



Universität  
Basel

## Research Project

### Rituals in an International Work Environment: An Anthropological Research Study on Cross-cultural Relations and Interactions in United Nations Affiliated Organizations in Geneva and Vienna

#### Third-party funded project

**Project title** Rituals in an International Work Environment: An Anthropological Research Study on Cross-cultural Relations and Interactions in United Nations Affiliated Organizations in Geneva and Vienna

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**Organisation / Research unit**

Departement Gesellschaftswissenschaften / Kulturanthropologie (Leimgruber)

**Department**

**Project start** 01.03.2016

**Probable end** 29.02.2020

**Status** Completed

The aim of this cultural anthropological research project is to shed light on the work and staff culture within the United Nations, starting from the UN Headquarters in Geneva and Vienna and focusing on specific sampled sub-organizations and affiliated entities. This umbrella organization with its many international bodies can be considered as 'third place' with a specific staff culture that effects inclusion or exclusion and eventually impinge on the employment success when it comes to gaining new staff members. Thus, following the agent perspective, this research study ultimately asks for the characteristics of this closed system of the United Nations and how these cross-cultural relations and interactions influence professional careers and biographies.

More precisely, the main purpose of this research is to analyze the everyday performances (hereinafter referred to as the 'ritualized cross-cultural interactions') based on how they mold work culture or identity of employees in UN organizations. It is presumed that this particular culture and the cultural practices, in other words the 'habitus of international life and work', shape the careers and biographies of the employees and, to a critical extent, the biographies of their family members.

The research subject includes a multi-site research perspective and applies a multi-method approach that entails as a combination of participative observation, qualitative interviews with relevant agents seen as representative case studies and a discursive data analysis of the organization's publicity focused on human resources issues.

This research study will provide a critical analysis of a trans-globally acting organization seen as a particular area of work and aims to reveal findings about cultural practices (ritualized cross-cultural interactions) in the webs of bureaucracy and diplomacy. For a better understanding of the dynamics of what can be framed as 'international careers', this research sets out to investigate on the habitus of transnational life and work. It is located at the interface among labor studies and organizational anthropology, in ritual studies tailored to the meaning in modern societies with a special focus on elites and biography studies in the context of transnational migration.

**Keywords** rituals, habitus of international life and work, biography studies, migration studies, transnational studies, work culture(s), organizational anthropology, United Nation Organization,

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**Add publication**

**Add documents**

**Specify cooperation partners**

ID	Kreditinhaber	Kooperationspartner	Institution	Laufzeit - von	Laufzeit - bis
3726538	Müllli, Linda Mar- tina	Götz, Irene, Prof. Dr. (co- supervisor)	Institut für Volk- skunde/Europäische Ethnologie, LMU Munich	01.02.2015	31.01.2019