

## Panel 7: Regional Anthropologies, Colonial and Postcolonial Histories

Wednesday, 6 December 2023 – Stream 1

[Session I: 12:00-13:45 pm CET // Session II: 14:30-16:15 pm CET]

This panel seeks to promote a dialogue between histories of the knowledge of regions within a variety of anthropological traditions and regional histories of anthropologies, especially as practised in colonial and postcolonial contexts. In ways related to the advent of “area studies” and similar formations, the anthropological study of different world areas has sometimes come to be defined by specific problems, topics, tropes, and/or theoretical approaches. For metropolitan anthropologies, different regions of study have sometimes been regarded as more or less theoretically productive overall, or have held disparate conceptual functions and been associated with distinct bodies of disciplinary literature. This has been true even at moments of high theoretical universalism—e.g., evolutionary theory—as various regions have held privileged roles in the imagination and visualisation of such ostensibly universal precepts. Meanwhile, anthropologies have both been constituent elements of colonial forms of knowledge and resources for reimagining region, area, and nation within anti- and postcolonial counter-traditions. As “sciences of self-knowledge” in such settings, anthropologies can have multi-dimensional roots both in metropolitan disciplines and in a host of pre-existing, emergent, or precolonial intellectual practices. Across these varied dynamics, anthropological practice has also often brushed against other allied or competing sorts of local knowledge production, such as folklore and national character studies. Within and among its papers, this panel aims to set these multifaceted histories of regional anthropologies in conversation.

Convenors: **Robert Oppenheim** (University of Texas at Austin), **Okpyo Moon** (Shandong University)

Session I [12:00-13:45 pm CET]

Shinji Yamashita (University of Tokyo, Japan)

**A Look at the History of Japanese Anthropology: How the Past Informs the Future**

The origin of anthropology in Japan dates back to 1884, when Tsuboi Shogoro, the founder of Japanese anthropology, organized a group called *Jinruigaku no Tomo* (Friends of Anthropology) at the Imperial University and started hosting workshops periodically. This group soon evolved into a more formal academic association, *Tokyo Jinruigakkai* (the Anthropological Society of Tokyo), which attempted, in a rather nationalistic manner, to research into the origin of Japanese people. Japan's colonial rule expanded the scope of research to include Asia and Pacific regions; Taiwan (1895), Korea (1910), Micronesia (1919), Manchuria (1933), and Southeast Asia (1941). Meanwhile, the Japanese Society of Ethnology (currently, the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology) was established in 1934, and in 1943 the Ethnic Research Institute (*Minzoku Kenkyusho*) was started to study colonial others within the Japanese Empire called "the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere." However, with the defeat in the Pacific War in 1945, Japan lost her overseas colonies. Consequently, Japanese anthropology had to resume itself in the postcolonial era. The problem is that the colonial history of Japanese anthropology has not been narrated widely and is therefore not well known among the subsequent generations of scholars. By taking up existing narratives reporting past activities, I will discuss the significance of these narratives from the pre- and post-war period in order to interrogate the assumed positions accepting, renouncing or juxtaposing the academic traditions of Japanese anthropology as a discipline. In doing so, the paper sheds light on the history of Japanese anthropology for the future.

Nava Kishor Das (Former Deputy Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata, India)

### **Indigenizing Indian Anthropology**

Anthropology, in 19th century India, was primarily an administrative instrument to explain the social customs and laws of native communities. Two new varieties of imperial ethnography emerged in the colonial era. One was journalistic, Christian missionary accounts and second was 'colonial' ethnology/ethnography. In fact, the Indological and Orientalist approaches and colonial discourses had largely laid the foundation of the essentialist construction of India, visualised in terms of categories of racialised caste and tribe. It was concretised through the launch of Census of India. Indian anthropologists in the 1940s/1950s began to critically re-examine the term "tribe." At this stage, N. K. Bose's anthropology articulated a nationalist resolve of the "tribal question." Bose discussed the indigenisation of Indian anthropology. N. K. Bose, Surajit Sinha and K. S. Singh had conducted numerous studies under the banner of Anthropological Survey of India to critically analyse the civilisational bases of Indian society and closer interactions of the tribes with major communities. Despite vital influences, the tribes retained their relative autonomy, as in religious sphere. Special mention may be made of 2 ASI studies conducted by Bose and Singh, which insisted on constructing a Swadeshi tradition in anthropology. Singh's study of People of India specially emphasised India's cultural, socio-economic, religious and political

heterogeneity, thus questioning the British presentation of India as a monolith. By decolonizing methodologies and recasting ethnographic conceptualisation these studies had contested the orientalist image of India. It led to the development of the Swadeshi or indigenous anthropology in India.

Daniele Cantini (Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany)

### **Anthropology in the Arab World: the fragmented histories of an uncomfortable discipline**

In this paper, I will present the result of a conference I co-organised in April 2023 with the same title, together with Irene Maffi, Abdallah Alajmi and Imed Melliti. In this conference over thirty scholars discussed the development, or lack thereof, of anthropology in all Arab countries. (Para) Whereas there are some publications on the development of social sciences in the Arab-speaking countries or studies on selected disciplines in several countries, the institutional development of anthropology, its insertion into transregional contexts, and the material difficulties of conducting research in some countries, are still largely understudied topics. The symposium we organised and the resulting publications, in Arabic and English, aim to contribute to this emerging field of analysis in a collaborative way. (Para) In the first part of the paper I will focus on some anthropologists' individual trajectories, which I consider particularly relevant for the discussion of the insertion of anthropology in local or national research landscapes. I will then briefly overview national or subnational case studies to investigate the institutional development (or lack thereof) of anthropology in various countries. In the third and last section I will offer a glimpse into how selected themes are dealt with by scholars based in the region who publish in Arabic or French or other languages, and not exclusively in English.

Marion Langumier (University of Paris Nanterre, France)

### **South Omo studies (Southern Ethiopia): from intellectual centrality to economico-political reappropriation?**

This paper is based on thirteen months of field research in the South Omo Zone, as well as archival research and interviews with anthropologists in Europe. I will interrogate "South Omo" areal studies under the prism of their Ethiopian reappropriation. I argue, more precisely, that anthropological regionalist studies are one of the three converging processes by which "South Omo" was constructed as a place of exception, the other being carried out by Ethiopian policy-makers and tourism entrepreneurs. (Para) In the late 1980s, a major ideological turn took the shape of an administrative remapping of Ethiopia, creating the South Omo zone. While the new political organisation was meant to better represent the indigenous inhabitants of the country, anthropological research took momentum. A primary generation of foreign ethnographers who

had arrived in the 1960s and 1970s expanded their works and some developed into schools of thought. A regional institutional facility was also set up, as a means to promote and publicize the research, and mediate between regional groups and between them and outside onlookers (tourists). (Para) In the years 2010s 2020s when my research took place, regional diversity was locally held as a major economic opportunity within state-lead development of cultural tours for the Euro-American gaze. It was also a source of nationalistic pride, built on a subaltern reappropriation of the "unity in diversity" ideology carried by the ruling party in the federal state. In the rhetoric of Ethiopian tourist guides who I met in South Omo towns, this economic and politicized understanding of diversity all built on a selective re-interpretation of prior anthropological works. Meanwhile, the regional scholarship has kept extending to also include an increasing cohort of Ethiopian scholars, complicating the production of regionalist anthropological knowledge.

William W. Kelly (University of Yale, Connecticut, US)

### **A discipline produced by the young and curated by the old**

The history of a discipline's accomplishments is always enriched by embedding it in the pedagogies of its institutions and the life courses of its practitioners. This is what I explore through the example of the regional ethnography of Japan. Nine decades of work has generated a corpus of over 450 doctoral dissertations and Over 300 ethnographic monographs. I focus here on the "demography" of that corpus. It is not surprising, albeit dismaying, that less than half of doctoral dissertations are ever published as monographs. What is less noticed is that roughly three-quarters of the published ethnographic corpus are "dissertation books." Only a small minority of trained anthropologists go on to publish further field research monographs. [As far as I can tell from comparative study, the Japan corpus profile is similar to other ethnographic regions.] Our discipline's corpus is largely produced by junior scholars who are guided, assessed, and consumed by senior scholars. This is not to diminish our accomplishments; a dissertation book, for instance, is usually produced under very different circumstances, over a longer period of research, and with a much wider net of assistance and assessment than subsequent monographs. But this demographic and pedagogic appreciation does provide a more soundly historiographic context for our perennial debates about the nature of ethnography and the entanglements of ethnography and theory.

Session II [14:30-16:15 pm CET]

Adonis Elumbre (Hamburg University, Germany // University of the Philippines-Baguio, Philippines)

## **Theorizing the native: Ethnological science in European explorations and expositions of late nineteenth-century Philippines**

Philippine anthropology is often historicized according to the institutionalization and professionalization of the academic discipline in the country since the beginning of the twentieth-century. At the core of this narrative is the colonial and post-colonial tension and collaboration with American anthropology which arguably continues to influence the contemporary development of the discipline. Prior to this however, in the late nineteenth-century, one could trace aspects of an incipient ethnological science that were created and circulated among European circles. These eventually became an intellectual platform for both Filipino elite nationalists and American colonial principals at the turn of the century. (Para) The paper seeks to examine this conjuncture in the history of early anthropological traditions in the Philippines as articulated by European explorers and scholars. Using primary sources drawn from German, French, British, and Spanish publications, it surveys how the natives in the Philippines were theorized in terms of ethnic formation and transformation. What were the bases of their knowledge claims? How was ethnicity approached scientifically? Why were such intellectual curiosities sustained during the period? (Para) Ultimately this paper argues that the resulting ethnological imaginaries of the native straddled both the factual and the fictional, revealing in the process a range of converging and diverging concepts and positionalities from among the Europeans. Situating this in the broader intellectual history of the discipline in the Philippines could provide perspectives about the origins of enduring colonial and elite-nationalist anthropological ideas and practices, as well as points for deconstruction for organizing an Aghamtaong Pilipino (Filipino Anthropology).

Raphael Louvet (ENS de Lyon, LARHRA/CECMC, France)

## **Investigating the Margins – Fieldwork Survey, Ethnographic Photography and Films of Republican China (1924-1949)**

This paper aims at presenting how Chinese ethnographers, by conducting missions to the borderlands during the early 1930s, participated in the construction of a new national discourse and in the imagining of Others such as Tibetans, Mongolians, and Muslims communities. (Para) During the studied period of time, the phrase “Let's go Northwest! [dao xibei qu到西北去]” became widely used in the press, and increasingly influential in political and intellectual circles. Faced simultaneously with the Japanese invasion and local separatism, the Nationalist Government started considering the development and incorporation of the Northwest to be the key to achieve national salvation. This impulse encouraged travel to this region, and brought along the first Chinese anthropologists, photographers, and filmmakers. In the context of the New Culture Movement and the emergence of fieldwork as a scientific method, these travels to the frontier produced new historical narratives and ethnographic

knowledge oriented towards a largely Han readership. Urban readers became enthralled by adventurous travelogs and exotic photographs of ethnic minorities. (Para) Despite most of these actors sharing a common ideology characterized by nationalistic enthusiasm, social Darwinism, and a “civilizing mission”, their attitude and their experience of conducting fieldwork in remote areas constitute a prolific research material. These journeys are considered self-contained narratives, where the places visited, and the routes taken were prepared for further integration into a common heritage. The knowledge produced by these missions became widespread in the Chinese cultural sphere and reinforced a representation of ethnicity that had first originated during the Imperial Era.

Natacha Gagné (Laval Université, Québec, Canada) – Antoine Hamel (Laval Université, Québec, Canada)

### **Francophone anthropology in Quebec: the founding years (1953-1987)**

Drawing on autobiographical accounts, this paper explores how a collective of anthropologists helped shape the contours and specificity of anthropology in Quebec. The historical anthropology that guides us is also a political anthropology aimed at considering the situation in which a francophone anthropology was established in Quebec. Anthropology developed at the same time as what is known as the "Quiet Revolution", a major period of social mutation and opening up to the world in connection with modernization, national affirmation and the decolonization movement on the international scene. The aim is to explore how anthropology became institutionalized in this context, by first attempting to understand the Other we were in the process of becoming for ourselves, this French-Canadian "in transition", to use Everett Hughes's words (1943), inserted into a process of industrialization and urbanization that transformed his peasant culture and social organization, and made him a Québécois as a result of the national affirmation movement of the 1960s. Another figure of otherness received considerable attention in relation to the first: that of Quebec's First Peoples. The period covered in this paper begins with the teaching of the first anthropology courses at Université de Montréal (1953) and Université Laval (1958) and is marked by the founding of autonomous anthropology departments at both universities, in 1961 in Montreal and in 1970 in Quebec City. The period ends with the 10th anniversary of the publication of *Anthropologie et sociétés*, the first and, to this day, only French-language journal specializing in anthropology in Quebec and Canada.

Daniela D. Barba Villamarin (University of Western Ontario, Canada)

### **Anthropologists in action: the role of Ecuadorian anthropologists as state agents during the twentieth century**

My presentation will focus on the role of Ecuadorian anthropologists as state agents during the twentieth century. This role influenced the formation of a

specific type of anthropologist: one characterized not only by producing academic knowledge but also by maintaining certain political commitments. Ecuadorian anthropology, as a Latin American anthropology, was shaped by a heteronomous field, meaning that the discipline was influenced by political agendas. The relationship between Ecuadorian anthropology and the State implied that anthropologists, on the one hand, were engaged agents with social issues, and on the other hand, they sought in the State, not just in the university, a space to conduct anthropological research. The type of commitment of these anthropologists presented different characteristics throughout the 20th century. I will present three types of commitment: In the 1940s, at the beginning of development policies, anthropologists established a model based on paternalism, as they, from their scientific authority, proposed unidirectional solutions to integrate indigenous people to the state. In the 1960s, anthropologists linked to folklore participated in rescuing popular culture in the face of rural world disintegration processes. In the 1970s, with the creation of the first university degree in anthropology, anthropologists developed a critical stance towards the establishment of capitalism in rural areas. This approach allowed anthropologists to give voice to the subjects of study and to make indigenous people visible as political agents. Throughout this journey, these anthropologists created anthropological networks with the United States, Mexico, and other countries, enabling an ongoing transnational exchange of knowledge.

Gustavo Racy (Federal University of São Paulo, Brasil // University of Antwerpen Belgium)

### **Counter-images, counter-history, counter-anthropologies. Colonial images of Brazil in the work of Denilson Baniwa**

Based on the panel's premise, that "anthropologies can have multi-dimensional roots", this communication wishes to explore the artistic use of colonial imagery by Brazilian indigenous artist Denilson Baniwa. Part of an ongoing research on the role of images in the construction of Brazil in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the proposed approach to Baniwa's work represents a further step into exploring how colonial visual culture may be used to confront official narratives, conjuring counter-images, counter-histories and, in this specific case, counter-anthropologies. Assuming the essential character of visual images as open phenomena, following authors such as Walter Benjamin, Giorgio Agamben, and Georges Didi-Huberman, by exploring Baniwa's work, we will see the possibilities offered by images according to the use there are given, thus looking at their form, but also the meanings engendered by the form's relation to content. Diving into anthropological reflections of authors such as Paul Stoller and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, and of indigenous thinkers, such as Ailton Krenak and David Kopenawa, this communication will look at Baniwa's works as

a case study for exploring, and speculating, on the possibilities of redefining, reimagining, retelling, and, overall, learning how to relate differently, to ideas of region, nation, ethnicity, and knowledge itself, reinforcing anthropology's multi-dimensional possibilities.