

Methodological Innovations in Gender Research: Public Lecture Series

Events, Audiences and Experiences: An Ethnographic, Feminist Proposal



Public Guest Lecture:

Dr Barbara Grabher

Date: June 1st, 2023

Time: 10:00

Location: LS 15.01, RESOWI C

Dr Barbara Grabher is a Lecturer in Event Studies at University Brighton, UK. As a Critical Event Studies scholar, Barbara Grabher investigates events and event-based regeneration strategies through the lens of gender, ecological sustainability, and the Anthropocene. In 2020, she completed her PhD at the University of Hull, UK and Oviedo, Spain. Her first monograph 'Doing Gender in Events: Feminist Perspectives in Critical Event Studies' was published in 2022 by Routledge.

Research in, on and around events is continuously increasing. However, there is very limited methodological variety in the ways audiences, their experiences and engagements with events are investigated. Vox Pop interviews, surveys or focus groups are some of the most frequently addressed methods, but these approaches are limited in capturing the complex experiential layers that events can provoke. In this talk, therefore, I make the proposal for an ethnographically informed, feminist-inspired approach in order to advance the methodological repertoire of event research. In my project 'Gendering Cities of Culture', I established a collaboration with so-called 'observing-participants'. Embracing the methods of participative observation and in-depth interviewing, the collaboration links with a citizen scientist framework in order to investigate the production of cultures of gender equality in the context of City/Capital of Culture events. Observing-participants are a team of volunteers, who are trained in the technique of participative observation and invited to visit, explore, and observe selected equality-themed events for the purpose of this study. The gathered data is immensely rich and gives a unique insight into the ways audiences perceive, discuss, and reflect upon the value of equality in relation to audience engagements, performances, and event infrastructures. Looking at the joys and challenges of this research collaboration, with this methodological proposal I hope to encourage innovative thinking about research participants. By conceptualising their contribution beyond their mere participatory status, I understand their positionality through our collaborative relationship.