

PLS 210
Political Science
Research Methods

Week 11:
Ethnography

Part I

- Research design:
 - Literature, research puzzles, and curiosity
 - Research questions, concepts, theories, hypotheses, and measures
 - Cases and observations
 - Inference
- Research ethics

Part II

- Qualitative data collection and analysis:
 - Ethnography
 - Interviews and focus groups
 - Historiography and archival work
 - Content analysis

Plan for this week

- Ethnography and political ethnography

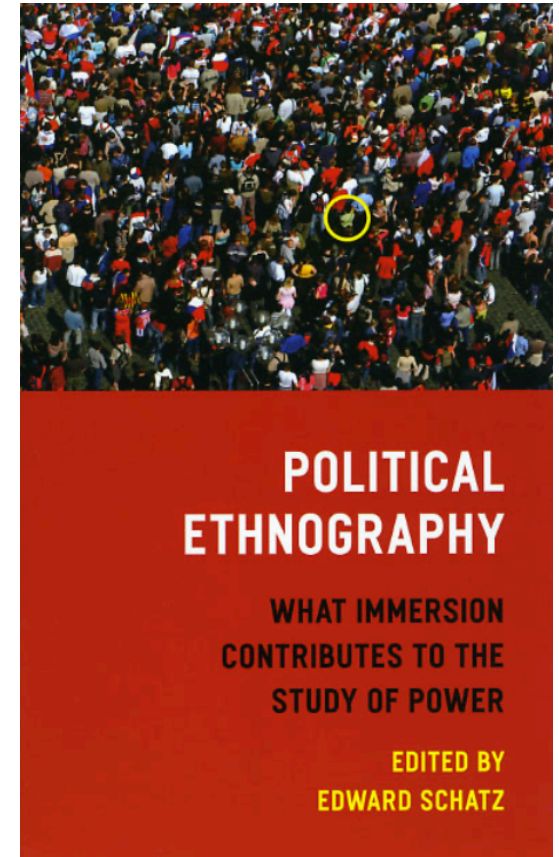


Ethnography

- Schatz:

- “[M]ost scholars equate ethnography with participant observation. That is, immersion [...] is taken to be the *sine qua non* of the approach. [...] The premise is that one must be ‘neck-deep’ in a research context to generate knowledge based on that context.”

- Schatz, Edward. 2009. “Introduction: Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics.” In *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, ed. Edward Schatz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1–22.

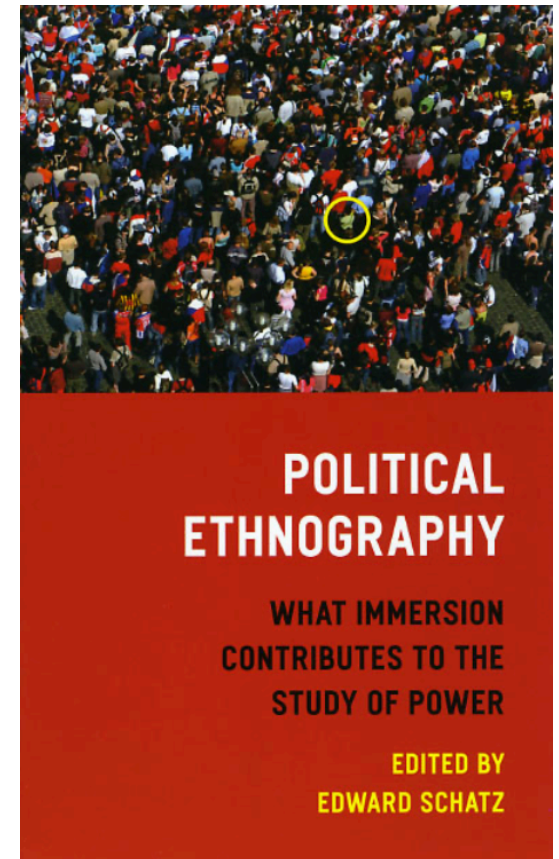


Ethnography

- Schatz:

- “[E]thnography is a sensibility that goes beyond face-to-face contact. It is an approach that cares—with the possible emotional engagement that implies—to glean the meanings that the people under study attribute to their social and political reality.”

- Schatz, Edward. 2009. “Introduction: Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics.” In *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, ed. Edward Schatz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1–22.



Uses of political ethnography

- Appraisal of etic meanings and generalizations
- New meanings and understandings
- Appreciation for the complexity of social reality
- Role of the researcher:
 - Researcher effects
 - Reflexivity
 - Normative commitments
(Pachirat: “the embodied nature of the ethnographic research process is itself political”)

Place of ethnography in Political Science

- Thick description vs. explanation



Doing ethnography

- Access:
 - Negotiations
 - Representation
 - Relationships
- Data collection:
 - Immersion and participant observation
- Analysis:
 - Narrative accounts
 - Coding

The slaughterhouse and the scope of politics

- Power relations in a Nebraska slaughterhouse:
 - Politics of sight
 - Politics of government regulation
 - Politics of labor
 - Violence



Labor and migration in Western Kazakhstan

- Politics of labor
- Kazakhstani politics
- Relations of power in the labor market, in Kazakhstan and elsewhere



Takeaways

- Ethnography: its value and limitations
- The boundaries of politics