

Sussex Anthropologist

Newsletter of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex

Student News

Global Studies Debate

November saw the inaugural Global Studies Student Debate, organised by the School's student societies. The motion 'This house believes that prostitution should be legalised' was supported by the team from

Anthropology - Fred Henderson, Luca Lo Scavo & Hannah Watts - while Meriam Mabrouk, Lola Karpf and Chris Campbell represented International Development in opposing it. Both sides presented interesting arguments, including a

lively discussion of the difference between decriminalising activities rather than making them illegal. With both teams well-prepared and a lively and engaged audience the event was a great success and, we hope, the start of an annual event.



Recent alumnus **Joe Baldwin** (MA Human Rights) has had a paper, *The Business of Homelessness*, published in *Practising Anthropology*.

The paper is based on his experience of volunteering for over 18 months for a young-persons homeless day-centre based in Brighton.

His work there began as a three-month placement to conduct research for his MA dissertation. Based on interviews and participant observation the research focused on

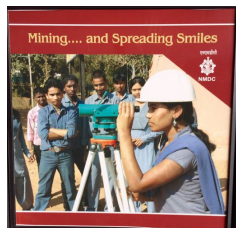
the increasingly discriminatory policies that affect homeless people, whilst considering what space organisations like the day-centre are given to resist punitive measures.

The work also considers the organisation's funding model and how this shapes what services are provided.



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New Research Grants



Paul Boyce, with Rohit Dasgupta at the University of Southampton, has a Wellcome Trust grant for their project '**Mobile-ising for Sexual Health: Digital technologies and Sexual Health Advocacy**'.

The project will explore emerging digital platforms in India and examine the challenges and opportunities of using mobile and digital platforms for sexual health advocacy amongst gay, MSM and trans communities. They will report on the experiences of NGOs using digital media platforms in developing advocacy and support campaigns and conduct discussions with stakeholders on how to leverage and use digital media for HIV prevention and sexual health advocacy.

Paul has also just been awarded a Sussex Social Science Impact Grant for a project on gender and sexual difference and access to welfare and employment in India - to be based on a case study in Manipur, N E India.



Maya Unnithan has received an ESRC grant (April 2017 to December 2020) as co-investigator of the project '**Son preference and sex selection in the UK**'.

The research will investigate gender preferences and reproductive choices in the childbearing practices of British Asian communities. Combining demographic and anthropological expertise it will evaluate son preference and claims of female sex selective abortion in the UK. Working alongside the Department of Health, pregnancy advisory committees and local communities, findings of the research will help promote gender equal population based policies. The grant will fund two postdoctoral fellows.

Lyndsay Mclean is co-Principle Investigator on a new, mixed methods research study to evaluate the Indashyirkirwa programme, a **Gender-Based Violence prevention programme in Rwanda**. This is as part of the DFID-funded Research and Innovation Fund 'What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)'. The project will last two years.



March to launch the Indashyirkirwa programme

Evan Killick has funding from the Sussex Research Development Fund to begin a new project on the history and current status of *Comunidades Nativas* in the Peruvian Amazon. The money will be used to support an initial collaborative workshop at NOPOKI, a new indigenous university in Atalaya, Peru (for more on Evan's work see the back page).



Students at NOPOKI

Workshops



Lyndsay Mclean recently spoke at the **What Works Global Summit**

www.wwgs2016.org

She ran a pre-summit workshop around the design of Violence Against Women & Girls Prevention programmes and the role of 'formative research' to design programmes that are appropriate to the socio-cultural context.

She was also on a panel presenting the findings of 'evidence reviews' conducted by the 'What Works' programme on the



causes and risk factors for VAWG as well as on what kinds of programmes and interventions have been most effective in reducing the prevalence of VAWG.

The final workshop of **Dinah Rajak's** ESRC Capitalist Humanitarianism Series (co-organised with Catherine Dolan (SOAS) and Kate Meagher (LSE)) on 'Infrastructures of Inclusion: Service Provision, New Technologies, Markets and Finance' will be at the LSE on April 27-28, 2017.



The workshop will focus on four distinct infrastructures of inclusion for the

marginalized: public services for poor communities, new technologies such as ICTs and solar, Botton of the Pyramid initiatives that bring informal labour and consumers into new market opportunities, and novel financial mechanisms for engaging with the 'unbanked'.



Last term **Magnus Marsden** spoke at the Herat Security Dialogue held in Afghanistan's Herat city.

Congratulations to our recent Postgraduates

Kamonwan Roengsumran whose PhD research was on child migrant workers in Samut Sakhon, Thailand.

Shrikant Borkhar's PhD thesis was 'The Twilight Zone of Aid Bureaucracy: an Aidsnography of Policy Entrepreneurs'.

Ejiro Onomake gained an MPhil for her study 'Elites Exchanges: The cultural politics of Chinese Business in Nigeria'.



Smita Yadav passed her PhD viva in July 2016 working with the Gonds in India.

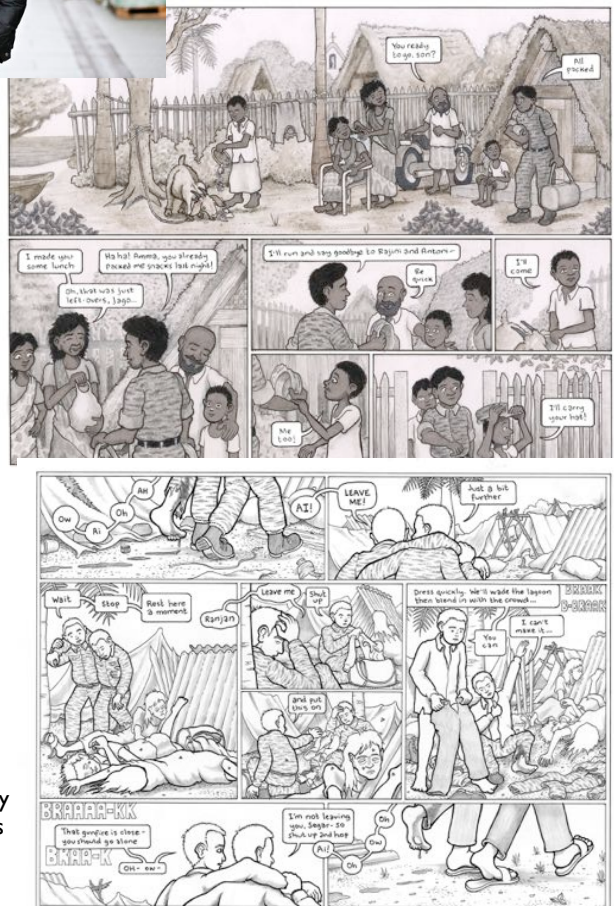
Smita's research challenges the conventional view that only work that is secured and permanent should be considered dignified. Focussing on a tribal community, the Gonds in central India, her fieldwork revealed that although their informal, irregular, and temporary forms of work made their economic lives precarious, the Gonds considered this work dignified because it offered them autonomy and prevented them from falling into debt bondage and starvation, which were greater threats to their survival and well being than a lack of education or access to formal work. Her findings on Gonds's work in the informal economy explored how the informal production and market relations shaped labour-capital relations which is a rapidly emerging site of economic growth and sustenance in the global south and a site to study pro poor and pro labour politics. Furthermore, her

research showed that even though informal institutions like unregulated labour markets are common topics in current development discourse, their existence and relations with formal regulatory institutions within the world of labour markets, both global and national, remain underexamined.



Benjamin Dix's thesis focused on the methodology and ethics of producing a graphic novel from testimonies of survivors of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009. Ben worked as a Communications and Liaison Manager for the United Nations in the LTTE held area of North Sri Lanka from 2004 to 2008 and based his thesis on his experience there and contacts made whilst in Sri Lanka. Ben interviewed Sri Lankan Tamils who had survived the conflict and were seeking asylum in London, Zurich and Chennai and adapted those testimonies into a narrative for the graphic novel, illustrated by Lindsay Pollock. The thesis covered an incredibly personal journey that

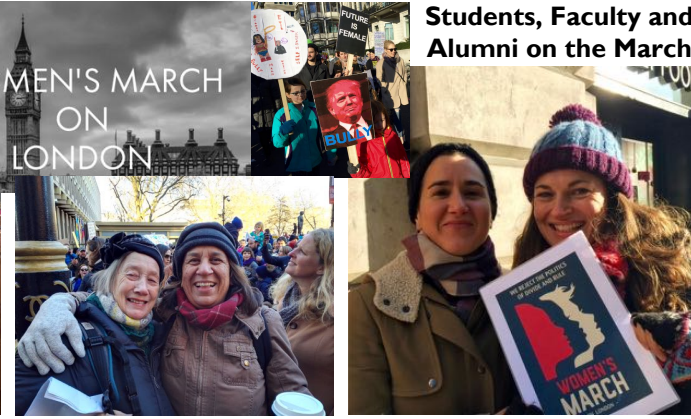
focused on trauma experienced by the respondents but also on the researcher himself who had evacuated from Sri Lanka with the UN and the sense of abandonment and guilt experienced. Whilst working on his thesis, Ben founded the company, **PositiveNegatives**, that has now produced nearly 40 comics and animations on migration issues for clients such as the UN, The Guardian, BBC, ICRC and Nobel Peace Centre. Ben was awarded a Senior Fellowship at SOAS, University of London and works with academics to adapt their research into interactive, multimedia for dissemination in the international media and school through his charity, **Why Comics?**



Other News



WOMEN'S MARCH ON LONDON



Students, Faculty and Alumni on the March



Magnus Marsden has had a busy few months with his TRODITIES research project that is examining China's trading relations with the world. The project's central focus is Yiwu, a commercially vibrant city in China's Zhejiang province that is known as a world hub for wholesale 'small-commodities' trade and is the starting point of a new train route that leads all the way to London. The project's research was recently featured in an *Observer* piece on this 'New Silk Road' (www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/14/china-silk-road-trade-train-rolls-london).

Meanwhile, last term Magnus was Visiting Research Fellow at the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and his book, *Trading Worlds: Afghan merchants across modern frontiers* was recently reviewed favourably in *The Times Literary Supplement* (www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/private/inheritors-of-the-silk-road/).

For more information on TRODITIES see <https://sway.com/HPGEIw9ETa2Sclj>

The Observer

Silk Road route back in business as China train rolls into London

After 16 days and 7,456 miles, the locomotive's arrival heralds the dawn of a new commercial era



The East Wind freight train prepares for its journey at Yiwu station in Zhejiang province of China. Photograph: VCG/Getty Images

Postdoc Showcase



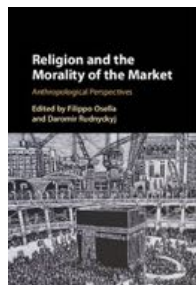
David Sancho just completed 14 months of fieldwork funded by a British Academy postdoctoral fellowship to conduct "Educating Migrants", an ethnography on Indian migrant families, children, and education in Dubai. The project looks at the growing circulation of private educational institutions, curricula, families and students across national borders, and focuses on the role of transnational schooling in the emergence and consolidation of a transnational Indian middle class. His project has built on collaboration with the Sheik Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding as well as a number of schools and families in Dubai. The first paper to come out of David's research, titled 'Facing life together': Neoliberalism, Happiness and everyday friendship in Dubai, will soon feature in a special issue of the *Journal of*



Ethnic and Migration Studies. He has also recently published an article in *Ethnography* titled **Escaping India's culture of education: Migration desires among aspiring middle-class young men** (journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1466138116687591).

David will soon present his work at the American Anthropological Association's Anthropology of Children and Youth Interest Group conference, *Childhoods in Motion*, at UCLA.

Publications



Religion and the Morality of the Market. Edited by **Filippo Osella & Daromir Rudnykij.**

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, there has been a widespread affirmation of economic ideologies that conceive the market as an autonomous sphere of human practice, holding that market principles should be applied to human action at large. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the ascendance of market reason has been

countered by calls for reforms of financial markets and for the consideration of moral values in economic practice. This book intervenes in these debates by showing how neoliberal market practices engender new forms of religiosity, and how religiosity shapes economic actions. It reveals how religious movements and organizations have reacted to the increasing prominence of market reason in unpredictable, and sometimes counterintuitive, ways. Using a range of examples from different countries and religious traditions, the book illustrates the myriad ways in which religious and market moralities are closely imbricated in diverse global contexts.



Dinah Rajak and **Max Bolt** co-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Southern African Studies* (Vol 42:5) on Labour, Insecurity and Violence in South Africa.



Magnus Marsden, Diana Ibanez Tirado and **David Henig**, have edited a special issue of *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* entitled *Everyday Diplomacy: Insights from Ethnography*.

Notes from the Field: Timber and Motors in the Peruvian Amazon - Evan Killick



groups of men physically rolling huge logs to the river. Now I watched as the logs were carved up into smaller planks, put on vehicles and trundled to the river, usually with us sitting on top. The final part of this new reality

Things change in eight years. Children grow up, teenagers now have children of their own and your friends have slowly aged with you. Beyond personal reactions to such changes, however, the returning anthropologist is interested in observing the deeper currents of stasis and transformation.

Since I was last in Asháninka communities in the Peruvian Amazon the wider world has generally appeared to accept and to start to act against the realities of climate change. Yet while such ideas might have been at the forefront of my own mind there was little evidence of them having reached the Ucayali. My questions about such things were treated dismissively by people who had perceived no changes to the world around them. Instead they were all keen to show me what *had* changed, and specifically the motors that they now all had.

Where a decade ago most communities had a single outboard motor, a large,

heavy and expensive model from the USA, now every single family had their own small Chinese version, worth a month's salary rather than a year's. Where people might have occasionally walked to see friends there was now a constant movement of people visiting each other and the river was filled with the constant buzz of motors. As soon as I arrived people were keen to show me how easy it was to get around, jumping into their canoes to go to drink with others. They also showed me the various other forms of transport that were being ingeniously created from these cheap new motors. Not only boats but also homemade tractors and other hybrid wheeled vehicles all of which could be used not

only for socialising but also for the Asháninka's main economic activity, timber. On previous visits I had spent days with

was that the timber itself was now headed for China to feed its citizens' thirst for parquet flooring. While I might have been hoping for a different situation this new reality made sense. My previous experiences had emphasised the way individuals focused on mobility and sociality so their enthusiasm for new ways of achieving this is not surprising. The fact that it comes at a cost to the forest can be understood as more due to the lack of change in the global economic system than any reflection on Asháninka values. For all of the agreements on climate change, until living trees are valued more than their timber little will change in the world's forests.

Outboard Motors in 2005 & 2015



New, local forms of motorised transport



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