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Department of Science and
Technology Studies

Department of Social and
Cultural Anthropology

The Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the Department of Science and Technology Studies invite applications for:

Relating Risks.

6th Vienna Ethnography Lab, September 28-30, 2022

In societies deeply permeated by uncertainties, risk has long become a buzzword. Old and novel risks seem to be lurking everywhere and are increasingly interrelated. The pandemic has once again revealed that individual health risks have long become deeply intertwined with political risks. But such related risks exist in other realms as well, e.g. agrochemicals constitute risks for the environment, but their ban might entail economic risks, establishing kin can mean sharing health risks, but also extend to political exclusion. Concerns about who, what, in what combination constitutes a "risky relation" transform individual relations and societies. While the notion of risk inadvertently concerns time horizons and visions of the future, it has important consequences for the present. The understanding of social, political, economic or medical relations in terms of risk translates into forms of governance and power differentials, but also impacts everyday life. How do people deal with diverse environmental, political, social or health risks? What is described as a risk in which contexts, and with which consequences? Which practices (of knowledge production, quantification, etc.) and experiences produce "risk" as a meaningful category for collective and individual actors? Which technologies, organisms or models transform how different risks are related and/or their relations obscured?

35 years after the publication of Ulrich Beck's risk society and a resurgent interest in the concept of risk, the laboratory's goal is to bring diverse strands of ethnographic research together and provide a forum for intensive discussions of early career scholars' ongoing or recently completed research around risk related topics. Among them are: environmental hazards and toxicity, novel technologies, political instabilities, demographic developments, mobilities. Specifically, we invite research that focuses on various actors ranging from patients, becoming parents, tenants and other ordinary citizens to managers, experts, scientists and politicians, all of whom relate risks thereby challenging and/or reproducing hierarchies and inequalities.

The laboratory offers a selected group of advanced PhD students and early post-doctoral scholars (max. 12 participants) the unique opportunity to discuss their work with two distinguished guest scholars and present their findings and ideas at an interdisciplinary forum.

Guest Scholars 2022

Prof. Michelle Murphy (Department of History, University of Toronto)

Dr. Michael Guggenheim (Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths University of London)

Conveners

Prof. Tatjana Thelen (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vienna)

Prof. Janina Kehr (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vienna)

Prof. Maximilian Fochler (Department of Science and Technology Studies, Vienna)

Application

We invite prospective participants to send us their application by March 15 2022. Applications should include a short motivation letter, a short CV, an abstract (250 words maximum) and an outline of research results (approx. 3-4 pages) to be presented at the laboratory.

Please send your application to: hanna.vietze@univie.ac.at

All applicants will be notified of the selection outcome by early April, 2022.

Format and Organization

The laboratory is based on the discussion of pre-circulated papers, additionally to the guest scholars' input presentations. Participants should hand in their full papers (up to 8000 words excluding the bibliography) to be distributed among all participants by September 1. Participants are expected to read all papers in advance and comment – together with one guest scholar – at least on one of them during the workshop in order to initiate and open up an intense discussion. Coffee breaks and lunches are provided. There are no participation fees; however please note that the organizers cannot cover travel expenses or accommodation costs.

Venue

Department of Science and Technology Studies, University of Vienna.