

24.01.

18:15–19:45 Uhr
Hörsaal P4
(Philosophicum)

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Institut für
Ethnologie und
Afrikastudien

2023

Julie Billaud

Genf

Humanitarian Technologies of Trust

What is trust and how is it established in humanitarian action? Why do humanitarians consider trust a vital resource in their field of action? Building on the International Committee of the Red Cross' response to urban violence and the anthropological literature that conceives trust both as a modern social virtue and a technology of power, I examine the various ways in which trust is enacted and practiced in humanitarian settings. I seek to analyse a paradox in the ICRC's conception of trust. While the organization's legalistic logic has traditionally led to a conceptualization of trust as the endresult of a "moral contract" rooted in the Geneva Conventions and operationalized through "confidential dialogue" and face-to-face interactions, more recent concerns for accountability have surprisingly led to the establishment of technocratic procedures where trustworthiness is achieved through the emptying out of social relations.

Julie Billaud is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Geneva Graduate Institute. Her researches examine intersecting processes of technocratic and programmatic changes in international human rights and humanitarian organizations. Her abiding interests in this intersection have led her to focus on how emerging practices of 'accountability' and 'transparency' become bureaucratized and standardized and with what implications for the notion of 'humanity' and for 'beneficiaries' more specifically. She is the author of *Kabul Carnival: Gender Politics in Postwar Afghanistan* (2015, University of Pennsylvania Press).



Foto: J. Billaud, DR
Congo, 2016

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