



# JOURNAL OF PRAGMATIC CONSTRUCTIVISM

## Editorial: To talk with the other

Morten Jakobsen

*Department of Management, Aarhus University*  
Email: [mja@mgmt.au.dk](mailto:mja@mgmt.au.dk)

Tuomas Korhonen

*Cost Management Center, Tampere University*  
Email: [tuomas.korhonen@tuni.fi](mailto:tuomas.korhonen@tuni.fi)

Teemu Laine

*Cost Management Center, Tampere University*  
Email: [teemu.laine@tuni.fi](mailto:teemu.laine@tuni.fi)

### 1 When we stop talking with the other

Currently, it seems as if it is increasingly difficult for people to talk with each other. Not necessarily with your relatives or other people that you tend to agree with. No, what is referred to is the conversation with other people, with whom you may have a touch of tension, because you may not fully agree with these people. Especially if the conversation concerns those matters that are of importance to you, or those matters that may be difficult to talk about. It could be your neighbour who insists on not keeping his garden in a proper way, because he has got this strange idea that there should be room for insects. Instead of asking about the choice underlying this practice, you choose to make a complaint over him to your local municipality or whatever authority you may think could help you. It could also be a new colleague who seems to apply some form of scientific method that we do not fully understand, and therefore do not agree with. Instead of asking this person about their methodology, we may try to avoid them, and make sure that we have other plans the day they present their research at a seminar. If we take it to a broader scale, our news are filled with pictures from Gaza where it is difficult to see that the two parties are interested in any form of negotiation, leaving two populations victimised. Or the now more or less forgotten war in Ukraine, that for the last year has been frozen in a warfare tactic that we thought was buried with the millions of young men, whose lives were sacrificed in northern France during the first world war more than one hundred years ago. History seems to repeat itself because we have no intentions in talking with the other. Instead, the young men and women who should make both Ukraine and Russia prosper in the future are sacrificed, leaving the future of the people in those countries in a highly questionable situation.

Talking with each other is important. Being interested in each other is important. But it requires that we put ourselves in play, and thereby at risk. Involving with the other gives you the chance to learn from the other, but it also implies that we may have to revise our perception of our reality, and therefore act differently than what we used to do. This indicates that if our intent is to engage with the other with the purpose of understanding the other, then it requires more than just to begin talking. We have to talk *with* each other, not just talk *to* each other.

## **2 The content of this issue**

Based on these rather sad examples of situations, in which people have stopped talking with each other, begun talking to each other, and eventually stopped talking, Lars Bo Henriksen's paper Dialogue seems germane. Here, he reflects upon what dialogue is and what it takes. Obviously, we cannot be friends with everybody in this world. There are people, whose actions or opinions are unacceptable for us and more broadly. But when we stop seeing the other, acknowledging the other, then dialogue stops, and conflicts arise.

Should we avoid conflicts both within our own species, and with other beings in the world, then an alternative mindset seems to be necessary. Lennart Nørreklit and Michael Paulsen have a suggestion for such mindset that they outline in their paper: Life-friendly - who we are and who we want to be. They advocate for a life-friendly approach to the world in our lives. What seems important is that they distinguish between friendship and friendliness, friendly towards life – life-friendly. The distinction is important, because a friendship is something you share with another person that is perhaps likely to be similar to you when it comes to interests and values. It is easy to be on good terms with such a person. Being life-friendly is something else. Life-friendliness is about how you relate to the world, also the parts of the world you do not understand or the parts and parties you disagree with. Treating such parts of the world in a friendly way is a challenge, but also a challenge that is required that we take up, because the alternative seems to entail conflicts and destruction.

## **3 Special issue – call for papers**

The paper by Lennart Nørreklit and Michael Paulsen can be seen as a bridge to the final contribution of this issue. Over the last year the Pragmatic Constructivism network has held several online workshops on the topic of life-friendly language games. During these workshops, many interesting ideas have been proposed. It is these ideas - along with new and probably even more interesting ones - upon which we now launch a call for papers on life-friendly language games. Our hope is that as many researchers as possible will contribute to this special issue. The special issue is guest edited by Michael Paulsen. In that sense, the issue and all its contributors will be in good hands. Looking forward to a great new issue, that could involve topics related to actor's relation to each other, the nature and also the structures and practices that produce life-friendliness.

The call for papers for the special issue on 'The Flourish of Life-Friendly Language Games' can be found at the end of this issue. Our hope is that you, based on Michael's proposals, will consider a contribution to the development of his ideas.