

Call for contributions & Save the date

IfL research workshop #8:

**Spatially related research practice in challenging environments:
Authoritarianism, conflicts and war**

March 23-24, 2023, Leipzig and online

Next to the growing presence of reactionary and right-wing movements, lingering ethnical conflicts and the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and its repercussions are affecting everyday life and social developments in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. Throughout the world, the effects of authoritarian and reactionary tendencies as well as consequences of crises and conflicts can be felt more strongly recently, contesting our research in many ways.

Urged by this current situation, questions increase on how we react to such conditions in our research practice. Authoritarian and reactionary contexts have been a topic of methodological exchange for some time (e.g. Janenova 2019, Koch 2013, Rothfuss 2011).

The IfL research workshop wants to address and deepen these debates, and create a forum of exchange of experiences and knowledge on field research under conditions of authoritarianism, conflicts and war, by integrating focused inputs, open discussion formats and diverse examples from various geographical research fields. The following themes are guiding our discussions on the subject:

- Research practice: which specific competences are needed? How to avoid risks for research participants as well as oneself during research? How to read between the lines, how to establish trust? How to position yourself in research, how to ensure good scientific practice in view of propaganda and danger? How to prepare for such conditions?
- Which questions about labelling language, contested terms and narratives do arise? Which media do we use or analyse? (including questions of trust and propaganda)
- Research ethics, considering vulnerabilities and sensibilities: what is a good way to communicate with contacts, research participants, taking into account possible fears, traumata etc.?
- Moral dilemmas: what right do we have for research in these times and places? What relevance and/or legitimation can research have in contexts of conflict and war, and by whom? What does this mean in terms of critical reflections on our research and positionality?
- What effects do conflicts and war have, on research in zones of war, post-war zones and/or regions affected by sanctions? How can we cope with effects of these conditions? How can or must we adapt – or give up – our research plans or our general research practice? What effects do these situations have on approaching the field, data or sources?
- Facing the current conditions, what research is particularly necessary; what can be the contribution of our research?
- Which technical questions arise, regarding security of all involved persons, vulnerability, transparency, data collection and safety but also digital competences?

We welcome ideas for contributions addressing one or several of these questions and challenges. We are open for ideas regarding other topics or geographical contexts. Inputs may tackle such issues by presenting research plans or results, discussing former experiences or new methodological approaches, or revealing considerations on research practice and ethical issues.

Please submit your abstract of 300 words to forschungswerkstatt@leibniz-ifl.de by October 31, 2022. In case of questions, please contact us at k_beurskens@leibniz-ifl.de and t_leibert@leibniz-ifl.de.

Parts of the research workshop will take place in a hybrid format. Fees below € 50 will arise.