

CALL FOR CHAPTERS: Edited Volume to be titled:

Ethnographic Peace Research: Strengths, Challenges, and Ethics

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The following call for abstracts is targeted at those who either conduct or wish to critique what we will call “Ethnographic Peace Research” (EPR). The goal of this project is to compile an edited volume to include chapters which illustrate, promote, or question the use of ethnographic methods in Peace Research. Proposed chapters can be methodological, theoretical, empirical, or a mix of all three, but must exhibit a substantial understanding of ethnography as a methodological tradition and the strengths and challenges thereof and relate these to the specific concerns of Peace Researchers.

The motivation for this volume:

While Peace Research (PR) has always incorporated different methodological approaches, large-N studies of state-level effects have driven the policy and practice of peace intervention. Above and beyond the influence of other contributing disciplines – such as anthropology, economics, history, law, psychology, or sociology – International Relations (IR) and its dominant quantitative wing have influenced the national and supra-national policies which guide peace-making, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. However, today the many shortcomings of post-Cold War peace interventions are recognized as associated in many ways with the state-centric, institutional, and top-down nature of such interventions. The lack of ownership of and local “buy-in” to the institutions and practices central to peace intervention at regional, national, and local levels are identified as critical problems with current policy and even IR scholars have turned their attention to the study of agency, the everyday, emancipation, resistance, hybridity, and friction, in what has been called the “local-turn.”

This newfound focus on the “local” has led many PR scholars to focus on individual and community experiences of peace interventions in transitional and post-conflict states. And, in turn, this new focus has generated an increase in the prevalence of research presented as “ethnographic” within disciplines central to PR, including international relations and human rights, for example. Many of these disciplines, however, have little tradition of ethnographic fieldwork and many such scholars have little training in ethnographic methods. These dynamics raise substantial questions regarding the strengths, challenges, and ethics of this “ethnographic turn” in PR. Answering these questions will demand significant reflection among those who describe their work as ethnographic and constructive critique from those who question the validity and value of such work. Collectively, the contributions to this volume will initiate this task and describe the implications of an Ethnographic Peace Research (EPR) agenda for contemporary Peace Studies theory, policy, and practice.

Submission details:

Abstracts of 600 words or less should be sent to G.millar@abdn.ac.uk by December 1st 2015 and selected contributors will (if in attendance) meet at the International Studies Association convention in Atlanta in March of 2016 to discuss progress on the chapters as well as potential additional collaborative projects. Contributors will then hopefully meet at a follow-up workshop in late 2016 to present the chapters as they near completion and, again, to consider further projects (funding applications for this workshop will be submitted in the coming months). The targeted submission date for the full Manuscript is Mid-2017 with a proposed publication date of late 2017 or early 2018. Once the abstracts have been received and contributions are confirmed an appropriate publisher will be approached.