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Political Ethnographies

Methods, Objects, and the Field

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Voting, political parties, social movements, international affairs, politicization: these and many more classical themes are reconceived in an original manner in this book, through field studies presented by specialists.

Many works of political science claim to employ ethnographical methodologies, but few define these with any precision or specify what they bring to the table. The goal of this book is to take stock of the development of such methodologies, originally conceived as solely anthropological, within the political sciences. In doing so, it draws on contributions from specialized researchers who have based their work on these methods in their studies of certain canonical objects in political science. What does working ethnographically bring to studying elections, political parties, protests and demonstrations, revolutionary moments, or informal modes of politicization? How can such methods enable us to better grasp cultural politicals in an internationalizing context? To what extent can an ethnography of the dissemination of political ideas refine their study? In what way do ethnographic methologies help us work in ways critical of the state, administrative practices, and relationships between bureaucrats and clients? These are some of the questions authors Hauchecorne and Penissat have tasked themselves with answering. In so doing, they also attempt to show how such methods place political science in conversation with anthropology, sociology, and history, thus reaffirming the idea of the social sciences.