

Curriculum Vitae

Dr. Laura Affolter

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Education

2012 – 2017

PhD in Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland.

2012 – 2017

Diploma Supplement Graduate School Gender Studies, University of Bern, Switzerland.

2009 – 2011

Master of Arts in Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland.

Major: Anthropology of Transnationalism and the State, Minor: Gender Studies

2005 – 2008

Bachelor of Arts in Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland. Major: Social Anthropology, Minor: Psychology

Additional training

2013

SVEB certificate in adult education, Klubschule Migros Luzern, Switzerland.

Academic positions

Since 2020

Postdoctoral researcher in the Research Group Sociology of Law, Hamburg Institute for Social Research

2019

Lecturer, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

2017 – 2020

Postdoctoral researcher in the SNSF project ‘Law in Protest: Transnational Struggles for Corporate Liability’, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland.

2014 – 2017

PhD student in the SNSF project “‘Doing Credibility’: The Construction of Credibility in Swiss Asylum Procedures’, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland.

2012 – 2014

Teaching and research assistant, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland.

2012

PhD student, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland.

2009 – 2011

Student assistant, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland.

Theses / Dissertation

Dr. des. 2017 (University of Bern)

Title: Protecting the System. Decision-Making in a Swiss Asylum Administration

Supervisors: Prof. Julia Eckert (University of Bern) and Prof. Tobias Kelly (University of Edinburgh)

MA 2011 (University of Bern)

Title: Los Priostes del Señor del Árbol: Religiosität, Kooperation und Konkurrenz im Dorfpatronenfest von Pomasqui

Supervisor: Prof. Hans-Rudolf Wicker (University of Bern)

BA 2008 (University of Bern)

Title: Die NAWÉ und die Ölfirmen – Freunde oder Feinde? Die Entstehung einer indigenen Organisation und ihre Beziehung zu transnationalen Akteuren am Beispiel der NAWÉ

Supervisor: Prof. Hans-Rudolf Wicker (University of Bern)

Fieldwork

July 2018 – present

Fieldwork in Ecuador (so far three stays in Quito, Ibarra, Valle de Íntag, Cantón Cotacachi, Cantón Pangua)

January 2013 – April 2015

Fieldwork in the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (various stays in different units of the SEM)

July 2009 – September 2009

Fieldwork in Pomasqui, Ecuador (for Master thesis)

Grants

2019, Promotion Fund (for the workshop ‘Sorgfalt oder Pflichterfüllung?’), University of Bern

2017, Grant by the Dr. Joséphine de Karman Foundation for talented students, University of Bern

2014, Promotion Fund (for the workshop ‘Tackling Asylum Proceedings from Below?’), University of Bern

2010, Grant by the Dr. Joséphine de Karman Foundation for talented students, University of Bern

Publications

Monograph

Asylum Matters: On the Front Line of Administrative Decision-Making, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.

Peer-reviewed articles

‘Trained to Disbelieve: The Normalisation of Suspicion in a Swiss Asylum Administration Office’, *Geopolitics*, 2021, DOI: [10.1080/14650045.2021.1897577](https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2021.1897577)

‘Regular Matters: Credibility Determination and the Institutional Habitus in a Swiss Asylum Office’, *Comparative Migration Studies*, 2021, DOI: [10.1186/s40878-020-00215-z](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00215-z)

‘The Responsibility to Prevent Future Harm: Anti-Mining Struggles, the State, and Constitutional Lawsuits in Ecuador’, *Journal of Legal Anthropology*, 2020, DOI: [10.3167/jla.2020.040205](https://doi.org/10.3167/jla.2020.040205)

Chapters in edited volumes

‘Keeping Numbers Low in the Name of Fairness. Ethos and Ethics in a Swiss Asylum Administration’, in: Julia Eckert, *The Bureaucratic Production of Difference*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2020.

‘Taking the “Just” Decision. Caseworkers and their Communities of Interpretation in the Swiss Asylum Office’ (written together with Jonathan Miaz and Ephraim Poertner), in: Nick Gill and Anthony Good, *Asylum Determination in Europe. Ethnographic Perspectives*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

‘Asyl-Verwaltung kraft Wissen. Die Herstellung von Entscheidungswissen in einer Schweizer Asylbehörde’, in: Christian Lahusen and Stephanie Schneider, *Asyl verwalten. Zur bürokratischen Bearbeitung eines gesellschaftlichen Problems*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2017.

Other journal articles

‘Prise de décision en matière d’asile. L’institutionnalisation de la suspicion’ (translated by Raphaël Rey), *Vivre Ensemble* 169, 2018.

‘Der grösste Teil von [unserem] Job ist Unglabhaftigkeit’, *Terra Cognita* 32, 2018.

Book reviews

‘Was wir von Pflanzen lernen können und müssen. Rezension zu “Die Pflanzen und ihre Rechte. Eine Charta zur Erhaltung unserer Natur” von Stefano Mancuso, [Soziopolis](#), 1.11.2021.

Other media & outreach

‘Radikale Bürgerlichkeit’ (written together with Tobias Eule), [TAZ](#), 24.11.2020.

“‘Sorgfalt’ als Pflicht des Staates. Verfassungsklagen in Ecuador’, [Blog Konzernverantwortung neu denken](#), Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, June 2019.

‘Observing observers’, [Anthroblog](#) of the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, September 2018.

“‘Viele Asylsuchende lügen’ – Wirklich?’, [Blog Fakten statt Mythen](#), Swiss Refugee Council, September 2018.

‘Wer viele Fälle positiv beurteilt, gilt als “Softie”’, Interview by Astrid Tomczack, [WOZ](#), 15.03.2018.

‘Herkunft von Asylbewerbern: Lüge oder Wahrheit’, Interview by Jessica King, [Beobachter](#), 11.11.2017.

‘Glaubwürdig im Asylprozess’, Interview by Katrin Hiss, Radio Rabe, [Rabe-Info](#), 09.06.2017.

Courses taught

2019

Mit Recht zu Gerechtigkeit? Debatten aus der Rechtsanthropologie, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Fribourg

2013

Anthropologie der Bürokratie, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2010, 2012 and 2013

Introduction to Social Anthropology (2010 as a student assistant together with Dr. Clare Oxby), Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2011

ABC of Kinship (as a student assistant together with Dr. Clare Oxby), Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2010

Tutorial for ‘ABC of Kinship’, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2009

Tutorial for ‘Comparative Anthropology of Muslim Societies. Mobility, Migration and the Pastoral Nomadic Heritage’, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

Invited classes and information events

2021, 'Rechte der Natur und Buen Vivir in Ecuador: Recht, Praxis und Konflikte', invited by Angela Lindt, BA/MA seminar: Recht auf Gerechtigkeit! Aktuelle rechtsanthropologische Debatten zur Juridifizierung sozialer Konflikte, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2020, 'Challenging State Politics: Legal Struggles against Mining in Ecuador', invited by Nicole Ahoya, BA/MA seminar: Ethnologie des Rechts mit einem Schwerpunkt auf Menschenrechten, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Luzern

2020, 'Asylum Matters: On the Front Line of Administrative Decision-Making', invited by Nora Trenkel, BA/MA seminar: Staat von unten. Anthropologie der Bürokratie, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2019, 'Ethics in Fieldwork', invited by Dr. des. Veronika Siegl, BA/MA seminar: Feldforschung und ihre ethischen Herausforderungen, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2018, 'Law in Protest', invited by Prof. Julia Eckert, BA/MA lecture: Anthropology of Transnationalism and the State, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2018, 'Referat und Diskussion', invited by Daria Ledergerber and Jenny Nerlich, BA tutorial: Arbeitsweisen der Sozialanthropologie, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2018, 'Protecting the System. Decision-Making in a Swiss Asylum Administration', invited by Dr. Annika Lems, BA/MA seminar: Introduction to refugee studies, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2017 and 2018, 'Working as an anthropologist', invited by Anna Hänni, Daria Ledergerber and Jenny Nerlich, BA tutorial: Arbeitsweisen der Sozialanthropologie, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2017 and 2018, 'Sozialanthropologie', Zukunftstag, University of Bern

2016, 'Entscheidungspraktiken und institutioneller Alltag im Staatssekretariat für Migration', invited by Prof. Julia Eckert, Lecture: Anthropology of Transnationalism and the State, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2015, 'Anthropology of Global Policies', invited by Prof. Julia Eckert, Lecture: Anthropology of Transnationalism and the State, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

2014 and 2015, 'Social Anthropology', Bachelor Information Days, University of Bern

2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, 'Social Anthropology', Invited by Victor Bandi, Gymnasium Hofwil

Conference papers and other presentations

2020

Presented paper, 'Challenging State Politics: The Mobilisation of Nature's Rights in Constitutional Lawsuits against Mining', International Workshop 'Civil Society and the Law: Civil Disobedience, Protests and the (Re)Writing of Environmental Politics', University of Lausanne, 12.11.2020.

Presented paper, 'The Responsibility to Protect: Using the Constitution against the State', Colloquium, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, 10.03.2020.

2019

Presented paper, 'Using the Constitution against the State: Legal Struggles against Mining in Ecuador', Colloquium, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Luzern, 11.12.2019.

Presented paper, "'Sorgfalt" als Pflicht des Staates: Verfassungsklagen in Ecuador', Workshop 'Sorgfalt oder Pflicht(erfüllung)? Interdisziplinärer Workshop zur Sorgfaltsprüfungspflicht', University of Bern, 08.05.2019.

2018

Roundtable contributor, 'Narrative der kausalen Verantwortung', Colloquium, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, 20.11.2018.

Presentation, 'Protecting the System. Decision-Making in a Swiss Asylum Administration', Training seminar of AsyLex, Olten, 23.09.2018.

Discussant, 'Transnational corporations, industrial disasters and environmental hazards. Allocating moral and legal responsibilities across different national contexts', 15th EASA Biennial Conference, Stockholm, 15.08.2018.

Presented paper, 'Acquiring an Institutional Habitus. The Shaping of Decision-Makers' Discretionary Practices in a Swiss Asylum Office', 15th Annual IMISCOE Conference, Panel 'Who is a "refugee"? Exploring the boundaries of the refugee category', Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona, 04.07.2018.

Presentation, 'Trainiert, um misstrauische zu sein...', Annual meeting of the Luzerner Asylnetz, Luzern, 26.06.2018.

Presented paper, 'The Normalcy of Digging Deep. Acquiring an Institutional Habitus in a Swiss Asylum Administration', APAD Conference, Panel 'The bureaucratization of asylum', University of Roskilde, 24.05.18.

2017

Discussant, 'Anticipation between Law and Bureaucratic Practices', at the EASA LAWNET workshop 'Anticipating Law. The Prognostics of Fear and Hope', University of Bern, 21.09.2017.

2016

Presented paper, 'The Good Decision-Maker', Summer school 'The Political Anthropology of World Society: On Practices of Knowledge and Regulation', Indemini, 21.-27.08.2016.

2015

Presented paper, 'Schwarz, weiss und ein bisschen grau. Die soziale Praxis von Recht im Schweizerischen Asylverfahren', Conference of the deutschsprachigen Rechtssoziologie-Vereinigungen, Berlin, 10.09.2015.

Presented paper, 'The Law and the People? The Bureaucratic Ethos of Fairness in Asylum Decision-Making', Workshop 'Ethos and Ethics in Migration Bureaucracies', Schloss Ueberstorf, 03.09.2015.

2014

Presented paper, "'Es gibt kein Rezept für die Glaubhaftigkeitsprüfung". Die bürokratische Praxis im schweizerischen Asylverfahren', 37th DGS Conference, Panel 'Asyl verwalten: Theoretische Perspektiven und empirische Befunde zur bürokratischen Bearbeitung eines gesellschaftlichen Problems', University of Trier, 09.10.2014.

Presented paper, 'Deserving to be believed in: Credibility determination in Swiss asylum bureaucracies', 13th EASA Biennial Conference, Panel 'Tracing Eligibilities: Moralities, Performances, Practices', University of Tallinn, 03.08.2014.

Presented paper, 'A Quest for "Truth"? Credibility Determination in Swiss Asylum Bureaucracies', Workshop 'Tackling Asylum Proceedings from Below? Practices of Asylum Adjudication in Europe', Schloss Ueberstorf, 18.09.2014.

2013

Presented paper, "'Doing credibility". Die Konstruktion von Glaubhaftigkeit im Schweizerischen Asylverfahren, Colloquium, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, 03.12.2013.

Presented paper, "'Doing Credibility". Credibility Assessment in Swiss Asylum Bureaucracies', Workshop 'Control at the Margins of the State', University of Bern, 23.11.2013.

Presented paper, 'Embracing "Governance" and "Policy" through the Study of Credibility Determination in Swiss Asylum Procedures', Summer school 'The Empirical Study of Domination: on the Political Anthropology of World Society', Indemini, 6.-14.07.2013.

Organisation of panels and workshops

2021

Organised international hybrid workshop, ‘Ontological and Normative Collisions: Struggles over Nature’s Rights’, together with Martha-Cecilia Dietrich and Andreas Gutmann, Hamburg Institute for Social Research, 27.-28.10.2021.

Organised international online workshop, ‘Legal Expertise in Theory and Practice’, together with Friederike Bahl, Clemens Boehncke, Tobias Eule and F. Derya Menten, Hamburg Institute for Social Research, 25.-26.02.2021.

2019

Organised international workshop, ‘Sorgfalt oder Pflicht(erfüllung)? Interdisziplinärer Workshop zur Sorgfaltsprüfungspflicht’, together with Angela Lindt, David Loher and Julia Eckert, University of Bern, 08.05.2019.

2018

Organised international workshop, ‘Turning the “asylum lottery” on its head. A critical reflection on ethnographies of refugee status determination processes’, together with Stephanie Schneider, University of Siegen, 13.-14.12.2018.

Convener of panel, ‘Transnationale Unternehmen und Menschenrechte’, Vierter Kongress der deutschsprachigen Rechtssoziologie-Vereinigungen, University of Basel, 13.09.2018.

2017

Organised international workshop, ‘Between Precarious Norms and Empowering Alternatives. Strategies and Tactics of Labour Organisation Between National and International Academic Contexts’, together with David Loher, Gerhild Perl, Kiri Santer, Zeynep Sariaslan and Corinne Schwaller, University of Bern, 16.11.2017.

2016

Organised international workshop, ‘Between Autonomy and Vulnerability: Perspectives on Migration’, together with Nula Frei, Teresia Gordzielik, Gabriela Medici, Stephanie Motz, Raphaël Rey and Nesa Zimmermann, University of Neuchâtel, 20.05.2016.

2014

Organised international workshop, ‘Tackling Asylum Proceedings from Below? Practices of Asylum Adjudication in Europe’, together with Jonathan Miaz and Ephraim Pörtner, Schloss Ueberstorf, 18.-20.09.2014.

2013

Organised international workshop, ‘Control at the Margins of the State’, together with Simon Affolter, Tobias Eule, David Loher, Simone Marti and Anna Wyss, University of Bern, 22-23.11.2013.

Editorial experience

Co-chief editor of TSANTSA, Journal of the Swiss Anthropological Association (since 2018)

Member of the editorial board of TSANTSA (since 2012)

Further relevant experience

Representative of the ‘intermediate staff’ (*Mittelbau*), Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern (spring and autumn semester 2018, autumn semester 2019)

Representative of the student body, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern (2008 - 2011)

Professional memberships

European Association of Social Anthropologists
EASA LAWNET
International Research Network on Asylum Procedures
Swiss Anthropological Association
Swiss AnthroCollective
Swiss Network of Young Migration Scholars

Languages

German (mother tongue), English (mother tongue), Spanish (fluent), French (working knowledge)