

On 11th January 2016, [REDACTED] (Sussex) & [REDACTED] (Goldsmiths) co-organized an event, bringing together established researchers, early career academics and doctoral students concerned with the ethical, theoretical and methodological issues thrown up by studying powerful groups, ethnographically.

Format of the event:

The workshop began with a reflection on careers based on working in and on elite organizations, from Cris Shore (Auckland) and Emma Crewe (SOAS, before the three panel sessions began. The first session brought together doctoral students (Saffron Woodcraft, UCL; Katharina Hecht, LSE), early career researchers (Luna Glucksberg, Goldsmiths) and established academics (Anna Kathrine Larsen, Norwegian University of Science & Technology) to discuss research on elites and urban/spatial change. The second panel was concerned with the study of elites involved in 'doing good' (philanthropy, CSR), and featured contributions from doctoral students (Taras Fedirko, Durham; Jessie Sklair, Goldsmiths), early career researchers (Maire Ni Mhorda, St Andrews) and established academics (Tijo Salverda, Cologne). The final session was an all-doctoral student panel featuring Seamus Montgomery (Oxford), Kapil Dahal (Durham) and Anna Ruddock (Kings), and was concerned largely with discussing methodological challenges – drawing on the insights of the established researchers (including Salverda, Crewe and Shore) present in the room. A full programme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Outcomes:

One immediate outcome from the event was an invitation from the Developmental Leadership Programme at the University of Birmingham to contribute a blog post on the event. The blog post ('Anthropology and elites: "studying up", politically') is available here: <http://www.dlprog.org/opinions/anthropology-and-elites-studying-up-politically.php>

We were also approached by the organizers of a recent University of Cambridge/UNESCO/EASA Network for the Anthropology of International Governance event on 'Collaborative Dilemmas' (12-13th April 2016) with regard to sharing details of our event, which were referred to in the Introductory session by Chiara Bortolotto, with whom we remain in contact.

The second outcome involves an edited collection that [REDACTED] (Sussex) and [REDACTED] (Goldsmiths) are working on. Featuring ethnographic contributions based on conference presentations from Maire Ni Mhorda, Luna Glucksberg, Jessie Sklair, and Tijo Salverda, we will be submitting a proposal for a themed section to *Focaal* on April 25th 2016.

Funding:

We are grateful to the RLI for their support for the workshop. The claims were all processed during February 2016 through the School of Global Studies, via the Budget Code [REDACTED], to which the RLI funds (£723) were allocated. A spreadsheet detailing the spending of the RLI funding is attached with this report.

Appendix 1: Event Programme:

Confronting Elite Anthropology: Collaboration, Hostility & Critique



'White Collar' © Sumi Perera RE 2015

University of Sussex, 11th January 2016
Arts C333, 9.30–18.00

This workshop aims to explore the political, methodological and ethical challenges that are faced when carrying out ethnographic research in elite fields. In neighbouring disciplines, there is a growing interest in the critical study of elite groups (Atkinson & Burrows 2014), but anthropology has taken a 'post-critical' turn where the study of elite professionals is concerned (Holmes & Marcus 2008; Jensen 2014; Yarrow & Venkatesan 2012). At the same time, there has been a renewed interest in critical anthropologies of class, system and inequality that confront elite world-making capacities from subaltern vantage points (Barber et al. 2012; Carrier & Kalb 2015). How might these two streams of anthropological work be bridged? What might a critical ethnography of elites look like? Does ethnography necessitate critique or surpass it, and do the rules change when studying elites? How might anthropologists working with elites balance obligations to those in their fieldsites with obligations to those whose lives are reshaped by elite agencies? Who, in fact, gets to do elite fieldwork and what obligations are created when access is granted to elite fieldsites?

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www.sussex.ac.uk/doctoralschool/internal/funding/rli

9.30: Coffee & Welcome

9.45: Introduction: What Might a Critical Ethnography of Elites Look Like? (Paul Gilbert, University of Sussex)

10.00: Confronting Elite Anthropology:

Panel Discussion with Emma Crewe (SOAS) & Cris Shore (Auckland)

11.15: Coffee/Tea

11.30: Panel I: (Dis)Locating Elites

1. "Social innovation" - at the intersection of collaboration and critique? Reflections from an ethnography of regeneration in London's Olympic Park (**Saffron Woodcraft, UCL**)
2. Doing research 'upwards': dilemmas in the study of the national elite in Dubai (**Anna Kathrine Larsen, Norwegian University of Science & Technology**)
3. Gendering the elites: an ethnographic approach to women's lives and the production of inequality in the Alpha Territories (**Luna Glucksberg, Goldsmiths**)
1. Economic inequality at the top end of the income and wealth distributions (**Katharina Hecht, LSE**)

Discussant: Tijo Salverda (University of Cologne)

13.00: Lunch

14.00: Panel II: Representing Elites Working for Social Change

1. Do I really witness positive change? Personal struggles in the interpretation of elite behaviour (**Tijo Salverda, University of Cologne**)
2. What is critique of elites for? (**Taras Fedirko, Durham University**)
3. The messy business of saving the world: challenges for an ethnographic critique of elite philanthropy (**Jessie Sklair, Goldsmiths**)
4. Dancing with the powerful: the ethnography of NGO elites (**Máire Ní Mhórdha, St Andrews**)

Discussant: Dinah Rajak (University of Sussex)

15.30: Coffee/Tea

15.45: Panel III: Education & Expertise in Elite Fields

1. Title TBC (**Seamus Montgomery, University of Oxford**)
2. Formal meetings: sites for engagement on elite anthropology (**Kapil Dahal, Durham University**)
3. "But it's not representative": Reflections on studying up at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (**Anna Ruddock, Kings College London**)

Discussant: Jane Cowan (University of Sussex)

17.15: Discussion & Close