

# Failing Better Together? A Stylised Conversation about Fieldwork

Written by Johannes Gunesch and Amina Nolte

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JOHANNES GUNESCH AND AMINA NOLTE, MAR 4 2020

**This is an excerpt from *Fieldwork as Failure: Living and Knowing in the Field of International Relations*.  
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*Fieldwork as Failure* is a collection of pieces that unsettle the silence that surrounds fieldwork failure in both methods training and academic publications. While fieldwork has gradually evolved into standard practice in IR research, the question of possible *failures* in field-based knowledge production remains conspicuously absent from both graduate training and writing in IR. This volume fills that lacuna by engaging with fieldwork as a site of knowledge production *and* inevitable failure. It develops methodological discussions in IR in two novel ways. First, it engages failure through experience-near and practice-based perspectives, with authors speaking *from* their experiences. And secondly, it delves into the politics of methods in IR and the discipline more generally to probe ways in which the realities of research condition scholarly claims.

### Failure, Naturalised and De-Constructed

Amina: How paradoxical it feels to entertain the notion of failure while we are sitting under the sun, next to a pool in which a plastic crocodile is floating.

Johannes: Yes, paradoxical, but maybe also quite telling.

A: Why?

J: Because for early-career scholars like us, failure might reveal itself precisely in the fleeting luxury we enjoy sitting next to a pool.

A: Haha, true, aspiring yet full of insecurity.

J: So the pool is actually a good place to start a conversation about what we might mean when we speak about failure.

A: And how we might fail better together!

J: Yes, but how do we do that? Where would you start?

A: I have this impulse to de-construct failure. As it seems to be all around us, this could help us question the centrality failure has assumed in academia.

J: Interesting, my first impulse would be to conceptualise failure. This, at least, is what I am trained to do. In political science, we often proceed deductively. First, we name the beast, then we try to tame it. So what is failure, which failure are we talking about, where do we locate it? And then: What do we do about it?

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A: Funny that you give so much credit to your disciplinary background. In anthropology, you hang out first and see where it takes you, without having to determine everything beforehand. Is this not a bit of a contradiction?

J: Yes, maybe, but it is actually my ethnographic work that triggers those abstract thoughts.

A: How so?

J: I am currently trying to make sense of my empirical material and question how and if at all I can bring different facets together. In reflecting a bit on the practice of ethnographic work in political science and international relations, I realised a tension that I find intriguing. This tension is particularly pronounced in critical research, I think, especially if critical means to question what is, how it came to be, and could be different (see Sjoberg 2018).

One way to illustrate this tension, and look at what it does to ethnographic work, is to probe naturalisation and de-construction (cf. Webster 1986; van Wingerden 2017). By naturalisation, I mean the act of attesting, describing and thereby determining 'what is'. It is a necessary and positive requirement of all communicative practices, including research interactions. For example, now we talk about 'failure', what it means to us, and thereby circumscribe its 'nature' (good or bad, productive or destructive and so on). Likewise, in fieldwork-practice, we try to make sense of other people's sense-making and capture phenomena 'on the ground', wherever this might be. We therefore inevitably naturalise when we generalise from particular experiences. And this is precisely where de-construction comes into play, which seeks to strip things of their assumed naturalness and to probe contingency, diversity, and emergence.

Now, if fieldwork is to be critical, distinct requirements overlap: The 'fieldwork encounter' valorises 'being there' (Borneman and Hammoudi 2017), while the 'spirit of enlightenment' aspires to see beyond and overcome our 'self-inflicted immaturity'. The problem is that those two requirements are simultaneously mobilised to legitimise research, assume authority, and thereby determine success and failure.

A: Ok, so the tension you describe is productive in that it shapes the practice of ethnographic research?

J: Exactly, and this is why such a seemingly dry methodological matter is actually deeply political (see Marchart 2007). Lest we forget, there is not one final cause, God is dead, reason sometimes wicked, utility not monolithic, capitalist growth endless, and so on. This is de-construction, if you will, which does away with clear-cut criteria for failure, too. Nonetheless, in pursuit of empirical validation, professional recognition or confirmation of expertise, we all partake in the act of foundation. We try to establish authority. Those acts are plural and provisional, but they render certain meanings and social artefacts more efficacious than others: Linking productivity to profitability is particularly conspicuous here. After all, progress is paramount and 'success needs to be earned', which generates competition. Thus, critical research simultaneously scrutinises and manifests differences; and any attempt to resolve those differences, for example through disciplinary fiat, animates the ensuing contestation.

A: Hmm, you said it yourself, but this really sounds very abstract. What does it bring to our account of 'failure' in fieldwork and critical research?

J: Two things: That 'failure' cannot be resolved, if only because it means very different things for different people. And that this needs to be worked through. To give a paradigmatic example drawn from the 'correspondence' and 'consensus' theories of truth, respectively (Jackson 2010): For a positivist perspective of mind-world dualism, failure depends on whether or not research 'corresponds' to the 'real world'; for a post-positivist perspective of mind-world monism, it depends on resonance with interlocutors. The former is 'objectively' determined by the use of statistics for example, the latter contingent on 'inter-subjective' understanding.

This also means each perspective has different requirements of naturalisation and de-construction. Yet, despite those differences, we are all trained and expected to 'get it right', no matter our disciplinary affiliations. This makes 'failure' ominous and 'success' a persistent expectation.

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## Failure or Not?

A: But you seem to accept 'failure' as a term.

J: You would go further?

A: Yes, I would question why we are giving so much weight to failure, especially in the context of ethnographic fieldwork.

J: Why do you think this is? Why do we approach fieldwork through the lens of failure?

A: I think it is partly because, as young researchers, it has become so much part of our experience, our daily environment, and our thinking. The world we live in – the precarious academic world we move in – produces us as failing subjects. Upon our initiation, we are introduced into a world in which we already fail. As a consequence, ambitious as we are, we have learned to accept failure as a term, as a concept, as a state of being. It looms in the background; a price we feel we have to pay for doing 'what we love'.

J: This is our metaphoric crocodile.

A: Yes, the crocodile of academia if you want, where failure looms in the background of everything we do: of every application and proposal we write or end up not writing; of every interview we are being invited to or not; of every beginning even – be it a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire chapter. Failure is not being able to pursue, to produce, and to perform.

J: So failure is a necessary component of neoliberal academia?

A: Yes, of course. We are taught to anticipate and manage 'failure'. Ultimately everything is 'trial and error', working to 'fail better next time', as Beckett said. Towards that end, failure and the anxiety to fail have become our companions, so much so that we can only learn to handle our precariousness as 'adeptly as possible' (Lorey 2015). But this inadvertently makes us lonely. To struggle with vulnerability, we focus on ourselves. We tend to apply, write, submit and publish alone to distinguish ourselves. We thus also risk failing alone, which is why we have to work harder, alone. To become more mindful. More aware. Resilient. We turn to 'self-help'. So that failure makes us stronger. And, in the end, failure becomes the premise on which (academic) success is supposedly built.

J: But what does it mean to start something on the premises of failure? Can we reject failure as a term, as a concept? Doesn't failure imply knowing what non-failing would entail? What is in between failing and succeeding? An experience, a conversation?

A: Exactly, and this is what ethnographic fieldwork is all about: experiences, engagement, and exchanges – and, most importantly, the reflection on those experiences. Thus, to me it is a question of how seriously we take ethnography in all its dimensions: as a practice of inquiry into social worlds of which we as researchers are an inherent part; as 'actively situated *between* powerful systems of meaning' (Clifford 2009, 2) in 'which human ways of life increasingly influence, dominate, parody, translate, and subvert one another' (Ibid., 22); as a process and an open engagement with the simultaneity, multiplicity, and ambiguity of lifeworlds. If we take all those things seriously as we claim to do, why do we relate fieldwork to the boundedness and fixedness of failure?

## Failure is Ubiquitous

J: Because failure is annoyingly ubiquitous. In my own research, I am continuously confronted with failure. It is there, we cannot just think it away – even though I would be very sympathetic to this kind of undertaking.

A: Could you give an example?

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J: Yes, several. For one, there is failure because human suffering is a reality; inequality, poverty, and violence are real, and they are aggravated by discursive constructions that decide whose voices are heard and whose suffering is recognised. This is a failure of politics and proof of our complicity in it. As such, I constantly fail because I do not want to hide behind some form of moral relativism. In my research, I trace the resonance of the Egyptian uprising in international development cooperation, where I also worked for some years. In particular, I focus on how the basic demands for 'bread, freedom, and social justice' are negotiated, *mis*-appropriated and thereby *dis*-qualified. As all those demands are put forth against the reality of economic marginalisation and political disenfranchisement, the problem is that my research entails a double blind: not only do actors in development cooperation tend to disregard people 'on the street'; in scrutinising what those powerful actors do, I also confirm their prerogatives and the exclusions this generates. Thus, I wonder to what extent I actually contribute to the cause of 'bread, freedom, and social justice' through my research – or whether I am not also undermining it, no matter how critical my undertaking claims to be.

Second, not only do I fail to live up to my ideals, but arguably also profit from the ensuing situation, which is very unsettling. As a white, male academic, I got a position at the UNDP without any particular knowledge about Egypt when I first arrived. Then the uprising happened, and I got drawn in until this day. Yes, I learned a lot, about political mobilisation and organisation, the politics of international solidarity, about myself ... But if it wasn't for the 'failure' of the Egyptian uprising and the misery it has brought upon so many people, my research would probably be only half as appealing. And now I can 'use' my experiences as a commodity in the academic market, not only to sanction my conclusions, but also as a competitive advantage. After all, I have *valuable* first-hand experiences with the uprising and development cooperation. I am being cynical here, but I profit from the Egyptian uprising in ways that most Egyptians do not because the entrenched structures of capitalist exploitation work in my favour.

Third, there is failure because the confrontation with authoritarianism has wide-ranging repercussions, also in research practices. In and beyond Egypt, insecurity, fear, mistrust, anxiety, and violence are widespread. This affects who you talk to, how, what information people relate... Secrecy and gatekeeping are common, and not only because of malicious intentions. In the most extreme cases, people simply disappear, are put in prison or murdered. This happens to Egyptians by the thousands, but nowadays also to foreigners. Giulio Regeni's tragic death is demonstrative (Nassif 2017; Palazzi/Pusterla 2018). The ensuing outcry over the murder of a foreign researcher inadvertently exposed not only the precarious and perilous politics of knowledge-production, but also its entanglement with the political economy of authoritarianism. That is, the structures of capitalist exploitation are related to hierarchies of signification. They affect whose lives, ambitions and sufferings are recognised or not (cf. Butler 2006). And they circumscribe to which people, experiences and narratives we have access to. This depends on the requirements of ethical research practice, but also racist, sexist, classist divisions. In my case, I had to cancel my fieldwork in Egypt. Instead, I now seek to trace the resonance of the Egyptian uprising beyond Egypt. By focusing on development professionals and fellow researchers, I try to put the critical gaze on those with privileges that many Egyptian activists don't have (anymore). But at what costs?

Fourth, I know failure because it underpins every step I take. Here, I fully agree with what you said before. We live in an environment that generates competition, induces precarity, valorises commodification, individualises responsibility, and thereby raises us as failing subjects. I actually find academia particularly odd: While there is an abundance of critical engagement with neoliberalism, young researchers oftentimes comply with the basic neoliberal requirements: We are ever-mobile and risk social relationships while we are at it, work non-stop for meagre pay and petty benefits, don't unionise, let alone properly mobilise ... and blame ourselves if we don't make it after all. In all earnest, I heard people tell one another to 'suck it up', 'toughen up', 'it's part of the game' and so on.

### Ok, Let's Rephrase Failure

A: Amen, but I would not call any of those points failure.

J: What would you call it?

A: I would first want to ask: what leads you to think about them in terms of failure?

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J: Hm, I think it takes a lot not to internalise the regimen of failure when it is constantly rubbed into your face, to say the least.

A: Yes, but without falling into the trap of 'positive psychology', I think that what you mention above is a very productive awareness of the pitfalls and possible dangers of ethnographic fieldwork; of the delicate and sensitive situations that we engage with as researchers; of the harm we often cause without knowing or through the will to know. But reflecting on all of the above is not failure. It is taking seriously ethnographic practice, political context, and the situatedness of experience and knowledge; it is recognising the importance of solidarity, but also the limits of representation. As I said earlier, I think we miss the complexity of working ethnographically in the field if we approach it in terms of a binary distinction between success and failure, right and wrong, complete and incomplete.

J: So how did you experience that during your own fieldwork on urban infrastructure and its contestation in Jerusalem?

A: I had to learn it the hard way. I started my fieldwork by being scared to fail, but I ended up abandoning the term from my own research vocabulary. Now, I think one cannot fail in ethnographic fieldwork. I came to think of it as an open process from which I take what I am able to observe and reflect on it. I mean, there is so much happening 'out there', all at once. But our ability to see and not see things, and to work through them, is limited by how we learned to see and unsee. To accept the partiality and limitedness of one's own perspective is a big chance and relief – but to some it might appear as failure, I guess.

J: How did this realisation come about?

A: Initially, I had no idea what this fieldwork would look like, where it would lead me, what I expected to take away from it. But when I moved to Jerusalem, I realised that there was no field – and no clear-cut failure or success either. I did not enter a 'field' when I entered Israel. There was no 'beginning' of fieldwork and no 'ending'. All I found was a shaky continuity: a continuity of an experience, of a journey, and of a conversation.

Instead of thinking of my research as work in a discrete field, I started thinking of 'spacework'. Not because my experience became something out of space but rather in terms of the spatial continuities, frictions, and struggles I learned about (Tsing 2005). I entered that 'space' way before I had physically entered Jerusalem. The boundedness of my research subject dissolved in front of me once I realised that the very space(s) I wanted to research were the ones that I already moved in, that formed my experience and shaped my perspective.

J: Could you give an example?

A: Entering Israel through Ben Gurion Airport always marks a crucial point in my journey through this space. I entered and always enter as the privileged white academic that I am. With a German passport. And a Muslim name – Amina, the mother of Prophet Mohammed. The 'trustworthy', as it translates. But my name is not trustworthy in the heavily securitised space that I enter. The person that I am is not to be believed. I end up sitting in the immigration area in which subjects get securitised through routinised practices of knowing the 'enemy'. Questions. The name of my grandparents, my parents, my siblings. Waiting. Hours of suspension, every time. In silent company with many others, uneasily sharing a space of uncertainty, of subjectification and in between-ness. Not yet in the country – but already in it enough to be subjected to its rules. In it enough to know that compliance helps. Patience. A smile. Some Hebrew words.

J: I can imagine that this experience also shapes every interaction you have during your 'spacework'.

A: Yes, for example every email I sent out as a request for an interview. Should I change my name? Would my name and my interest in Israeli security practices be too suspicious? Would it change how people approach me? I recall how an Israeli security advisor told me straight away that he had 'checked' up on me before our meeting; how the police commander, responsible for the security of infrastructure in Jerusalem, seemed really alert when I called him to ask whether we could meet; how the actors I tried to follow were all of a sudden following me. Googling me.

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Reading articles I had published.

This made me think a lot about how affected my 'results' would be from all the presumptions and considerations that the people I interviewed had already gathered about me. How the knowledge they shared with me would already be filtered and weighed. And how I, as the young female researcher, had to comply with their rules of the game. I remember how I played extra naïve during our conversations, not allowing myself to show any disapproval of their words. I remember ignoring the masculinity displayed while talking about security trainings, drone operations, surveillance, and targeted killings along infrastructure in Jerusalem.

J: What did you take out of these experiences?

A: Many questions and maybe some preliminary answers... So, after all, did I fail? I don't think so. Rather, I adapted, but in a political manner. I came to reflect on the hegemonic discourse I settled in, on how the spaces I lived and moved in were permeated by fixed articulations, sedimented by daily practices and routines. This relates to what you said before about naturalisation and de-construction. Seen from this perspective, every coffee, every walk to the grocery store and every movement happened in the growing awareness of how hegemony works: how hegemony produces its own subjects, how it impacts the things we find and do not find, things we hear and not hear, things we see and do not see.

Is this failure? I doubt it. It helped me to refine my theoretical and conceptual reflections, to deepen my initial flirt with Gramsci, Laclau and Mouffe. I understood the value of hegemony as a concept only against the backdrop of my ethnographic engagement. I learned that 'hegemony is never complete' (Crehan 2018, 136) but is always at work through the 'contradictions between the official narratives of the dominant and the actual experience of subaltern' (Ibid.). Hegemony, as I sort of knew before but only really came to understand through the engagement with my ethnographic encounters and materials, works through the everydayness, the mundane, and the common sense.

J: Well put, and very relevant for how failure as a token of capitalism becomes hegemonic, too.

A: Yes, but the point is that it took all my ethnographic work to realise just that. I spent six months in Jerusalem, between Israel and Palestine, in order to research Israeli security practices around so-called 'critical infrastructure'. I was interested in how infrastructure is constructed as critical and what is implied in this construction. How does 'critical infrastructure' affect the people who use it? How do the actors around it understand what they do? How are politics done under the premises of security concerns and practices? How is an entire world and a society built on the vague meaning of security?

It took me a while to realise that everything I did was a part of what I wanted to research. That the continuity between security practices 'here' and 'there' connects spaces and disconnects others; that security is not to be found in a bounded field but rather in and through the spaces through which its diverging meanings and practices move; that security circulates; and that it materialises spatially, fragments spaces of solidarity, and uproots feelings of safety and community.

J: So, with regards to fieldwork and failure, what does that mean?

A: Well, what I am saying is that there is no field, not at least in any clearly bounded way. And hence there is no definite failure either. The idea of a bounded space or a fixed temporal sequence works with ideas of a 'beginning' and an 'end', with clear ideas of who has to reach what, in a specific time and place. Instead, the many things that emerge across and in between the social relations that make up our fieldwork practices matter much more to me.

This brings me back to what I said before, that trying to put up with failure makes us lonely. In my time in Jerusalem and beyond, I have had various encounters with fellow researchers, working on similar subjects and going about their own ethnographic endeavours. However, sharing a research subject only seldomly evoked joy or sympathy in these encounters. Rather the opposite: I realised that the fear of failing is even bigger if there is already someone out there who might have better access, more contacts, more experience, or more publications.

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J: Here again, ethnographic fieldwork is charged with anxiety, but different from what you said before.

A: Yes, this is the very particular anxiety of meeting someone who has been quicker, who has been 'there' before you, who harnessed all the information 'out there' and who might be faster in 'using' the information in order to advance their academic career. Here, the 'field' is given a very specific temporal and spatial delineation that it naturally does not possess, and which is at odds with what I said before about it.

The tricky part is this: in theory, we cannot be precarious alone. Being precarious does not exist in itself; it is always relational and 'therefore shared *with* other precarious lives' (Lorey 2015, 12). But in reality, the complete opposite tends to happen. Instead of acknowledging a shared experience and appreciating that our subjective understanding of things will always lead us to see, reflect and write differently than others, we feel endangered by others.

If we were to understand that we cannot fail with what we do and that our research will always be framed through the uniqueness of our own perspective, would this not make us more open to relate to each other? Instead of uniting us then, precariousness separates us. Turns us into anxious individuals. And hence it makes us governable in the sense that we compete with each other about who exploits him/herself most 'productively': for funding, for positions, ideas, publications.

J: What do you make out of this?

A: I think that it obstructs the very openness, sharedness, and resonance that ethnographic fieldwork requires. Anxiety leads to everything that ethnographically-informed research should reject – it encourages gatekeeping instead of cooperation, disclosure instead of open exchange, and silence where there should be flows of words, discussions, phrasing and rephrasing, thinking together and with one another. Thus, the fear of failure makes us fail even harder. Instead of accepting the inter-subjective, the personal and positioned relations that exist between the researcher and their 'research subjects', making every research unique in its own way, researchers compare themselves with each other. Instead of relating to each other, learning from each other, they compete. And this, inevitably, only leads to more failure.

### **Five Inconclusive Suggestions for Failing Better Together**

J: So what do we do?

A: Cheeky, that's what I wanted to ask you!

J: I think you are right to point out that we will inevitably fail as soon as we accept the premises of failure.

A: But I also see how anxiety and fear are mechanisms of producing neoliberal subjectivities.

J: Yes, this is something structural, which might not leave us with a lot of possibilities to personalise those pressures. And what is more: if we were to turn those pressures into something positive, we would put it upon ourselves again to adapt, which is precisely how the whole thing works in the first place.

A: But should this stop us from trying harder, or differently, as long as we can at least? Instead of obsessing about our victimhood and helplessness, I really think we need to move on.

J: Where to?

A: Away from our disciplinary routines and the comfort they provide or seem to promise maybe.

J: Ok, let's think, maybe we can identify some very inconclusive suggestions for failing better together.

A: First of all, we could share more. This could help against the commodification of research, the hierarchical politics

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of expertise, and the uneasy attempt to position oneself as an expert. We can share stories and experiences – positive and negative ones alike. We can share materials, readings-lists, and annotated bibliographies with colleagues. We can co-generate research with interlocutors – instead of informants that contribute ‘data’, the people we engage with can partake in the conception of research, its writing, and dissemination. But all this requires that we actually try to engage with one another, in conversations, seminars, and supervisions.

J: Yeah, we tend to forget that the struggle can also be beautiful, when we find some shared meaning, a purpose even or a cause.

A: In any case, value is more than just a product – and the purpose of research is not only to come up with a definite conclusion. If we were to talk not only of successes, failure would then become less menacing. And as an incentive to reflect, learn from and gain a sense of purpose in contrast to what we do not want, failure could even be worth experiencing.

J: Relatedly, we could acknowledge the numerous factors that induce vulnerability, which is very different from self-pity. This could be the second point. Instead of artificially separating emotions from research, values from facts, and mind from world, this could help to expose research as personal. Against the ironclad positivist trinity of objectivism, empiricism, and naturalism, there is much to be explored with regards to what our research does to us and our interlocutors. This is what Elizabeth Dauphinée (2010) suggests when her main protagonist asks: ‘What expert am I?’ To me, this daunting question should neither prompt self-indulgence nor an automatic vindication if only one exposes their tribulations. It would not only be insufficient, but also counterproductive to consider the question in isolation from the socio-political context. Rather, careful scrutiny of structures of domination and hierarchies of signification is needed because they implicate us all. For example, in the course of the Egyptian uprising, fear has long crossed the Mediterranean (Wahba 2018). Now, in many places, politics works through fear, but this is why it could be an unexpectedly empowering act to attest its pervasiveness (Kanafani and Sawaf 2017).

A: Yes. But there is something that makes me feel uneasy with what you are saying. I think it has to do with the emphasis on responsibility or rather the underlying expectation to assume it. Responsibility for what? Where to start? Am I not overly responsible already? Why me? And what about collective responsibility? After all, ‘we’ care more for those that are close to us, which renders empathy prone to racism. It seems like responsibility has become a disciplinary force, a perversion of Foucault’s ‘care for self and others’. In this way, responsibility has debilitating and individualising tendencies.

J: True, but maybe this is not so much a problem of responsibility, but its de-political rendition. And here is our third point, I think. As part of it, we need to more confidently establish and clearly communicate standards by which we judge, assess, and act – in ethnographic research as well as other forms of political practice (Schatzki 2009). This goes against my own cynicism as well as (post-modern) relativism. Standards of positivism and policy-relevance are as straightforward as they are predominant, but commitments to justice could oftentimes be made more explicit. And we should utilise our critical purchase. When we feel we do actually get it right, we should speak out, as clearly as possible, and heed the consequences of our insights. For too long violence has been sanctioned and normalised while its profiteers become apologists. But I feel that what is happening around us is too important to be left to those that are audacious or ruthless enough to speak the loudest. Thus, for me, to cultivate responsibility means dealing with the politics of expertise and the uses and abuses of authority.

A: I like this commitment for, rather than against something. This might be the fourth point, namely that it is not enough to complain about failure and criticise neoliberalism, but that we need to do something about it. In academia, critique is performed extensively. Yet, for all sorts of reasons, critique has run out of steam, as Bruno Latour (2004) famously put it. The performance of critique not only remains inconsequential, but it also helps maintain the status quo (Boltanski/Chiapello 2007). As a case in point, critical researchers also play along even though they obsess over neoliberalism and its effects. But austerity and authoritarianism affect us all, from CEU, which is forced out of Hungary, to many other institutions. So how can a greater concern with social justice be purposefully integrated into academia? Maybe we really need to do things differently, build different, better partnerships. But how can those that have the means support those that don’t?



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J: That's tricky, but I think we need to shift the focus in order to figure it out. This could be the fifth point. There is much more to critical research than publish or perish, success and failure. Supervision, collegiality, and care are crucial. Lively exchanges, feedback, and revisions matter way beyond a footnote. So thank you, Katarina and Jakub, as well as all the participants of our workshop, for your comments and suggestions to this conversation! And thank you for being open-access, E-IR. We definitely need more spaces to cherish the many experiences, curiosities and contradictions that lie between success and failure in research.

A: Yes, and we need to maintain this conversation and think together – with or without a plastic crocodile in a pool, within and beyond academia.

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