

Newsletter of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex

Two New Members of the Department



Celma Carrion Choquiro



In this issue:

New Faces	1
Citizen Aid	1
New Funding	2
Student News	2
Publications	3
Other News	3
Notes from the field	4
Who We Are	4

Diana Ibañez Tirado

Diana is principally an anthropologist of everyday life and gendered sociality in the Muslim-majorities societies of Central Asia, more particularly Tajikistan. She has conducted long-term field research on time and temporality, gender and family life in Kulob, a town of about 90,000 inhabitants located in southern Tajikistan. Since 2013, Diana expanded the thematic scale and geographical scope of her anthropological investigations beyond Tajikistan and towards the study of Persian and Russian speaking merchants who trade in a variety of commodities between China and Eurasia, West and Central Asia. As a postdoctoral researcher fellow in an ERC-funded project, she conducted nine months of fieldwork in the Chinese city of Yiwu—a major centre for the global trade of commodities of everyday use and home to 14 000 foreign merchants from around the world. Her focus on this project was on gendered aspects of trans-regional trade expanding from China towards related commercial nodes where she has also conducted short-term fieldwork in cities located in Tajikistan, Iran, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia.

Diana is also interested in visual anthropology and material culture and, in addition to her written work, she has curated two exhibitions of photographs and objects from the Chinese city of Yiwu (2014 and 2017/2018), and has produced a video-documentary about international traders living in this city (2018).



Julie Billaud

Julie's PhD research was carried out in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime, in the 'Postwar/reconstruction' period. Based on fieldwork among various groups of women targeted by 'empowerment' programs (university students, Members of Parliament, women's rights activists and lawyers at the Kabul Family Court), the research explored gender politics and the politics of humanitarianism and legal reform in the new Islamic Republic. Her first monograph *Kabul Carnival: Gender Politics in Postwar Afghanistan* came out in 2015 with the University of Pennsylvania Press.

After the PhD Julie redirected her attention to Islam in Europe, and more precisely to everyday forms of Islamic justice in the UK as they are routinely practiced in British shariah councils, law firms specializing in Islamic law, the World Islamic Economic Forum and the vibrant Muslim marriage industry. The study investigated notions of morality, citizenship and multiculturalism from the standpoint of these emerging religious claims.

A second postdoctoral research project was an ethnographic study of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a new mechanism of human rights monitoring within the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Julie's most recent research was for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva to carry out an ethnographic study of its 'diplomatic culture'.

Citizen Aid and Grassroots Humanitarianism: Development Futures?

This was the key question for a workshop organised by **Meike Fechter** and **Anke Schwittay** in the Spring Term, bringing together an interdisciplinary group of researchers from Norway, the Netherlands, the US and the UK, including MA and emerging PhD projects. It was generously supported by the Sussex Research Opportunities Fund, the Department of Anthropology, and additionally offered a masterclass by Susan Appe and Allison Schnable on 'Researching Grassroots International NGOs' for Sussex MA students.

A notable feature of international development over the last decade has been the rise and increased visibility of small-scale private aid initiatives, within Europe and in countries of the Global South. These initiatives include 'everyday humanitarians' working in makeshift refugee camps; local residents providing emergency assistance in the aftermath of disasters, and people setting up independent aid projects in countries distant from their own.

Workshop highlights included the role of social media in facilitating these private funding flows; the diversity of those involved, including practitioners from the Global South and North, and the importance of transnational connections. The decentralised, informal, and

personalised nature of such private aid activities emerged as what makes them different from more established forms of development. Preparations for a joint publication are now underway, as well as for future research collaborations.

LOGO from a 2017 Home Office App to help citizens prepare for terrorist attacks - an interesting comparison to how this workshop envisaged the theme!



Quinto Valentin Chumpate



New Funding



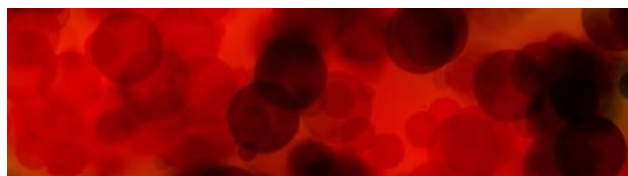
Meike Fechter and **Pamela Kea** are part of a consortium working across Sussex and led by BICC/Bonn with further partners in Asia and Africa on the project TRAFIG - Transnational Figurations of Displacement: Connectivity and Mobility as Solutions to Protracted Refugee Situations. Lasting 3 years the project has a €3 million budget funded under the horizon 2020 programme.

TRAFIG introduces a novel perspective on protracted displacement situations (PDS) that will improve the protection and resilience of refugees and enhance trust and cooperation between refugees and host communities.



Pamela Kea also has funding from the Sussex Research Development Fund. This pilot project will focus on female migrant returnees in The Gambia and Senegal who are at the forefront of their fields of work and are in a position to address gender inequality and bring about social change. It will provide novel insights into: their motivations for returning; the impact of

their work initiatives on addressing gender inequality and promoting social change; the effect of their return on local communities; and their continuing transnational practices.



Narrating Blood: An International Network is a CORTH project in collaboration with the Sussex Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS). **Maya Unnithan**, Janet Boddy (CIRCY) and Hayley MacGregoor (IDS) won a joint bid from the International Research Partner Network fund at Sussex to bring together a unique network of interdisciplinary scholars across the globe to 'talk about blood.'

Exploring the social, economic and health burden of often hidden, blood related conditions such as anaemia in lower and middle-income countries, it focuses on the way blood (from menstruation to anaemia) is narrated within policy discourse, and in everyday family, school and livelihood contexts in poor, rural, urban and migrating populations.

The first meeting of the network was held at Sussex in June bringing together global research partners from India, Ghana and Bangladesh as well as colleagues from across the UK.

Student News



James Koronka worked over the summer with **Rebecca Prentice** and **Layla Zaglul** as a Junior Research Associate. He conducted fieldwork in Lewes interviewing people in the town to get a sense of their feelings toward the Lewes Pound and its impact on the community.

James writes: "Complementary or local currencies are becoming

relatively common with 12 currently in operation in the UK and more in development. Local currencies are designed to bolster the local economy, but they also have an environmental and social impact. I was interested in looking at the social implications of the currency, in particular assessing whether people in Lewes are deriving a sense of community from having a shared local currency. I spent several weeks in the town interviewing locals, tourists, business owners and the Transition Town Group and Lewes Pound Group to learn more about people's feelings toward the currency. In standard anthropological fashion, I quickly discovered things were not as they appeared from the outside, and had to rethink some of the assumptions that I had beforehand. Most notably my research showed that there is little current use of the currency except among a small, committed community of locals. However, there was a strong sentiment for the currency and many people expressed pleasure in the concept and seeing the notes in use. There also remains a significant interest in making the scheme work more effectively."

A poster summarising James's research and findings will be displayed and judged on October 4th. The winning two posters from the JRA scheme will then be displayed in Parliament.

For further information on the JRA scheme see:

www.sussex.ac.uk/research/undergraduate



Natasha Hoare's, final year dissertation was Highly Commended by the Global Undergraduate Awards.

The paper examined Japanese garden aesthetics where traditionally great thought is given to each detail. While such gardens often seek to represent microcosms of nature there

is little in the way of 'wildness'. In previous research water and stone have often been analysed as key motifs throughout different eras and styles but in contrast there has been a surprising lack of attention to one more central element; moss.

Since its presence is clearly no random accident, this paper attempts to give moss some of the attention it deserves by drawing on the field of multi-species ethnography, pioneered by scholars like Donna Haraway and developed further into the plant and non-animal kingdom by anthropologists like Anna Tsing. It argues that moss plays an important role in the garden by adding an autobiographical aspect to its surroundings – giving insight into the history of the object which, in line with traditional Japanese aesthetics, can allow the object to be perceived as more beautiful by humans. The paper also explores how the plant can destabilise typical dichotomies between 'natural' and 'artificial'; at first revered for its image as primitive and spontaneous, moss is then meticulously cultivated to become an image of perfect order.

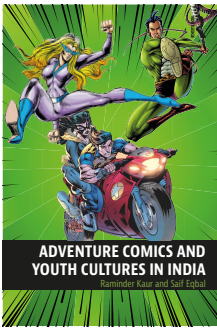
Alumni

2018's MA graduates have gone on to some impressive and interesting jobs:

Tim Perkins (SAGE) is a Business Development Administrator for Itad, an international development NGO in Brighton; Emily Nell (ADST) is now based in Tunis, Tunisia as REACH Assessment Intern for Libya; Gemma Harvey (SAGE) is a Donor Fundraiser for Bristol-based charity One25; Declan D'Arcy (ADST) is a Research Intern at CFOR Force for Change in London; Sasha Flatau (ADST) has begun a fully-funded PhD in Anthropology at LSE, and Ruyu Lin (ADST) has begun her PhD at the Institute for Development Studies.

We wish them all the best in their nascent careers.

Publications



Adventure Comics and Youth Cultures in India. **Raminder Kaur & Said Eqbal.** (Routledge. 2018)

This pioneering book presents a history and ethnography of adventure comic books for young people in India with a particular focus on vernacular superheroism. It chronicles popular and youth culture in the subcontinent from the mid-twentieth century to the contemporary era dominated by creative audio-video-digital outlets.



Filippo Osella edited a volume for **Modern Asian Studies** on Charity and Philanthropy in South Asia.

Why should we care about giving in modern South Asia, and why now?

These are among the questions at the

forefront of this special issue whose contributors explore charitable practices and philanthropic transformations in diverse historical and cultural contexts across the colonial/post-colonial divide at a time when trade liberalization, the transformation of state welfare-ism, and the consolidation of a global economy has led to a deepening of neo-liberal regimes across the region as well as political and religious fundamentalisms.

DID YOU KNOW?

In most Yanomami myths people aren't different from animals. They walk, talk, eat and behave just like us. We see a jaguar as a four-legged, furry beast, but a jaguar sees himself (and other jaguars) as a human being. Apparently the jaguars see us as little wild pigs, which are delicious to eat. If you see a jaguar, run as fast as you can in order to, quite literally, save your bacon.

Thiago's take on Amazonian perspectivism

Other News

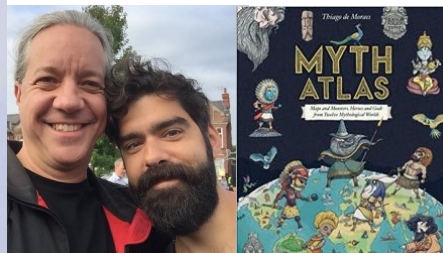
The TRODITIES project led by **Magnus Marsden** organised a conference "Global Traders in Yiwu and their Routes". Held at and in collaboration with the Yiwu Commercial and Industrial College it was attended by important Chinese officials and academics as well as numerous foreign traders based in Yiwu the day involved presentations by TRODITIES team members and local scholars on their research findings.



On Monday 17 September 2018 the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) held a round table jointly organised with **Sussex Asia** entitled: "Afghanistan, Asia and the new Silk Road: Perspectives from the Ground". Academics, economic experts, civil society members and media representatives attended the event. The event explored the ways in which traders from Afghanistan have played a critical role in connecting the country to other parts of Asia over the past decades, often in the most difficult of circumstances. By focusing on the activities of traders, speakers developed the idea that infrastructures are not only built structures but also often human, and that trading networks are an especially clear example of a human infrastructure than channels the movement of people, ideas, and commodities. The speakers included H.E Dr. Mustafa Mastoor, Minister of Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Professor Magnus Marsden the Chief Academic Adviser at the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) and Director of the Sussex Asia Centre, University of Sussex, and Mr. Azrakhsh Hafizi, president of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industries and economic affairs analyst.

Evan Killick advised Thiago de Moraes on Amazonian cosmologies for his new book, *Myth Atlas*. The book uses maps and pictures to show how 12 different cultures have seen the world.

www.thiagodemoraes.com/2018/8/1/myth-atlas



Evan Killick used funding from a GCRF Networking Grant to support a second International Intercultural Collaborative Workshop at UCSS-NOPOKI in the Amazonian city of Atalaya, Peru.

Bringing together anthropologists, activists, government and NGO workers with indigenous people and university students the workshop discussed the issues currently facing the region.

The project also involved pilot fieldwork to start developing new collaborative research methodologies involving indigenous film making and mapping. Enabling indigenous communities more effectively to document and publicise the issues they currently face.

Support was also given for a women-only event hosted by FEMIPA (Federation of Indigenous Women of Atalaya Province).



Carolina Rodriguez, Amalia Casique Coronada & Mercedes Giesecke discussing their research. Other pictures from the workshop are on left of the cover page.

Viva Sussex

Congratulations to **Dr. Valerio Colosio**.

His research explored the social legacies of slavery in a mountainous area of central Chad, where local groups were often harassed and enslaved by warriors coming from neighbouring sultanates.

His work analysed how former slaves and their descendants were integrated into society after the colonial abolition of slavery and when and how history and memory of these events continues to matter in contemporary Chad. Overall, his work shows how the recognition of citizenship rights tends to be related to specific identities and how slave ancestry has become a contemporary political tool.



Notes from the Field: Stages - Nigel Eltringham



In collaboration with Shana Swiss and Paul Heritage of People's Palace Projects, a research centre in the Drama Department at

Queen Mary University of London, I have been working on a theatre project to develop citizen activism and community engagement with power holders and decision makers.

Part of the umbrella project 'Stages - Theatre for Social Change' which asks "Who is the Stage For?", the project uses the Ten Stages of Genocide (developed by Greg Stanton of www.genocidewatch.com) as a catalyst for dramatic content.

The Ten Stages of Genocide is a model that presents the risk factors of genocide as a process, with identifiable phases (for example, classification and discrimination) that can be identified early, challenged, resisted, and interrupted.

Artists collaboratively create theatre events that address inequality and social exclusion and that reflect local realities. The aim of the project, supported by the Peace Development Fund and National Lottery Awards for All, is to facilitate engagement with power holders and decision makers by creating participatory

theatre performances and community conversations that increase understanding of both the processes that lead to exclusion and those that mobilise behaviours that challenge discrimination and embrace difference.

The project enables people to experience the power that theatre has to clarify issues, challenge attitudes and develop solutions. The first outcome of the project was a performance devised by students from Queen Mary University of London entitled 'Stage 3'. Addressing the process of being categorised based on race, age and socioeconomic background, Stage 3 places participants in positions that question their perceptions of power and powerlessness.

Its premier at Rich Mix, Bethnal Green as part of the Tower Hamlets 'Tafahum' project generated a passionate conversation about migration, discrimination and belonging, issues that resonated with many of the young people in Tower Hamlets, some of whom had experienced, or were experiencing, the complex UK immigration process.



My role as an anthropologist on the project is to produce an ethnographic account and analysis of the processes through which these performances are devised, rehearsed, performed and received.

See more about the People's Palace Projects at: www.peoplespalaceprojects.org.uk/en

Stage 3 will be performed in Brighton (14 October), Dover (20 October), and Hastings (3 November) as part of Safe Passage's Our Turn campaign, whose goal is to resettle 10,000 child refugees in the UK over the next 10 years. This initiative was inspired by the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport when Britain rescued 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Europe on the eve of WWII.

Further performances are planned in Harwich, Southend-on-Sea, and London.



Sussex Anthropology: Who We Are

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