

# ETHNOGRAPHY TALKS

## TRANSDISCIPLINARY CONVERSATIONS IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND BEYOND

Join us via Zoom

Meeting ID: 655 9084 8325

Passcode: etalks

This series is  
organised by the  
critical ethnography  
collective at the  
School of  
Humanities and  
Social Sciences  
@HSG

**Autumn 2025**

**December 15th**

**What is rigorous ethnography?**

**Patrik Aspers (University of St Gallen)**

**10:15–11:45 | The Square ARENA 11–2091**

The ideal-typical model of scientific inquiry is based on controlled experiments.

Since the advent of scientific methods, various tools—ranging from precise measurements to rules of thumb—have been developed to increase reliability, validity, reproducibility, and public trust. This seminar is an open invitation to discuss the need for, and the possible means of, establishing rigorous ethnography. It addresses why rigor might be necessary in ethnographic research and contributes to the ongoing conversation initiated by our own work and that of M.L. Small. The goal is to have an open, critical dialogue on what rigor can and should mean in ethnographic practice.

Rigorous Phenomenology is about the meaning of the actors. You may develop a formally rigorous model—and this is what "quantitative" researchers have done, but this formal rigour, if it limits our explanations that are grounded in the meaning of the actors we study, it comes with no value. Our problem is a different one, to establish a rigorous model so that we can understand the meaning of those we study.