

> Monday, January 22nd, 2024

10:30 – 12:00

> ICOR

**RESEARCH
SEMINAR**



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

“EMOTION AND RESEARCH ON PERSONALLY RELEVANT GRAND CHALLENGES”

CO-AUTHORED WITH LUCAS AMARAL LAURIANO, IÉSEG

BY HAITAO YU - IÉSEG



ABSTRACT

In this paper, we intend to study the emotions of conducting research on personally relevant grand challenges. By personally relevant, we mean the research “addresses questions in which scholars are personally invested or involves a population to which they belong or in which they hold a personal interest.” In personally relevant research, questions are motivated by scholars’ own experiences, identities, interests, and communities. We argue that grand challenges connected to social and environmental aspects can be leveraged when scholars are personally engaged in such a topic. In this sense, to connect our research to a grand challenge that we personally care about can boost emotional energy and maintain ourselves in a difficult career. Yet, the desire to address a personally relevant grand challenge in the real world can have its own emotional challenges. Ironically, an equivalent tension may emerge when scholars do research close to them, notably emotional exhaustion.

To investigate the emotions of personally relevant research on grand challenges, we draw on the two authors’ fieldwork experiences in their doctorate research. The first author conducted two ethnographies with organizations in Indigenous communities in China and Canada. He was born and grew up on the Tibetan Plateau and has a particular interest in understanding how organizations can facilitate sustainable development in local communities. The second author engaged in an ethnography with employees and managers in the Brazilian subsidiary of a multinational automobile company. He was previously an employee at the same organization, and lived many of the issues he encountered during his research. In this sense, both research sites and topics are deeply personally relevant.

