

Newsletter of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex



New Research - Global Trade in China

The European Commission has awarded **Magnus Marsden** a large-scale ERC Advanced Grant for a project entitled *Trust, Global Traders, and Commodities in a Chinese International City*.

The project's central focus will be on Yiwu, a dynamic city of 2 million in China's commercially vibrant Zhejiang province. Yiwu is known by traders from countries including Afghanistan and Syria, Ukraine and Mexico, and the UK and Russia as the world's hub for the wholesale of 'small commodities'. Magnus Marsden

and the project's team will explore the ways in which transnational trading activities are conducted in Yiwu, and document the city's connections to the wider world through networks and flows of people, commodities, and knowledge. It is anticipated that the project's findings will yield new perspectives on the precise ways in which trade facilitates the simultaneous exchange of commodities, practices, ideas, and identities.



Magnus with Mohammad Gulab Mangal, Afghanistan's Minister for Border and Tribal Affairs

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Paperwork and Citizenship in India

Geert De Neve & Grace Carswell have obtained funding from the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust for a project entitled: *The materiality of citizenship and state-society interaction: A study of people's engagement with official documents, cards and paperwork in India*.

The project also involves **Dr Tom Chambers**, who obtained his PhD from the anthropology department earlier this year.

The researchers will explore how cards, documents and official paperwork play a central role in ordinary citizens' everyday engagement with the state. In India,



as elsewhere, entitlements to state resources and citizenship rights are mediated by official documents, ID cards and certificates, which people need to obtain

and present in order to access even basic rights and benefits. Moreover, the issuing, withdrawal or approval of paperwork forms a crucial mechanism of governance that can

act to assert state authority and perpetuate inequalities of access. With the widening reach of the Indian state in people's lives through social protection policies (e.g. housing, pensions and employment guarantees) and a new biometric ID card, understanding the politics of paperwork has become ever more pressing. Based on a comparative ethnographic study of two Indian states, this project will explore how official documents mediate - and even constitute - ordinary Indians' interactions with the state, shape processes of claim making, and inform popular understandings of citizenship. Grace and Geert will carry out field research in the state of Tamil Nadu, while Tom will conduct research in Uttar Pradesh.



Anke Schwittay is a lead author on Markets, Finance and

Corporations for the International Panel on Social Progress (IPSP), a global initiative spearheaded by Amartya Sen to get social scientists' perspectives on the state of the social world.

Anke recently attended the first author meeting in Istanbul and will now begin to write her contribution.

For more information see: <http://www.ip-socialprogress.org/>

Our Students

MA Anthropology (2013) graduate **Chloe Peacock**, won the 2014 Sunley Prize for her dissertation, "Remembering the Riots: Citizenship and 'Social Cleansing' After the London Riots of 2011." To download a

copy of Chloe's essay go to: <http://www.howardleague.org/sunley-prize-2014/> Well done Chloe!



Alice Viba's Undergraduate

Dissertation: "The rise of collaborative consumption: A critical assessment of resistance to capitalism and its ideologies of self and property" was shortlisted for the Royal Anthropological Institute Student Essay Prize.

Finally, congratulations to our recent Anthropology PhD **Jenny Diggins** who has just been appointed as a Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University.



Recent Workshops



As part of the 'Careers and Personal Development Month' in the School of Global Studies, **Alex Aisher** designed and convened a new '**Values and Personal Development**' workshop for Global Studies undergraduates. Using cards, seeds and Alex's DecisionSeed® tool this energising experiential workshop gave participants a chance to explore and assess how different career pathways aligned with their deepest values.

'**Voices of Activism: Conversations on Social Movements**' was a daylong event bringing activists and students together to discuss a range of subjects including international campaigning, use of social media and violent protest. The speakers in the morning session represented a diverse range of activists:

For those without much experience of activism, the day provided a good insight into some of the issues, motivations and problems facing members of social movements. For those already pursuing forms of activism, the event offered shared experiences and deeper awareness of their own activities.

Jonathan Newman



Global Voices at WOMAD



'The beating heart of the festival' said one visitor to the School of Global Studies' Bedouin tent jam-packed with three days of thought-provoking, entertaining and diverse talks, presentations, screenings, song, rap and rhythms.

Highlights included a screening of Amir Amirani's *We Are Many* - an important and highly acclaimed documentary about worldwide protests against the 2003 Iraq war. It was charismatically introduced by the University's Chancellor Sanjeev Bhaskar who proudly walked around with

Recent PhDs



Jamie Barnes' thesis is an autoethnographic and reflexive exploration of Christian experience based on his own life-experience and religious conversion as well as fieldwork carried out in the southern Balkans. It explores perception and asks how, and why, we come to inhabit the realities within which we live? A central argument is that at the heart of certain types of Christian faith is a freely entered charismatic relationship with a divine Other. The thesis explores the manner in which this is lived out and the kinds of 'worlds' it creates.



Anneke Newman's thesis titled "Faith, identity, status and schooling: An ethnography of educational decision-making in northern Senegal" analysed parents' and students' negotiations of state and Islamic education. It exposed the damaging effects of secular bias in dominant models of 'quality' education in international education policy, and theoretical frameworks for understanding people's engagement with schooling within comparative education. In the spirit of applied anthropology, it pointed towards alternative theoretical concepts for making sense of the subtle ways in which faith informs people's decisions, and practical suggestions for more sensitive education policy.

a Global Studies T-shirt. Channel 4's Jon Snow showed his full-fledged support while hosting the Q&A with the director: '*It's electrifying. An absolute must-see. Every person in Britain, across the world, needs to see it to avoid this sort of thing ever happening again.*'

Staff and students too numerous to name here pitched in to lead daily workshops and Talk Circles sessions. The pop-up summer school covered a host of topics including: 'Gender(ed) Violence', 'Child Labour in Cocoa and Cotton', 'Video Games, New Media Technologies & Indigenous Groups', 'Participatory Photography and Film', and 'Kissing The Other', a guided meditation session to explore anthropology as practice. As one participant wrote:

'Festivals like WOMAD are where the mix of ideas, stories and culture and generation HAPPEN - so it's the best place for research universities to engage with the WORLD.'



Based on 18 months of fieldwork **Tom Chamber's** thesis focused on work, life and migration in a Muslim wood crafting community of Saharanpur (North India). The thesis utilises 'informality' to understand networks, connections, niches and spaces of production and exchange. It explores the complexities of a supply chain filled with ambiguous actors and the connections and networks within which craft workers operate. It traces the influence of Islam and explores connections of religion and friendship. It follows pathways of migration across the country and to the Gulf.



Ross Wignall's doctoral research focused on the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), exploring the role of morality in creating a platform for transnational development partnership. Based on 18 months ethnographic fieldwork spread across The Gambia and the UK, his thesis offers significant contributions to understanding the historic intertwining of economic development and religious organisations through an ethnographic portrait of interpersonal relationships. As such, it sits at the intersection of contemporary debates within both development practice and the anthropological critique of development.

A final highlight was Sophia Efthimiou's lead on the uplifting World Song in Harmony joined by passing festival goers. People left the tent singing, even on a day when the rain was unrelenting, prompting one person to feedback:

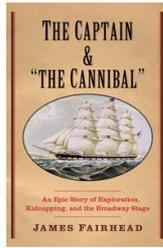
'My heart melted and remains soft. Voices dancing together brings me to tears. Remembering my roots brings up deep sadness in reflection of human disconnection, but also power and strength in remembering unity... Thank you.'

Raminder Kaur



Chancellor Sanjeev Bhaskar with Jon Snow and Andrea Cornwall

Hot Off the Press!



James Fairhead has a new book published by Yale University Press "**The Captain & 'The Cannibal': An Epic Story of Exploration, Kidnapping and the Broadway Stage**"

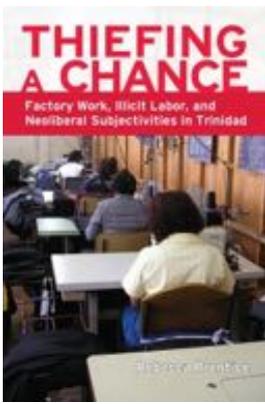
Sailing in uncharted waters of the Pacific in 1830, Captain Benjamin Morrell of Connecticut became the first outsider to encounter the inhabitants of a small island off New Guinea. The contact quickly turned violent, fatal cannons were fired, and Morrell abducted young Dako, a hostage so shocked by the white complexions of his kidnapers that he believed he had been captured by the dead. This gripping book unveils for the first time the strange odyssey the two men shared in ensuing years.

Upon returning to New York, Morrell

exhibited Dako as a "cannibal" in wildly popular shows performed on Broadway. The proceeds helped fund a return voyage to the South Pacific—the captain hoping to establish trade with Dako's assistance, and Dako seizing his chance to return home with the only person who knew where his island was. Supported by rich, newly found archives, this wide-ranging volume traces the voyage to its extraordinary ends and en route decrypts Morrell's ambiguous character, the mythic qualities of Dako's life, and the two men's infusion into American literature—as Melville's *Queequeg*, for example, and in Poe's *Pym*.

"The joy of Fairhead's excellent book lies in its wonderful detail... Teasing truth out of fiction Fairhead provides us with a tale as remarkable for what it says about "us" as it does about "them"."—Philip Hoare, *Literary Review*.

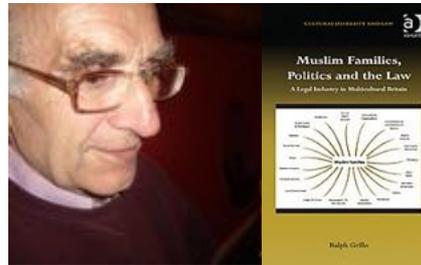
"[A] superb new cultural history masquerading as an adventure tale... A fascinating glimpse into the sometimes ruthless Realeconomik of the early 19th century, which Fairhead delivers with great storytelling flair."—*Washington Post*



Rebecca Prentice, *Thieving a Chance: Factory Work, Illicit Labor, and Neoliberal Subjectivities in Trinidad* (University Press of Colorado, 2015).

economic opportunities for engaging the "global" market. This fascinating ethnography explores contemporary life in the Signature Fashions garment factory, where the workers attempt to exploit gaps in these new labor configurations through illicit and informal uses of the factory, a practice they colloquially refer to as "thieving a chance."

Ralph Grillo, *Muslim Families, Politics and the Law: A Legal Industry in Multicultural Britain* (Ashgate, 2015)



In contemporary European societies Islam generally and the Muslim family in particular have become highly politicized sites of contestation. Through a focus on British Muslim families and on the way in which gender relations and associated questions of (women's) agency, consent and autonomy, have become the focus of political and social commentary, this book considers the implications of Muslim practices and beliefs for British multiculturalism, past, present and future. Practices concerning marriage and divorce are especially controversial and the book includes a detailed overview of the public debate about the application of Islamic legal and ethical norms (shari'a) in family law matters, and the associated role of Shari'a councils, in a British context.

Ralph Grillo is Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology.

Winner of the Society for the Anthropology of Work 2015 Book Prize

When an IMF-backed program of liberalization opened Trinidad's borders to foreign ready-made apparel, global competition damaged the local industry and unraveled worker entitlements and expectations but also presented new

Sports Culture in the UK



Dr Jon Mitchell was asked by advertising agency GreyLondon to comment on contemporary Sports Culture in the UK, for a campaign they are planning for a major sporting

brand. Here is an extract from his report: 'What seems to be happening is an increased blurring of the boundaries between work and leisure sports, such that people take on sporting activity with the same degree of disciplined commitment they apply to work. They are also increasingly recording their endeavours, often through digital technologies such as Strava and FitBit. These trends add to the disciplining of leisure, through bureaucratisation. The

pattern bears comparison to Max Weber's ideas about vocation in modernity. Sport might be seen as a new type of leisure-based vocation, based not around creativity but discipline and bureaucracy – what Weber calls the Iron Cage of Modernity.

Despite this, there is also another important trend, towards emphasising freedom and nature – what one might call 'Wellness' or 'Lifestyle' sport. This incorporates a number of different trends:

1. the increased popularity of yogic practices, pilates and the like – some of which incorporate elements of either/both spirituality and mental-health based practices, mindfulness etc.
2. nature-based activity: from the rise of 'ultra' marathon running to open water swimming, mountain biking, adventure racing – activities which place people in nature.
3. 'natural' practices of sport – for example, barefoot running, which

attempt to capture sport at its most natural; the body at its most basic.

If the disciplining and bureaucratising processes are linked to a Weberian notion of modernity and vocation, then this is a counter-stream, linked perhaps to a contemporary Romanticism, and nostalgia.' This central tension between modernity and nostalgia – and in this case, discipline and freedom – appears in many areas of social life. It is no surprise, then, to find it also in sport.



The Ebola Crisis



Ebola Response Anthropology Platform

Anthropologists from around the world providing advice on how to engage with crucial socio-cultural and political dimensions of the Ebola outbreak and build locally-appropriate interventions.

Identifying and Diagnosing Cases -

Management of the Dead -

Caring for the Sick -

Clinical Trials/Research -

Preparedness -

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As the Ebola crisis deepened in West Africa in August 2014, the key problems were social – how the response related to the cultural, political, economic realities of those affected. Since the 1990s **James Fairhead** and **Melissa Leach** (current Director of the Institute of Development Studies) have conducted fieldwork in Guinea only 20 miles from the village where the epidemic originated together with. So in September 2014, James set up an emergency panel at the African Studies Association conference at Sussex to bring together regional medical anthropologists. Out of this emerged the idea of an **'Ebola Response Anthropology Platform'** that would provide a focal point to feed research and social analysis into the escalating medical response.

With Wellcome Trust support, the platform immediately liaised with medical anthropology colleagues in Europe, the US and Africa to develop common purpose, coordinate and provide mutual support. The group were then 'co-opted' in October 2014 as the "Anthropology and Social Science Sub-Group" of the UK Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) – doubling as a formal UK Government Committee informing DFID decision-making in real-time as they grappled with the unprecedented, uncertain and unfolding realities of the Ebola crisis.

James also prepared a detailed briefing paper explaining the social logics of funeral practices that were central to both Ebola transmission and key, too, to the often violent resistance that Ebola response teams were then facing. He translated key



French works into English and responded to briefing requests from West Africa concerning burial practices, the stigmatisation of survivors, attitudes to immunization and so on. Through the platform's website, these helped those working in West Africa to understand the social complexities into which the response was playing.

The wider platform also enabled the anthropology community to speak more forcibly, for example in a 'Comment' in The Lancet on the inadequacy of existing communication strategies, and questioning the patronising and disrespectful approaches to community and communication that infused the response and that instilled community distrust. See: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)62382-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)62382-5)

The contributions of the platform to Ebola response have been acknowledged by DfID. For them: "Real time advice from anthropologists had been of great benefit in rising to the challenge of managing the vital period just before death and subsequent funeral rites ..in a socially acceptable way".

The WHO in their unprecedented *Leadership statement on the Ebola response and WHO reforms* admitted that:

"A significant obstacle to an effective response has been the inadequate engagement with affected communities and families. This is not simply about getting the right messages across; we must learn to listen if we want to be heard."

As they write "We have learned the importance of respect for culture in promoting safe and respectful funeral and burial practices. Empowering communities must be an action, not a cliché... We will develop expertise in community engagement in outbreak preparedness and response. We will emphasise the importance of community systems strengthening and work with partners to develop multidisciplinary approaches to community engagement, informed by anthropology and other social sciences."

Sussex Anthropology has been a pulsating heart articulating and evidencing this need.

The platform remains active at: <http://www.ebola-anthropology.net>



Sussex Anthropology: Who We Are

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