

# The Leaps of Faith in Social Science: A Study of the Imagined in the Discourse of the Real

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***Abstract:** In this paper, the author introduces a post-Meadian concept useful for contemporary ethnography. Emergent ideal types capture the imaginary (that which is not bound to space and time coordinates) in the doing ethnography and making empirical claims (the empirical is considered that which is limited to space and time coordinates). She uses a heuristic device, grounded narrative fictions, as one way of depicting the imaginary for ethnographic audiences. The exploration draws on the ethnography of a kindergarten/Grade 1 class. The author does not use many scholarly references. Instead, she tries to develop two innovations to ethnographic analysis (emergent ideal types and grounded narrative fictions) from within an ethnographic example. She tries in this thought piece to explicate the linguistic mechanisms through which ethnographers draw on the imaginary to link empirical patterns with interpretive analyses.*

***Keywords:** Mead, empirical, types, imagined, Habermas, social science theory*

## **Citation**

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## **Author's note**

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