

Dark Ethnography?

Encountering *the Uncomfortable Other* in Ethnographic Research

11 – 12 July 2019

International Workshop at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany

Organizers: Lene Faust (Bern) and Simone Pfeifer (Mainz)
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FOREWORD

The workshop “Dark Ethnography” brings together researchers from anthropology and related disciplines working in the fields of neo fascism and militant Islamism – two somehow extreme sides of a political and societal spectrum. The three thematic sections focus on methodological and theoretical implications and challenges of working ethnographically with people that are categorized for example as ‘criminals’, ‘perpetrators’, ‘militant extremists’ or ‘terrorists’. Thereby the workshop expands on Sherry Ortner’s notion of “dark anthropology” and relates to a trend in anthropology to pay attention to “people we don’t (necessarily) like” (Sindre Bangstad).

Location: Infobox (Corner: Jakob-Welder-Weg/Johannes-von-Müller-Weg, Department for Anthropology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz
Please register for participation as places are limited. To register, email Simone Pfeifer (pfeifer@uni-mainz.de). The keynote is open to the public.

The convener Lene Faust is member of the IRC Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies at the Institute of Social Anthropology of the University of Bern. The convener Simone Pfeifer is member of the BMBF funded research project “Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Appropriation, and Dissemination” at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.

PUBLIC KEYNOTE:

Under a Different Name: Secrecy, Complicity, Ethnography

by Nitzan Shoshan (Mexico City)

Thursday, July 11, 7 pm, HS 15 (Hörsaal, forum 7)

Drawing on his research under a false identity, in this talk Nitzan Shoshan reconsiders the ethical imperative of absolute transparency and full disclosure in the transactions of anthropologists with their interlocutors in the field. Motivated by recent political developments in numerous world regions—including Europe—anthropology has recently shown a growing interest in research agendas that appear to entail the systematic violation of some of its most cherished ethical paradigms. Shoshan reflects on the significance of these disciplinary shifts by examining his evolving relationships with his interlocutors, particularly the social workers who consented to grant him access to their young right-wing extremist “clients” on the condition that he takes up an alias. Working under a different name brings into focus the intensive metapragmatic labor in which anthropologists engage as they position themselves in their respective fields, a dimension of our labor that too often remains unexplored. How do we draw our interlocutors into webs of secrecy and complicity as we withhold and obfuscate information in our transactions with them? How do we recruit them to collaborate with our dissimulations, and how, in turn, do they call upon us to reciprocate by upholding theirs? How do such complicities get mobilized interactionally and become discursively framed? Recognizing the importance of secrecy and complicity in fieldwork situations invites us to think, too, about the limits of transparency and honesty in ethnographic work more generally.

Workshop Timetable

Thursday, July 11th:

13:30 – 14.00 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION** (Lene Faust and Simone Pfeifer)

14:00 – 15:30 **PANEL 1: MORAL AND EMOTIONAL DILEMMAS**

Moderation: Lene Faust

Jens Adam (Berlin): **Situating Dark Ethnography: Violence, Neoliberalism and Alternative Futures in the European Anthropologies**

Martijn de Koning (Amsterdam): **Ethnography of IS and Al Qaeda Supporters in the Netherlands - Reflections on Ethical, Legal and Emotional Questions**

Simone Pfeifer (Mainz) and Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann (Mainz): **Research Ethics in Militant Contexts: Challenges in Digital Ethnography**

15:30 - 16:00 *Coffee Break*

16:00 - 17:30 **PANEL 2: CROSSING BORDERS IN FIELDWORK**

Moderation: Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann

Ajmal Hussain (Manchester): **On the Politics and Pitfalls of Researching Radicalisation**

Alice Blum (Giessen): **“Not Everything Was Bad throughout my Research” – Normative Expectations and Personal Uncertainties During Ethnographic Studies Regarding Right Wing Extremism**

Ana Ivasiuc (Giessen): **Game of Selves: ‘Uncomfortable Others’ and the Anthropologist’s Selves**

17:30 – 19:00 *Break with snack*

19:00 – 20:00 **PUBLIC KEYNOTE**: Room: HS 15 (Hörsaal), forum 7

Moderation: Christoph Günther (Mainz)

Nitzan Shoshan (Mexico City): **Under a Different Name: Secrecy, Complicity, Ethnography**

20:00 Reception with dinner in room: R 00-618 (kleiner Übungsraum), Forum 6

Friday, July 12th:

9:30 – 10:45 PANEL 3:
REFLEXIVITY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING ABOUT CONTESTED FIELDS 1
Moderation: Lene Faust

Anne Dippel, Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, Oliver Wurzbacher (Jena): **Where Dracula Turns into a Light Fairytale. On Pride and Prejudice in Contemporary Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina**

Marion Näser-Lather (Marburg): **'Dangerous' Fields – Challenges, Implications and Investigability**

10:45 – 11:15 *Coffee Break*

11:15 – 12:30 PANEL 3:
REFLEXIVITY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING ABOUT CONTESTED FIELDS 2
Moderation: Simone Pfeifer

Erol Saglam (Stockholm): **When Nationalism Meets Conspiracies: Insights from an Ethnographic Study on Violent Far-Right Communities in Contemporary Turkey**

Salman Hussain (Massachusetts, Amherst): **Ethnographic Entanglements: The Politics of Truth, Memory, and Emotion Among the Families and Claimants of the 'Missing Persons' in the 'War on Terror' in Pakistan**

12:30 – 13.00 **CLOSING SESSION WITH PANEL DISCUSSION:**

**Where to go from here?
Directions and Consequences for the Discourse about Ethics and Self-Reflexion in Social Anthropology**

Moderation & Discussion: Mario Krämer (Siegen)

Lunch

We thank the BMBF, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, the "Gutenberg Workshops" and the DFG (Exzellenzstrategie von Bund und Ländern, UP 26/1, Project-ID: 422041080) for their generous funding.

Poster design by Ulf Neumann

Abstracts:

PANEL 1: MORAL AND EMOTIONAL DILEMMAS

Jens Adam (Berlin):

Situating Dark Ethnography: Violence, Neoliberalism and Alternative Futures in the European Anthropologies

In her paper Sherry Ortner emphasizes that she writes from the “perspective of the United States”, where the expansion of neoliberal economics and governmentality or the proliferation of different forms of violence might be more extreme and the consequences of these developments for anthropology more noticeable than in other places. I would like to take these remarks as an invitation to examine to which extent the issues of a “dark anthropology” are reflected in the European discipline(s). This intention will not be realised in an encyclopaedic manner, but by three limited conceptual interventions based on ethnographic material:

Firstly, I will take up Ortner’s concern with neoliberalism by raising the question if European Anthropologies might have paid too little attention to the transformation of industrial complexes, property relations and modes of labouring that took place all over Eastern Europe since the end of state socialism and have been of major importance for the (neoliberal) reshaping of the continent. By way of example I will draw on my ethnographic work in a once centrally planned, integrated socialist housing district in Western Ukraine and emphasise the “modes of disassembling” that were enacted during the capitalist transformation.

Secondly, I’ll connect to Ortner’s proposal to better integrate studies about the “dark side of human life” and the “good life” by referring to pictures of an ethnographic archive that have been displayed in a Berlin exhibition recently. These pictures, taken by a German ‘Volkskundler’ in the early years of national socialism, show happy community life in villages – celebrations, gatherings, market-days – but still contain an underlying dimension of violence, a foreshadowing of a genocidal potential to be enacted later on. These observations will pose an entry point to problematize typical ethnographic categories focussing on the “everyday/good life” as they tend to fade out disruptions, violence and disorder as steady contingencies of human coexistence.

Thirdly, I will relate to Ortner’s interest in activism and resistance by proposing “alternative futures” – imagined, promised, arrested or hard-won – crystallizing around architectural forms of refuge and displacement in Germany as fields of ethnographic inquiry that conceptually entangle questions of “(good) life”, “violence” and “power”. Could such a focus on unequally distributed temporalities constitute a productive starting point for a critical ethnography in/of contemporary Europe?

Martin de Koning (Amsterdam):

Ethnography of IS and Al Qaeda Supporters in the Netherlands - Reflections on Ethical, Legal and Emotional Questions

Ethnography of IS and Al Qaeda supporters in the Netherlands - Reflections on ethical, legal and emotional questions. In this paper I will reflect on the work with Dutch militant activists supporting Al Qaeda and IS(IS) prior and during the war in Syria. This work was part of a larger project on Muslim militant activism in the Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands which started in 2010. Originally focusing on what was regarded by many in the media and in policy circles as marginal fringe groups, after many of our interlocutors in 2012, 2013 and 2014 left to Syria to join IS(IS) and Al Qaeda, the political context changed dramatically. It is this change which occurred during our research which allows me to engage with the question of what happens if we work with people many anthropologists usually oppose (and with the question if and how that actually matters). I will deal specifically with the ethical, legal and emotional issues that emerged during and after our work in the Netherlands which culminated in me becoming a witness and an expert witness in a trial against my interlocutors.

Simone Pfeifer (Mainz), Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann (Mainz):

Research Ethics in Militant Contexts: Challenges in Digital Ethnography

In this contribution we reflect on ethical challenges of doing digital ethnography in a highly contested and politicized field of (militant) Islamist social media environments and different groups of people engaging in and with these environments. It is extremely difficult to enter the field of Islamist circles online and offline, where building trust highly depends on the protection of the interlocutors' privacy and security.

In the presentation we therefore relate to issues of privacy, transparency and security of the researchers but also our interlocutors within the digital ethnography with different groups' engagement with militant Islamist and Jihadi audio-visual material online and offline. Furthermore, we ask the related questions of what is 'publicness', what is 'privateness' in social media and how to deal with anonymity and transparency of researching online in a politically contested field.

PANEL 2: CROSSING BORDERS IN FIELDWORK

Ajmal Hussain (Manchester):

On the Politics and Pitfalls of Researching Radicalisation

This paper addresses some key issues that face the researcher when conducting ethnography with young Muslim inhabitants of a city that has been at the centre of much scaremongering about violent extremism and radicalisation.

I consider firstly the problematic of entering the field - specifically the impact on my positionality in doing such research - in a charged atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust. I realise this to be fed by the interaction and encounter of people, places, policing and narratives into which the researcher gets folded. This is evident in the suspicion toward me from young people who almost certainly initially apprehend me as an outsider, and by fellow academic and activist onlookers for whom researching radicalisation equates to furthering a phoney state discourse that feeds the 'war on terror'.

I reflect on some of the challenges or demands this places on the researcher. Drawing on early reflections from encounters with young people within an 'Islamist milieu', I show how through sustained interaction that involves enduring many rounds of questioning and checking of my truth status, I come into contact with different surfaces of young people - beyond those of pathologised and suspect. I find that young people are responsive to the suspecting gaze by also stepping *into* the frame, and not merely being framed. While being suspects they are also suspicious, which leads to curiosity and engagement with my research. I demonstrate this through presentation of a short film produced by young people about my fieldwork site.

I suggest that in order to illuminate the precarity *and* vitality that characterise 'dark ethnography', research should depart from discussions that defer getting 'up-close' (Keith 2005: 6) to young people under the gaze of the security services, because of the politics this invokes. Instead, participatory research that goes beyond the caricatures and clichés of researching radicalisation can help activate young people's agency; through animating potentialities that exist in the day to day and ordinary spaces of urban life (Amin 2015). Film, is one mode through which young people display indifference toward the constraints of inner-city life and the gaze of security services. In so doing, they utter the condition of 'generic blackness' as 'a force that perhaps never comes to the fore but, nevertheless, endures' (Simone 2016)¹.

¹ Elaborating on 'generic blackness' and the potentialities inherent to it, Simone states: "generic blackness is not a place where a person resides, that can be known: it is not a project waiting to be realized. Rather, it points to the uninhabitable in all that makes itself known as exemplarily inhabitable." (Simone 2016: 7), and where 'unbound forces' are 'black-boxed' (ibid: 8).

Alice Blum (Giessen):

“Not everything was bad throughout my research” – normative expectations and personal uncertainties during ethnographic studies regarding right-wing extremism.

Ethnographic research regarding the field of the far-right-wing movement in Germany is highly controversial until now. Even though the urge for an insight from an internal perspective of such an environment is growing stronger, there are massive doubts/massive doubts remain: Does research coincide with people from this environment in this case? Does research reproduce their ideology and their practice by reporting on it? Is a researcher within such a field actually able to meet the requirements of qualitative research, such as the principle of openness, both with regard to interaction with the interlocutors, as well as the process of evaluation/analysis respectively.

I would like to consider these questions and challenges by referring to my own ethnographic research within the far-right-wing environment. Several participatory observations of the so-called “völkische Siedler*innen” as well as accompanying the so-called “Identitäre Bewegung” in Germany for one year form the basis of this approach. This approach interlinked with a massive fear of the field (in terms of Devereux), bodily/corporal reactions as coping strategies (Blum) as well as debates regarding the legitimacy of my own research practice which is subject to controversies. This article takes into account how far the participants of this movement can be seen as human beings without separating the topic’s political explosive nature at the same time. The attempt of a research which also tries to develop perspectives seems to be a possibility to meet this challenge without succumbing to one’s own personal expectations or expectations addressed from the outside. Thus, topics such as “researching against” and research which is based on the relevance of the protagonists within the field can be combined.

Furthermore, the article aims to be an appeal with regards to supporting researchers confronted with these challenges and to offer a perspective concerning sociological studies that refer to dark fields. These kinds of studies can be straining and researchers, of course, require support during this process that exceeds the regular research support such as counselling in academic writing.

Ana Ivasiuc (Giessen):

Game of Selves: ‘Uncomfortable Others’ and the Anthropologist’s Selves

In November 2014, I obtained permission to accompany a group of citizens who mobilized to patrol their neighbourhood at night in the peripheries of Rome. They claimed that thefts were on the rise in the neighbourhood, and for it they blamed primarily the Roma from a nearby camp. While claiming to be apolitical and dressing their initiative as a community service, the group had clear connections with the far-right political landscape in Rome, and their Facebook page was brimming with open praise for fascism, xenophobic commentary, and vigilante-like incitement to violence.

Recounting crucial moments of my research with the neighbourhood patrol, I will reconstruct the methodological, ethical, and political questions that accompanied me while carrying out this kind of ‘dark ethnography’, and explore their significance for the way we study their – and our – worlds. While I argue that in many ways, such ‘repugnant others’ are methodologically not different from other people with whom we do research, I also show the kinds of limits that they may push in us, the boundaries we construct and transgress repeatedly, the conflicts that arise between our various selves both in the fieldwork encounter and outside of it, and the ways in which the contours of these selves shape our research and our writings.

PUBLIC KEYNOTE

Nitzan Shoshan: (Mexico City):

Under a different name: Secrecy, complicity, ethnography.

Drawing on his research under a false identity, in this talk Nitzan Shoshan reconsiders the ethical imperative of absolute transparency and full disclosure in the transactions of anthropologists with their interlocutors in the field. Motivated by recent political developments in numerous world regions—including Europe—anthropology has recently shown a growing interest in research agendas that appear to entail the systematic violation of some of its most cherished ethical paradigms. Shoshan reflects on the significance of these disciplinary shifts by examining his evolving relationships with his interlocutors, particularly the social workers who consented to grant him access to their young right-wing extremist “clients” on the condition that he takes up an alias. Working under a different name brings into focus the intensive metapragmatic labor in which anthropologists engage as they position themselves in their respective fields, a dimension of our labor that too often remains unexplored. How do we draw our interlocutors into webs of secrecy and complicity as we withhold and obfuscate information in our transactions with them? How do we recruit them to collaborate with our dissimulations, and how, in turn, do they call upon us to reciprocate by upholding theirs? How do such complicities get mobilized interactionally and become discursively framed? Recognizing the importance of secrecy and complicity in fieldwork situations invites us to think, too, about the limits of transparency and honesty in ethnographic work more generally.

PANEL 3: REFLEXIVITY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING ABOUT CONTESTED FIELDS 1

Anne Dippel, Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, Oliver Wurzbacher (Jena):

Where Dracula Turns into a Light Fairytale. On pride and Prejudice in Contemporary Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina

In early October 2018 thirteen students and three researchers from Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena set out for a two-week travel to Romania and Ukraine. Their goal was to study the vanishing cultures of Germans and Jews in Banat, Transylvania and Bukovina. During their field trip, the team ethnographers regularly encountered interlocutors that shared nationalist, ethnicist and islamophobic visions of society. The enlightened dream of studying a multicultural utopia, sunken during the short 20th century, turned into the dark reality of envisioned superstitions, prejudices and wounded pride.

Within the research process, especially during the regularly held plena within the field, the team ethnographers discussed extensively the question of how to deal with their dark material, how to distance from the field within interviews, without closing it up, and how not to reduce their informants, all of them complex beings. How to bring different positions into a fruitful dialogue? What ethical dilemmas do ethnographers encounter, when immersing in cultures, which do not share our own common sense of a critical cultural relativism? The team decided, that tackling the questions of dark ethnography turned into one of the central goals to work on, when returning and analyzing the data. This talk wants to share the critical outcomes of the debate. The ethnographic field trip is part of a one-year-project seminar. It has been designed to explore cutting edge methods of empirical team research, overcoming mere anecdotal experiences of individuals, trying to map a multicultural complex environment, and to teach students anthropological methods. Its goal is an exhibition, and will include a short film, as well as a blog. Several bachelors as well as master theses will emerge out of the interdisciplinary project, led by cultural anthropologist Anne Dippel, working in collaboration with cultural scientist Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, the romanist Victoria Popovici, and the cultural anthropologist Wolfgang Vogel (all FSU Jena).

Marion Näser-Lather (Marburg):

'Dangerous' Fields – Challenges, Implications and Investigability

Research of some topics may become 'dangerous' for the researcher in manifold ways. The field of research can be characterized by violence and/or happen to be in conflict zones, thus influencing the abilities of perception and cognition, challenging the researcher's self-concept as well as his/her perception by others. All these aspects are raising the question of research limits. One striking example is the much debated research in the field of the military (e.g. see González, Gusterson, and Price 2009). In my contribution, I will discuss several points relevant for research in such sensitive fields (Lee 1993): 1. field access and the influence of gender in fields that are characterized by the dominating values of masculine power; 2. possible strategies for coping with dangers for researchers and their field partners (e.g. Jacobs 2006) and their implications for research methods, analysis and presentation of data; 3. The negotiation of sympathy/empathy (see Bubandt/Willerslev 2015) and of ethics (e.g. see Scheper-Hughes 1995) while acting in the field, e.g. when being confronted with norms different from own ethical attitudes, violence or crimes, and 4. The possible reception of researching marginalized and/or stigmatized groups by colleagues – e.g. through an identification of the researcher and the researched (Ferrell/Hamm 1998). For my reflections I will draw mainly on my research about and within the German Armed Forces (since 2006), taking also on account related field experiences in Afghanistan (2008) and considerations with regard to my future research project on the connection between gendered norms within the Calabrian mafia 'Ndrangheta and gender relationships in Calabria.

PANEL 3: REFLEXIVITY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING ABOUT CONTESTED FIELDS 2

Erol Saglam (Stockholm):

When Nationalism Meets Conspiracies. Insights from an Ethnographic Study on Violent Far-Right Communities in Contemporary Turkey

Conventional ethnographic research has traditionally been undergirded "by expectations that researchers who succeed in establishing empathic connections to respondents will have positive feelings toward them" (Blee 1998, 383). As "a measure of ideological compatibility between scholar and those being studied" (Blee 1998, 388) is assumed, more and more anthropological endeavours have come to focus on subaltern, excluded, disadvantaged, marginalized, suffering, and non-European subjects (Robbins 2013; Trouillot 2003; Shryock 2004). These scholarly quests have been widely maintained by an implicit assumption of empathy, extending from the researcher toward the research subjects, through which the suffering of marginalized communities is given voice to be remedied (Fassin 2008; Hale 2006; Hemmingsen 2011; Shosan 2016).

Conducting research among subjects with whom anthropologists cannot easily sympathize with (Bangstad 2017) is, expectedly, difficult but still bears to potential to instantiate fruitful discussions, not solely for ethical and methodological challenges they generate, but also because they provide valuable insights into how largely overlooked aspects of everyday socialities (e.g., mundane activities that concretely maintain the state) and subjectivities involved. Although researchers are conventionally instructed to "learn to talk like they did" (Fabian 2001, 2), how are we to strategize when the ethnographic study at stake concerns not the usual subjects of anthropological studies (e.g. "suffering" or "disenfranchised" communities at the margins with whom the researcher can sympathize) but those who align with the power, circulate discourses against disadvantaged individuals/communities and endorse their oppression, harbour far-right political views, or inflict violence upon whom they deem "subversive" (e.g., political activists/opponents or minorities)? How is our understanding of anthropological methodology and ethics amended through such endeavours? How is the researcher to act in such encounters? How do such anthropological studies extend the scope of our articulations of subjectivity and agency? Especially combined with the difficulties to study such groups, what is to be gained from such engagements under such circumstances?

Drawing on an ethnographic research on Turkish nationalist communities in Trabzon, in northeastern Turkey, this article explores the methodological and analytic difficulties in anthropological research that emanate from the very socio-political alignments of communities studied. I focus specifically on nationalism, vigilantism, the prevalence of conspiracy theories, and extralegal violence to account for how attending to such socialities would extend the scope of our analyses and provide rather productive insights into the workings of state, law, and subjectivities. My involvement with the local men in Trabzon have generated insightful challenges to anthropological conventions, forcing me to re-think my positionality in the field and to attend to how these discourses and practices can be reflexively integrated into the analysis. Tracing (vigilante) suspicion and extralegal violence (by the civilian actors), I aim to explore how researchers can manoeuvre across them to account for nascent relationalities between the state and its subjects as well as contributing to how (masculine) socialities can be comprehended better in light of such engagements. I also discuss of how reflexive anthropological research on non-subaltern communities might open up new articulations of subjectivity through highlighting how docile bodies concretely forge and maintain unequal power relations within society.

Salman Hussain (Massachusetts, Amherst):

Ethnographic Entanglements: The Politics of Truth, Memory, and Emotion Among the Families and Claimants of the 'Missing Persons' in the 'War on Terror' in Pakistan

Based on fieldwork among the families and claimants of the 'missing persons' – suspected Islamic militants, nationalist separatists and their sympathizers, extra-judicially abducted and detained by state military and intelligence services – in Pakistan, this paper explores the politics of truth and memory in ethnographic research. Specifically, the paper examines how the victims and (human) targets of the global 'war on terror' contest its ideological claims and truth and how the anthropologist is caught ethically and politically in these contestations. The paper builds upon a discussion of making of the dossiers of (counter)memory, which contain biographical and legal traces of the disappeared persons, by the families of the missing persons to challenge the state's denial of abductions and to contest its narrative on 'terrorism'.

The paper explores: how are ethnographers seduced into the politics of 'truth', particularly, the truths about political violence, its victims and perpetrators, and what role does the anthropologist, as the listener and collector of stories of violence and trauma, plays in such politics of representation?

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

Jens Adam

Jens Adam holds a position as assistant professor at the Institute for European Ethnology at Humboldt-University in Berlin. His research interests include public policy, political violence, cities as well as processes of europeanization and cosmopolitization. He is currently developing a research project on urban development, configurations of statehood and processes of europeanization in Lviv (Western Ukraine) taking Ann Stoler’s notion of “imperial debris” as one ethnographic starting point. For his most recent book “Ordnungen des Nationalen und die geteilte Welt. Zur Praxis Auswärtiger Kulturpolitik als Konfliktprävention” (Bielefeld 2018) he conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Berlin, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Sarajevo to study practices and formats of translating the German Foreign Office’s official policy to “prevent conflicts via culture”: <http://www.transcript-verlag.de/media/pdf/2e/06/62/oa9783839442623.pdf>. As part of an editorial team he is currently finalising an anthology that will connect anthropological research on the formation of contemporary Europe with postcolonial theory.

Alice Blum

Alice Blum is working for a PhD at the Professorship for General Educational Science, Institute of Educational Science, Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, Germany. Her research concentrates on right wing extremism and gender, with a focus on the so called new or alt right. The working title of her thesis is: „From the construction of a movement. The Identitäre Bewegung in Germany – an ethnographic study“. Before she worked at the university, she studied social work and research in social work with a main emphasis on qualitative research at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. For her engagement she received the Laura Maria Bassi (2013) and the graduate price (2017), also she receives a scholarship from the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung.

Valeska Bopp-Filimonov

Valeska Bopp-Filimonov’s main research area is memory and how “ordinary citizens” coped with Romanian communism. She has worked extensively on the shortages in the 1980s under Ceausescu. Her doctoral thesis focused more broadly on the relation between public and private accounts on the socialist time and combined discourse analyses with biographic research. She finished her studies at Leipzig University where she graduated in Cultural Studies and later on defended her PhD at the Seminar of History. She now works as Juniorprofessor (Associate Professor) at the Institute of Romance Studies of Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena and is especially interested in the development (and improvement) of the “rare subject” of Romanian Studies.

Anne Dippel

Anne Dippel is a socio-cultural anthropologist and media theorist exploring the playgrounds of science, technology and society. In her 2015 German book „Dichten und Denken in Österreich. Eine literarische Ethnographie“ she explored how writers play with language, shaping national identities and collective memory in Austria. Her recent work focuses on high-energy physics. She asks how humans, machines and data are making (sense of) nature at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN). Currently, Dippel is based as researcher and lecturer at the department for Cultural Anthropology/Cultural History of Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena. She has been working at the cluster of excellence Image-Knowledge-Gestalt of Humboldt-University Berlin, has been visiting assistant professor at MIT, and for the time of her field work an associated member of CERN collaboration.

Lene Faust

Lene Faust is a postdoctoral researcher in Social Anthropology at the University of Bern where she is part of the Interfaculty Research Cooperation (IRC) “Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies”. Currently she is working on the project “Religious Rituals as Coping Strategies for Conflicts” which is based on fieldwork in Sicily. Lene obtained her PhD from the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, and has been awarded a scholarship from the Evangelisches Studienwerk Villigst e.V. For her PhD she did fieldwork in Italy (Rome) with neofascists, focusing, among other things, on memory culture, transgenerational dynamics of inheritance of war and violent experiences, ritual practices like the cult of the dead and aspects of political religion in Neofascism. From 2014 to 2018 she was the scientific coordinator of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) “Media of Cooperation” at the University of Siegen.

Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann

Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann is a PhD candidate in Anthropology and part of the Junior Research Group Jihadism on the Internet at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. Her thesis focusses on artistic adaptations and appropriations of religious and political aspects of Jihadist propaganda. Larissa has studied African Studies and Islamic Studies at the University of Cologne, University of Nairobi and University of Khartoum and finished her master's degree in 2014. Her research interests focus on urban arts as well as gender specific topics in the MENA region, East Africa and the Horn of Africa. Prior to joining the Department of Anthropology and African Studies, she worked as coordinator of the cultural department of the Goethe-Institut in Sudan from 2014 on. She focused on promoting urban arts, intercultural exchange, creational work, as well as the administration of the social media profiles of the Goethe-Institut.

Christoph Günther

Christoph Günther studied Middle Eastern Studies, History, and Arabic. He is the Principal Investigator of the junior research group *Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Dissemination and Appropriation* at the University of Mainz. Christoph’s research interests include religio-political movements in the modern Middle East, visual cultures and iconography, and the sociology of religion. He has extensively published on the evolution, ideology, and political iconography of the Islamic State and its predecessors. His most recent peer-reviewed publications include an article in the *International Journal of Communication* (13/2019) in which he develops the concept of *iconic socioclasm* to analyze the Islamic State’s strategy to attack religious scholars, cultural properties, and related social infrastructures. Christoph’s second monograph, *The Islamic State: Entrepreneurs of Identity* (Berghahn Books, forthcoming) addresses the Islamic State’s identity politics and scrutinizes the movement’s symbolic repertoire. He has also co-edited a volume on *Jihadi Audiovisuality and their Entanglements* (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming) where he develops a conceptual framework for an interdisciplinary analysis of the multiplicity of textual, verbal, aural and visual figurations, symbols, and patterns of appropriation and their culturally constituted aspects and experiences that evolve around audio-visual articulations of Jihadi ideologues, groups and movements.

Ajmal Hussain

Dr Ajmal Hussain is Research Fellow in Sociology at the University of Manchester. Ajmal’s book in progress, tentatively titled *Urban Rituals* documents the emergence of Muslim vernacular culture through analysis of the interaction between the material, social, and narrative life of the inner city. It makes use of work in the areas of affect, infrastructure and assemblage to develop a new theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between multiculturalism and faith in everyday urban life. Ajmal has published work in *Sociological Review online* (2011), *Ethnic & Racial Studies* (2014), *Identities* (2018) as well as in edited collections of various EU press. He is currently leading

the UK element of ethnographic research within Islamist milieus as part of the H2020 funded project 'Dialogue about Radicalisation and Equality'.

Salman Hussain

Salman Hussain is a Lecturer/Research and Teaching Fellow in the Legal Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He completed his PhD in Cultural Anthropology at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, and held Dissertation Writing and Visiting Research Fellowships in Law and Anthropology Department of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany.

He is working on two research projects currently: The first one focuses on forced disappearances in the military and intelligence campaigns against 'terrorism' in Pakistan and the political protests and human rights activism against them. This project draws from ethnographic research he has been conducting (since 2012) with the families of the 'missing persons' and political and human rights activists in the country. His second project examines the intersection between law, body and sexual biopolitics in Pakistan. He follows the *hijras/khwajasarras*' (non-normative and transgender performers) campaigns for human rights in the Pakistani legal, public and media spheres and examines a new language of gender and sexual rights that has emerged to contest inequality and marginalization in South Asia.

Ana Ivasiuc

Ana Ivasiuc is a visiting fellow at the Justus Liebig University (Giessen). Between 2014 and 2017, she conducted postdoctoral research within the DFG-funded project 'Dynamics of Security: Forms of Securitization in Historical Perspective' at the same university. In her urban ethnography with a far-right neighbourhood patrol and with police from Rome, she has focused on the securitization of the Roma and on practices of formal and informal policing. Ana Ivasiuc is the co-editor of *Roma Activism: Reimagining Power and Knowledge* (with Sam Beck, Berghahn Books, 2018) and of *The Securitization of the Roma in Europe* (with Huub van Baar and Regina Kreide, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). She is the winner of the 2017 Herder – Council for European Studies Fellowship.

Martijn de Koning

Martijn de Koning is an anthropologist at the University of Amsterdam and at Radboud University Nijmegen. He is currently involved in the project 'Forces that bind and/or divide' of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. His main research interests are activism among Muslims, Islamic marriages and the racialization of Muslims. He has published about (militant) activism, Islamophobia and racialization, religious identity of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youth, Salafism, and Islamic marriages in the Netherlands.

Mario Krämer

Mario Krämer is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the University of Siegen. His main fields of research are political anthropology (chieftaincy and democratisation; violent conflict and social order) and anthropology of sports. Since 2001, he has conducted about 30 months of fieldwork in Southern Africa, mainly in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) and Namibia. He is co-editor of *Ethnicity as a Political Resource. Conceptualizations across Disciplines, Regions, and Periods* (Bielefeld: transcript; 2015) and his latest publications include *Neither Despotism nor Civil: the Legitimacy of Chieftaincy in its Relationship with the ANC and the State in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa)*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 54(1): 117-143 and *The Struggle over Neotraditional Authority: Power, Legitimacy and Democracy in South Africa and Namibia* (Habilitationsschrift submitted to the Philosophy Faculty, University of Cologne; 2018).

Marion Näser-Lather

Marion Näser-Lather has studied European Ethnology and Philosophy. After her Ph.D. in European Ethnology on soldier families (Bundeswehrfamilien, Nomos 2011), she held postdoctoral positions at the DFG Research Training Group "Automatisms" at the University of Paderborn, at the Institute for European Ethnology of the Philipps-University Marburg and at the Institute for Historical Sciences and European Ethnology (Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck). After finishing her habilitation project on the new Italian Feminist Movement "Se Non Ora Quando?", Marion Näser-Lather is currently conducting a BMBF project on "antifeminist discourses in academic contexts" at the Centre for Gender Studies and Feminist Future Research of the Philipps-University Marburg. Among her research interests are Gender Studies, Mediterranean Studies, digitization, and Critical Military Studies. Her most recent publications include the edited volume "Conflict veterans" (with Michael Daxner and Silvia Nicola, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018) and "Practices of Resistance" (with Jutta Lauth Bacas, special issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* 48:1 2018).

Simone Pfeifer

Simone Pfeifer is a Visual and Media Anthropologist at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and a postdoctoral researcher at the research project "Jihadism on the Internet". Before coming to Mainz, she has been part of the Research Training Group 'Locating Media' at the University of Siegen and the DFG research project 'Media-related configurations of translocal social spaces by West-African migrants in Europe' at the University of Cologne. Her doctoral research focused on media practices and transnational social relationships of Senegalese in Berlin and Dakar with a focus on visual and digital media practices. In her postdoctoral research project, she looks at the circulation and appropriation of 'propagandistic' images and videos in social media relating to Islam, with a special focus on gender-specific and affective dimensions of these processes.

Erol Saglam

Erol Saglam is a SI postdoctoral fellow at Stockholm University. Building on his doctoral research at Birkbeck, University of London (2017), his current project explores men's circulation of conspiracies in order to comprehend how states are maintained in the everyday through extralegal violence and vigilantism conspiracies seem to fuel. Saglam is also studying treasure hunts to get a better grasp of collective memory, violence, and subjectivities in contemporary Turkey in addition to his involvement with the Romeyka Project at the University of Cambridge, UK. His publications dealt with everyday configurations of Islamic piety, how Turkish public space accommodates socio-cultural distinctions in different modalities, and the mundane construction of heteronormative masculinities through spatialities and utterances. His primary research interests involve normalcy, masculinities, extralegal violence, memory, and subjectivities.

Oliver Wurzbacher

Oliver Wurzbacher was born in 1991 and lives in Jena. He studied Cultural Anthropology/Cultural History and Sociology at the Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena and at the University of Szeged in Hungary. In 2019 he graduated as Master of Arts and works now as research associate at the department of Cultural Anthropology/Cultural History in Jena. As well his dissertation project is planned which will focus on the development of Infomatics in GDR.