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## *Workshop: Ethnography & epistemic hierarchies*

This workshop is an invitation to reflect on the ambivalent roles that ethnography plays in the context of powerful epistemologies. Ethnography's complicity in the conception and maintenance of the colonial project has been a central concern to ethnographers ever since the first critical debates on anthropology's disciplinary history emerged in the first decades of decolonisation. Considering the popularity that ethnographic methods have come to enjoy across the social sciences, the discourse around ethnography's legacy as colonial practice has remained of critical importance. In this context, the asymmetric power relations involved in ethnographic research as well as the ethnographers' own entanglements with hegemonic epistemologies have emerged as critical points of ethical and methodological reflection. Thereby, the positionality of both experts and expertise, the dominance of Euro-Western ontology and epistemology, and the intersectionality of epistemic exclusion and invisibility have been increasingly problematised. While ethnography's contribution to the construction and maintenance of epistemic hierarchies is at the forefront of ongoing debates, attention has also been devoted to the critical potential of ethnographic methods and the role it could play in challenging dominant modes of knowledge production.

Considering this ambiguity, this workshop, on the one hand, creates a space for introspective engagement with our own knowledge production and its relationship to power. On the other, we want to probe ethnography as a vector for change and explore its potential contribution to the dismantlement of knowledge barriers and boundaries. Our hands-on reflections are complemented by inputs from scholars working with ethnographic methods and/or postcolonial theory that problematise the relationship between knowledge and knowledge carrier in the context of different knowledge practices and explore both challenges and opportunities for ethnographic research. We want to explore the following questions:

1. How do we cope with the challenge of interrogating our own powerful knowledge production?
2. How can ethnography be used for critiquing disciplinary conventions and methods of knowledge production?
3. What are the specific challenges of ethnographic studies of powerful epistemologies?

The workshop is co-organized by the DVPW working group *Ethnografische Methoden in der Politikwissenschaft* and the C2PO (Center for Political Practices and Orders), Erfurt University. It will take place in Erfurt on May 25/26, 2023

### **Organizers**

Anna Lena Goll, Amelie Harbisch,  
Hanna Schnieders, Felix Anderl,  
Julia Leser, Eva Johais, Micha  
Fiedlschuster

### **DVPW Working Group**

Ethnografische Methoden in der  
Politikwissenschaft

### **Date**

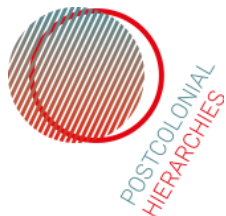
May 25–26, 2023

### **Place**

Internationales Begegnungszentrum,  
Michaelisstraße 38, Erfurt

### **Contact**

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



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(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 May 4, 2023.

## Program

### Thursday, May 25, 2023

2–2.30 pm	Welcome & Getting to know each other
2.30–4 pm	<b>Session 1: The Colonial Legacies in Anthropology and Ethnographic Research</b> Collective text work & group discussions The selection of texts will be circulated beforehand.
4.00–4.30 pm	Coffee break
4.30–6.00 pm	<b>Session 2: The Emancipatory Potential of Ethnographic Research</b> Inputs by <b>Tareq Sydiq</b> (Center for Conflict Studies, Marburg University) <b>Siddharth Tripathi</b> (Center for Political Practices and Orders, University of Erfurt) Group work & plenum discussion
6.30 pm	Joint dinner

### Friday, May 26, 2023

9.30–10 am	Coffee & Warm-Up
10–11.30 am	<b>Session 3.1: Power Dynamics and Epistemic Challenges</b> Inputs by <b>Eva Johais</b> (CMI, Bergen) and others (tba) Plenum discussion
11.30–1.00 pm	<b>Session 3.2: Power Dynamics and Epistemic Challenges</b> Group work & plenum discussion
1–2 pm	Lunch
2–3 pm	<b>Final Session: What's next?</b>