phenomenal Practices - *Methodological considerations for hunting the ghostly concept of interprofessionalism as phenomenon*

**P1**
In this talk, I will discuss the methodological considerations for hunting the concept of interprofessionalism as a phenomenon in an agential realist sense. The conclusion of my talk is, that the methodological consequences of putting a concept to work as a phenomenon, that is as an onto-epistemological hauntology between an emergent ‘it’ and ‘I’, is that the boundaries between what I usually refer to as the steps in a research process/or the chapters in my theses (theory, methods, analysis) are effaced. And this is a particular type of hauntology of phenomenal practices.

**P2**
Interprofessionalism is a concept that, with the organizational becoming of University Colleges (UC’s) in Denmark (2008), has been charged with promises for a brighter tomorrow for the welfare state. Usually recognized as a type of collaboration across professions, interprofessionalism is said to have positive effects on work on complex welfare issues (Zwarenstein and Reeves 2009; Edwards 2010; Paradis and Reeves 2012).

In the 1990’s there were around 120 independent higher educational organizations in Denmark that offered professional bachelor-programs\(^1\). In 2007/2008 University Colleges were made of the

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\(^1\) In Denmark, where this work has been performed, the official titles of programs at University Colleges are: “professional bachelors”. It serves to denote that the programs are university college bachelors rather than university bachelors. A professional bachelors program takes between 3 and 4 years, and they are programs with obligatory practicums. For the social educationalists more than one year of the full three and a half years of studies are practicums in workplace settings.
existing seminars, and here interprofessionalism was one of the major political arguments for creating the new organizations, as they would gather professions as diverse as teachers and textile designers, physiotherapists and social educationalists. From about 120 organizations in 1990, in 2008 there were 7 UC’s in Denmark, and this was quite a change.

In 2010 I was employed as Ph.D.-fellow at a university and as research consultant, in a UC, where I’ve been doing ethnographic fieldwork from 2010-2014. In this work, I’m following the concept of interprofessionalism, in very diverse practices that occur, at the same time as the turmoil of creating a new educational organization.

So I follow the concept of interprofessionalism as it emerges, both in practices where I am told ‘it’ is happening, in practices where I suppose ‘it’ would occur; And in practices where ‘it’ is called by other names, as interdisciplinarity or innovation through collaboration. And then sometimes ‘it’ surprises me by emerging in practices where I wouldn’t have thought it possible.

‘It’ emerges as I try and research how ‘it’ emerges as the educational organization emerges.

Attempting to research something, that is in the making, politically, organizationally and educationally, highlights that methodology is about the creation of realities, just as much as political reform might be.

P3
In this sense methodology does not describe the world; it is involved in the invention or the creation of the world (Law, 2004, Barad 2007). The methodological question is then; “How do we

2 Methods are part of but not reducible to methodologies. Where methods denote a set of doings/techniques that can be used for producing ‘data’ (interviewing, surveys etc.), methodology is the entanglements through which research
know the world or gain knowledge of it?\textsuperscript{3}(Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 12). So thinking methodology in this way means thinking ontology and epistemology in one breath as onto-epistemology as Karen Barad coins it. Thinking about methodology as a way of creating worlds implies a breakdown of the dividing lines between theory and practice, method and theory, analysis and writing. And this is a way of attuning to the intra-active dynamics between the doings of research practices and the doings of research products.

P4
Interprofessionalism emerges through interprofessional modules. Here interprofessionalism is sought to be a competence that can be taught and learnt through learning with students from other programmes. Here a collaborative competence and an innovative approach to problem solving of welfare-state issues is hoped to be achieved. This doesn’t always happen as hoped for, as students perform differences rather than similarities or hierarchies amongst each other.

P5
Building campuses is part of a new way of organizing the UC. By being merged into the same physical space, the professional programmes are hoped to create a common sense of community and through this closely knitted communitarian sense, the logic is, that they will develop innovative approaches towards their practices and knowledge productions. Sometimes this is called interprofessionalism, sometimes it isn’t. The campus walls are seen as the condition of products (i.e. texts) becomes. Stanley, L. and S. Wise (2013). Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes. Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology. L. Stanley. 13.

\textsuperscript{3} Where an epistemological question is: “what is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?” and an ontological question is: “what kind of being is the human being and what is the nature of reality?
possibility for interprofessionalism. Interprofessionalism here also emerges as an everyday phenomenon with sometimes unheeded effects, as being together across programs also makes students and staff, construct differences amongst each other and create home spaces and non-spaces.

**P6**
A couple of years ago, the UC invited its employees to be part of the building and formulation of the future for the organization. Through workshops, seminars and festivities the aim was to construct a coherent organization with a common goal. Here interprofessionalism appeared as an organizational ambition, a way of gathering the employees across programs, a way of thinking about change, a way of going across that which once was, and ‘sewing’ together that which could be. It was presented as logic of cohesiveness deployed to make sense of, and better the existing practices. At the same time there were strikes and conflicts, as this idea of knitting closer bonds, imposed itself as a threat towards traditions, employee autonomy and mono-professional ambitions.

**P7**
How do you follow a concept as vague as interprofessionalism? I soon realized that I needed to be extremely flexible in order to put or find myself in situations where this concept might be enacted. I thus decided to construct a design where I sometimes decided where to go, and sometimes I was shown where to go. Sometimes I was surprised at where I’d end up, and I felt like nothing of relevance was happening, only to be surprised when I re-read my notes, that it was there all along. So I ended up doing ethnography in practices as diverse as the ones I just presented. Where
interprofessionalism tended to be slippery and was molded into different forms with every question I asked, with every method I deployed for researching it.

If interprofessionalism, as a concept, can be any of the following very different practices: (1) a collaborative competence and something that reifies a sense of difference and hierarchy amongst the professions, (2) and an architectural possibility space for closeness, but also an everyday phenomenon that creates both differences and similarities, closeness and distance (3) and an organizational ambition of cohesiveness, innovation and change at the same time as it is an experience of loss of autonomy. - And if all these practices through which it emerges hinges on to the way the organization emerges, and the specific ways in which I research it, or allow myself to research it. - Then it follows, that it is difficult to define. Maybe even it is impossible to define, as the ambitions, forms, names and spaces and logics through which it emerges shape-shifts with every step we take – ‘It’ and ‘I’.

P8
An agential realist understanding of phenomena is helpful here. Working with concepts as phenomena, I understand as the entangled intra-actions through which a mutual ‘research thing’ and ‘research doing’ emerges (Barad 2007, 128). By holding on firmly to this notion, my ‘research doings’ have become attuned towards both producing and navigating in, and maybe even accepting, mess, as John Law describes⁴ in the enactment of it. The mess that is everyday life, which is not a cohesive, ordered and planned process of predictable causes and effects. In this mess both ‘it’ and ‘I’ have engaged in co-performative practices of hunting and haunting. For ‘following’ a concept as interprofessionalism, is rather like hunting a ghost. Sometimes I see it,

⁴ it in his book ‘After Method, Mess In social science research’ from 2004
sometimes I don’t. Mostly, I feel like I am the only one that feels its presence, and sometimes I don’t notice it until somebody is screaming its name. Following a concept is researching presences, absences, and the unheeded mundane material-discursive practices of educational organizations. It’s assembling the unassimilable and allowing research to emerge in mess (Law 2004; Kofoed 2007).

P9

About concepts
This involves a particular understanding of concepts, as never only words (as if words were ever only words…). Concepts are rather material-discursive, and they can be understood as phenomena, if we attune our research towards them as such. And if concepts are phenomena, they are emergent qualities of particular intra-actions. This materialist understanding of concepts, Barad writes, undermines the notion of an inherent fixed (apparatus independent, Cartesian) subject-object distinction, so:

“Concepts do not refer to the object of investigation. Rather, concepts in their material intra-activity enact the differentiated inseparability that is a phenomenon.” (Barad 2010, 253)

5So while I tune in on the concept in different empirical practices, of teaching, building and future-visioning, I am tuned in to it, by the way it emerges. Researching concepts as phenomena entails an intra-active entanglement between researcher and researched, that emerge as inseparable.

5 In my case the concept of interprofessionalism, emerges as a phenomenon in entanglement with the way that I research it in particular practices. And the way that I research it, emerges in entanglement with how the concept emerges in particular practices.
P10
Allowing for concepts to be phenomena, entail working with concepts without predefining them. And working without predefined concepts, makes research work explorative and emergent. Anne-Marie Mol argues that just this, makes us become curious about more than when we work with pre-established definitions (Mol 2013). It makes us explore practices, rather than evaluate or look for particular effects of them (Sauzet 2014, 173). Researching an undefined concept, that sometimes appears under different names or no name, makes me sensitive towards the world in its becoming, and demands that my research be curious towards both the unheeded and the maybe possible, as well as on the explicitly enunciated and well-defined.

P11
Phenomenal practices
To move from pre-defined notions of concepts to gaining knowledge and becoming co-productive of their meaning as researcher as they emerge, I have been in need of a framework that would allow me to stop visualizing not-existing dividing lines between theory and practice, between the organizational practices, and my research practices. And also, I needed a coherent argument for not working from a definition of the concept, as it was the opposite, that is the emergent qualities of ‘it’ as it became a thing within the organization that became a thing, that fascinated me. Being occupied by the entanglement of the practices I decided to develop a concept of phenomenal practices.

Researching phenomenal practices, is a way to research how the phenomenon of interprofessionalism, my ‘research thing’ (as entangled doings in an emergent educational organization) emerges through my ‘research doings’ (as entangled doings in an emergent educational organization). A phenomenal practice is thus the analytical figure that I use to think
my research through, as I attempt to operationalize the tenets of agential realism read through other new materialist text. Here, I am particularly occupied with Annemarie Mol’s texts, especially ‘The body Multiple – Ontology in medical practice’ (2002) on her praxiographic approach. A praxiographic approach is an empirical-analytical attempt of un-bracketing the practices we research. To this aim, Mol suggest that we treat everything as practice, and to this I would add my own research practices, in order to research becomings in practice, as everything might be co-productive of a phenomenon’s becoming (Mol 2002, 156).

P12
This is a particular type of hauntology6 (Barad 2010), where the qualities of my concept ‘interprofessionalism’ shape-shifts through phenomenal practices of which my practices of research is a part. So it is not that ‘I’, the emergent researcher subject, has the liberty to deem whatever and everything interprofessionalism. Rather my conditions of possibility for seeing, hearing, feeling, deeming interprofessionalism, is a question of a particular phenomenal practice of mutual haunting between ‘the concept’ and ‘I’. Maggie MacLure (2013) calls this to wonder, this feeling of choosing something that choses you. This she says, is a matter of strange connections and simultaneously being inside and outside of the research project. It is an embodied experience of making sense. But this can also be demystified; Barad says, there is no mystery at all as to how things are entangled, because there are no different planes of existence. There are just entanglements (Barad, 2007).

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6 Hauntology is an idea within the philosophy of history introduced by Jacques Derrida in his 1993 work Spectres of Marx. The word, a combination of the word haunt and the suffix -ology, and a near-homophone to ontology in Derrida’s native French, deals with “the paradoxical state of the spectre, which is neither being nor non-being”.
Barad writes that analyzing phenomenon includes the: “(…) accounting of the larger material arrangement (ie. The full set of practices) that is a part of the phenomenon investigated or produced.” (Barad, 390, 2007). In this sense, the lists of possible practices to include in analysis are never-ending. Rather than mystifying the entanglements, I believe that making research response-able is interesting. A response-able practice entails manifesting particular doings as they become determining for the production of the phenomenon. And this is a question of agential cuts, of cutting in phenomenal practices.

Methodological consequences and criteria
Cuts are done through the way in which I practice research; this might be the questions I ask, the concepts I use to understand the world with, the utensils I research through and so on, and these become important to describe, as they are: “the condition of possibility for determinate meaning for the concept in question (...)” (Barad, 2007, 127). Descriptions of this, is a way of rendering particular cuts response-able for the emergent phenomenon (Barad 2007, 120). And the function of this is to open a dialogue about the productions, to enable response, rather than closing them down by highlighting fixed findings. This, for me, is the ethical part of working onto-epistemologically. And this is a performative approach.

So if I go back to my phenomenal practices, these reflections would mean that, as part of my writings I would include selected important cuts:

But not everything, not the whole apparatus as Barad would put it. This isn’t possible in ethnography; this type of science is difference from physics...

It is not to say that everything is made apparent, but rather that particular cuts are made open for dialogue.
When writing on how I researched the interprofessional modules I would, for instance, include the story of how I first chose to participate in a module that only contained (social-educationalists) kindergarten-teachers and school-teacher students. In the beginning of my Ph.D., I was fixated on the idea of researching encounters between professions, as they would most likely look like in what I imagined as “real-work-life-encounters” in practice. The first module I followed was, for this reason, on inclusion and exclusion in the school and institutional life of children and young people. And here interprofessionalism emerged, as an issue between these two professions, in tension with how they imagined their future-work-life-encounters would look.

A year later, the interprofessional modules took place for the third time around. And by now, I was more attuned to the way the interprofessional modules didn’t always mimic “real-work-life-encounters” between professionals. So I decided to attend the interprofessional module with the largest diversity of programs. A module where both physiotherapy students, psychomotor therapy students, nursing students, school-teacher students and social-educationalists attended. The module was called Health and life-quality, and it gave interprofessionalism a new “flavor”, as the students didn’t necessarily trust that the encounters of professions in the module looked like their perceived future-work-life-encounters would. And upon not recognizing the combination of professions as mimicking future possibilities, they approached the subject matter quite differently than the students from the first module that I followed.

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9 Either the students choose the module of their personal interest’, because, as they said; the modules were only three weeks long and they didn’t finish with a grade, so therefore these modules were not considered as important as other parts of their programs. (The more important parts were the ones where they would, as they put it, learn their “core competencies”....) Or the students would choose the module closest to home to avoid spending time in transport...
With my “logics of choice” of modules, I thus added particular possibilities for researching the emergence of interprofessionalism, by exploring it in two different spaces of possibility, and reading these diffractively through each other.

P17
I would describe my research on campuses as a ‘practice’ that I was guided to as something interprofessional. It wasn’t something that I found, but rather something that found me. Being employed by the UC, as well as doing research there, I was urged by the board of directors, to do an evaluation of whether the ambitions for the buildings of campuses had been achieved. One of these ambitions was to ensure the interdisciplinary collaboration between the educations. Looking closer at the everyday-life at an already built campus, I made research participants draw maps of the campus and “draw and tell” about the routes and rhythms of their everyday lives on campus. As these stories and drawings opened up practices of building home-spaces and non-spaces, stories of feeling particular because other programs where seen as different, stories of tensions between programmes and of closeness between others\(^{10}\), made interprofessionalism become a particular unheeded aspect of the everyday life in campuses as professions where gathered on common addresses.

P18
When writing about the visionary seminar, I would include how I was stuck between the position of researcher and consultant. I was invited to join in as consultant, but finished participating as researcher. This was an ambivalent experience of both seeing the potentialities of gathering an

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\(^{10}\) and issues of sharing rooms and having to reshuffle the layout of tables and chairs at the beginning of each session, as another program had rearranged it to their proper purpose just before
organization and seeing the destructive side, as it seemed to imply both fusion and fission effects between the programs. As researcher I observed, interviewed, read. As employee of the organization I also received the internal e-mails, in which the management tried to go into dialogue with the staff on whether or not their strikes and discontent, that occurred at the same time as the visionary-seminars, with the same people, was legal, how to handle it and how to jointly react to processes of fusioning professional programs, all the while downsizing and rearranging managerial structures and teacher autonomy. In these entangled processes, I saw the many effects of the ambitions of interprofessionalism. And even though it was scarcely called so, but rather appeared as interdisciplinary collaboration, thinking across programs, teaching across programs etc., there were effects of interprofessional ambitions that came to the fore, as this concept haunted me!

**P19**
Reseaching the becoming of interprofessionalism in an emergent organization is as such a performance of the becoming of interprofessionalism through phenomenal practices, and I will try and make particular effects of the phenomenal practices, as well as particular conditions of possibility, part of my “dissertation performance”.

The methodological consequences of putting a concept to work as a phenomenon, as an ont-epistemological hauntology between an emergent ‘it’ and ‘I’, is in my mind, that the boundaries between what I usually refer to as the steps in a research process/or the chapters in my theses (theory, methods, analysis) are effaced. There is no research object outside of the research process. There is no separation between method and theory, practice and writing, subject and
object, or between the field of research and the researcher. There are only co-performative processes of hunting and haunting though which emerges “It’s” and “I’s”.


