

Sussex Anthropologist

Newsletter of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex

Gender, Anthropology and the Political Economy of Development: A Celebration of the Work of Professor Ann Whitehead



Ann with Bridget Byrne

Ann Whitehead formally retired from Sussex in 2009. A renowned scholar and activist, she has made fundamental contributions to anthropology, feminism and development studies, based on path-breaking analyses of gender relations, labour institutions and our understanding of poverty dynamics, especially in the changing agrarian economies of sub-Saharan Africa. In September a two-day celebration of



her work was held in the School of Global Studies. Contributors attended from across the world and

from a range of academic and policy institutions, reflecting the broad impact of Ann's work.

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Innovations to Promote Growth among Small-Scale Irrigators

Elizabeth Harrison and Katy Gardner, with **Dominic Kniveton** from Geography, have recently been successful in a £250k research bid to the ESRC-DFID Growth Programme. This project involves comparative research in Bangladesh, Tanzania and Malawi and will examine the rules and norms governing access to and control over water by smallholder farmers, considering how these are influenced by externally-induced innovations and the effects of climate change. For example, what is the relationship between 'local' rules and 'outside' influences such as government and NGO initiatives and the activities of corporations? How are the politics of water control



changing? The project aims to determine if general principles of water allocation and equity can be identified, and what the scope is for transferring them across contexts.

The research team has partners in both sub-Saharan Africa and Bangladesh. **Zahir Ahmed** will lead the fieldwork in Bangladesh, while

postdoctoral research fellow, **Canford Chiroro**, a Zimbabwean national, will be joining the research team in February and undertaking the Malawi and Tanzania fieldwork.



6th Form Anthropology Conference

As a part of the university's Widening Participation agenda, and in support of the the A-level in Anthropology, in October 2012 the Department of Anthropology organised a conference for 6th form students from schools and colleges in London and the South East.

Students took part in workshops on globalizaton, gender, kinship, and culture, as well as attending a screening of the ethnographic film, 'Shooting Freetown,' with the filmmaker Kieron Hanson in attendance.

The day was energetic and lively, with feedback from students including comments such as: 'The professors that gave us lectures took away my

ambiguity surrounding anthropology. I really enjoyed the day, it was an amazing experience.' The day also included a forum for school teachers of anthropology, to help develop better links between A-level teaching and anthropological research and practice. As one teacher noted: 'For students to discuss the fieldwork that anthropologists do, and the range of issues that it covers, makes their subject real!'

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the day a great success!



Nuclear Debates in Parliament, Rosanna Marvell and Raminder Kaur



Staff and students in the Anthropology department at Sussex were instrumental in highlighting the plight of residents around the Koodankulam nuclear power plant (KKNPP) in south India to British MPs. An Indo-Russian venture, the KKNPP development has been imposed upon local residents which number about 1.5 million in a 30 km radius. There have been no emergency preparedness exercises, no public release of the mandatory site evaluation reports and several environmental and safety concerns have not been addressed.

A parliamentary meeting was planned with the support of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the South Asian Solidarity Group (SASG) in the House of Commons aided by the Brighton MP, Caroline Lucas and some Labour ministers on October 18 2012. For the first time, the voices of the villages could be heard in British parliament. The first was from a video recording of Dr. S. P. Udayakumar, whose still-framed profile had



overseen all the proceedings from a large screen at the back of the room. Dr. Udayakumar does not possess the global profile of campaigners such as Arundhati Roy; he is by profession a teacher, having taught English in

Ethiopia and lectured in many universities. However, he has stood up and publicly campaigned for the rights of the disenfranchised villagers in Koodankulam, and heads the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE). By speaking out, Dr. Udayakumar has earned unwavering persecution and has become a virtual prisoner in the village in which he resides next to the nuclear plant.

He stated:

'We live in a kind of military camp, totally isolated from the rest of the world. Police come and knock on the doors of our houses, ask obscene questions to our women, arrest anyone indiscriminately, and we are not able to resist this. Many political parties and politicians support this ruse. ...the normal life in our area has been completely paralysed...we are living in a total banana republic. We need the solidarity and support of the international community....We also request the people of Britain to put pressure on the British government to not engage in nuclear deals with our country.'

It is key that what Dr. Udayakumar, and so many others, are asking for is *solidarity*, not aid or intervention. Following the video recording, Amrit Wilson of SASG, read out a letter received the day before from Melrit, a woman from a fishing community near the nuclear plant. Melrit had joined a large group in boats that surrounded the nuclear power plant, and recounted her experiences of police brutalities:



'I forgot the desecration of the village church by the police. I forgot the anguish of the wives and mothers of all who were taken away brutally that day. I forgot thirst, hunger... I have grown up in this wind and sun, eating the bounties of the ocean. As I stood on the boat, I remember the demands we have put across... to let go of the sisters and brothers locked up on unfair charges since September 10, to withdraw all police forces from the villages and reinstate normal life, to close Koodankulam nuclear power plant and convert it into a nature and people friendly energy production plant'.

Caroline Lucas added:

'It's tragic but perhaps of no surprise that one blogger on the ground in Koodankulam writes, 'The protesters are willing to sacrifice their lives since they felt that the nuclear power plant will result in their deaths anyway.'... I'm sure others will tell you how protesters are having their civil liberties and fundamental human rights abused and just how comprehensively the local people have lost their trust in the police and the authorities, about how the nuclear power plant will have a huge impact on nearby villages... now facing a hugely uncertain future as a result of this development imposed upon them over which they feel that have no ability to properly protest against.'

Pledges were also made to halt nuclear trade with India that has picked up since the ratification of the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal (2008). Nuclear companies in USA, Canada, France and Australia have already entered into agreements with the Indian government and Conservative policy is to follow suit.

For more information see: www.southasiasolidarity.org

Recently completed PhD Research



David Sancho focused on the role that secondary education plays in the (re) production of inequalities amongst the established and emergent middle classes in Ernakulam, Kerala, South India. The work compared two groups of youth who inhabit very different structural positions on the educational ladder. As such the thesis draws attention to the critical role that school education plays in the production of successful middle class subjects for the Indian and global economy. To this end, the thesis proposes a move away from the pervasive consumption-centric discourse that has infused debates about becoming and being middle-class in India, to the idea of 'competence' as the key analytical notion. This places education at the centre of the debate on what it means to be a middle class youth in India by acknowledging how education continues to mediate the (re)production of social and economic inequalities, and by providing a more accurate representation of the importance of successful engagement with the globalised economy.



Ines Hasselberg's work drew on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in London. Her thesis examines experiences of deportation and deportability of migrants convicted of a criminal offence in the UK. It finds that migrants' deportability is experienced in relation to official bodies, such as the Home Office, the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal, Immigration Removal Centres and Reporting Centres, and becomes embedded in their daily lives, social relations and sense of self. The lived experience of deportation policies emphasises the material and human costs associated with deportation and highlights its punitive and coercive effects. The thesis concludes that the interruption of migrants' existence in the UK is effected long before their actual removal from the territory. It is a process developing from the embodiment of their deportability as their present and future lives become suspended by the threat of expulsion from their residence of choice.



Andrea Szkil's thesis explores the work of forensic specialists employed by the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP). Headquartered in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), ICMP is currently assisting the Bosnian government in locating, exhuming, and identifying the remains of the individuals who went missing during the country's recent war (1992-1995). Utilising data obtained via interviews with and observations of ICMP staff members' work in three mortuaries throughout BiH, her thesis primarily represents a study of the management of professional identity in emotionally charged situations. In discussing this topic, it considers forensic specialists' work with human remains, their interactions with victims' family members, and their attendance at events in which victims are commemorated and/or buried.



In her research **Lauren Greenwood** explored the challenges facing the British military when engaging with non-military actors in 'population-centred' counter-insurgency and stabilisation operations. Such actors include humanitarian agencies, non-government organisations, civilian populations and national and international government institutions. There has been considerable resistance, especially from the British Army, to processes that have the potential to undermine traditional military combat skills. Managing the interface with civilian organisations is the task of the tri-service (Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force) Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG).

Lauren's thesis is an examination of this specialist military unit. Members of the MSSG must learn and then embody a new set of rules and cultural codes that allows them to take military practices out of the strict confines of military hierarchies and into the comparatively undisciplined, messy and unpredictable civilian sphere. This includes developing an awareness of humanitarian principles and stabilisation practices, and educating the wider armed forces about these concepts, both during training and on deployment.

The shift towards 'population-centred' counter-insurgency and stabilisation operations has heightened the tensions between tradition and change within the British military, and has tested identities, boundaries and roles in a plethora of ways. Those within military institutions see the traditional 'warrior' identity as dominant – soldiers are trained killers first and foremost. Lauren's work examines how this second facilitator identity is trained, embodied, and reproduced by military Stabilisation Operatives, and the renegotiation of masculinity that results.

Other News



ADST MA student **Gumring Hkangda** has been awarded a scholarship from the James Henry Green Trust for his studies at Sussex. As part of his award, Gumring will work closely with the Brighton and Hove Museum on their collection of 1920s photographs and textiles relating to the Kachin community in Burma, of which he is a member. The James Henry Green Trust hopes to award two scholarships to students of Southeast Asian descent for the 2013-2014 academic year, to study anthropology, development, or art history. [For more information see: www.sussex.ac.uk/study/funding/opportunities/view/12]

Dispatch from the Field: "Take Everything" - Dimitris Dalakoglou



Although Christmas decorations were much more modest in Athens this year, in Omonoia Square one could still see a bizarre version of the nativity scene, with plastic statues dressed in supposedly Biblical costumes, surrounded by Palm Trees.

Perhaps not unexpectedly the mood of passing Athenians' did not appear to be lifted by the sight. Instead it is the mixture of noisy cars and the huge crowd of unemployed people in front of the local job centre, that dominates the January morning rhythms of this part of the city. From the south-east corner leads Stadiou, once a thriving commercial street it has seen almost half of its shops shut within the last year. Those still open appear devoid of clients with sales people loitering around piles of clothing. "People expect the big sales in a few days" one saleswoman explained to me when I asked where the customers were. "It was also Christmas and people did their shopping earlier," she added behind a tight and stressed smile. However, the deserted shop across the street told another story on two huge yellow signs: "CLOSING DOWN" "TAKE EVERYTHING".

The size of the clothing shop I am in seems disproportionately big for the three saleswomen present and I wonder how many of the women's colleagues were fired over

the last few months and how much their own salaries have been reduced. Official unemployment in October 2012 was almost 26.8%, up from 19.7% a year earlier. Many of those who have kept their jobs have taken salary cuts of up to 50%. Meanwhile new employment laws have removed the minimum wage and removed the legal requirement for employers to agree new pay deals with unions.

However, the Greek state apparatus is busying itself not only with financial emergencies. For example, since August 2012 when the sun has set and many shops shut for the night, the area of Omonoia sees one of the largest police operations the city has ever experienced. Monikered ironically, or perhaps as a provocation, after the ancient Greek God of hospitality, Operation Xenios Zeus focused specifically on migrants walking in the centre of Athens. In the four months up to the end of November a total of 54,751 "foreigners" were detained in the city centre, 3,996 of whom were arrested for lacking the proper documents while just 33 were arrested for breaking other laws.

Walking around Omonoia today one notices a very obvious decrease in the number of migrants, but they are not the only casualties of the Greek state of emergency. Squatters too have apparently become an enemy of the

state. In December Villa Amalias, a 20 year old squat, was cleared by police. Villa Amalias was a school abandoned for almost two decades before squatters occupied it in 1990, maintaining it and making it a living space and open social centre. Yesterday, 9th January 2013, the squatters re-occupied the building for a few hours, before police special forces again cleared it and arrested 93 occupiers, charging them with felonies for having their faces covered. The law turning any crime committed with a covered face into a felony came into being a few years ago, precisely to suppress protest. One of the main anti-protest tactics of the Greek Police is the use of tear gas, usually thrown into the crowd. This means that demonstrators who now try to protect themselves from the poisonous gas by covering their face risk being charged with a felony.

Villa Amalias housed a printing press that printed many of the political posters that cover the walls of central Athens. The squatters have also been important in protecting the neighborhood from an increasing number of racist attacks by the rising Neo-Nazi gangs who roam the city at night informally and violently paralleling the work of Operation Xenios Zeus.

Somebody recently laughed when they heard that my current project is on public spaces in the city: "Athens will soon have no public and no spaces, they will take everything away."

For more on Dimitris' project "The City at a Time of Crisis" follow the blog: <http://www.crisis-scape.net/blog.html>



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beyond the arab spring

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