

ISA RESEARCH FORUM

Anthropology's Methodological Inventory Today: Standards, Risks, and Potentials

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Seminar room 1, A-1030 Wien, Apostelgasse 23

Up to the 1970's, ethnographic fieldwork was considered to be anthropology's main and fairly homogenous methodological procedure, while other academic fields tended to largely ignore its relevance. Almost the reverse is what characterizes the situation today in this regard: Internally, ethnographic fieldwork is characterized by a new and explicit diversity, while at the same time other academic and non-academic fields have imported "ethnography" to the extent that the label appears to have become synonymous with cutting-edge success. Moreover, two additional instruments now are firmly integrated in anthropology's methodological tool-kit which some earlier national traditions had preferred to ignore. During long periods, historical anthropology had been disregarded by most traditions in Francophone and British anthropology, while comparative anthropology had fallen into disgrace in the US after Murdock's quantitative and universalist efforts. Today's transnational anthropology therefore can build on a more solid methodological equipment than its respective predecessors: a new diversity of ethnographic methods, combined with improved qualitative procedures in historical and comparative anthropology announce our field's new, global status in qualitative methods for the humanities and the social sciences at large.



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His research focuses on the Middle East and Europe, including and combining ethnographic fieldwork, historical anthropology and anthropological comparison. His recent areas of research include the history of anthropology in German, as well as works on anthropological methodology.

Recent Publications:

- 2011 [co-edited with F. Kreff & E. Knoll]: Lexikon der Globalisierung. Bielefeld: transcript.
- 2010 Transitions: Notes on anthropology's present and its transnational potentials, in: American Anthropologist vol. 112, December 2010/4, pp. 552-562.
- 2005 [co-authored with F. Barth, R. Parkin & S. Silverman]: One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology. The Halle Lectures. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 2002 [edited with R. G. Fox]: Anthropology, by Comparison. London: Routledge.