

Workshop 54

New Dimensions

Convenors:

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“New Dimensions” is a workshop especially addressed to PhD students. Ten days prior to the EASA conference, the Vienna Socrates Intensive Programme will take place in which lecturers and students from ten European universities will participate. PhD students are invited to submit papers prior to the conference which reflect on their research projects in the context of nationalism, multi-culturalism, post-colonialism, processes of constructing and deconstructing boundaries. Lecturers and students will discuss these papers during the Intensive Programme and the students will present rewritten versions in a workshop during the EASA conference. Connecting the Vienna Socrates Intensive Programme and the EASA conference, the workshop “New Dimensions” thus not only refers to topical and innovative research by young anthropologists, it also creates a new dimension of conference presentation.

Social Memory, Collective Learning and Hazard Mitigation in an Argentine Prairie Community

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This paper develops the theoretical framework for my dissertation project, ethnographically located in the Argentine prairie region. Flooding in this region is a recurrent phenomenon. Even so, catastrophes are critical experiences for people affected and these experiences can be assumed to generate processes of social remembering over time. The current constraints of Argentine economy and politics eventually turn a recurrent natural hazard into a complex emergency, unfolding parallel processes of crisis. This project connects the anthropology of disaster to the social construction of boundaries in time and space, by using the concept ‘memory work’ and exploring the significance of social memory of natural hazard experiences for people’s mitigation strategies in a flood prone local community.

What are the cultural processes by which people understand the disaster and how does long and short term stress affect these processes? What are the social, political and economic effects of the disasters over time and what coping strategies do people deploy? What roles do collective representations of previous hazard experiences play in such a context and how do they relate to disaster vulnerability and resilience?

The Local Escape of Palestinians in Israel. The Relation Between the Success of Family Lists in Local Elections and the October 2000 Riots as a Critical Event

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Critical events imply a situation or an event that has historical importance through instituting new modalities of historical actions, which “was not inscribed in the inventory of the situation itself” (Das 1995: 5). After these events, new action comes into being, which implies that traditional categories such as moral codes; honour codes of conduct etc, acquire new forms by a variety of (political) actors (ibid: 6). In my paper I claim that the intifada-riots inside Israel in October 2000 where thirteen Palestinians were killed by Israeli police forces, in the same way as the “nakba” of 1948 where 90 % of the Palestinian inhabitants of the new Israeli state became refugees, constitutes such a critical event. My hypothesis is that there is a connection between this intifada related critical event and the consolidated role of kinship in local politics in villages of Palestinian citizens of Israel, as could be seen through the success of family lists in local elections in 2003.

My intention is thus to analyse macro-micro dynamics between national conflict and resurgence of kinship based on an empirical study of local politics in the village Deir al-Asad in Israel. I hope my paper would be a contribution within political anthropology on kinship and politics, nationalism and ethnic conflict.

Mediation and Ethnic Identity in Kuna Yala (Panamá 1925-2003)

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In recent years, anthropologists have been concerned with the ways in which history and cultural symbols have been manipulated in the recreation of ethnic identities and organizations. The role of the ‘cultural-mediators’ is central in view of elucidating these cultural transformations. In order to better understand their role, I decided to study the cultural and political mediation in Kuna Yala (Panama).

Today the Kuna live along the eastern Caribbean shore of Panama on the Coast of San Blas, as well as around the cities of Panama and Colon. They deal with the government, national society and international agencies through a variety of channels and organizations (General Congress, national political parties and non-governmental organizations).

Using an anthropological approach, I will elucidate the transformations in ethnic identity in connection to change in political discourse of Kuna organizations, especially among Kuna NGO. These organizations now place environment at the center of their political struggles. A new ethnic identity is emerging and

being put in context in social situations and encounters.

Playing Away: Globalisation and Irish Theatre

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At beginning of the 21st century we have yet to fully address James Clifford's call to investigate the processes involved in present experience of cultural identity (Clifford: 1988). In Ireland, theatre and the arts have long been implicated in the imagining of the nation state and the construction of a 'national identity', (Murray 1997). Theatre and performance participate in the socio-cultural life of the community as a means of articulation of 'home based experience' (Murray 1999), and as sites for the re-imagining of Irish cultural identity in an increasingly 'global' Ireland.

This paper is concerned with the question of how globalisation affects the creative practitioner in Ireland and draws from fieldwork conducted during 2000-2004 in communities on the west coast (Sligo) and east coast (Dublin) of Ireland. Two ethnographic field sites: that of the community and that of the 'performance event' set the stage for a dialogue between relational notions of the regional and the urban, the centre and periphery, tradition and innovation, which participate in the re-imagining of Irish cultural identity. This paper examines how these re-imaginings are articulated through theatre and performance both at home and abroad.

Given today's world of diaspora, transnational cultural exchanges, and technological advances in mass media this paper examines the power and value of Irish cultural performances in the imagining of a 'European' identity, and the role of imagined 'European' identities in refiguring Irish performance culture.

From Migrant to Citizen: Argentinean Migrants in Transnational Space.

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Since the economic regression in the 1990s and especially after a successive meltdown in 2001 Argentina has seen huge emigration flows, worst in their history. More than half a million Argentines left their home in the past few years to live abroad, about half of them in Spain. Many settled permanently and participate fully in a host society through labour, taxes, and social interactions, in schools and through their part in enriching urban cultural landscape. They form new networks and communities, which help restructure their notion of home, belonging and identities. Citizens and nationals of Argentine, seeking means to acquire second citizenship of a European country find themselves in transnational space, spanning from places and communities of origin to places and new communities of immigration. Maintaining some forms of social interactions with home communities and

forming new transspatial or transnational networks provide them with an opportunity to reconsider their relations to their nation, home country and European countries. Many Argentines have at least some sort of connection to one or more European countries, since their parents emigrated from Europe. When acquiring residential permit or citizenship of a European country, they legitimate their notion of belonging to more than one country through family histories, 'blood' or kin relations. In most cases, however this is merely a utilization of a notion of nationality to gain legal status and a possibility to start a new living in another country.

Transnational ties, interactions and mobility between social worlds that span more than one place give migrants means to negotiate their notion of belonging, citizenship and national identities. The presentation is an outcome of ethnographic study of migrants' adaptation and reconstruction of their identities in relation to home and host states. When considering migrations, transnational connections, settings and dynamics are manifest to be key factors in (re)construction, negotiation and reproduction of individual notions of belonging as well as national and transnational identities.

The Hifi-People vs the Cheap People: How Ethnic Conflict and Class Differences Coincide in Bombay, India

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Between December 1992 and February 1993 large scale Hindu-Muslim violence in Bombay left at least 800 people dead. Bandra East, a suburb in north-Bombay, was a hot-spot during these riots. The neighbourhood received much media attention that helped to create anti-muslim sentiments, and the area suffered from repeated violent clashes during which at least 55 people died and 54 homes were destroyed.

This paper aims to put different theoretical approaches to the study of violence in perspective, by showing how very different causes, ranging from national events, regional politics and local circumstances, combined to produce the violence in Bandra East. By using the statements of inhabitants about the violence, the paper pays special attention to how local socio-economic differences helped to raise a widespread acceptance of the use of violence.