#review: anthropology and law

Daniel Souleles
November, 2017

The task of reviewing Mark Goodale's *Anthropology and Law: A Critical Introduction* was weird, in a fractal way. The book itself, the object of my review, is, in fact, a review itself of recent work in legal anthropology. Moreover, the book

begins with a foreword by Sally Engle Merry who already offers a review of the book with presenting what is to come and vouching for its merit. This means that my task was to write a review of a review that already has a review bound into its foreword. Once you get past all of that, there is the question of the book's contents, which are concise, exemplary, often fun to read, yet hard to evaluate.

> *Formally, the book examines new work in legal anthropology since the end of the cold war.*

It is broken up into areas of inquiry that Goodale identifies as encompassing most of legal anthropological practice. Goodale starts with an introduction that glosses over the history of legal anthropology, which mirrors the larger discipline up until the mid-1980s. This section starts in the 19th century with law that develops with "civilization" in some evolutionary sense. Then the author turns to Malinowski's development of participant observation in social anthropology and the fascination with a "relationship between rules, or norms, and the complexities of social practice" (14). Moving into the work of Gluckman and P. Bohannan with a debate of emic or etic categories in relation to a method for studying legal systems, this section is followed by Nader and co.'s suggestion that legal anthropology really should be concerned with studying the dispute resolution processes. Finally, we arrive at an intellectual divide in the 1980s that concludes, "the problem of cross-cultural definitions of law and its institutions, was an intellectual and disciplinary dead end" (18). The discipline does not end there, but what comes next defies easy categorization to any particular theoretical paradigm according to Goodale.

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After clearing the above, Goodale suggests his own schema for understanding contemporary legal anthropology, and breaks it up into three distinct book sections categorized as: I. Law and the Production of Meaning, II. Law and Agency/Law as Regulation, and III. Law and Identity. The categories are further broken up into 8 chapters, and the 8 chapters are, in turn, broken up into 25 subsections (excluding all introductory and concluding sections). While there is a larger theoretical structure to Goodale's book, ultimately the sections have a catch-all quality to them. Goodale acknowledges this suggesting that, "what follows is an admittedly idiosyncratic examination of the many ways in which anthropologists have transformed—sometimes against their better judgment the study of law…" (2).

This review is set against a historical schema in which the fall of the Soviet Union led to an interregnum of legal utopianism in which multilateral and NGO organizations flourished, all under the banner of legal universalism, human rights laws, contracts, and courts, to push a utopian ideology of universal human rights and various forms of global governance.

Social analysts are now at the far side of this interregnum. They can see the ways in which this utopian legal architecture has been repurposed and coopted for narrower chauvinistic and capitalist ends. This repurposing often reinforces the inequality that civil rights rhetoric and the utopianism of a few decades ago sought to mitigate and ultimately destroy (c.f. 188), i.e. ascendant ethnic nationalism and, somehow, also transnational neoliberal capitalism. But rather than a systematic or empirical argument the content reviewed in the book's sections and its chapters are idiosyncratic.

To give one example of what this looks like, here follows a schematic outline of Chapter 4 "Human Rights and the Politics of Aspiration" from Part II, "Law and Agency, Law as Regulation:

- Part II: Law and Agency, Law as Regulation, which contains the chapter:
  - Chapter 4, "Human Rights and the Politics of Aspiration," which has sections on:
    – "From Cultural Difference to a Right to Culture"
    – "Human Rights and its Networks"
    – "Moral Creativity and the Practice of Human Rights"
    – "The Politics of Aspiration and the Limits of Human Rights" and
    – "The Ethnographic Political Economy of International Law."

All this is to show the various ways in which, "the anthropology of human rights has become the critical ethnography of one of the key ideas of contemporary world-making, with lessons that go well beyond anthropology itself" (97). Each of the sub-sections contains a brief summary of related ethnographic work, any of which would be an excellent starting point for other scholars. From a descriptive

point of view, this is often interesting, but as to the logic of such categorization, we're more or less left relying on Goodale's expertise.

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In a way, this difficulty also tells us a bit about how academia works. Goodale's author's blurb notifies us that he is Professor of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Lausanne, and that he was previously Professor of Conflict Studies and Anthropology at George Mason University, as well as the First Marjorie Shostak Distinguished Lecturer in Anthropology at Emory University. Moreover, he is the author of 12 books, numerous articles, received numerous grants and so on. In his own preface, he tells us that the work in this volume has been presented in various forms at 19 different Universities and Centers, and that 8 senior scholars have specifically revised portions of this book. All this is to show that the book has been vetted and is as much a product of Goodale's as it is one of the discipline.

One of these senior scholars is the already mentioned Sally Engle Merry, the Silver Professor of Anthropology at NYU, an extensively published author in

human rights law and gender scholarship. The cumulative effect is, insofar as theirs is an admittedly idiosyncratic presentation of the current state of legal anthropology (though persuasively presented and set against a compelling theory of the current historical moment), and insofar as this author and his work has been as vetted and vouched for as much as anthropologists can be, I'm not sure what grounds I have to critique. Basically, the book has already been reviewed and approved by The Discipline.

> *Perhaps, then, what might be of some consequence, is a suggestion for how to use this book.*

One way to approach it is to read it straight through—this is likely for beginners in the field, graduate students prepping for exams, and anyone wanting to build a legal anthropology course, or start a review on the topic. Goodale gives a sense of how he sees recent scholarship fitting into long-standing conversations within the sub-discipline. Therefore, another approach is to treat the book like an index. In my field of study, I spend a lot of time thinking about financiers, why they do what they do, and how our world is so amenable to their professional activities. Too, a lot these questions connect to legal structures of corporations, tax law, contract law, and the way in which national governments regulate and fund pensions. All of these structural features that affect the lives of financiers come from laws and legislatures, states and judiciaries. Moreover, many of the legal terms and categories that come with these structural features are part of a larger linguistic and conceptual inventory that allows finance to make sense. In turn, Goodale's Chapter 1 on "Speaking the Law" offers a sampling of scholarship that looks at the ways in which legal discourses structure certain types of human interaction. Also of use is Goodale's Chapter 5 on "Shaping Inclusion, and Exclusion through Law," which points to the ways in which legal processes can structure the shape of a conflict and the grounds on which adversaries must meet, as in the case of Native People in Canada whose struggle is in many ways prefigured by having to make use of law courts and legal arguments. I would perhaps like to hear more about the nature of contract and

tax law and how these are evolving in state and international contexts, and how legislatures understand all this, but these chapters are an excellent start for bringing my work into conversation with legal anthropology. As a reference, Goodale's book is an approachable, though partial, starting point.

There is no way around the fact that a book like this fluidly discusses a wide range of ethnographic primary studies, and a long thoughtful engagement with legal anthropology. It might help books like this to clearly it's sampling strategy of literature and references as well as an explanation of what and why conceptual areas are neglected (e.g. economics and religion which are briefly noted on p. xiii) and how the author sees them fitting into the anthropology of law. In the absence of a clear answer to these questions or a more schematic presentation, we are left with an appeal to authority. The framing of the book's material precludes systematic critique, but I am happy to give it the benefit of the doubt, and will certainly make good use of this book as a reference.

Goodale, Mark. 2017. *Anthropology and Law: A Critical Introduction.* New York: New York University Press. 320 pp. Pb $35.00. ISBN: 9781479895519.

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A Year of Two Elections

Peter Lockwood
November, 2017

Victor flew into the tackle, blocking the opponent's shot at goal. Shouts of praise went up from the fans and substitutes standing on the touch-line. "*Sawa Victor*!" ("Nice Victor!"). "*Asanta Victor*!" ("Thank you Victor!"). "*Huyu mluhya huyo*!" ("This one's a Luhya that one!"). The last phrase caught my attention. Spoken emphatically by his team-mate John Kamau – a 19-year-old striker who likes to compare himself to his footballing hero, Chelsea attacker Eden Hazard – it was both an ardent declaration of Victor's Luhya ethnicity and his dogged contribution to the team. Victor, 21 years-old and stockily built, had been leading the line all afternoon, chasing long balls looped over the top of the opposition defence by his teammates and withstanding several poorly time tackles that had left him lying on the floor in agony on each occasion. Star Boyz, Victor's team, were 3-1 up and on their way to a first victory in three games. His performance had been instrumental to the win. Given this context, one might better translate Kamau's

words of praise as: “He’s a special Luhya, this guy!”

For the last five months I had been training with Star Boyz, a local football team comprised of players aged between 18 and 28 from the area of southern, peri-urban Kiambu County where I continue to conduct my PhD fieldwork. Originally a plan to let off some steam alongside a busy timetable of language-learning, training and hanging out with the players of Star Boyz had begun to provide me with new perspectives on masculine sociality and friendship – themes related to my long-standing research interest in the predicament of young men in an era of mass unemployment and underemployment in Africa and beyond. Practically all the Star Boyz players hail from low-income households aspiring to middle-class status. After leaving high school many had begun to lead what is colloquially referred to as a “hustling” life-style in the peri-urban wage economy. My friend and neighbour James, a 21-year-old Gikuyu and Star Boyz midfielder, frequently takes temporary manual work (*kibarua*) on local construction sites paying 500 Kenyan shillings per day (approximately 5 USD). For James, this fairly gruelling work simply provides “money so you’re not broke” since he regularly goes for long periods without being called by his boss, though he tries to save what he can towards building materials for a house he plans to build on his family’s plot of land.

But since Kenya’s August 2017 elections, I had begun to take a growing interest in the significant role of three Luhya players, of which Victor was one, in the predominantly Gikuyu team and broader social setting. In the early months of fieldwork I had come to understand that whilst my fieldsite is largely comprised of Gikuyu-speakers who identify themselves in ethnic terms as Gikuyu, it is also home to a small proportion of Luhya, Luo and Kisii wage migrants who have moved closer to Nairobi to search for cash wages *(“kutafuta pesa”*).

The lives of these migrants and their families seemed significant given that Kenyan politics is often viewed through the prism of ethnic division: a competition between “tribal” blocs mobilised by a cadre of elite politicians manoeuvring for the ultimate prize of the Presidency (Mueller 2008). With that in mind, the

governing Jubilee Party can be seen as an alliance of Gikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic constituencies represented by President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy-President William Ruto respectively. Uhuru is the political inheritor to the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru (GEMA) hegemony created by Kenya's first President Jomo Kenyatta (and not coincidentally President Uhuru's father). The original Kenyatta is famously rumoured to have used oaths to bind together these groups from the region of central Kenya (of which Kiambu is a part) with the aim of maintaining a grip on the Presidency and the access to resources the position continues to provide (Branch 2011: 85). A sense of entitlement amongst Gikuyu has been fostered by their elites who promulgate the notion that independence was won by specifically Gikuyu *Mau Mau* fighters, whatever the truth of such claims may be (see Lonsdale 1992). Meanwhile, Luo and Luhya communities that comprise the bulk of support for the National Super Alliance (NASA) – a conglomeration of opposition parties – have found their western homelands historically marginalised by government development schemes that have favoured "Kikuyuland".

A month earlier in September, however, the usual story of GEMA-Kalenjin political dominance took a twist as the results of the August Presidential election that had returned incumbent Uhuru Kenyatta were annulled by the Supreme Court and a re-run was announced. As a result, everyday life in Kiambu had effectively returned to a state of waiting. My interlocutors from low-income families complained to me that as a result of this liminal period money had become scarce ("*pesa imekosa*"). Business ground to a halt, with traders avoiding Nairobi due to fears of being caught up in protests triggered by the opposition and counter-protests by Jubilee Party supporters. Gikuyu vernacular radio reports used the word "*nduma*", meaning darkness but with connotations of confusion, to evoke the state of uncertainty that broadcasters suggested many Gikuyu felt after "*ũthamaki witũ*" ("our kingship", that is to say, vernacular radio references to the president as "*mũthamaki*" imply the monarchical rule of a king) had apparently been snatched from them by the *aici* (thieves) of the Supreme Court. Local opinion of opposition leader Raila Odinga was at an all time low, and he was frequently referred to as a self-interested "*mjinga*" (fool) in conversations. If

NASA was a dirty word before the election, it was even more so after September. In response to the fresh elections announced by the Supreme Court, NASA organised a series of protests in Kenyan cities, arguing that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) could not be trusted to oversee fresh elections (which NASA claim were rigged first time around in favour of the Jubilee government). Hate speech on social media escalated, and on Kiambu County *Facebook* groups Jubilee supporters posted their praise for police violence meted out to Luo NASA followers protesting in western Kenya. NASA supporters hit back, accusing Gikuyu of being gullible "*warus*" (potatoes, a staple in central Kenya), mindlessly following their leaders with no thought for the countless allegations of corruption on Jubilee's watch.

Given this broader context of inter-ethnic tension, Kamau's praise for Victor that made merit of his being Luhya seemed particularly striking. A football match might seem like an odd place to reflect on Kenya's recent political turbulence, but given the primacy many scholarly and media commentators have given to ethnic division both before and after the election, it is sometimes useful to step down from the macro-level of such analyses and into the everyday lives of those living out these events.

> *A dangerous slippage occurs when everyday life begins to be viewed with categories gleaned from the study of ethnic multi-party politics.*

The style of sociality amongst Star Boyz players offers an alternative perspective on Kenyan society at a crucial moment. Victor's apparent embodiment of a stereotypical Luhya trait that day, physical strength (*nguvu*), hinted at the objectification and praise of difference – alternative political possibilities for a Kenyan public culture that often seems to fetishise a vague notion of "unity" (*umoja*) at the expense of fostering relations across ethnic differences. Kamau's words of praise were a far cry from the "One Kenya, One Tribe" campaign run by NGOs and civil-society organisations to foster a sense of Kenyanness by downplaying ethnic identities. "You shouldn't align to your tribe, but to your

country", goes its logic, one that seems to recognise both the precarity of national unity and the deep significance of aspects of "tribe" for many Kenyans from childhood, such as language. On the other hand, middle-class civil society frequently observes that young men in Nairobi's informal settlements transcend their ethnic identification through their common identification with the more immediate, pressing reality of urban poverty. Yet the predominantly Gikuyu character of Kiambu County precludes this interpretation too. Praise for difference reminds us that Kenyan nationalism need not be premised on the "fraternity" of Kenyanness alone but might be achieved through relations akin to "cousinage" that both recognise ethnic difference yet claim affinity (Ben-Yehoyada 2014). Such relations may crop up even in unlikely places like youth football teams. Rather than a commensurating unity, Kenyan nation-building may be better served by an appreciation of these local instances that make difference the basis of friendship and cooperation.

Not long after half-time Wamalwa, another of Star Boyz' three Luhya players, was substituted after a long shift patrolling the midfield. Like Victor, Wamalwa's tireless running and tackling had been critical to the victory. Wamalwa, as I found out through pitch-side conversations whilst watching the game that day, had been nicknamed Wetangula by his team-mates. Nick-naming is fairly common amongst the group, but whilst other team members are named after famous footballers like Eliaquim Mangala or N'Golo Kante, Wamalwa has been named after his ethnic compatriot Moses Wetangula, the Luhya leader of the FORD-Kenya political party and senator of Bungoma County. Wetangula, it should be noted, is a somewhat archetypal Kenyan politician having managed to mobilise supporters from his own ethnic background. He is, in a sense, one of the most famous Luhya in Kenya.

As Wamalwa walked off the pitch and came towards us, a broad smile on his face knowing the team were on the verge of victory, Kamau grabbed his friend by the shoulders, roughing his hand over his shaved head whilst chanting "NASA! NASA! NASA!". I was struck by the juxtaposition of Kamau's playful affection whilst simultaneously elaborating Wamalwa's difference, not necessarily in his eyes, but according to the macro-scale parameters of ethnic multi-party politics. Kamau

was joking that Wamalwa, as a Luhya, was inherently a NASA follower (*mfuasi wa NASA* or *mtu wa NASA*). Wamalwa himself was smiling, having become used to being teased by Kamau for apparently being an ethnic opponent and outsider. Of course, having played in the same team for over a year, Kamau knows full well that Wamalwa won't take this personally. After all, Wamalwa grew up in the same area as Kamau and speaks the Gikuyu language fluently whilst Kamau's brash character has given him a degree of leeway to tease his team-mates in this fashion.

The Godfather of structural-functionalist anthropology, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1940: 197-8) once wrote that such "playful antagonism" expresses the possibility of divergent interests and potential conflict by turning it into the very stuff of social relations. By placing the possibility of Wamalwa supporting NASA in the open, whether in fact he did or did not, Kamau signalled his indifference to the purchase such categories might actually have on their friendship. The categories of "NASA" and "Jubilee" themselves seemed laughable – as if they could ever aspire to fully account for a person's identity (see also Yeh 2017). Far from being a pressing issue, national or Presidential politics are rarely discussed seriously by Star Boyz players, being somewhat distant to their hustling lives on local construction sites and tea farms.

> *The parroting of political slogans signals their banality at the level of everyday life for peri-urban Gikuyu youths like the Star Boyz players who are concerned with maintaining more immediate social relations than the divisions Kenyan politics often presents as paramount.*

The seriousness of such politics is turned into the butt of the joke: What could Kamau possibly have against Star Boyz's best striker or most hard-working midfielder, men who had become his friends in the midst of the long season? The logic of tribal division seemed absurd, even funny in the face of real knowledge of the ostensible other.

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In Kenya's era of multi-party politics, the experience of ethnicity as the primary vector of political mobilisation structures understandings of self and other. Politicians' appeals to ethnicity would be ineffective if this were not the case. But neither is knowledge of the other exhausted by ethnic categories imported from the realm of politics. The experience of peri-urban living and labour migration affords Gikuyu alternative ways of knowing ethnic others that allow understandings of difference gleaned from politics to be turned on their head. When a person's virtues are gauged in proximity, the very notion of ethnic division itself can be objectified as worthy of ridicule, its way of looking at the world rendered useless from the perspective of friendship. Whilst tales of hate speech and hate speech itself circulate on social media, indicating a widening gap between Gikuyu and ethnic communities aligned with NASA during the election period, ethnography can provide alternative narratives to tell of Kenya's year of two elections. It can remind us of the possibilities for solidarity and alignment that exist within contexts already made knowable as ones defined by ethnic chauvinism.

Notes

This essay draws on my current PhD field research, supported by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). All names and some biographical details have been anonymised.

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Visualising happiness

Ilona Suojanen
November, 2017

Most of us are seeking happiness. Now more than ever, happiness has became one of the most pursued goals, and not just on individual level. Governments and companies in many countries are aiming to increase the happiness of their citizens and employees. Many scientists aim for simplifying happiness by measuring and quantifying it, resulting in headlines announcing: “Norway is the happiest country in the world”. These measurements surely tell us how countries have succeeded on many different levels, but can we be sure of the happiness of people in these nations? As anthropologists Izquierdo and Mathews (2009) argue, there is “no single pursuit for happiness”, as it varies greatly in societies and cultural contexts.

I started my journey as a happiness scholar looking right into these figures. Through regression analysis I found significant correlations between work values

and happiness, which are elaborated in my book, *Work For Your Happiness* (Suojanen, 2012). Although significant, correlations didn't really convince me. I wanted to understand better what people talk about when they talk about happiness. What does happiness mean to them? I wanted to make sense of happiness.

When measuring happiness, the most often asked question in surveys is: on scale 1-10, how happy are you? But what do these answers really tell us? My 7 might be your 9, and my 7 might refer to emotion in a particular moment, whereas your 9 to reflections on your satisfaction for life as a whole. As philosopher Daniel Haybro (2008) says: these answers not only fail to tell why these answers were selected, but they also fail in informing what people meant with the term 'happy'.

This doesn't mean that happiness studies using measurements, surveys and quantitative approach should be banned, but the information we gain from surveys is still rather limited, especially when talking about something as messy as happiness. As social anthropologist Neil Thin (2012) says: "quantitative studies can surely tell if the glass is half full, but they fail to tell what the glass contains and how the content was poured in". Sociologist Mark Cieslik (2018) is concerned about surveys forcing happiness being seen as something people have, rather than something they do. According to Cieslik, surveys propose stagnant happiness, ignoring the process and the changes: happiness evolving and intertwining with structures and resources of individuals. Thin highlights that it is not just a matter of the inaccuracy or limitations with information based on numbers; this kind of data might also distort our efforts to focus on unimportant aspects of happiness, or might lead us away from sincerity and empathy and give too much emphasis on scores (e.g. Norwegians being the happiest). Therefore, qualitative studies are needed to complement and guide these measurements, and to allow us to hear the stories behind numbers. Also, as Thin (2009) emphasises, anthropologists "must make the comparative analytical and empirical study of wellbeing central to our concerns, to offer adequate descriptions of human experience".

What is the right way to approach happiness as a human experience then? Can happiness ever be fully understood?

Interviews allow people to form their answers, and even lead the conversation, instead of choosing from given options. However, we are not all verbally talented, and talking about happiness could be a challenge to anyone, as it is so intangible. As we live in a very visual world and the current postmodern culture expands visual aspects to all parts of our lives, there are global trends towards greater dominance, or at least new forms, of visual information. Social philosopher Gillian Rose (2012) reminds that art, media, Facebook, and advertisements all render the world in visual terms. We are used to sharing our moments and lives constantly by taking photos and posting them on blogs, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, and so forth. Also, as business academic Russell Belk (2017) says: "the current generation of 'born digital' consumers has come to expect visual images and quickly become bored with purely textual information". Therefore, I started wondering if visual methods could provide an informative and fresh way to look into workplace happiness, as the use of visual data is still relatively rare in the organisational research.

I asked 24 young professionals based in Scotland to take a photo whenever they experienced a work-related happiness moment during a two-week-period, as a part of my PhD study. They were requested to send the photo by using Whatsapp or email with a short explanatory caption. Later on, I printed out all the images and asked them to tell the stories behind the images. I call this method *mindful photography*, following Kurtz and Lyubomirsky's (2013) work, but it is very similar, if not identical with other terms such as participant-led photography, participatory photography, and visual storytelling. These methods all support people to generate their own work and ask them to look at things from their own perspective. They are allowed to choose what kind of information they want to provide and what matters to them. It also invites them to share their lived experiences and naturally, allows for capturing the moment visually.

These photos, together with stories and discussions during semi-structured interview, provided a lot of information on happiness: the different ways people conceptualise happiness, the importance of and the expectations for happiness, enablers that either create or allow happiness, and insights into who is responsible for happiness. In addition to all this, I also learnt a great deal about visual methods.

The eight main benefits of using visual methods in happiness studies are (supported by the quotes form participants):

1) Taking and sending photos is **a natural way** to share information, as we are so used to taking photos and sharing them.

> *"I do take photos in my daily life, I use Instagram." – Sofia, 27, business*

2) Photos work as a **great reminder** to recall the moments later.

> *"I took pictures to remind me of what the moment was." – Adam, 31, education*

3) This method provides **a fresh and instant way** to look at happiness.

> *"There is certain immediacy to it that you don't have in what we call diaries." – Dennis, 28, education*

4) It is a **good attempt to capture a fleeting happiness** moment.

> *"Happiness is quite complex idea and it means very different things to different people. I don't think a very simplistic staff survey can address those things." – Charlotte, 26, civil service*

5) Participants have the **ownership of the photos**. They were and still are their photos, which they chose to share.

6) This provides **a new way to interview**. Participants were able to focus on something else than interviewer's face, which made the situation more relaxed and helped to focus on the topic. They lead the conversations and were able to bring up topics that mattered to them. Also, as the pictures were put together as a collage, this method allowed them to look at the bigger picture and to reflect on their happiness on another level.

7) The images also **provided information of the participants' surroundings and environments**, allowing access to many workplaces.

8) It makes research **more interesting, pleasant, and informative for the researcher, participant, and the reader**, and also perhaps increases happiness.

> *"It wasn't just a little thing to stop for 10 seconds, it actually made me happy. I enjoyed taking the photos and it made me to stop and think, which I don't normally do." – Charlie, 30, retail*

There were also challenges both during the data collection and analysis. These challenges should not stop anyone from using visual methods, but instead to encourage them to look for ways to conquer obstacles and improve the methodology.

1) There were moments when participants **were not able to take a photo**. There were several reasons for this: cameras were not allowed, full concentration was needed, it was seen as nonprofessional behaviour, confidentiality and anonymity were at risk, or participation was forgotten.

2) Sometimes it was **hard to recognise or choose a happiness moment** to report:

> *"What I found difficult about this was judging when happiness is worth recording."- Jack, 36, education*

3) Some participants questioned **if it is even possible to take pictures of happiness**, a highly internal feeling not necessary related to anything external around to capture in a photo:

> *"For example, having a good conversation. Or working in a company that values what you value; you cannot take a picture of it. " – Nathan, 24, banking*

4) In some occasions it could be questioned if the happiness moment was an authentic one or **an attempt to please the researcher** and to complete a promised task:

> *"Most of them I was trying to push. If I had not received your messages I would have not sent anything, because it was really difficult to find something." – Miguel, 34, oceanography*

5) **The timing of the study** in spring and summer very likely increased the amount of sunny outdoor images. Also the tasks differed in some cases around the year.

"I would have taken very different pictures had this been during semester time, there would have been more pics about teaching."- Dennis, 28, education

As I started analysing the data, I realised there were differences between the results based solely on photos and those based on narratives. For example, had happiness been analysed purely based on the images, the main conclusions would have been based on 19 photos of mugs and 28 photos of blue skies and sun, and barely any pictures of people: warm beverages and nice weather make people happy at work, other people have no influence on happiness. In contrast, analysis based on narratives gave somewhat varying results; although nature and weather were among the five main generators of happiness moments, coffee wasn't. As the participants were highly aware of not taking photos of people for various reasons, there were barely any images of people, although many of the narratives focused on the interactions with others.

Also, although entries did include plenty of nature related photos, some of the happy moments were not related to nature as such, but were taken on the way home after a successful day at work or after a pleasant train journey with colleagues, in which case happiness was not caused by weather or nature. Images of warm beverages

were shared with narratives of pleasant conversations with colleagues, quiet breaks during a hectic day or the flexibility of the work. The photos were not necessarily always representing a happiness moment and were occasionally even misinformative. I want to highlight that this is possible indeed with numbers and words as well. According to Sam Warren (2002), photos can provide only a fragmented and partial reality, and therefore words are needed to "synthetise images and text as a whole".

> *Therefore, I found the combination of photos and narratives most suitable to make sense of the happiness experiences, as I believe, just like Warren, that although the words and images are not sufficient alone, they can "create a synergy" together.*

Coming back to my earlier question: "can happiness be fully understood?" Maybe not, and that is part of the charm. We can aim to understand it in variety and richness – how it is expressed and experienced by each individual – in which an anthropological approach can provide plenty of possibilities, mindful photography just being one. I welcome the challenge to provide more information on something as mobile, context dependent, ambivalent, subjective, and intangible as happiness.

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All photos courtesy of Ilona Suojanen.

This post was first published on 30 May 2017.

Cultivating Childhood

Franziska Fay
November, 2017

Samira and Amna visit me in the afternoon after finishing Quran school (madrasa). After they have taken off their buibuis (long black overdress) and head scarves Samira continues taking off a few more layers of clothes. I ask her why she is wearing so much on such a hot day. The 2 Tshirts and 4 leggings are just enough, she tells me, otherwise it hurts too much when they hit us in madrasa. (Zanzibar, February 2015)

After 17 months of fieldwork in Zanzibar I suddenly only have a month left. A slight feeling of anxiety now accompanies my daily routine. What did I find? How

do I make sense of it? Whom else do I need to interview? When do I say goodbye to my research participants? Zanzibar has been a journey. But this is rather in the sense of the Noun – "an act of travelling from one place to another" – than the verb – "to travel somewhere".

> *Where exactly this journey has taken me I cannot yet say, but it certainly picked me up somewhere and took me to other places – emotionally, intellectually, physically – over and over again.*

In January 2014 I started doing field research on Zanzibar's national "child protection system". In Zanzibar part of the child protection system's aim is to decrease the normalized use of corporal punishment in the education sector – the most common form of violence against children on the so frequently romanticized Indian Ocean archipelago (UNICEF 2011).

In moments like the one described above the reality of many children's lives in Zanzibar unfolded before me and enforced my research goal of understanding the many factors that make life for children as it is. By questioning the usefulness of the category of "child protection" I put at stake something often assumed to be beyond need for critical inquiry. Exploring this policy field creates an opportunity for 9reconsidering what Boyden et al. (2012) points out very precisely:

> *Child protection policy is about changing values, attitudes, and practices beyond the delivery of professional services (p.519).*

With my inquiry into policy makers' attempts to translate universalized child rights-based ideas of positive discipline from theory into practice it was this "beyond" that I set out to look for.

My research's intellectual framework is primarily, but not exclusively, situated within the Anthropologies of Childhood and Development. The mood of thought being a critical childhood-as-construction and development as a semi-productive decomplexification and technicization of social reality. Anthropologically it was Christopher Davis' (2000) Death in Abeyance that guided me in a more ethnographic regard. In her account of a people's medical system, based on illness narratives and a contextualized understanding of healing, she describes a phenomenon as heterogeneous as the one at the centre of my research. Similarly it became my aim to understand punishment and protection logic in the context of Zanzibari society in its own right, instead of as subordinate to another system of thought – a frequent local perception of international child protection programs due to their promotion of international child rights standards as superior to contextual understandings of children's well-being.

Focusing on "people's diagnostic categories" as the actual "starting points of or building blocks for a constructivist approach to knowledgeable intervention" (p.69), I attempted to also start from here – in search of people's 'diagnostic categories' in regard to punishment and protection, their 'diagnoses' of inadequate behaviour demanding punishment as 'therapy', and their diagnoses of critical situations that children would need protection from.

Getting There

I arrive in the field on the 50-year anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution – a celebration as ambivalent as the island itself. Stone Town is decorated in the

colours of the flag of the semi-autonomous state and with banners stating mapinduzi daima (revolution forever) suggesting a national excitement about this commemoration of the overthrow of the Omani Sultanate, which was soon followed by the creation of the Union of mainland Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar. At night the celebrations peak in fireworks and the sound of gunshots. It is only when I start asking people directly that the general tenor gets more negative, particularly regarding the concealment of the mass murder of people of Arab descent, whom a majority of Zanzibaris have in their family. What I see seems to be more official performance than anything else and day 1 in the field prepares me to question these ruling discourses and to discover what lies underneath.

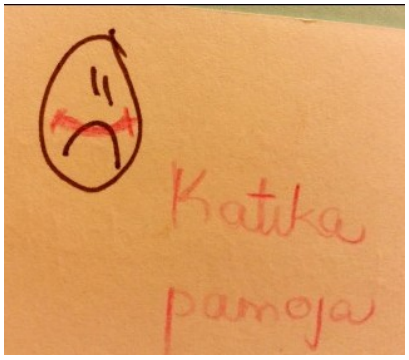
Research Emotions

Sitting on my Zanzibari host family's veranda the neighbours' about four year old daughter comes over to sit with us. Suddenly another neighbour who is sitting next to me, lifts the girl's skirt for a few seconds to inspect her behind and comments on the marks that some kind of disciplining method has left there. She starts discussing the child's misbehaviour which she assumes must have had led to this. Feeling uncomfortable I turn my head away so I wouldn't support what I perceive as disrespectful behaviour towards the girl's feelings. Embarrassment creeps up my spine, which I wonder if she feels it herself in that moment of exposure. But the girl remains quiet and leaves little opportunity to read what is on her mind – neither about being beaten as a form of discipline nor about the respective marks on her body being discussed openly in front of a stranger.

My emotional journey into the field probably began on this afternoon in late August 2009. From my discomfort with this encounter sprung many questions, some of which I have been able to follow up on throughout my field research, all centred around the concepts of ‘protection’ and ‘personhood’:

> *What does it mean to be a child in Zanzibar? How is personhood constructed in regard to discipline? To what extend is bodily privacy an adult-held privilege? What protection measures exist in the Archipelago to secure children’s safety?*

Wondering about productive ways of engaging with my research questions, I found helpful guidance in Rainer Maria Rilke’s (1929) Letters to a Young Poet. In search for meaning he advises the receiver of his letters to “love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language” (p.23). This made me reconsider how I regarded my own questions. Had I maybe not loved them for just what they were, I now tried to do so, and instead of waiting for the answer they might bring about to rather appreciate the many little answers they produced along the way to some sort of truth. And so I learned to “gradually, without even noticing it, live [my] way into the answer” (p.24) instead of finding all at once exactly what I had set out to discover. Rilke’s thoughts further strengthened my inquiry into children’s life worlds by trying to not lose what he calls “a child’s wise not understanding (…)” (p.35) which came to be the most fruitful position for me to take in regard to asking questions about sensitive matters such as discipline and safety.



Working on a topic such as children's protection and punishment became immediately emotionally loaded. Depending on people's stance on the matter they would also perceive my research project as either advocating for or against it – which was far from my intentions – and respectively criticize or support me for it. It became a key challenge trying not to suggest a moral agenda of my research but to make it understood to my research participants as an attempt to grasp the wider effects of those activities with actual moral ideals – such as development programs or child rearing practices. Hence my own role as a researcher became a crucial angle point to this emotional journey. A feeling of illegitimacy steadily accompanied me. The constant negotiation of my persona and the attempt to gain empirical data from children and adults without provoking negative or morally loaded assumptions about my intentions or undermining local understandings of childhood put me at the margins of comfort.

> *And after all, I was who and what I was: a morally biased non-Muslim single white woman researcher in a predominantly Muslim society, where it came to be these attributes that would often contest the legitimacy of my inquiry.*

Having been raised in a "Western" country with a full prohibition of corporal punishment a certain moral bias did shape my personal point of view on the matter, which I nevertheless would only elaborate on if specifically asked about it. In some people's views not being Muslim challenged my ability to understanding religious reasoning for corporal punishment, which it was often grounded in. And finally my status as a child-less unmarried foreign woman living on her own came to undermine my status as an adult-researcher and hence being taken seriously, particularly by women or mothers, who would tell me that I myself would remain "a child" until this situation eventually changed.

Yet, the biggest recurring emotional challenge remained witnessing children

being hit. During observations in the schools and as part of everyday life this often came to be at the centre of my fieldnotes. Being a silent observer with the aim of not disturbing or interfering in children's normal life situations while dealing with the complications of witnessing other's pain often felt absurd. Still it seemed necessary to grasp a glimpse of the anyway simply through my presence distorted "normal" situations children experience in the Zanzibari education system.

Participant's Views

When I meet the head teacher she proudly tells me the children have all brought back their cameras and are already waiting for me in a classroom. When I sit down with them and want to start collecting the cameras Maryam, one of the more outspoken and active ones in the group tells, me that they actually all forgot to bring them. The head teacher did not seem to have known this. When Maryam adds, "but please don't tell our teacher, ok?" I understand that they must have lied about having brought the cameras in fear of being punished for it. (February 2015, Zanzibar)

My own emotional path during research is somewhat comparable to that of my research participants. Especially the child-centred methodological approach I worked with turned out to reveal much in this regard.

Situations like the one above became common and reflected the sensitivity of using supposedly child-friendly research methods. Working with children on a topic that concerned them in their own right and depicted them as "people" whose views could be taken seriously was a seldom viewpoint in Zanzibari society where children's opinions are commonly sidelined in everyday life and rarely considered important.

> *Hence working with children through a child-centred research approach in a system of a general culture of punishment also meant working in a parallel system within which "mistakes" – such as forgetting to bring your camera – might again be punished with the rules applicable to the ruling system.*

My methodological approach stressed the inseparability of children's and adults'

lives and gave an idea of children's negotiations while working with me as a researcher. While children were mostly excited about opportunities to draw or take photographs, teachers seemed hesitant and rather indifferent to such engagement, but nevertheless remained the main characters in charge of granting children's participation in my project. To understand disciplining processes it became inevitable to understand child-adult relationships and the intersections of their worlds. Teju Cole's (2007) Every Day is for the Thief offered thought on childhood that applied well to these observations. In Cole's words "the completeness of a child is the most fragile and most powerful thing in the world. A child's confidence is the world's wonder" (p.31) – and in Zanzibar it often was indeed. Development organization's approaches to empowering children to speak out about abuse and violence by focusing on child participation and making children's voices heard often made people wonder, as it painted a role of the child in society that is far from common, and which is rather built on restrained and obedience than confidence and being outspoken. And it is at a later point in Cole's story a doctor reflects on his treatment of child patients saying, "the kids are okay, actually, it's the parents that are difficult. They're the hardest part of pediatrics" (p.91) that I could again relate to my own situation.

Even though talking about a medical field, similarly in Zanzibar, I found in my research that parents and teachers – the adult counterparts in children's lives – proved to be the most crucial, most difficult and at the same time most neglected group to work with. Like in pediatrics when treating a harm to children's lives (be it an illness or violence inflicted in the name of discipline), children were usually the least difficult to work with whereas adults often had strong feelings about why child-rights based approaches were a "Western" approach, unsuitable for the Zanzibar context and corporal punishment a mechanism itself for protecting children from going off track.

Finally the last dialogue in Tayeb Salih's (1962) The Doum Tree of Wad Hamid might serve as a preliminary conclusion to my fieldwork journey. While Salih's characters wonder whether or not the old and beloved doum tree in the village will one day be cut down they agree that this will not be necessary because "what all these people have overlooked is that there's plenty of room for all these things: plenty of room for the doum tree, the tomb, the water-pump, and the steamer's stopping-place" (p.22).

> *Maybe child protection policy makers will realize that there is plenty of room, and even a need, for both international and non-international conceptualizations of childhood and protection, and that only approaches that respect and incorporate the variety of these concepts will be able to positively contribute to change in children's lives.*

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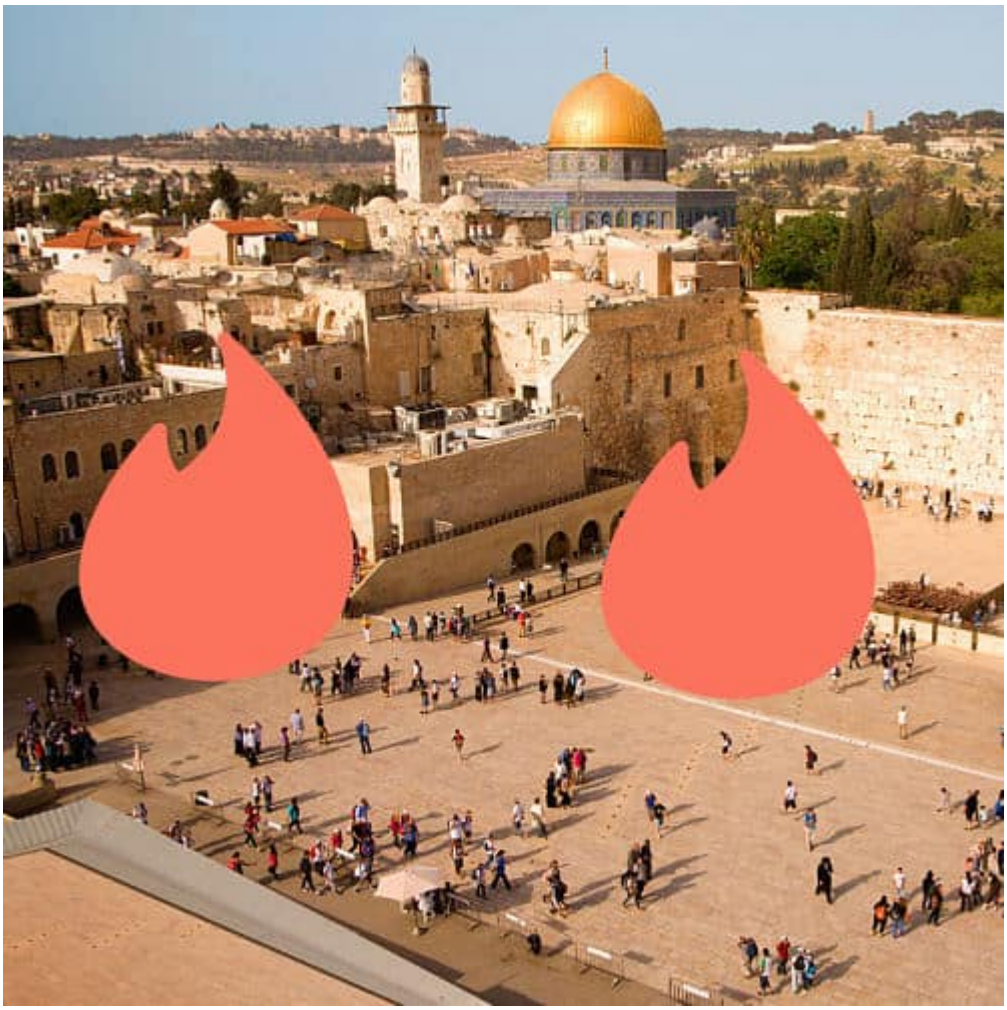
All pictures except Zanzibar city by Franziska Fay.

This post was first published on 6 July 2015.

Tinder as a methodological tool #EmergingDigitalPractices

Anya Evans
November, 2017



Imagine being able to remotely and anonymously search through locals in your area, browse through pictures of them, and chat with those who also found you attractive. Imagine if you could use your smartphone to do this from the comfort of your own home. For those not familiar with Tinder, it's a hugely popular dating app that allows users to swipe through seemingly endless potential partners and form matches with those who were attracted to you. Tinder functions by accessing the user's location and showing Tinder users based on age, gender, and distance preferences from 1 to 160 kilometres away. It only allows you to be approached by people who you have chosen. As a woman, you are more or less guaranteed matches, conversation, and dates. Imagine the kind of safe, manageable contact with new people you might have. Now imagine, what this might mean for an ethnographer conducting research in a militarised war zone that is both socially and religiously conservative, divided by strict borders and

with little to no contact between the divided populations.

My research looks at everyday life and the politics of space amongst Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian West Bank. Palestinians with West Bank ID cards are forbidden to exit the West Bank without permits, which are difficult to obtain from the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF). Meanwhile Jewish Israelis are forbidden to enter areas of the West Bank designated as Area A – the largest Palestinian cities of Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem, Jenin, and so on. The remaining 60% of the West Bank is "shared" between Palestinian towns and villages, illegal Israeli settlers, and the IOF.

This setting offers me the unique experience of learning about two culturally different but geographically proximate groups who, despite regular outbreaks of hostility between them, have relatively little contact with each other. As an ethnographer, conducting research among both Palestinians and Israeli settlers is not an option in terms of building trusting relationships or managing my own emotions about the conflict. Movement after sundown in the West Bank is restricted to those who have cars, and the dangers of night-time IOF raids, checkpoints, and the surge of attacks on settlers have to be factored in to travelling between spaces. Safely building relationships and knowledge about members of both communities without arousing suspicion or compromising my well-being is a difficult task, not to mention building personal and even romantic relations with those around me.

> *Luckily Tinder is not restricted by the occupation's enforced ethnic separation, placing Palestinians, Israelis, and IOF soldiers on a relatively equal playing field of access.*

In addition, since smartphones have become more ubiquitous than personal computers in Palestinian and Israeli society, their owners have been afforded independent and private Internet use. A new kind of private communication between individuals can now occur, including romantic and sexual exchanges, occurring on such popular messaging platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook

Messenger, and Viber, which provides instant messaging features for known people. Conversely, Tinder opens up the potential of messaging between unknown individuals, with an explicitly romantic and/or sexual interest.

We are no longer living in the days of fieldwork as a remote exile of Malinowskian standards. While loneliness in the field may be inevitable, smartphones and social media have also changed the way we conduct fieldwork – we have to work a lot harder to distance ourselves from our friends and family if we conduct our research abroad. Once in the field, I found myself using my phone just as much as ever to keep in touch with friends and family. Having lived in London for the past few years I was accustomed to using Tinder, where it has become fairly common among single young people. Naturally I was curious about how it was being used locally and I found plenty of nearby users. I created a new profile with pictures of me in various neutral locations, removed any personal information (such as school or university that are automatically included from your Facebook profile). I also included a short introductory sentence on my profile in English explaining that I was new to the region and adjusted my settings to include male users aged 24-35 within 45 kilometres of me. While I did experiment with viewing both women and men, Tinder does not make it possible to converse with users unless they "match" you, which means that as a woman trying to talk to other women who identify as heterosexual is difficult.

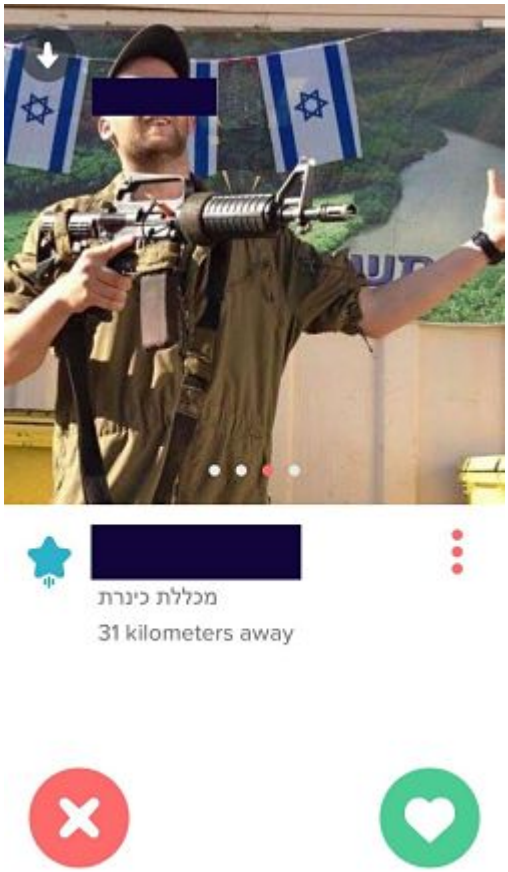
With the range of distance that Tinder allows, I discovered users over Israel's Apartheid Wall in Jerusalem (14km), Tel Aviv (45km), Amman in Jordan (75km), and the south of Lebanon (140km). Searching closer to home, Tinder provided an unpleasant reminder that for those who stay within their West Bank cities, illegal and often hostile Israeli settlers are everywhere. I was horrified and yet fascinated as I swiped my way through hundreds of profiles to see Israeli man after Israeli man, as close as 2 kilometres away, inside Palestine. As an anthropologist looking at everyday life, daily routines, and how people use and understood the ethnically segregated space around them, I was hooked.

While there has been considerable discussion of how we use social media within

anthropological circles, in my review of the literature I found that little attention has been paid to Tinder as a tool, whether used personally or professionally.

Tinder and similar location-based apps allow us to see how users present themselves to the world and have remote contact with otherwise inaccessible populations. Of course, such access in a romantic and/or sexual context also raises some important ethical and methodological questions. How can we harness popular social media platforms for research purposes? Can we differentiate between using them both personally and professionally? What are the ethical ramifications of using something like Tinder as a research tool?

Social mapping



If you stay inside Palestinian cities and you have no personal connections with Israelis, the spatiality of the occupation can be hard to understand. There is no longer an area called Palestine that is populated solely by Palestinians. There are very few maps illustrating the demographic breakdowns of the Occupied West Bank, not to mention up to date ones as the illegal Israeli settlements continue to expand. "Area A"[1] is limited to the biggest cities, shrinking and often violated. The spaces between and encroaching into these cities ("Area C", about 60% of the West Bank) are now populated by approximately 600,000 Jewish settlers, including the ultra-Zionist, the ultra-orthodox, and increasingly the right-wing working classes, all attracted to the settlements' government subsidisation of housing (for Jewish citizens only). The populations

are mixed, but not mixing, and education about either side is detrimental and/or non-existent.

Some shared Facebook or other social media interests as well as some peace-building initiatives bring people into contact who might not have been otherwise, but Tinder shows you from the privacy of your home exactly which users are around you (again, filtered through personalised options of gender, age range, and distance). For those who didn't grow up here, watching the settlements arrive and expand, it is very difficult to conceive of the space not always having been the way it is now, nor the extent of the settler presence.

> *Tinder assisted in my understanding of just how invasive and close Israeli presence has come to one of the last strongholds of Palestinian space since the creation of the Israeli state in 1948.*

Nationalism

The nationalism I discovered on Tinder was somehow both alarming and fascinating. Most Israeli men I saw had at least one picture of them posing proudly with their guns in army uniform, images from their three years of mandatory national service. Israeli users also often used nationalist memes in lieu of a personal photo or had the Israeli flag washed over their picture. I found far more Israelis than Palestinians[1], and those Palestinian male users generally preferred to use nationalist or romantic memes and quotes, or images of men with keffiiyehs over their faces throwing stones – the archetypal image of the Palestinian resistance actor. Presumably these photos also serve to provide anonymity; Tinder necessitates its users to post pictures on their profile, but it does not discriminate on the content of the picture. Stock images, jokes, and memes are also often used to maintain user privacy. In both conservative Jewish and Muslim cultures, Tinder creates a context where young men and women may be alone together, going against social convention. Therefore its users may prefer to keep themselves anonymous while browsing other users.

Israeli Tinder users appear to concretise a Zionist ambition of recreating Jews as independent and defensive. Israeli mandatory reserve service requires male citizens to be lifelong soldiers, defenders of the Jewish State. The male Israeli body should be strong, muscular, and powerful. The theme of the male body as defender is also present among Palestinian users. Denied a national army permitted to engage in combat with its occupier, Palestinian men are often civilian soldiers, responsible for the protection of their homes and land. However, as the Israeli occupation government criminalises the right of resistance, the Palestinian soldier hides his face behind his keffiyeh or hides his identity entirely behind a selection of romantic quotes and ideas.

It must be acknowledged that because Tinder users are most likely in pursuit of romance and/or sex, the ways in which users communicate with each other may be flirtatious, sexually forward, or presenting a more attractive and accommodating version of themselves. One could say politely that it's a 'less than professional' context. My matches often directed our conversations towards things we had in common or places we could go, paying me compliments, asking when we could meet, and extolling their personal virtues in an attempt to get my phone number and/or meet.

The way we present ourselves on Tinder is not necessarily the way we may present ourselves in other formats and platforms – for example we may be more flirtatious, try to appear more outgoing, more funny, or otherwise more appealing to the opposite sex. But since this behavioural adjustment may also happen in

face-to-face encounters between anthropologists and their interlocutors, does this mean we cannot use it as a form of legitimate empirical data collection? As an example, if I ever confessed my own politics or residence in Palestine to my Israeli matches, they often attempted to 'convert' and 'explain' to me their side, or quickly label me a terrorist sympathiser. The Palestinder Project[2] documents the average content of such exchanges, and while presented in a comedic fashion, the creators use screenshots of conversations between the two groups to emphasise the miseducation and mistrust among the populations. Tinder conversations in general are marketed as stereotypically brief and light, flirtatious. Here in the West Bank chats between Tinder users can quickly turn into a heated political argument unless directed away from the issues on the ground: the occupation, the Wall, the mobility restrictions, the IOF, my work. In this sense I too was adjusting the way I communicated with Israelis in order to get them to communicate with me.

Cultural knowledge

Tinder is also useful for expanding my knowledge of Israeli culture, as a kind of social gauge, a way to keep in touch with Israelis on my own terms with a relatively anonymous profile. When chatting with Israeli Tinder matches that I chose for both personal and professional reasons, I would tell them I lived in Jerusalem. And as I got to know the city better, I was able to provide more convincing details about where I might live, as well as which details to leave out. If I felt like provoking a political discussion I could even 'come clean' about my real work or location. I was even lucky enough to find a few who lived in the settlement I planned to conduct further research in. Whenever I did tell settlers I was researching them, they told me either that there was 'nothing there' or that they were 'monkeys.'

Upon learning I was a foreigner, most men wanted to know my opinion about the regional political situation. My answer was usually that it was 'complicated,' and many responded with the view that 'Arabs wanted war' and they were proud to have served in the IOF that violently oppresses them. "Palestine", for these men, was simply a place referred to as where the "hostile Arabs" live and where they went when serving in the IOF, not a place where foreigners might safely go or where Tinder might happen.

I only ever met up with one match who fulfilled my research criteria, and because I was on the fence about whether it was a research or romantic interaction, I didn't tell him about my work. It became clear to me during our date that we weren't a romantic match, and since he still seemed interested in pursuing a romantic path I decided it was unethical to continue to meet with him as a research contact. I explained the situation to him but he expressed a desire to

continue to pursue a romantic relationship despite my decision against it. Aside from the fact that he didn't accept my rejection, I felt uncomfortable trying to build a working relationship with someone who would be waiting for me to 'change my mind' about him. Although the situation of unrequited attraction between researchers and interlocutors may well be common, Tinder's remoteness allowed me to navigate this discomfort in a new and potentially safer way – I never had to use my real name, phone number, or feel rude disappearing afterwards.

Language practice

Tinder is exceptionally useful for keeping up on language skills. While I currently work in Palestine, my two years of Hebrew study have deteriorated – apart from conversational practice on Tinder. As similar Semitic languages, Hebrew and Arabic are two languages that are not to be confused, so this text-based method saved me the embarrassment of mixing up spoken Hebrew and Arabic with the wrong people. Using Tinder, I could have small conversations in Hebrew and keep my vocabulary alive without needing to speak out loud and avoiding confusing vocabulary. It's not perfect, but it has certainly been useful.

Tinder as a methodological tool

Accessing my research subjects in this remote and limited manner allows me to multi-task, ethnographically, and 'go over to the other side' occasionally to check in with my informants on my own terms. If I want, I can pick an Israeli seemingly at random from Tinder, travel the short distance across the Apartheid Wall to West Jerusalem, talk to them, and then return to my own fieldsite where dating is difficult and contact with Israelis is limited, as is even leaving the West Bank for most. Despite maintaining honest relations with my Tinder matches, I feel a twinge of guilt when using data I've gleaned from conversations or people I've met from Tinder, as if this is somehow not legitimate anthropological knowledge.

> *Ethically, we must wonder if it is acceptable to meet potential research subjects in a dating or romantic context when you might have no intention of becoming*

involved with them romantically.

Or alternatively, is it ethically acceptable to meet potential research subjects in a dating or romantic context when you *do have* the intention of becoming involved with them romantically? I have been, for the most part, honest and open with those I have met regarding my intentions and profession, but this doesn't necessarily stop people's feelings from being hurt, or worse. Whatever my intention is in a new conversation with a Tinder match or Tinder interlocutor, I have always informed them that I'm a researcher of Israelis, which I can then position myself as politically neutral or otherwise – this is also a tactic I use outside the realm of Tinder, depending on who I'm talking to. If necessary I can hide the elements of my work that might trigger an argument or the portrayal of myself as a person opposed to Israel. This is achieved by highlighting the less political elements of my work and focusing on Israeli culture, which tends to flatter my (Israeli) Tinder contacts and potentially gain insight into their experiences. These are techniques that anthropologists may also employ in face-to-face interactions. And thus far it has worked, in that my interlocutors on Tinder have been accepting and interested in my work, often offering to meet and tell me about their lives. Establishing the context of research before a date or a romantic interaction where either party is free to reject the company of the other party felt like an interview situation to me, where the premise is similar.

So the question is, how do other people use Tinder and any similar social media/apps for their work? Where do we draw a line with what is and isn't deemed scientific, objective, anthropological data? What are the anthropological uses for Tinder other than in the investigation of divided populations? These days ethnographic fieldwork is often accompanied by our smartphones, WIFI, Facebook, and the ability to stay in regular contact with our loved ones, colleagues, and new research contacts. Alongside this we have new ways of meeting and staying in touch with our interlocutors, new ways of meeting new people that can come with certain contexts or expectations, which requires us to investigate the ways we collect data and the ramifications behind them. Using

romance as a context through which we can explore the cultures that we live in, and in my case, the ones that we don't, can open otherwise closed doors. Meanwhile the remote quality of smartphone communication gives an added protection of distance and safety for ethnographers unable to move freely between spaces.

> *Tinder might not be the most perfect way of conducting ethnographic research, but it certainly opens up a new space for safe cultural exploration for ethnographers in difficult locations.*

[1] This is discernable from name, language used on profile, and general physiology/use of national symbols in profiles.

[2] A tongue-in-cheek look at several foreigners' Tinder and Grinder conversations with Israelis while living in the Palestinian West Bank during the 2014 Gaza War.

[1] The Occupied West Bank was divided into Areas A, B, and C after the 1994 Oslo Accords. Area A contains the major Palestinian cities, Area B is designated mixed industrial space, and Area C, which over 60% of the West Bank is designated, is mixed Palestinian and settler space, where Palestinians are forbidden from building new structures.

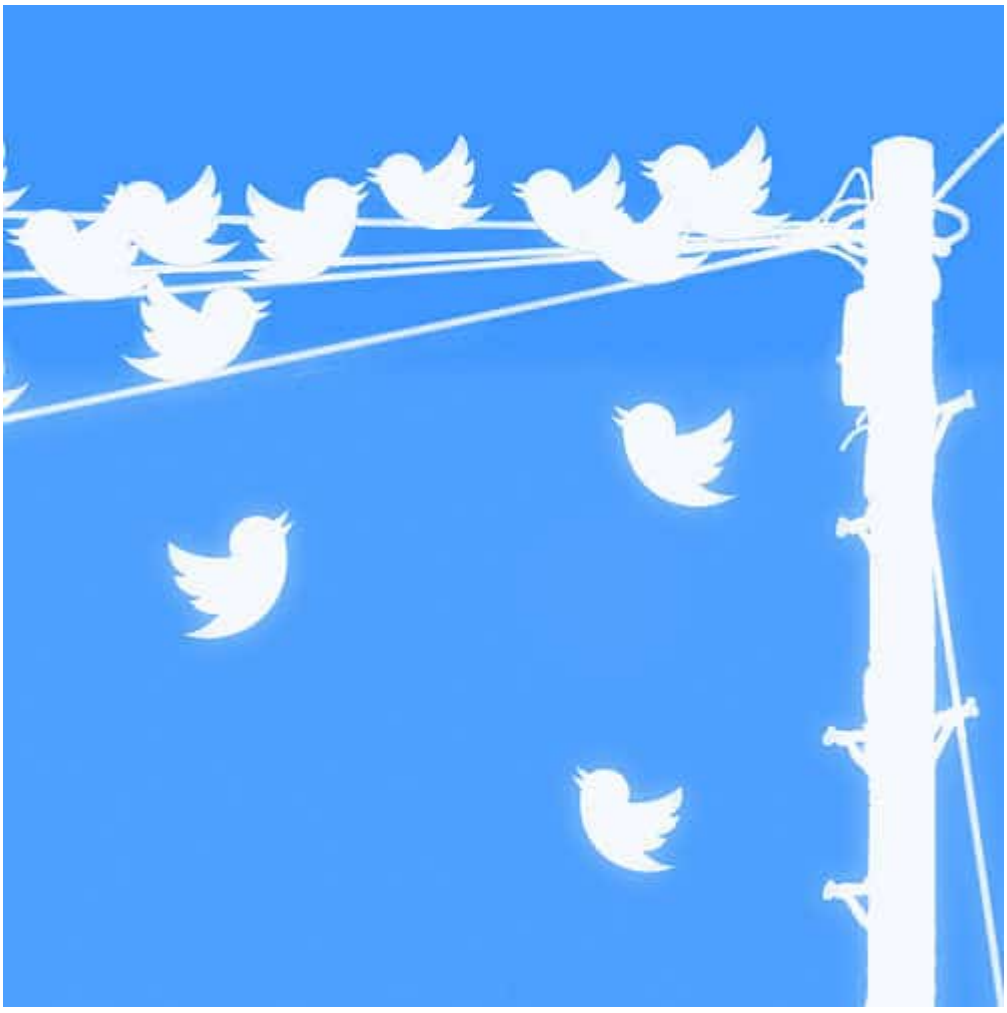
Interested in more? Don't miss Anya's follow-up post.

Featured image (modified) by israeltourism (flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0)

This post was first published on 2 May 2017.

Notes from inside a Twitter Experiment #EmergingDigitalPractices

Rachel Douglas-Jones
November, 2017



Using participation in a collective online experiment with Twitter as a springboard, I interrogate the tweet as a fieldnote. How do the temporalities of tweeting intersect with disciplinary understandings and imaginings of "field time", and how might we address fraught question of audiences, transparency and visibility brought about by tweeting from the

field?

A participant view

In the bright days of the Scandinavian summer of 2015, from a post-it note stuck to the screen frame of my Mac, I typed #ESIFRice into Twitter almost every morning, following a hashtag that crossed timezones and fieldsites from Thimphu (Bhutan) to Manus Province (PNG) to me in Copenhagen, over to Houston, Texas (USA). In returning to the notes and photos sent from the fieldsites of many researchers I have never met, I remain intrigued and puzzled by the effect of the week-long hash-tagged posting.

The #ESIFRice hashtag was created for an explicitly titled "experiment", conducted by The Ethnography Studio in Houston, Texas, as one of a number of ethnographic explorations the Studio conducted that summer (Ballestero, Campbell and Storer 2015). I took part, even though that summer I did not consider myself to be doing fieldwork. I was writing a presentation from my office in Copenhagen, for an event in Frankfurt. My head was in external hard drives and cardboard boxes, revisiting field-notes from fieldwork in Guangzhou, Southern China several years prior, handwritten in hospitals and committee rooms. During the week of #ESIFRice, as I tweeted about being in the field through my notes, I read comments from researchers around the world, and saw images from long drives across empty landscapes juxtaposed with photos of protests, waiting rooms and moments of rest.

With its tweeted form of recording and encoding the practices of fieldwork and "the" field, #ESIFRice created its *own* field. My comments below demonstrate the long-lasting effects of leaving a field: the questions one is left with, and those which emerge over time. Since the "experiment" ended, I have found myself wondering what the field and Twitter might do for one another, returning repeatedly to the question of whether, and in what way, the tweets shared during #ESIFRice are a form of fieldnotes. #ESIFRice invited participants to deliberately tweet from the field for a week, but what would a tweeted fieldnote be?

What would tweeting do for ethnographic practice?

I develop these questions as a thought experiment in using twitter as an "infrastructure of inquiry" (Estalella and Criado 2017), reflecting on both the writing and reading of tweets, and what tweets-intended-as-fieldnotes would or could do for ethnography.

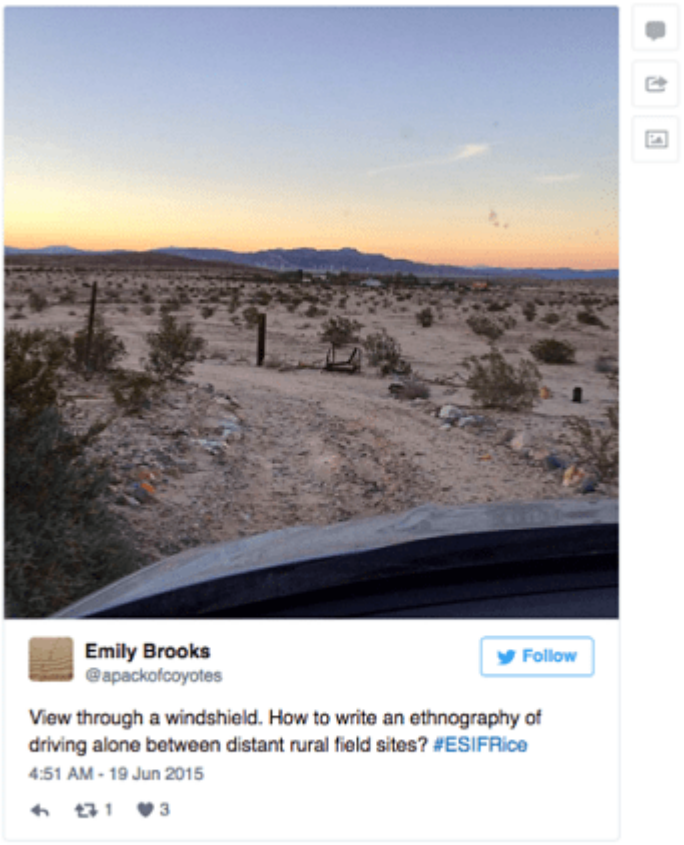
Writing a tweet, or the time of the field

Time in Anthropology: In *Time and the Field* (2013) Dalsgaard and Nielsen remind us that that ethnography and "the field" have their own valued and idealised speeds, from the ideal of lifelong absorption (Radin [1933]1966:178-179) to the privileged "deliberate, patient ethnography", (Marcus 2015: 153), the "slowness" of ethnographic writing, the "belatedness" of a text, and the politics of "timeliness", of anthropological "relevance" (Rabinow et al 2008). Despite this resurgent attention to time, however, some associations remain entrenched: geography is *still* temporalized (Fabian 1983) and time *still* spatialized (Zeitlyn 2015). Imaginaries of place and time are so intertwined that #ESIFRice's questions about a geographic hold on the imagination of the field are, I find, also questions about its temporalities.

Tweets as Punctuations: So it is into this morally charged environment that tweets must step. They appear fast. Their speed seems to puncture field-time, to bring the field "closer", just as the slowness of posted letters once meant fields were far away (Simpson 2009). Considering the semi-tacit values of field-time, I found myself wondering whether #ESIFRice's tweets from the field prioritised some forms of sociality over others: specifically, those visible in a tweet's frame-able temporality, reducing or shifting to the background lifetimes, epochs, eras, generations, and realisations that come only after many years. Tweets —and I generalise here—seem directed at the happening of the now: an *event* orientation which makes a particular form of attention, as though moments were discrete, or are made so through the singularization of a tweeted description or photograph. If a tweet both punctuates and frames the now, it becomes readily available to an

anthropology of “the contemporary” (Rabinow et al. 2008) and its associated urgent timeliness.

Hacking tweet-time: To think *within* the medium of the tweet, then, means reaching for tactics that would deliberately re-orient their presentist gaze. One could dedicate one’s field-tweets to that which is still, and does not move. To that which is silent, or that which does not happen. A series might be committed to that which has long since ceased to be but leaves some trace, or that which has not yet happened. Thinking about what these kinds of tweets would look like—as a means of persuading a presentist medium into conveying anticipation or erasure—is a form of experimenting with ethnographic description (see figure at right). This would make tweeting a way of holding a specific theme in focus during fieldwork, making fieldnote-like tweets into a curious form of reflexive field practice, a way of pausing through composing a tweet, to see again, and consider what might be seen in the text or image by others. What might such “punctuations” do to still-often solitary fieldwork?



Reading Tweets, form and content: Telegraphic pre-emption?

So let us turn from the solitary tweeter, face in their phone or screen, to readers of field tweets. With her colleagues Baird Campbell and Eliot Storer, Andrea Ballestero, one of #ESIFRice’s initiators, became interested in the “telegraphic”

form of the tweet—with its "productive tentativeness" and character limit (Ballestero, Campbell and Storer 2015). I like this formulation. Combining "tentative" and "telegraphic" brings provisionality to an element of Twitter I have struggled with: as a format of micro-blogging, tweeting can feel like "publication", with all of the finality that implies for those of us used to privately drafting and editing or revising texts with colleagues. It also raises the question of *for whom* an ethnographer would tweet.

Readership in the present: Tweeting from the field would make many ethnographers anxious: is it not dangerously premature to write publicly, to speak directly from the midst of fieldwork? Would not a momentary condensation to 140 characters be pre-empting the careful, long term analysis out of which ethnographies emerge? Twitter seems the very opposite of deliberate, prudent engagement and reflection, especially if one is followed on Twitter by people in one's field (Alyanak 2017), even though collaborative field blogging is a precursor here (e.g. Cohorticulture 2008-11). This aversion is particularly stark for a discipline where sharing fieldnotes is still moderately taboo (Sanjek 1990, Sanjek and Tratner 2015, though see Okely 2011) and where we know how much our choice of words, terms, concepts and frames matter. If we are not writing (just) for ourselves, if we are being "telegraphic", then who would a field a tweet be for? While anthropologists have long been exhorted to record the "imponderabilia" of the everyday (Malinowski 2002 [1922]), what does it do to these imponderabilia, to analysis and to the ethnographer to broadcast everyday moments from the field almost as they happen? Asking the question shows how some fields lend themselves more easily to tweeting than others, some even offering opportunities for intervention.

Reading the place of the image: #ESIFRice was used by several anthropologists as a chance to intervene on taken for granted imaginaries of their field sites, by publishing "destabilizing" images (Campbell 2015). During #ESIFRice we saw coevalness as Paige West snapped pictures of vast multi-storey construction sites in Port Moresby, the 12 flights departing the domestic terminal at 7am (see figure at right), and a night out with PNG businesspeople: "This is PNG", she wrote (West 2015). Populating a feed with images of everyday life in the places we work has great power to jolt the assumptions of people who might see our Twitter feeds, and even to redirect our own ethnographic attention in taking and posting images. In an echo of Schapera's use of a camera as a "visual notebook", seeking to document (and preserve) daily life amongst the Bakgatla and Tswana (Comaroff, Comaroff and James 2007), image-based tweets give immediacy, the form's casualness lending an appearance of non-mediation, direct access. But the geographic model of the field that West was challenging is pervasive. As inheritors of Mercator's 1569 cartography, viewers map power and spatialise time (Fabian 2008, see also Crampton 1994 and the (doubly fictional) Cartographers for Social Equality). So it seems there is also a danger here, in the ease with which a platform like Twitter brings images to the fore, in the *re-association* of "the field" with *where* anthropologists happen to physically be. A regeneration of new forms of technologically directed location fundamentalism?

Data Hungry Audiences: Public tweets have further potential audiences. In

their form as independently circulating artefacts, they can become objects in other economies. What does a tweeted form of field notation mean to one's University, research institute or funding body? It is too easy to imagine keen new funding conditions set down in the name of "opening up the field", or of methodological "transparency"- making visible the daily moves of the ethnographer through ongoing tweets from the field. The path from optional to obligatory is short, and the implications vast. The dangers of this short circuit were pointed out by Strathern as early as 1999 as she considered the implications of audited scholarship: the constant performance of "research" may cost us actual research (Strathern 1999: 140). Tweets, with their quantifiable properties, are already partially integrated into measures, already cautiously (or casually) enrolled as evidence of "impactful" activity. All whilst academics are increasingly exhorted to manage themselves as a small business, promoting their entrepreneurial selves while preparing their work for insertion into "impact accelerators" (Economic and Social Research Council, UK 2017). Ethnographic fields are carved out within national economies for research funding, and I once spent forty minutes of a precious two hour research meeting in the UK enduring discussion about whether or not an upcoming project event should be live-tweeted. Through the ties of the ethnographer, field tweets are in danger of already having an audience—and effect—in mind.

Thinking through tweets

Being based in an IT University, heading a "Lab" in research methods, I am daily faced with the growing dominance of "experiment" as a language and practice through which authoritative claims are being made. While the open-ended character of ethnography may be described both as experimental and as collaborative, neither can be assumed. We must recognise that while experiments are often a mode of authority in themselves, and while the term is sometimes borrowed for its epistemic kudos, it no longer only carries the special status of scientific authority through the *reproduction of controlled conditions* to produce facts (see Shapin 1994). Contrary to traditional lab-based research (and notwithstanding field experiments as an in-between situation, see Schwartz 2014

and Kelly 2012), when "experiment" is invoked today, it refers as much to a path of action that submits the experimenter to *uncontrolled and uncertain conditions* in the name of social transformation, in which the outcome may be everything from entirely pre-determined (by organisers or participants) to utterly irrelevant (the 'experiment' stands for itself). From a traditional scientific standpoint this latter, uncontrolled mode is spurious, but from a social science standpoint it demonstrates the longevity and discursive reproduction of "experimental epistemologies" (McCulloch and Pitts 1965) and the lure of spaces generative of a sense of possibility (Schwarz 2014: 6).

To experiment without invoking experiment for its own sake means to take experiment as a means towards an imagined end. Here, I have thought through the tweet for what it does to anthropological thinking and practice: a *thought* experiment, centered on the tension between a tweet as a condensation point versus the radical openness of ethnography.

> *By focusing on the tweet, the noise around twitter as a platform recedes: becoming less some digitised semblance of "society", or fire-hose source for visualisation through quantitative digital methods, and more a form to be worked in dialogue with critical and historically informed ways of knowing and doing anthropological work. Certainly worth a thought experiment.*

Acknowledgements

This essay is extracted from a longer article prepared for the first meeting of the EASA #colleex network. I thank Andrea Ballestero, members of the Ethnography Studio and participants in the #ESIFRice week-long experiment. Thanks also to Brit Ross Winthereik and Marie Blønd for their work in convening an IT University of Copenhagen event on Twitter and Ethnography at which I received early comments.

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Featured image (cropped) by mkhmarketing (flickr, CC BY 2.0)

This post was first published on 23 September 2017.

Welcome to the Instabition! #EmergingDigitalPractices

Minke Nouwens
November, 2017

Dear Allegra readers, welcome to this week's new #thread on emerging digital practices! Today's post introduces not only this theme but also me, Minke Nouwens, Allegra's newly appointed 'Master of Collections' and the driving force behind

> *the expansion of Allegra's Virtual Museum of Obscure Fieldwork Artefacts (AVMoFA) onto Instagram.*

The idea for AVMoFA's expansion grew out of my earlier engagement with emerging digital research practices in anthropology – and hence it seems only fitting to celebrate this by revisiting some marvellous posts from Allegra's archive. The posts in question have drawn our collective attention toward the social media and different app platforms as sites for rethinking our research and

methodological practices.

Together these posts offer a moment for slowing down – for taking a break and looking back at ideas developed in earlier thematic threads. Simultaneously they offer the opportunity to look ahead and build upon commonalities toward new insights.

> *This frame of mind is also at the background of AVMoFA's expansion. In short, the plan is to start embracing Allegra's – so far rather passive – Instagram account as a key site for presenting research insights, and thus to offer the opportunity to experiment with Instabition (i.e. Instagram exhibition) as a new form of research dissemination.*

In doing so, we are inspired by recent efforts by different digital platforms to seek out collaborations with visual media producers, and to thus provide them with digital spaces for artistic experimentation. Merely one example is offered by WeTransfer, which uses their homepage for presenting work from emerging artists. A while back Snapchat collaborated with Jeff Koons to rebrand itself by giving users the option to paste digital renderings of his familiar sculptures onto their own photos.

The hashtag 'Instabition' has quickly gained traction in Instagram as marking the outlet's potential as a new space where emerging artists (particularly women artists) can present their work outside of, or counter to, established cultural institutions like galleries, art fairs, and museums. Thus digital platforms come to act as spaces of curation, display, and dissemination for artistic expressions, as well as places to question the boundaries of these digital environments and our behaviour towards them. These developments can find meaning and support also for our anthropological endeavours, opening up possibilities of engagement with others.

> *AVMoFA's Instabition will give visual anthropologists and artists the opportunity to explore and experiment with diverse materials. Simultaneously,*

AVMoFA joins a broader move to appropriate Instagram as a significant place for considering the role of visual representations in a digital space.

These initiatives awaken significant research questions – both of ethics and of substance. What happens when we turn an anthropological lens toward ourselves and our interlocutors via Instagram; how do we ensure interlocutor anonymity and respect the sensitive nature of our field sites? What happens to (research) photographs within an Instagram exhibition? How does the platform impact their meaning; how are connections to our research and public communities affected?

AVMoFA's Instabitions offer a space for reflecting upon such questions in the form of written contextualisation, background information, additional poetic musings – or something else entirely.

To set things in motion, please join me in this delightful series from Allegra's archives discussing both the use of visual representations in a digital age and the potential of other digital outlets and social media tools in research.

We start tomorrow with a redux by Rachel Douglas-Jones who took part in a Twitter experiment and questions the tweet as field note. On Wednesday we revisit one of our readers' favourites, namely Anya Evans's widely circulated essay on Tinder as a research tool in her fieldwork among Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian West Bank.

On Thursay we revisit Allegra's fieldwork thread from 2015 via Franziska Fay's essay on what happened when she gave cameras to children during her field research in Zanzibar's national "child protection system." And on Friday we share Ilona Soujanen's essay on the uses of Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp to develop an innovative way to study the phenomenon of happiness visually.

We will close this week with a call for images for our first Instabition experiment on Friday – so stay tuned!

If you have an idea you would like to play around with, please get in touch with me by emailing submissions@allegralaboratory.net with the subject heading "AVMoFA." And, lastly,

> *do not forget to follow our Instagram page to partake in the various Instabitions we have in store for you!*

See you soon,
Minke

Featured image by Tanja Cappell (flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Adopt a Canadian: A short story

Balasescu, Alexandru
November, 2017

I wrote this fiction in January 2017, following a series of events in international politics. I felt the need to an alternative-to-anthropology modality of thinking about, and expression of, the concerns regarding three major issues that confront today's world: the forced displacement and refugee crisis, the climate change and its denial, and the raise of nationalism encouraged by the election of Donald Trump for the office of the president of the United States. The writing itself was triggered by the new White House administration's attempts to curtail the freedom of movement combined with the announced plans (at the time) to exit the Paris agreement.

The fiction is based on a classic anthropological type of approach: an appeal to an emic understanding of a phenomenon, or as Tim Ingold would put it for example "knowing from inside". The aim is to create empathy for the refugee condition not

by presenting a fictional or ethnographic description of a group of refugees, but by a move to otherize the self. What if the knowing “us” becomes the others? Could this be better portrayed in a story in which the development of events bring the dominant subject in a subaltern position? And to what effect?

> *“Adopt a Canadian” raises those questions placing the story in a not so far future when climate change and political choices provoke a change in the direction of refugee flows. It is a world that is not yet re-settled, in which new values and hierarchies did not emerge, while the old ones are shaken and reinterpreted.*

The short story is a stand alone piece but could be seen also as departing point for a “Climate Change” novel. As Amitav Ghosh recently remarked, the climate change fiction does not have the prominence it deserves, because it tackles a sensitive subject. Its necessity is incontestable, and it may itself be an instrument of knowledge that enables us to think in terms of an ethnography of the future.

Currently I am working into developing the story into a film script together with 88FilmWorks production company based in Southern California.

Full story

[pdf-embedder url=”http://allegralaboratory.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Adopt-a-Canadian_Alec-Balasescu.pdf” title=”Adopt a Canadian_Alec Balasescu”]

Download full story as PDF.

Academia in Dark Times of Austerity Politics and Authoritarianism #precarity

David Loher
November, 2017

In these days, two at first sight independent developments are threatening academic freedom. Neoliberal austerity politics and authoritarian political tendencies both leave their traces in academia, shaping not only the individual lives of scholars. They are also affecting research itself. The upcoming EASA AGM seminar “On Politics and Precarities in Academia. Anthropological Perspectives”

(16-17 November 2017 at the University of Bern) aims to bring together the debates on these two tendencies asking how they are interrelated.

Precarity Becomes Normalcy

The concept of precarity allows to bring into conversation the two debates on political interferences and the effects of the ongoing austerity politics in academia. Anna Tsing defines precarity as a "life without the promise of stability" (Tsing 2015: 2). What once seemed the face of the less fortunate, it now seems to have become the condition of our times (see Tsing 2015: 2); not only in academia, but also beyond. Authoritarian tendencies threatening academic freedom directly or indirectly and the ongoing neoliberal austerity politics in academia with its budget cuts and increasing competition over scarce funding lead to conditions, where society is no longer able to keep this promise of stability.

Precarity has been normalised in two different ways. Firstly, it has been normalised in the sense that the threat of instability is no longer restricted to the margins of society. Instead, it has made its way into the middle of society. And secondly,

> *precarity has been normalised in the sense that instability is no longer the exception, but has become the very condition of contemporary society.*

Political Persecution

In recent times, the rise of authoritarian governments and regimes in several countries has resulted in increasing political interferences. This ranges from subtle political pressure up to direct political interventions in academia. Four recent examples highlight this tendency.

In Hungary, an amendment to the national higher education legislation threatened the existence of the Central European University CEU.[1] In Turkey, more than 1.400 academics signed a petition calling for an end to armed conflicts in the dominantly Kurdish populated South-eastern regions.[2] Scholars who

signed the petition “We will not be a part to this crime” were labelled as supporters of terrorism by the government and put on trial; followed by mass redundancies of critical academics and scholars and the shutdown of entire universities by emergency decrees after the coup attempt in July 2016. Until today, thousands of academics have lost their jobs. Subsequently, many Turkish academics have left the country, seeking refuge in Europe and other countries. Others have remained in Turkey and continue their struggle by organising public lectures in so-called Street Academies. Earlier this year in Russia, the state supervisory authority for education *Rosobrnadzor* forced the European University St. Petersburg to stop all educational activities after a highly debatable court decision that charged the privately funded university of violation of several legal regulations.[3] And last year, U.S.-based climate researchers copied and archived U.S. climate data, worrying that the Trump administration would dismantle climate research programmes with the result that public climate data will no longer be available.[4]

Neoliberalisation of academia

Arguably subtler, but not less effective, the ongoing neoliberalisation of academia affects the personal lives of the academic staff. Trapped in low paid and fix-term contracts, especially young researchers are constantly juggling with several teaching appointments, administrative tasks at the department, and the writing of research grant applications, while desperately trying to spare out some time to do what is supposed to be their main task; research. Replacing stable jobs for researchers and lecturers with grants and project-related funding has introduced an element of constant competition over scarce funding opportunities among researchers.

> *Colleagues are not only research partners, but have become more and more competitors when it comes to the next application round.*

Instead of doing research, scholars are kept busy with the writing of grant applications and remain in a vulnerable position, not knowing whether they will

have funding for the next year. In addition, this increasing competition over scarce funding is accompanied by the proliferation of audit culture in the academic field (see Shore and Wright 1999).

Precarisation of researchers and research

Political pressure and direct interventions on the one hand, and the growing economic pressure on the other hand—both contributing to increasing precarisation in academia—do not only shape individual life trajectories and research biographies. These tendencies also affect research itself. Arguably, anthropology is a discipline that is particularly vulnerable to these developments. With its research ideal of long-term and intensive personal engagement within a distinct field site, fix short-term contracts contradict this ideal. It leads to research projects, which are driven less by genuine scientific interest, but more and more shaped by strategic choices and external constraints.

Precarity: A Useful Concept at All?

However, there are three objections against precarity as a useful analytical lens to describe the condition of contemporary academia. The first critique argues that precarity has the effect of an othering. Thorkelson argues that the category of precarity "can lead into a split discourse, in which a liberal subject gets to take pity on the abject, precarious, or unemployed Other within its rank" (2016: 485). The second objection questions the explanatory power of precarity as an overarching concept to describe and relate the seminar's two main themes. Political pressure and austerity politics each affect academic freedom in very different ways and are therefore not comparable. And with reference to Max Weber's "Wissenschaft als Beruf" (1992), the third critique calls into question the diagnosis that economic precarity in academia is a new phenomenon at all. Rather, it is what characterises the field of academia from its beginnings.

Between Reflection and Action

The two-day EASA seminar pursues two aims. It brings together researchers who

are studying the ongoing precarisation in academia. Either these studies are focusing on political persecution of academics and, more general, political interferences threatening academic freedom. Or the studies discuss the effects of economic precarisation and austerity politics on research, the individual lives of academics, and academia in general.

> *Beyond this reflection on precarisation, the seminar is also a push for action, asking what can be done against these developments that are threatening the freedom of academia in very different but related ways.*

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Unseen citizen engagement with science, technology and health in Russia

Evgeniya Popova
November, 2017

At the beginning of 2017 many Russians living with HIV/AIDS were told by their doctors that there were no antiretroviral drugs for them. They would have to change their therapy regimen or even stop treatment completely for the time being. Doctors would say, ‘we just don’t have anything left for you; stocks are depleting and what is left needs to be reserved for pregnant women to prevent prenatal transmission of infection and for really urgent cases’.

The reason for this medical disaster was a rapid change of drug procurement procedures by the Ministry of Health. Regional departments of health didn’t cope with the new tendering requirements – installed for a very good reason, to prevent corruption – and many regions failed to make contracts with drug producers on time. It was not until summer 2017 that officials stopped denying a possibility of shortage, dismissing statements of patients who spoke up and

concerns made by some physicians.

This story so far resembles familiar accounts of how non-democratic governance processes occur, specifically those in post-Soviet settings. There is unpredictable, hastened, and non-transparent regulatory change, not attuned to the realities on the ground or needs of those affected by it. Citizens appear as helpless victims (and here 'helpless citizens' category would also include medical professionals and scientists along with the lay persons and patients) with their lives being mounded by political power.

> *However true this picture may be, it overlooks an important nuance: there are avenues for citizen participation in science, technology, and politics in non-democratic spaces.*

Yet conceptions of participation as deliberative (or 'talk-based'), formally designated, and situated in institutionally sanctioned spaces that have come to dominate academic imagination, preclude recognition of and engagement with such avenues.

Indeed, look at what has been happening in parallel to the situation described above. Income of an average Russian citizen is not nearly enough to allow purchasing antiretovirals regularly. Add to this the heavy stigmatisation of HIV-positive people due to suffering as a result of their immoral behaviour (often referred to is drug addiction – for a long time HIV epidemic in Russia has been fuelled by intravenous drug use) and being highly contagious. Those, whose health state became known, tell stories about being fired from their jobs and denied access to, for example, dental services. So what were these people left to do in a situation of drug shortages, being able to neither afford them nor mobilise larger society for support?

What occurred next was the organisation of an additional layer to the drug distribution system. Soon in all major cities leftovers and stocks of unused medicines kept by those who changed treatment regimen and from those few who

could pay were pulled together in ‘medicinal boxes’. Out of these ‘medicinal boxes’ help was distributed for free to those whose therapy was changed or stopped by the state health care. Surely, the functioning of this system was still dependent on inputs of antiretrovirals previously supplied by the healthcare organisations. Yet, concerned with medically unjustified changes in treatment or its interruption and the effects it would have on their health and long-term prospects, people living with HIV/AIDS managed to take action to avoid triage and meet health needs for at least some in their community, filling the few gaps formal healthcare system couldn’t fill.

One can interpret these actions through ‘weapons of the weak’. However, a recent theme in social science – public participation in science, technology and politics – can offer a productive angle to interpret these actions as well. Practices of HIV/AIDS community can be read as an innovation in participation that allowed patients to reshape and contribute to the functioning of the state healthcare system. Importantly, they did it through materiality of drugs and their flow as well as using informal ways, but those looking for a public debate and participation in institutionally sanctioned spaces continued to look in vain.

> *It is, then, crucially important that we widen our conceptions of and approaches to study participation, to include hidden, informal ways in which citizens engage with science, technology, and politics, especially where they are persistently discouraged from doing so.*

Is it possible to rethink the strands of, primarily, Science and Technology Studies (STS) scholarship dealing with public engagement and participation as a kind of area studies? Can it be that the STS models and concepts make less sense outside the settings where they were developed, namely in mature democracies of the ‘west’? As Manuel Tirony argued recently with regards to the issue at hand, “universal claims and generalized hypotheses have to be carefully calibrated and agnostically revised”. This is not to undermine the importance and numerous achievements of the field, but to point out that sometimes modes of reasoning and

trajectories of scholarly inquiry are so entrenched in such past achievements that they obscure rather than illuminate important dynamics and practises. For example, our recent research on science, technology and politics in post-Soviet settings (see, specifically chapters by Ekaterina Borozdina and Tetiana Stepurko & Paolo Carlo Belli in the book "Health, Technologies, and Politics in Post-Soviet Settings. Navigating Uncertainties") has indicated a variety of ways, most of which are hidden and informal, in which citizens take part in shaping health technologies and care. These ways are yet to be noticed and recognised as modes of participation.

However, it would be unproductive to think about public participation as being open and formal in democratic settings, while being hidden and informal in non-democratic ones. Or to draw any strict dichotomies of this kind, including democracy versus non-democracy itself. Our point is rather different: there is a rich repertoire of practises and avenues creatively developed by citizens to influence sociotechnical change and its various smaller streams. Some of these appear to be more relied upon in situations where the public is excluded from taking part in technologies and politics. But each setting is characterised by a complex mix of formal and informal as well as open and hidden participation practices, forming a larger ecology of interconnected publics, artefacts, and infrastructures. Russian HIV/AIDS patients, who started off by acting in isolation from any formal processes, collected a large compilation of statements and evidence of shortages from those affected who turned to the 'medical boxes' for help.

> *That is, through hidden and informal actions artefacts were collected for engaging into a different kind of action that ended up breaking the denial of decision-makers (not resulting in a public debate, mind you, but still engaging gears of the inert healthcare system to move towards correcting itself).*

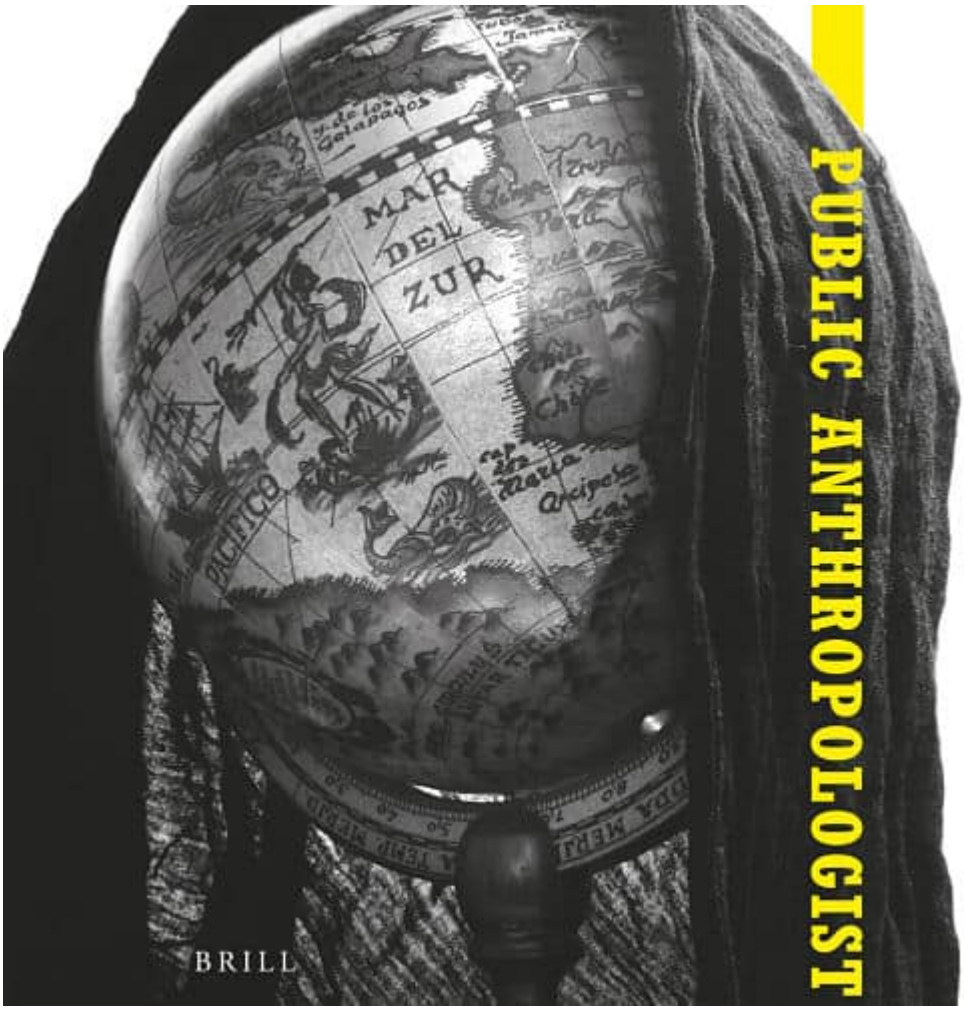
It is this kind of work of recalibrating and revising claims and hypotheses, to paraphrase Tironi, in science, technology, and medicine, in light of global

diversity of societies and political cultures that we attempt to inspire with the series of the 'Social sciences & health innovations' conferences. The latest conference took place on May 22-24, 2017, and had a focus on 'Making health public'. Apart from connecting social and biomedical scientists, public health professionals, and policy makers, this series was meant to serve as a platform to facilitate dialogue between academics working globally and in post-Soviet regions. It is about time that social studies of participation and STS more generally stop being 'area studies' and begin seriously engaging with locations outside the geographies of their birth.

Featured image by Damian Gadal (flickr, CC BY 2.0).

New journal: Public Anthropologist

Allegra
November, 2017



Dear Allies, we are happy to share with you the news about the launch of the new journal *Public Anthropologist.*

Founded by our ally Antonio De Lauri and published by Brill, the journal aims at creating a hybrid, critical space between the ponderous nature of traditional academic journals and the immediacy of blogs, newspapers, and experts' accounts. It inquiries critical issues of our time in a way that both encourages and scrutinizes a diverse range of shifts outwards from the purely academic realm towards wider publics and counterpublics engaged in cultural and political exchanges, and collective collaborations for change. This implicitly interrogates the implications and expectations of anthropology's public presence.

> *Public anthropologist directly aims at facing conditions of violence, inequality and injustice, and exploring ways anthropology might impact processes of*

public awareness and political change. It is interested in the area in which newspapers, television, political actors, new media, activists, experts and academics continually mobilise positions that support or challenge dominant narratives.

Visit also *Public Anthropologist*'s blog here and follow the debate on Academic Politics of Silencing.

Allegra Calling for Reviews Editor!

Allegra
November, 2017

Allegra is looking for a new reviews editor to take over the responsibilities of our Ally Judith Beyer who needs a break to concentrate on the ‘compulsory’ writing of her book (ah, this hellish tenure system!).

> *We’ll miss you Judith!*

The job consists in:

- Compiling thematic lists of new books in legal and political anthropology (and beyond!).
- Publishing regular calls for reviewers and selecting reviewers according to their field of expertise.
- Contacting publishers to obtain copies of books to be sent to selected

reviewers.
- Ensuring that reviews are processed according to deadlines while ensuring the quality of reviews.
- Liaising with editorial assistants once reviews are ready to be published.

The ideal candidate:

- LOVES BOOKS! This position is an opportunity to do what we love in a way that has an impact on others!
- has a PhD in anthropology.
- is committed to Open Access Publishing.
- is on the pulse of cutting edge publications in anthropology.
- is conscientious and well organized.
- enjoys working in a team.
- knowledge of Word Press is a plus!

Send your CV together with a short letter of motivation to: stuff@allegralaboratory.net before 31 December 2017.

Featured image by César Viteri on Unsplash