

# ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS AND WRITING

One-day Workshop and lecture  
with Prof. Suzanne Hall

7 May , 2014 / 10:00-17:00

International Graduate Program Berlin - New York - Toronto  
Center for Metropolitan Studies  
Hardenbergstraße 16-18, 10623 Berlin

## LECTURE

6 May 2014 Room: TBA

18:00-20:00 Suzanne Hall "Super-diverse street: the urban localities of accelerated migration"

## PROGRAM

7 May 2014 Room HBS 010 (ground floor)

10:00-10:15 General Introductions

10:15-11:00 Making Practice Visible: exploring urban ethnography

Required reading: Hall, S (2012) 'Making Practice Visible' in City Street and Citizen, Chapter 1, pp. 13-30.)

11:00-12:30 Session 1: Ethnographic research: experiences and challenges

Anna Steigemann: "Shopping for Community - Bodily Aspects"

Hanna Hilbrandt: "The Challenges of Researching Allotment Dwellings",

Marcela Arrieta: "Others experiencing the challenges of building the city - Before the field, ethnographic methods"

12:30-13:30 Lunch Break

13:30-15:00 Session 2: Ethnographic writing: From fieldnotes to text

Afia Afenah: "We are managing: The politics of everyday (dis)possession in Accra",

Christian Haid: "City Life in Limbo – (In)Stabilities and Conflict in Informal Practices"

Meisen Wong: "A Spectral Existence: Living in a Chinese Ghost City"

15:00-15:30 Break

15:30-17:00 Key-themes and issues in ethnographic research: Wrap-up by Prof. Hall followed by a general discussion.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Prof. Suzanne Hall, Afia Afenah, Marcela Arrieta, Christian Haid, Hanna Hilbrandt, Anna Steigemann, Meisen Wong.

In a nutshell, ethnography consists of three main components: actual fieldwork, note-taking, and, lastly, the translation of the former two into forms of writing, displaying degrees of conceptual or theoretical depth without losing a sense of the data collected. In the workshop emphasis is given on two specific phases. Firstly, the focus will be placed on the researcher's position, the experience and challenges that can and will arise in the field. The second part of the workshop will be concerned with the key issues of the writing process and the written product. We will also discuss different approaches of how to represent in written form what has been observed and experienced in the field. Participants will contribute to the workshop with papers on either of the two phases depending on their current state of research.

Participants circulate papers of no more than 5000 words in advance. Suggested date: 23 April 2014. Each of the sessions follows the "NYLON model": Each participant is tasked with reading someone else's paper, and presenting it to the group in no more than 10 minutes, both outlining the key points and raising key questions. 3 contributions per session.

Participants either submit a piece of ethnographic writing or a paper on ethnographic methods with regards to their current research. Papers can be work in progress.

## **PARTICIPANT'S BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Afia Afenah (afia.afenah@metropolitanstudies.de)**

Afia Afenah is an urban scholar with a BA in Social Anthropology/Economics from the School of Oriental and African Studies and an MSc in Urban Development and Planning from the Development Planning Unit, University College London. Her research interests include changing patterns of social organization in the city, urban inequality and the political economy of forced eviction. Her PhD thesis ethnographically explores the complexities of social and economic relations and asymmetries of power in Old Fadama, Accra's largest 'informal settlement'.

### **Marcela Arrieta (marcela.arrieta@metropolitanstudies.de)**

is an urban anthropologist from the Andes University, Colombia and holds a Masters in historical urban studies with a research focus on environmental history at the Center for Metropolitan Studies, TU Berlin. Her dissertation investigates the sustainable development of cities through an ethnographic examination of communal water supply systems, the discourses of the local inhabitants, their uses of water, and the input of local knowledge(s) towards city planning and resource management. The relations between the local inhabitants and their territory, human beings and their environment, and culture and nature, have taken a central position in her research work.

**Christian Haid (christian.haid@metropolitanstudies.de)**

Christian Haid's academic background is in Urban Sociology, Architecture and Urban Planning. His first Masters degree in architecture is from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. After practicing as an architect and urban planner Christian graduated in the interdisciplinary Masters degree in Urban Studies from University College London. His research interests are centered around diversity and difference in public space, local articulations in global urbanization, everyday life, and urban informality in contexts of both Global South and North. In his doctoral dissertation he ethnographically explores the stabilities and instabilities within informal activities and practices that come into being in multicultural public spaces in the city of Berlin.

**Prof. Suzanne Hall (s.m.hall@lse.ac.uk)**

Suzanne Hall is an urban ethnographer, and has practised as an architect in South Africa. From 1997 to 2003 she established a practice that focused on the role of design in rapidly urbanising, poor and racially segregated areas in Cape Town and her work has been published and exhibited internationally. Suzi teaches primarily in the Cities Programme within the Department of Sociology and is a Research Fellow in 'Cities, Space and Society' at LSE Cities. Her research and teaching interests are foregrounded in local expressions of global urbanisation, particularly social and spatial forms of inclusion and exclusion, urban multicultural, urban migration, the design of the city, and ethnography and visual methods. She is currently leading the 'Ordinary Streets' research project, a visual and ethnographic exploration of the economies and cultures of street in the context of urban migrations (<http://lsecities.net/objects/research-projects/ordinary-streets>). She is a recipient of the Rome Scholarship in Architecture (1998 - 1999) and the LSE's Robert McKenzie Prize for outstanding Ph.D. research (2010)

**Hanna Hilbrandt (hanna.hilbrandt@open.ac.uk)**

Hanna Hilbrandt studied Architecture (Diplom) and Urban Studies (MSc) in Berlin, Mexico City and London. Her doctoral research at the Open University explores the relationship of informal and regulatory practices in the everyday politics of inhabiting, planning and governing the margins of Berlin. Prior to studying at the Open University, she worked as a research assistant at the Technical University, Berlin and an architect for several architectural firms in Berlin and Mexico City

**Anna Steigemann (anna.steigemann@metropolitanstudies.de)**

Anna has studied Social Sciences with a strong focus on Urban Sociology and Urban Studies as well as Geography, Ethnology and Gender Studies as her minor studies at Humboldt University of Berlin and the Graduate Center of CUNY. Afterwards, she has worked in several urban research projects, such as on insecurity in public space, urban deprived youth, ageing in the city, and conflicts of use in public space. She started teaching in 2010 and worked as an assistant professor at the Institute for Sociology and Urban and Regional Planning at TU Berlin. Since 2012, she is a DFG PhD fellow at the Center for Metropolitan Studies. Her main interests are neighborhood studies and everyday life, urban in/exclusion processes and particularly social interactions in public and semi-public spaces.

Her dissertation examines whether, how and why local businesses affect the creation of social ties on the neighborhood level, thereby contributing to the local sense of belonging or community.

**Meisen Wong (meisen.wong@metropolitanstudies.de)**

Having graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with her Bachelors and Masters degree, Wong's academic background is in Sociology and Cultural Studies. Her research interests include class and consumption patterns, popular culture, political economy and everyday life. The focus on her doctoral dissertation is on ghost cities in China, examining the relationship between 'cityness' and the imaginations and constructions of 'future' of residents who reside in these cities. A comparative study between New Ordos in Inner Mongolia and Zhengdong in Henan, her dissertation is an ethnographic exploration of the temporal experiences of residents who live in a state of 'suspended futures' and the informal practices of production and consumption which they undertake to manage a global future which appears and recedes simultaneously.