

50. Trading Safety for Knowledge? Perspectives on Risks and Well-being in Fieldwork (Roundtable)

Tamara Gupper

Enduring hardship and taking risks related to one's personal safety have long been considered an integral part of anthropological fieldwork. Often, they have been portrayed as heroic stories which ignored the far-reaching consequences for re-searchers' physical and mental wellbeing. In the past decade, an increasing number of researchers started writing, speaking and publishing about their own experiences of unsafety and violence during fieldwork. Such accounts as well as recent scholarship on fieldwork safety show that challenging or even traumatic fieldwork experiences cannot be treated as isolated incidents.

In 2021, we, Kira Kreft, Laura Thurmann and Tamara Gupper, established the initiative "The Safer Fieldwork Project" to raise awareness for possible risks during fieldwork. In a year of collaborative work, we conceptualized and held multiple workshops for students on how the researchers' positionality, the research context, and the chosen methodology can impact safety in the field. What became visible in our exchange with students and academics, is that what is considered an acceptable amount of risk, a safe research context or an act of violence is often unclear and contested.

With this roundtable, we aim at bringing together different perspectives on safety in ethnographic fieldwork in order to critically engage with current practices of generating knowledge. What are the limits of ethnographic research if we prioritize the physical and mental health of anthropologists over research results? How do risks differ in relation to anthropologists' diverse positionalities and identities, and what implications does this have for the inclusivity and accessibility of our discipline? And finally, how can we help future researchers conduct fieldwork safely?

tamara.gupper@posteo.de