Universität Basel

Publication

"Altérités et affinités ethnographiques : réflexions autour du proche, du lointain, du dedans et du dehors"

This essay examines the stakes and implications of the distinction made between outsider and insider in ethnographic methodology and qualitative research in general, and questions its epistemological and methodological legitimacy. As a first step, the author frames his discussion within the broader discussions that analyze the epistemological foundations of "classic anthropology" in a critical and reflexive perspective. He thus contextualizes the processes of undermining - and "decredibilization" - of the status of the insider within larger processes of construction of the legitimate anthropological object, and the corollary purification that establishes a clear separation between anthropologists and their objects of research. In a second step, the author questions the analytical legitimacy of the epistemological a priori on which the distinction between outsider and insider, and therefore the controversies revolving around so-called "insider research," build upon. As a way of conclusion, the author explores the notion of autoethnography and shows to what extent it offers interesting methodological insights in order to re-symmetrize the relationship between ethnographers and their field(work)s.