



## *Ethnographic Relations: Power – Responsibility – Affect*

Workshop, University of Tübingen, 11–12 April 2024

More than other social science methodologies, ethnography is dependent on relationships that researchers establish during fieldwork. These relations are enriching, but also exhausting and hard to conceptualize. In this workshop, we aim to reflect on the political, moral, and affective dimensions of ethnographic research relations. It is common to encounter power imbalances within our fieldwork. But as power is not a fixed state, questions arise: What constitutes power during and after field research? What does it entail to navigate power relations across diverse fields of ethnographic study? And how do we handle research in fields where we may be hesitant to give voice and representation? Zooming-out of the field begs further questions: to what extent is our research complicit in, and how can it potentially contest prevailing societal power structures? With power comes responsibility. From a relational perspective, responsibility can be understood as a practice of answering, that can be rehearsed: our responsibility towards the climate crisis, global injustice or structural racism. Yet, it is far from clear how this translates into ethnographic practice. Furthermore it is tricky to respond responsibly when doing research with morally problematic groups. The third dimension of ethnographic relations that we seek to explore is inseparable from the domain of politics and morality. Our feelings are politically and morally shaped. Emotions such as fear, sympathy, anger, and shame may seem solely personal, but when understood as affective dynamics within the spheres of power and morality, they are societal forces as well. What can we learn from what we feel during our research? And how might feelings serve as valuable tools for reflecting on our research relationships?

This workshop is an invitation to reflect upon our interactions and relations as ethnographic researchers in terms of power, responsibility and affect. Its overarching objective is to foster an awareness of the intricacies and challenges intrinsic to ethnographic inquiry. As such, we welcome participation from both early-stage and experienced researchers across all domains of political ethnography.

The workshop will take place in Tübingen on April 11–12, 2024 (in person). Please note that travel, accommodation, and dinner need to be covered by the participants.

Please register at [ethnografie@dvpw.de](mailto:ethnografie@dvpw.de) until March 10, 2024.

### **Organizers**

Riccarda Flemmer, Florian Spissinger, Eva Johais, Julia Leser, Felix Anderl

### **DVPW-Arbeitskreis**

„Ethnografische Methoden in der Politikwissenschaft“  
In Kooperation mit Junior-Professur Riccarda Flemmer.  
Gefördert im Rahmen der Exzellenzstrategie von Bund und Ländern.

### **Date**

April 11–12, 2024

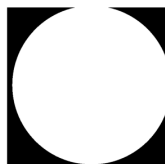
### **Place**

University of Tübingen  
Institut für Politikwissenschaft  
Melanchthonstr. 36, 72074 Tübingen  
Seminarraum 124

### **Contact**

E-Mail [ethnografie@dvpw.de](mailto:ethnografie@dvpw.de)  
Website [politicaethnography.com](http://politicaethnography.com)

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## Program

### Thursday, April 11, 2024

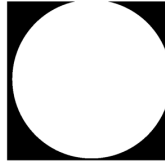
- 2–2.30 pm Welcome & Getting to know each other
- 2.30–4 pm **Session 1: Power – Responsibility – Affect**  
Collective text work & group discussions
- Sirnate, Vasundhara. 2014. “Positionality, Personal Insecurity, and Female Empathy in Security Studies Research.” *APSC* 47(2): 398–401.
- Nielsen, Richard A. 2020. “Recite! Interpretive Fieldwork for Positivists.” In *Stories from the Field: A Guide to Navigating Fieldwork in Political Science*, edited by Peter Krause and Ora Szekely, 36–46. New York, N.Y. Columbia University Press.
- Deodhar, Bhakti. 2022. “Inside, Outside, Upside Down: Power, Positionality, and Limits of Ethnic Identity in the Ethnographies of the Far-Right.” In *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 51(4), 538–565.
- The texts will be circulated beforehand.
- 4.00–4.30 pm Coffee break
- 4.30–6.00 pm **Session 2: Inputs on Power in Research Relations**  
Inputs & plenum discussion
- 6.30 pm Joint dinner at Afrika Restaurant  
<http://www.africa-tuebingen.de/>

### Friday, April 12, 2024

- 9.30–10 am Coffee & Warm-Up
- 10–11.30 am **Session 3: Responsibility and Morality in/of Research Relations**  
Group work and plenum discussion on two cases.
- Case 1: Teitelbaum, Benjamin R. 2019. “Collaborating with the Radical Right: Scholar-Informant Solidarity and the Case for an Immoral Anthropology.” *Current Anthropology* 60(3): 414–35.
- Case 2: Goffman, Alice (2014). *On the run: Fugitive life in an American city*. Picador; “Appendix: A Methodological Note,” 211–240.

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11.30–1.00 pm

**Session 4: Inputs on Affect in Research Relations**

Inputs & plenum discussion

1–2 pm

Lunch

2–3 pm

**Final Session: What's next?**

Der Workshop wird organisiert vom DVPW-Arbeitskreis *Ethnografische Methoden in der Politikwissenschaft* in Kooperation mit der Junior Professur Riccarda Flemmer. Gefördert im Rahmen der Exzellenzstrategie von Bund und Ländern.