

Edited Volume Call for Chapters

Title: Experimenting with Care: Ethnographic Methods and the Ethics-Politics of Creative Practice

The crises shaping our present moment deeply challenge the ways in which the social sciences and humanities — and anthropology in particular — produce knowledge. This context compels us to revisit our research practices and to rethink how we engage with the worlds we study. In a time of ecological, social, political, and epistemic transition, there is an urgent need to imagine modes of ethnographic inquiry that do not merely represent reality but actively participate in its composition, opening spaces for the imagination and materialisation of other possibilities of shared existence.

Within this scenario, the ethics-politics of care has become a fertile framework for reorienting research practices in the social sciences. Feminist thinkers have shown that thinking and doing with care is not a secondary gesture, but a condition that shapes how we produce knowledge and how we relate to that which we study. From this perspective, care involves a sustained and committed attention to the entanglements — human and more-than-human, material and affective — that shape research fields, and a willingness to take responsibility and to respond, as Donna Haraway (2003, 2016) proposes, to the vulnerabilities that emerge within them. Similarly, María Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) proposes to understand care as an epistemic and affective practice, capable of restoring attention to what has been historically neglected or devalued. Her invitation to “think with care” points to a transformation in the very forms of knowing: it is not only about observing or describing, but about becoming involved in processes of repair and sustenance of the worlds we inhabit. For their part, J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006) suggest that caring is also a politics of becoming — a creative impulse that orients theory and practice not only toward attending to what exists, but toward actively cultivating what might yet come into being.

This shift toward what we might call careful research entails moving the focus from representation to relationality, vulnerability, and shared responsibility. Researching, in this sense, is not a neutral act of distant observation, but an ethical practice of involvement — one that acknowledges that producing knowledge always intervenes in the entanglements it studies. Such a shift challenges not only our understanding of ethnographic practice, but also our broader conception of anthropology itself: as a situated, embodied, and affective labor attentive to the material and political conditions that enable — or constrain — the possibilities of life in common.

Within this framework, ethnographic experimentation emerges as a privileged field for studying how these caring dispositions can translate into concrete methodological explorations. In recent years, debates on experimentation in anthropology have prompted an expansion of media, formats, and collaborations — from workshops and performances to living archives, digital platforms, and creative writing exercises (Estalella and Sánchez Criado, 2018; Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón, 2019; Ballesterio and Winthereik, 2021). However, much of this discussion has focused on the epistemological and aesthetic dimensions of such practices, while their ethical and affective dimensions remain relatively underexplored. It is precisely here where this proposal sits. Its aim is **to explore care as an explicit and constitutive axis of ethnographic experimentation.**

Understanding ethnographic experimentation from this perspective means conceiving it not merely as a field of technical or formal invention, but as a relational space where modes of attention, sustenance, and co-responsibility are tested and cultivated. Every experiment reconfigures the bonds and commitments that make research possible; thus, integrating care as a methodological principle invites us to recognize and engage with the tensions, vulnerabilities, and affects that emerge within the process of knowledge production itself. This articulation between experimentation and care does not seek to constrain ethnography's inventive potential, but rather to attune it more closely to the effects it produces. In this sense, we propose to reorient the debate on ethnographic experimentation toward a reflection on its ethical-political implications, situating care as a generative force that binds creativity and responsibility.

This volume seeks to gather contributions that explore the intersections between care and ethnographic experimentation, attending both to concrete methodological experiences and to their theoretical and ethical-political implications. We aim to bring together reflections that, from situated practice, **demonstrate how care can be articulated in multiple ways within experimental ethnographic work.** Specifically, we invite chapters engaging with one of the following themes:

1) Caring through devices: materialities and affects

This axis focuses on the media, tools, and material assemblages that mediate ethnographic experimentation, exploring how creative devices — workshops, performances, mappings, embroideries, living archives, digital platforms, and more — can be configured as practices of care. The goal is to analyse not only what these devices produce, but how they sustain relationships, distribute responsibilities, address conflicts, and shape affective bonds among research participants.

2) Caring for the field: practices of sustenance and repair

This axis explores how ethnographic experimentation opens possibilities for rethinking care within fieldwork dynamics: from building trust and co-responsibility with participants and collectives, to attending to the affective, material, and political effects produced by research. It also invites analyses of the conditions that make fieldwork possible in contexts of precarity, crisis, or inequality, as well as the strategies, networks, or infrastructures of repair and mutual support that emerge between researchers and communities.

3) Imagining with care: overflows and improvisations in research

This axis focuses on the speculative and creative dimensions of ethnographic experimentation when practiced with care, attending to how research transforms when it opens to the unexpected. Caring, in this sense, also means learning to improvise — to respond creatively to ruptures, failures, or emergencies that reconfigure fieldwork. Contributions may explore how ethnographic projects evolve into unforeseen forms, tools, or methodologies. Also, how careful attention to what arises during research processes can generate new languages, devices, or relationships.

4) Experimental pedagogies and ethnographic training through care

This axis invites explorations of care as a pedagogical and collective methodology within ethnographic training and research. It focuses on teaching experiences, workshops, laboratories, and collaborative spaces where care is tested as a way of learning, teaching, and accompanying. Thinking pedagogy through care means recognizing that learning to research also involves learning to sustain relationships, to improvise amid uncertainty, and to cultivate ethical and affective dispositions toward those with and about whom we study. Contributions may engage with situated teaching experiences, critical pedagogies, or experimental learning processes that aim to form ethnographers attuned to the relational, material, and political dimensions of their practice.

In sum, this volume seeks to open a space for collective reflection and experimentation around what it means to research with care in times of crisis and transformation. By placing the ethics-politics of care at the center of methodological exploration, we aim to contribute to contemporary debates on ethnographic experimentation — expanding their scope beyond technical or aesthetic creation to encompass their affective, relational, and material dimensions.

References

- Ballesteros, A. y Winthereik, B.R. (2021) *Experimenting with Ethnography: A Companion to Analysis*. Durham: Duke University Press
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- Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006) *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis, MN., London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Haraway, D. (2003) *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
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Abstract submission

Please submit your **400-word abstract** (excluding references) and **biography** (up to 250 words) to isabel.gutierrez@cchs.csic.es and candela.morado@incipit.csic.es by **November 24**.

Notification of acceptance: January 10.

Selected authors will be expected to submit a full draft of their paper (5000 words) by April-May, 2026.

Book series under consideration for the volume:

-Theorizing Ethnography: Concept, Context, Critique.Routledge.

-Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality.

Editors

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