

## The Politics of/in Ethnographic Writing

Workshop

June 20/21, 2022

Building „Normative Orders“ | Room EG 01  
Max-Horkheimer Str. 2 | 60323 Frankfurt am Main

In this workshop, we will address the political dimensions of and in ethnographic writing: How can we deal with different political concepts and definitions that inform our ethnographic writing? How can we address the challenges that are often part of interdisciplinary collaborations, in particular when it concerns the writing process? And how can we think about the politics of textwork and publishing ethnographic research? The workshop starts on Monday, June 20, 2022, at 6 pm, with a keynote address by Anna Leander (Geneva Graduate Institute) on “Destabilizing Definitions: The Challenge of Doing Ethnographic Concept Work in International Relations”. On Tuesday, June 21, 2022, the workshop will offer a rich program that builds on the keynote and our ongoing engagement with ethnographic writing. We will discuss the promise of ethnographic writing, but also address practical problems of writing-up and publishing. We will work collectively on strategies from observation to publication, and we will discuss the changing publishing landscape for ethnographers in political science.

The workshop is co-organized by the DVPW Themengruppe “Ethnografische Methoden in der Politikwissenschaft” and the Research Department “Glocal Junctions” at Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) and will take place in Frankfurt (Main) on June 20/21, 2022. Please note that travel, accommodation and meals need to be covered by the participants.

Please register at [ethnografie@dvpw.de](mailto:ethnografie@dvpw.de) until June 12, 2022.

### Program

#### Monday, June 20, 2022

6 pm–7.30 pm      Keynote

#### **Destabilizing Definitions: The Challenge of Doing Ethnographic Concept Work in International Relations**

Anna Leander (Geneva Graduate Institute)

A constant and recurring difficulty and challenge for scholars writing ethnography in International Relations is that the understanding of what ‘definitions’ are and how they should be dealt with in ethnography are at odds with what is usually assumed in IR. ‘What is your definition of this concept?’ is a standard question in IR. Many IR methods textbook instruct their readers to define their core concepts at the outset of their research and in the beginning of their texts. By contrast, in much ethnography, the focus is to explore a conceptual universe and the definition of the

core concept studied is therefore necessary suspended to the end of the research. It is the outcome of the research process, not the starting point. It belongs towards the conclusion of texts. Even more fundamentally, the notion of what a concept is changes. This talk puts the spotlight on this specific tension. It clarifies its character, its implication for how we relate to definitions in our writing and suggests ways of working with it. It does so connecting examples from ethnographic writing in International Relations with Ann Laura Stoler's notion of concept work.

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

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| 9.30 am–10 am   | Warm-up                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 10 am–1 pm      | <b>Politics of Textwork (including coffee break)</b><br><br>In the morning session, we take up the challenge of transforming ethnographic material into text. Participants will work with their own material in practical exercises (writing & editing an excerpt-commentary, and pairwise peer review). Alternatively, participants analyze the structure of an exemplary text. |
| 1 pm–2 pm       | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2 pm–3 pm       | Input & Discussion<br><br><b>Politics of the Interdisciplinary: Dilemmas of Ethnographic Elements in Interdisciplinary Collaborations</b><br><br>Sabine Mannitz (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt)                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 3 pm–3.15 pm    | Coffee break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 3.15 pm–4.15 pm | <b>Politics of Publishing</b><br><br>In the afternoon session, we will work in small expert groups and discuss the possibilities and experiences with publishing ethnographic research in journals, as dissertation monographs, in different disciplinary and regional contexts.                                                                                                 |
| 4.15 pm–5pm     | Final discussion & future events of the theme group                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |