



Call for Applications for the Workshop:

## Exploring and Employing Autoethnographic Positioning Analysis

Bielefeld, 18-19 September 2025

We are pleased to invite early-career researchers to submit their work for an upcoming workshop on Autoethnographic Positioning Analysis. This workshop builds upon insights from the recent special issue of *Qualitative Inquiry* titled *Positioning Analysis with Autoethnography: Epistemic Explorations of Self-Reflexivity* (edited by Heike Greschke, 2024). Drawing on insights and methodologies from this special issue, the workshop offers participants a space to explore, develop and apply autoethnographic positioning approaches and analyses to their own work.

Autoethnography, a qualitative research approach that merges personal narrative with cultural analysis, has gained significant recognition, including through esteemed publications such as the *Journal of Autoethnography* (University of California Press). It encompasses diverse methodologies, including evocative, collaborative, performative, analytical, critical, and decolonizing perspectives, each providing unique insights into social relations and phenomena. This workshop builds on these approaches and enhances their analytical potential through a positioning-analytical perspective. Drawing on Rom Harré and Luk van Langenhove's (1999) concept of social positioning, this approach emphasizes the mutuality of self and others, revealing how roles and identities are negotiated within ethnographic settings. By systematically analyzing positioning, we aim to deepen understanding of the interplay between researchers and participants, reflecting broader societal norms and power structures. Positioning analysis thus extends beyond reflexivity, as it addresses relational intricacies and invective elements inherent in ethnographic interactions, as articulated during the "ethnographic crisis" (Clifford 1983, Clifford/Marcus 1986). By focusing on these dynamics, the workshop seeks to enhance methodological practices, exploring how personal narratives intersect with broader cultural and societal frameworks.

This workshop embraces a cooperative working atmosphere where participants motivate each other and bring diverse perspectives to both data analysis and conceptualization. We invite contributions from all interested individuals across three focus areas:

### Focus Area 1: Developing Emerging Ideas

This focus area welcomes all those interested in learning about autoethnographic positioning analysis. Participants will have the opportunity to explore foundational concepts and share initial project ideas. Please outline your research project idea and motivations for attending the workshop in a brief statement of up to 300 words.

### Focus Area 2: Applying New Approaches

This focus area is ideal for anyone looking to apply new methodologies to their data. We offer a collaborative space to experiment and innovate. Please provide a one to two-page abstract, including details about your data type, field characteristics, and research interests or topics.

### Focus Area 3: Exploring Established Practices

Participants interested in discussing advanced questions in autoethnography or positioning analysis are invited to share their insights and experiences. Key topics include:

- Deepening understanding of relational dynamics in ethnographic research.
- Examining the interplay between researchers and participants in ethnographic settings.
- Engaging critically with positioning processes in research.

Please submit a one to two-page abstract, detailing your work and ideas related to these aspects.

We welcome submissions in both English and German. We particularly encourage participation from individuals who have either collected their data or are just starting their research project and who wish to employ autoethnographic positioning analysis in their work.

Participation in the workshop is free of charge. The event is jointly organized by the team from the Chair of Media Sociology at Bielefeld University (Prof. Heike Greschke) and the Chair of Sociology of the Body at Mainz University (Jr. Prof. Tobias Boll), and the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology. We welcome participants from diverse academic backgrounds to join us in exploring the potential of analyzing positioning processes in ethnographic work and fostering a supportive environment where wide-ranging perspectives enrich our understanding of the approach.

Please submit your abstracts by April 15<sup>th</sup> 2025 to Mei-Chen Spiegelberg (she/her) [mei-chen.spiegelberg@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:mei-chen.spiegelberg@uni-bielefeld.de). If you have any further questions, feel free to contact her as well.

We look forward to your application.

## References

Clifford, James (1983): On Ethnographic Authority. In: *Representations* 2, pp. 118–46.

Clifford, James; Marcus, George (Eds.) (1986): *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Greschke, Heike (2024): “Positioning” Analysis With Autoethnography—Epistemic Explorations of Self-Reflexivity: Introduction to the Special Issue. In: *Qualitative Inquiry* 30 (8-9), pp. 659–662. DOI: 10.1177/10778004231193762.

Harré, Rom; van Langenhove, Luk (Eds.) (1999): *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Oxford: Blackwell.