

Sussex Anthropologist

Newsletter of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex



50 Years of Anthropology at Sussex

Join us in celebrating half a century of world-leading research and teaching excellence.

From 4pm on 18th November
Komedia, 44-47 Gardner St., Brighton

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Lyndsay McLean Hilker takes part in UNICEF Research Watch



Dr Lyndsay McLean Hilker
Lecturer in Anthropology and International Development,
University of Sussex

Lyndsay participated in this TV debate on Youth, Conflict and Peace Building after writing a policy brief on the topic. The debate was chaired by the former BBC war correspondent and current UNICEF Ambassador Martin Bell and considers issues such as What drives youth involvement in conflict and civil unrest? What

motivates them to join peace-building processes in post-conflict societies? and, Is the rapid growth of youth populations in many regions of the world a threat or an opportunity? Watch the debate at: <http://www.unicef-irc.org/research-watch/Youth--Conflict-and-Peace-Building-debate.html>



The department's own **Dimitris Dalakoglou** organised this

interdisciplinary conference over the summer as part of his larger ESRC-funded project of the same name.

Filippo Osella was also one of a range of scholars who participated.

A New Face



Anke Schwittay joins us from the University of Auckland. She gained her PhD from the UC Berkeley analysing the role of Silicon Valley high-tech companies in overseas development. For this work she conducted multi-sited ethnography in California, Costa Rica and India. Her most recent research has focused on microfinance and the manner in which it considered and represented in development policy and practice.

New MA launched: Social Anthropology of the Global Economy



Photo: James Morgan

The MA is designed to help students develop a critical understanding of the relationship between neoliberal capitalism and social and economic transformation around the world.

The course combines theory and anthropological case studies to explore equality and inequality; the politics of labour in the global economy; relationships between wealth, power, and democracy;

the global and local impacts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social enterprise; and new social movements for social and economic justice.



Student Success

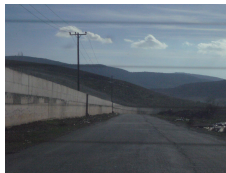
Alexander Dunlap has won two prizes for his paper 'The Expanding Techniques of Progress: Agricultural Biotechnology and UN-REDD+' One from Portland State University for the best graduate paper and one from the Association for Institutional Thought. Alexander has just started his PhD in anthropology with James Fairhead and Dimitris Dalakoglou.



Congratulations to **Helen Brunt**, a former ADST MA student, who received a Certificate of Appreciation from the UNHCR for her MA thesis entitled *Stateless Stakeholders, Seen but not Heard?*

Hot off the Press

Dimitris Dalakoglou and Penny Harvey (Manchester) have edited the new volume *Roads and Anthropology: Ethnography, Infrastructures, (Im)mobility*. The first collection of ethnographies of roads themselves, the essays look at how roads and the powerful sense of mobility that they promise carry us back and forth between the sweeping narratives of globalisation, and the specific, tangible materialities of particular times and places. Indeed, despite the fact that roads might, by comparison with the sparkling agility of virtual technologies, appear to be grounded in twentieth century industrial political economy they could arguably be taken as the paradigmatic material infrastructure of the twenty-first century.

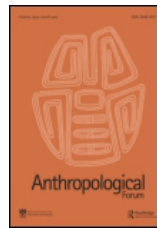


Tom Widger's book *Suicide in Sri Lanka: The Anthropology of an Epidemic* is published this year by Routledge. Extending anthropological approaches to practice, learning, and agency, Tom draws on his long-term fieldwork in a Sinhala Buddhist



Flowers and the poisonous seeds of the yellow Oleander ('Kaneru') tree

community to develop an ethnographic theory of suicide that foregrounds local knowledge and sets out a charter for prevention. The book highlights the motives of children and adults becoming suicidal, and how certain gender, age, and class relationships and violence are prone to give rise to suicidal responses. By linking these experiences to emotional states, it develops an ethnopsychiatric model of suicide rooted in social practice. He then goes on to examine how suicides are resolved at village and national levels, and traces the roots of interventions to the politics of colonial and post-colonial social welfare and health regimes.



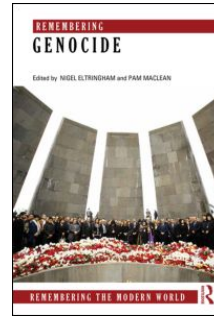
Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner and **Anne-Meike Fechter** have guest edited the latest issue of *Anthropological Forum*, entitled 'The 21st Century Gift'. The issue discusses whether and

how societies in the 21st century warrant new ways of theorising the gift, given the long predominance of Maussian theories. Articles include discussions on bodily gifts, philanthropy, informal payments, volunteering, altruism, development, and the circulation of things. Contributors to the volume include Bob Simpson (Durham University), **Nattaka Chaisinthop** (Sussex), Stavroula Pipyrrou (St. Andrews) and Davd Lewis (LSE).



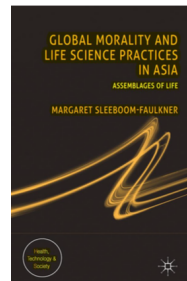
Anke Schwittay's book *New Media and International Development: Representation and Affect in Microfinance* is an in-depth examination of microfinance's enduring popularity with Northern publics.

Through a case study of Kiva.org, the world's first person-to-person microlending website, and other microfinance organizations, the book argues that international development efforts have an affective dimension. This is fostered through narrative and visual representations, through the performance of development rituals and through bonds of fellowship between Northern donors and Southern recipients. These practices constitute people in the global North as everyday humanitarians and mobilize their affective investments, which are financial, social and emotional investments in distant others to alleviate their poverty. The book draws on ethnographic material from the US, India and Indonesia and the anthropological and development studies literature on humanitarianism, affect and the public faces of development.

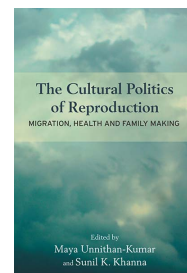


Nigel Eltringham and Pam Maclean have a new edited collection, *Remembering Genocide* which draws on current research from a range of disciplines to explore how communities

throughout the world remember genocide. Whether coming to terms with atrocities committed in Namibia and Rwanda, Australia, Canada, the Punjab, Armenia, Cambodia and during the Holocaust, those seeking to remember genocide are confronted with numerous challenges. Survivors grapple with the possibility, or even the desirability, of recalling painful memories. Societies where genocide has been perpetrated find it difficult to engage with an uncomfortable historical legacy.



Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner has authored *Global Morality and Life Science Practices in Asia* which explores the concept of life assemblages, highlighting the diverging ways in which societies share questions of what is a life worth living. In the light of such questions, the book shows the different ways in which societies deal with the regulation of new developments and practices in life science research and mobilise available political mechanisms to deliberate them.



Maya Unnithan and Sunil Khanna have edited the volume *The Cultural Politics of Reproduction: Migration, Health and Family Making*. Charting the experiences of internally or externally migrant communities, the book examines

social transformation through the dynamic relationship between movement, reproduction and health. The chapters examine how healthcare experiences of migrants are not only embedded in their own unique health worldviews, but also influenced by the history, policy and politics of the wider state systems. The research among migrant communities provides an understanding of how ideas of reproduction and 'cultures of health' travel; how healing, birth and care practices become a result of movement; and how health-related perceptions and reproductive experiences can define migrant belonging and identity.

A New Centre



October saw the launch of the **Centre for Cultures of Reproduction, Technologies and Health [CORTH]**. An interdisciplinary centre located within Anthropology and the School of Global Studies it is an intellectual space to encourage critical thinking on the intersections of gender, power, body-politics, health, medicine, culture, rights and justice. For more information see: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/corth>

The centre will promote and support research on the following broad themes:

Childbearing and maternal health
Interrupted reproduction and identities
Reproductive technologies
Sexual and reproductive health rights and justice
Population policies, family forms and legislation
Innovative Research Methodologies



Maya Unnithan, Professor of Social and Medical Anthropology is the Centre's Director

Workshops and Panels

Philanthropy Workshop in Colombo

Jock Stirrat, Sarah Kabir and Tom Widger delivered 7 days' of training in philanthropy, CSR, and social business as part of an ESRC-DfID Impact Maximisation Grant. Look up P4workshops on Facebook or see their webpage:

www.charityphilanthropydevelopment.org



Workshop on Garment Workers's Health and Safety

The event, organised by **Rebecca Prentice** and **Geert de Neve**, brought together 24 scholars, students and practitioners to discuss labour conditions in the global garment sector.



There was consensus among the scholars attending the event that corporate self-regulation via voluntary 'codes of conduct' has failed to protect garment workers. Many campaigns designed to educate consumers to shop 'ethically' have also fallen short. But new global agreements, such as the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (2013), may offer some hope for improving working conditions by making fashion brands legally accountable for the safety of workers in the factories from which they source garments.



Margaret Sleeboom Faulkner, will give a **Professorial Lecture** on the 3rd December from 18:30 in the Chown Lecture Theatre - BSMS.

Entitled *Why biomedical anthropology is crucial to political decisions about the future of life, life science and local health* the lecture will examine why while genomics, regenerative medicine and other life sciences promise to revolutionise society as we know it, including 'developing' countries, anthropology has approached issues around the role of biology in society only hesitatingly. Instead Margaret will argue that anthropological insights into biomedical economies and cultures are urgently needed when discussing innovative biomedical technologies that require radical societal adjustment. This lecture will question one-size-fits-all solutions to population health in the context of global diversity.

trajectories of cell flows in the context of umbilical cord blood banking and translational research in India. Drawing on fieldwork and interviews he examines how private cord blood banks are competing for their share of 'biocapital' and how this competition affects the flow of cells from body to body in a global context.



Apple stem cell supplements!

The second theme involves the co-production of science and business in stem cell-based product development in India through an ethnographic study of a stem cell company in Bangalore. The company invests its resources to bring stem cell-based products to the market for therapeutic use. His work shows how stem cell companies in resource poor settings, such as in India, are confronted with multiple challenges, including constraints in getting funding for basic research, inadequate regulatory approval mechanisms, a lack of critical human resources for advanced cutting-edge research and the overall high cost of conducting research. Many stem cell researchers and scientists in India believe that even though the stem cell field is generally regarded as promising, translating these promises into practice and bringing tangible therapeutic stem cell-based products to the market to address the unmet needs of patients across the globe is still a distant dream.

Bionetworking in Asia



Can stem cells cure my sickle cell disease?

Prasanna Kumar Patra is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the ESRC-funded Bionetworking in Asia Project. He has been focusing on two interrelated research themes. The first concerns the



James Fairhead chaired an emergency **panel discussion on Ebola** at the recent African Studies Association of the UK conference. You can see a summary of the debate at <https://storify.com/SussexGlobal/ebola-the-challenges>. He has also produced a briefing paper: The significance of death, funerals and the after-life in Ebola-hit Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia: Anthropological insights into infection and social resistance. Read it online at www.heart-resources.org.

'Every Person Counts': Development Under the Radar - Anne-Meike Fechter



Sewing classes are among the initiatives typically offered by small-scale 'aid entrepreneurs'

'How is the little girl? Has she still got a temperature, or is she better? And have you been to the doctors?' 'Not better,' Chann shakes his head doubtfully, 'not to the doctor, not yet'. Belinda tells me later that she is concerned about their reluctance to take their daughter to a medical clinic, approaching traditional healers first. She and her husband Derek, who are from Australia, visited Chann's village the day before. They are in Cambodia to continue working with a small local NGO in this village, which they came across two years ago, through a short video posted online by the organisation's Cambodian founder. Since then, they have become involved in the school set up by the NGO, and travel to Cambodia regularly to help develop the project, as well as finding ways to fundraise for it. 'We're

beginning to look at the whole village', Derek tells me, 'it's not just education- it's health, it's farming, all kinds of things- we didn't expect it when we first came!' They had not been searching in particular for a venture such as this, but since their children had left home, were looking to 'do something'.

Their story is not unique. It may be particularly pronounced here, but is not limited to Cambodia, where government regulation of the comings and goings of foreigners, as well as of the teeming NGO sector, is relatively loose. Consequently, there is a wealth of activities aimed at supporting poor Cambodians - carried out by foreigners from Euro-American countries as well as Korea, Japan, Singapore and Australia. In many cases,

they first visited the country as tourists, when a chance encounter with a child drinks seller near the temple complex of Angkor, or an extended ride with a Cambodian tour guide- confronted them with what they saw as a need, and became involved in addressing it. Some are young people who left jobs in their home countries; others describe themselves as restless or somewhat unfulfilled in their retirement. Some go back and forth, while others move to Cambodia permanently to pursue their vision of a particular project.

While one might regard them as time-worn examples of individual do-gooders, what makes their activities significant, among other things, is their near-complete absence from academic research on development. Even though there is no shortage of studies of local NGOs, the persistent focus on private, public and third-sector organisations, alongside institutional donors, large-scale philanthropists and policy-level programmes, has obscured the view on a wealth of small-scale, individual actors who are engaged in what could be called 'development under the radar'. They are the focus of my current research project funded by the Leverhulme Foundation, which aims to bring these alternative actors in development into the framework of academic research, as well as fostering a more comprehensive popular awareness of their activities.



Sussex Anthropology: Who We Are

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