



European Association of Social Anthropologists
Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux



The Institute of Ethnology
of the Czech Academy of Sciences, v.v.i.

Making Anthropology Matter

Vila Lanna, Prague

October 14–15, 2015

Conference Abstracts



Monika Baer

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Wrocław, Poland

Gender in late industrialism: The unconventional theory at the conventional research site

The proposed presentation aims to consider what are the actual possibilities for anthropologists to contribute to public debates of contemporary Poland. It is based on the ongoing fieldwork research conducted in the commune of Dobrzeń Wielki (Opolskie Voivodeship), which focuses on gendered aspects of local power plant extension understood as an expression of the late industrial condition. While specificity of the research site has been drawing attention of various social scientists for decades, most of the analyses offer rather limited insights due to their conventionally conceptualized subject matters. The discussed study is an attempt to move beyond those limitations, even though in terms of public debates, it suffers from its own ones as well.

Brenda Beck

Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, Canada

Repurposing Stories to Teach about Social Justice

I will report on how teachers in both Canada and India have been using stories, collected during fieldwork, to teach about concepts of social justice.

Niko Besnier and Susana Narotzky

Department of Cultural Anthropology, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands

Department of Cultural Anthropology and History of the Americas and Africa, University of Barcelona, Spain

Capacity Building Workshop (October 15, 14:30 – 16:30)

Niko Besnier and Susana Narotzky will talk about their experience on how to produce a viable research proposal to ERC. Workshop participants can take this opportunity to present their own projects by bringing with them (on a USB stick) an abstract of 2000 characters that will ‘provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved’ (from ERC proposal instructions). Providing this abstract, however, is not a requirement for participation in the workshop, and everyone is welcome.

Alexandra Bitusikova

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

Anthropology clustering as a way to address major societal challenges and to be heard

The aim of this short contribution is to encourage anthropologists in EASA (and outside EASA) to identify major societal challenges and topics where anthropology could contribute (in harmony with existing funding opportunities in H2020 and elsewhere) and to create several strong thematic clusters that could influence next work programmes in H2020 and their thematic areas.

Aleksandar Bošković

Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Belgrade, Serbia

World Anthropologies from a Local Perspective

The presentation will deal with the prospects of developing anthropology in former Yugoslavia, as well as some of the practical problems that practitioners from these countries face, Language and cultural issues, relations with professional institutions and grant-giving bodies (which seem to favour certain types of proposals) are some of the issues that will be briefly discussed.

Michał Buchowski

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland / European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/O, Germany

Absent Other: Multiculturalism and the Fear of Muslims in a Non-Immigrant Society

This paper addresses the issue of multiculturalism in Poland which serves here as a case study for a wider pattern noticeable in several European countries where number of immigrants, especially Muslims in relation to the whole population is “statistically insignificant.” The reference point is the concept of tolerance. National historians like to impart the belief in the ‘eternal Polish tolerance’. In fact, there is no connection between any form of the historical tolerance in the distant past and the views of the majority of contemporary Poles on ethnic and religious minorities in the country or elsewhere. Today’s attitudes result from the most recent history, marked with the interwar, war and post-WWII nationalisms, seven decades of a relative ethnic and cultural homogeneity of society, recent migration trends in Europe, the current refugee crisis and worldwide spreading of a fear of terrorism, overwhelmingly bolstered by the media, and last but not least, the most recent “refugee crisis.”

Shukti Chaudhuri-Brill

Consultant, Paris, France

Making Culture Count

A definition of culture as a simple agglomeration of traits pertaining to a particular group of people underlies discourses on integration of migrants/minorities on the part of aid organizations and state institutions. I encounter such definitions in research and practical work with Romanian Rom migrants in the Paris area. This perspective contrasts with anthropological conceptions of culture as learned and patterned behavior, originating within and intersecting with structural relations of power between social actors/institutions. Anthropologists could contribute to political discourse/practices of social integration by providing broader theoretical and practical perspectives on culture to education, health, economic and other integration contexts.

Auksuolė Čepaitienė

Lithuanian Institute of History (Department of Ethnology), Vilnius, Lithuania

Emphasising Education in the Development of Anthropology

The discipline of anthropology (and ethnology) is underrepresented in Lithuania, and challenged by the other fields of inquiry despite the variety of efforts taken since 1990's. Drawing on local practises I suggest for education in the development of anthropology (and ethnology). Intellectual value and productivity of anthropology rests in the capacities that are learnt, taught and ensured by consistent approach to discipline, theoretical training and ethnographic practice brought together. To have anthropology and its sister disciplines developed as modern fields of study it means to approach critically the understanding of cultural and social complexities of contemporary world.

Hana Červinková

Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences. Prague, Czech Republic /University of Lower Silesia, Wroclaw, Poland

Seeing the Invisible Other – Anthropology and Teacher Training in Central Europe

Many anthropologists today work in interdisciplinary academic settings outside of traditional anthropology/ethnology departments. I will draw on my experience from working in the last 12 years as an anthropologist at a School of Education in Poland where we train future teachers and educational specialists (enrollment of 1,000 students per year). Introductory anthropology courses are a part of most undergraduate and graduate educational studies curricula in Poland, where more than 60,000 students are enrolled in educational studies departments. This institutional presence of anthropology in an academic field that trains future educators creates a great opportunity for anthropologists to cultivate anthropological sensibilities, making anthropology matter in the public sphere.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen

Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, Norway

Norwegian Anthropology from Success to Ambiguity

Although Norwegian anthropology remains a healthy and well-known discipline, it has lost some ground since the turn of the millennium. This is apparent when looking at student recruitment, public visibility and general importance in Norwegian public life. While no single cause explains this hopefully temporary decline, a neoliberal knowledge regime and the backlash against multiculturalism are two factors to be considered seriously.

Paolo Favero

Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Interdisciplinarity Indiscipline”: an anthropologist in the world of images

The present paper aims to offer some reflections about the meaning of the anthropological perspective in the context of visual cultures writ large. In the first part, grounding my analysis on my extensive collaborations with visual sociologists, media and film studies scholars in the framework of the Visual and Digital Cultures Research Center (ViDi) at the University of Antwerp, I will problematize the extent to which the practices that characterize the work of the anthropologist can dialogue with those of other disciplines. What different notions of ethnography do we bring to bear in such collaborations? In the second part I will insert such

reflections in the world of commercial documentary filmmaking. Grounding my reflections again on my personal experiences and in particular on my earlier collaborations with public television I will investigate the extent to which the anthropological perspective may become a useful tool for communicating to wider audiences.

Rachael Goberman-Hill

University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

Making anthropology matter to Europe: contributing to decisions about health

Many anthropologists work outside conventional academia, and many conduct research into health, illness and healthcare. In this talk I shall describe and reflect on my role as an anthropologist working in multidisciplinary health research contexts. I will particularly focus on how anthropologists like me might have a voice in decisions that affect our populations, and how we might best represent anthropology as relevant and constructive.

Valentina Grillo

University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

Migrations and Refugees' issues: Shifting Discourses in Political Anthropology

In political anthropology the importance of refugees' and migratory issues lies in the chance to better understand logics of power and nation-state. To gain the most of it, it is important to approach the issue holistically and include transnational aspects. Transnational approaches remained often bounded to conceive the phenomenon following transnational scapes that often remain unrelated to dynamics and relations of power. At the same time, power relations profoundly shape the life of migrants and refugees. Approaching migrations and refugees' issues needs both paradigms: it might be the right time to combine them to make anthropology relevant in public spheres.

Haldis Haukanes

University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Towards an engaged anthropology of/ for the future?

With reference to my work among young Czechs on their " Imagined futures", my presentation will address some dilemmas related to the important but complicated role of the anthropologist as a "bridge" between different knowledge systems and settings. In particular I discuss the challenges of entering and maintaining a dialogue around urgent moral and political issues with people we meet in the field.

Narmala Halstead

University of East London, UK

Making explicit: popularization and knowledge boundaries in anthropology

This talk considers that understandings of distance from knowledge forms marked by popularization are co- presences in anthropology as ways of protecting disciplinary boundaries. It looks at how a problem of popularization can be retained to set limits, visibly and invisibly, to the idea of anthropology as an engagement beyond its 'academic

boundaries'. This is where anthropological knowledge achieves privileged status through understandings of its distance from the popular. These distinctions exoticise the discipline to parallel increasing emphasis on anthropology's role in the contemporary and its vital contributions to pressing concerns.

The talk reflects on these issues, drawing on fieldwork and other experiences as well as related accounts in the literature to consider that the presencing and absenting of the popular in anthropology both contributes to privileged knowledge and certain difficulties of wider engagement. It highlights the overlooked role of the popular as also invisibly embedded in subjective spaces of anthropological knowledge production.

Łukasz Kaczmarek

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

Mobility Discourse in Public Culture: Anthropology vs. Problematic Categorization of the "Forced" and "Economic" Migrants

I discuss challenges for Central European anthropology in a face of the 'EU refugees crisis'. It refers both to conducting ethnographic research in an age of 'quantitative and methodological nationalism', and fighting for public culture – mass media and policy-makers – attention (Ortner 1998). The character of anthropological knowledge – nuanced, humanizing the Other, deconstructing common places, contextualized – undermines our 'scientific' authority within a public discourse. It hampers communicating our knowledge about migrants, host societies and the ways of facilitating the integration processes. I draw on both, my recent research in Jamaica, Ireland and Poland, and the activities of AMU Center for Migration Research and Migrant Info Point.

Agnieszka Kościańska

University of Warsaw, Poland

Anthropology Against Sexuality and Gender Based Discrimination

The recent eruption of racism in Central Europe as well as earlier moral panic over gender and sexuality showed the urgent need for anthropologists' engagement in the public debate in the region. In this presentation, I will reflect on my own experiences in translating my research on gender and sexuality into politically and socially relevant expert knowledge.

Judith Okely

Oxford School of Anthropology, Oxford, UK

Anthropology's Contribution to Gypsy/Roma and Traveller Identity and Rights

Gypsies/Roma/Travellers have been unique nomads supplying occasional goods and services to the dominant political economy. They have been persecuted through centuries. This presentation draws on in-depth fieldwork by anthropologists throughout Europe. Under communism, many Roma were settled. In the UK, after 1994 legislation abolished the official duty to provide sites, the majority of English Gypsies are now housed against their wishes. With perspectives from the inside, anthropologists have helped to counter Racist Othering. Members of the varied ethnic groups are increasingly embracing anthropology.

Marek Pawlak

Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland

European Migration and the Neoliberal Imaginaries

Drawing on my fieldwork on transnational migrants living mobile lives between Poland and Norway, I discuss the importance of anthropological perspective and comparisons in migration scholarship and public discourse. By introducing the complexity of migrants' identity strategies, I attempt to explain the existing process of valorising migrants' mobile practices, which seems to be at odds with the widely promoted neoliberal agenda. I conclude the intervention by making some initial comparisons to my next research (to be conducted among Polish migrants living in the aftermath of economic crisis in Iceland) and pointing out the advantages of anthropological endeavours in raising crucial questions about European mobility and migration, multiple crises and the neoliberal conditions.

Italo Pardo

University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

Anthropology Matters

In this paper I suggest that Anthropology matters, and so do anthropological matters, well beyond disciplinary boundaries. I will argue that this is so primarily because of disciplinary commitment to ethnographically-based and holistic analysis and to comparative methodology. Drawing on personal experience over 25 years, I will illustrate how the social anthropologist is particularly well-equipped to stimulate critical scholarship, exchange of ideas and research collaboration among scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds, such as sociologists, geographers, jurists, economists, political scientists, historians, architects and medical doctors. I will then discuss the need and potential to promote the significance of anthropological research to society and engage in debate and collaboration with non-academics who operate in society and are interested in our empirical knowledge, and in making use of it.

Agnieszka Pasieka

University of Vienna, Austria

Anthropology and the ability to listen

Anthropologists/Ethnographers are often praised for being capable of talking to other people, and more precisely to different sorts of people: inhabitants of remote places, practitioners of exotic rites, and even "repugnant others", to use the expression of Susan Harding (This at least seems to me to be the way in which anthropologists are viewed in Poland). However, I'd like to argue that a more fruitful way of thinking about anthropologists' strength is by highlighting their ability to listen. I strongly believe that many problems our societies are currently facing, including the refugee crisis, demonstrate clearly that not only should anthropologists join public debates but also try to set rules of those debates/how to debate.

Daniela Mosaad-Penickova

Anglo-American University, Prague, Czech Republic

Medical Anthropological Research on Migrant Health in the Framework of Global Health

Amidst of the Middle-Eastern migration to EU upsurge, a historically important windows opens for European medical anthropologists – not only to bring forward ethnographies on the migrants health and health care but to contribute to new and more efficient policies that would better monitor and subsequently manage the critical health related conditions migrants endure. As the crisis transcend nation states' boundaries, so do anthropologists need to create a network of collaboration in this endeavor.

Giuliana B. Prato

University of Kent, UK

From Development to Sustainability and Social Responsibility – The Contribution of Anthropology

Nowadays the contribution of anthropologists to development programmes is widely acknowledged. In this paper I shall focus on an aspect that instead has been often overlooked. I shall discuss how anthropological research brings to light complex ways in which ideological biases and vested interests may pre-empt objective analysis and the successful accomplishment of economic policies. In particular, I shall draw on urban ethnographies to discuss how local knowledge and the sustainable exploitation of such knowledge and local resources (both human and natural) are all too often undervalued or ignored.

Tamás Régi

Kodolányi János University of Applied Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

Some thoughts on the Position of Anthropology in Hungary

This year the Hungarian Government announced that from 2016 it will be prohibited to offer cultural anthropology undergraduate program in Hungarian universities. In this short presentation I would like to talk about the current debates (pros/cons) about the elimination of the cultural anthropology BA level program in Hungary.

Petr Skalník

University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

Between science and humanities: social anthropology at a crossroads

As far as social anthropology is concerned we are dealing with a scientific discipline and not a humanity. Social anthropology develops its theories from data gained through empirical research. Those who want to practice discourse without empirical data can do it but in as social anthropologists. EASA is being infiltrated by quite few fakes who pretend to be social anthropologists because the discipline has a strong organization such as EASA. I welcome interdisciplinarity but it should be made known from what position this or that view is coming. Otherwise the specificity of our approach will disappear in a sea of irresponsible chatting.

Valeria Siniscalchi

Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre Norbert Elias, Marseille, France

Food values, economic spaces, and alternatives in Europe

The global flows of food and protests that we can observe in Europe today allow us to conceptualize food as the object of claims, as an instrument of political struggles, and the subject of new economic imaginaries with the larger objective of changing the economic system. From individual acts by consumers or producers to organized social movements, people draw new economic spaces inside Europe through food and food values. The analysis of these economic spaces, values and alternatives allows us to reflect to our paradigms and to our capacity to grasp contemporary economic changes.

Daniel Sosna

University of West Bohemia, Pilsen, Czech Republic

Are Anthropologists Persuasive?

Anthropologists are trained to understand others but others are not trained to understand anthropologists. This asymmetrical relationship becomes noticeable when anthropologists try to persuade the public that anthropological views of contemporary pressing problems concerning otherness are sound. I will suggest several possible sources of our limited capacity for persuasion outside the disciplinary borders and argue that we have not paid the same amount of attention for different dimensions of the other.

Jaroslav Šotola and Mario Rodríguez Polo

Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic

Refugees, informal initiatives and anthropology

Current migration „crisis“ represents a challenge for European societies and also for current anthropology. Based on short term research, we would like to present an exceptional response to an exceptional situation: multisited ethnography in an unstable situation between virtual space and humanitarian aid.

Georgeta Stoica

Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), UMR ENTROPIE, Université de Perpignan, France

Find a job Find Anthropologists

The skills developed by completing a degree in anthropology should give the opportunity to our students to find a job as an anthropologist not only inside academia but also within different agencies and organizations (environmental, governmental, etc.) and our competences should be needed not only because these are required by a specific research program. What is cultural competence and how this can strengthen the presence of our discipline outside the academia? Who needs anthropologists and why anthropology is needed? What place do we

have in interdisciplinary research? These are just a few questions that we should try to ask in order to find a place for anthropology at different levels across Europe.

Zdeněk Uherek

Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic

One anthropology or many anthropologies? A reflection on one forgotten project.

The UNESCO-MOST programme in 1998 initiated the creation of a series of case studies from various countries of the world, how cooperation of the humanities and social sciences with the decision making sphere takes place in them. The investigation was never evaluated complexly. From its results, however, it is possible to deduce that there are several methods of the communication of anthropology with the decision-making sphere and the public, which have an impact on the development of the disciplines themselves and also an impact on how the society perceives them. Other than presenting the models of how anthropology can function in society, I focus on the Czech Republic, where especially in the area of applied anthropology the expectations and the possibilities of the field are not in harmony with one another.

Susana de Matos Viegas

Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Land Across Borders

Displacements of various kinds are a key issue in contemporary world. Comparative perspectives in Anthropology allow us to enlarge the human scale of dispossession, connecting displacements of ethnic nature, such as colonial or contemporary expulsion of people from so called indigenous territorialities and contemporary senses of dispossession of people from their homes in Europe or north America as a result of mortgage foreclosure.