



The Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the Department for African Studies invite applications for:

## **Infrastructures: Imagination, Materiality, Process**

**4th Vienna Ethnography Lab, 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

Since the new material turn, infrastructures have attracted increasing attention in various fields of the social sciences and humanities. Despite their apparent context-free objective and timeless logic, historical development and temporality matters in how infrastructures are appropriated and what meanings get attached to them. Thereby infrastructures do not only feed into local practices of appropriation but also into imaginations as well as the formation of new socialities or differentiation, producing in- and exclusion. Infrastructures allow for certain forms of exchange and mobility while preventing others. Infrastructures influence the way space is experienced and have the capacity to generate hope and anxiety as well as fear and anger. They feed into visions of the future as they are translated into policies. This has been most obvious in (post)colonial policies that set out to produce “modern” subjects through “urban” infrastructures but this is an ongoing process. The appropriation of infrastructures in everyday life, as well as their failure or decay, can transform political structures. Presented as “public good”, infrastructures also can be signifiers of the boundaries between public and private, state and market or of more general power hierarchies.

The laboratory’s goal is to provide a forum for intensive interdisciplinary discussions of young scholars’ ongoing or recently completed research. Discussions will focus on imagination and materiality of infrastructures as processes of appropriation, translation and decline in contexts spanning different historical times and geographical spaces. Possible examples include (but are not limited to): infrastructural violence; public health infrastructures; (post)colonial housing; megaprojects; energy transportation; mobilities and immobilities through infrastructures; urban and rural planning; fluidity and precarity of infrastructures; infrastructures, representation and media.

The laboratory offers a selected group of advanced PhD students and young post-doctoral scholars (max. 12 participants) the opportunity to discuss their work with two distinguished guest scholars and present their findings and ideas at an interdisciplinary forum.

## Guest Scholars 2018

1. Jörg Niewöhner, Professor for Urban Anthropology and Human-Environment Relations at the Institute for European Ethnology (Humboldt University, Berlin)
2. Antina von Schnitzler, Associate Professor of International Affairs (The New School, NY)

## Organisers

Prof. Tatjana Thelen (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology)  
Prof. Kirsten Rüter (Department of African Studies)  
Prof. Peter Schweitzer (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology)

## Application

We invite prospective participants to send us their applications by March 15, 2018. Applications should include a letter stating their reasons for applying, a short CV, an abstract (250 words maximum) and an outline of research results (up to 5 pages) to be presented at the laboratory. Please send your application to: [seiichi.chikama@univie.ac.at](mailto:seiichi.chikama@univie.ac.at)  
All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process by May 1st, 2018.

## Format and Organization

The laboratory will be based on the discussion of pre-circulated papers. Participants should hand in their full papers (up to 8000 words excluding the bibliography) by 1<sup>st</sup> of September to be distributed among all participants. Participants are expected to read all papers in advance and comment on at least one of them during the workshop. Papers will be introduced and commented first by one senior and one junior scholar followed by intensive discussion. Each day will be opened with a morning session consisting of a presentation by a guest scholar. Coffee breaks and lunches will be provided. There are no fees; please note, however, that we cannot cover travel expenses or accommodation.

## Venue

Hörsaal 10  
Rathausstrasse 19  
1010 Vienna  
Austria



universität  
wien

Department of African Studies      Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology