



Faculty of  
Philosophy

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

# Old Discipline, New Trajectories

**THEORIES, METHODS AND PRACTICES  
IN ANTHROPOLOGY**

June 16–18, 2022

Vilnius University, Lithuania



This conference is a joint initiative of the Society of Anthropological Sciences and the Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies at Vilnius University



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PRESS

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## About the Conference

The Society for the Anthropological Sciences (SASci) has expanded to Europe and West, Central and South Asia and is holding its first Euro-Asian Conference at Vilnius University, Lithuania on June 16-18th 2022. Going under the title “Old Discipline, New Trajectories: Theories, Methods and Practices in Anthropology,” the conference seeks to provide a “home” for socio-cultural and linguistic anthropologists as well as archaeologists and bio-evolutionary anthropologists who identify themselves and seek to connect with scientifically minded anthropologists. It does not neglect the humanistic aspect of anthropology and embraces it as part of the unity implicit in the study of human lifeways and the cultural stuff that gives meaning, direction and collective identities to us. The conference might be seen as an important foundational step to establishing closer collaboration and integration among different disciplinary and methodological strands within the discipline of anthropology.

The conference will broadly focus on theory, methods and practices in anthropology and will address the following questions:

- Can we still say that anthropology is the most scientific of the humanities and the most humanistic of the social sciences?
- What does a scientific approach to the study of culture imply theoretically and methodologically?
- Should ethnography still hold a central place in anthropology?
- How can the results of the study of human evolution, cultural evolution and language evolution contribute insights into the current human condition?
- What are the consequences the current rapid technological change is having on culture?
- What can anthropology contribute to the important questions of today’s world such as pandemics, growing economic inequality, fascism, second demographic transition, climate change, etc.?

## About the Society

SASci was founded to support a pro-science approach to the study of culture within the American Anthropological Association and to establish a bridge between the American Anthropological Association and others outside of it who shared this position.

The stated objective of SASci is to advance the scientific study of human societies through scholarly meetings, publications, and related activities. SASci also advances the dissemination of anthropological knowledge within the scientific community, to other educators, and to the broader general public. SASci encourages active student participation and facilitates student incorporation into the professional research community.





# Conference Program



Opening session will be held at Aula Parva Hall  
(Universiteto str. 3).

Other sessions will be held at the Institute of Asian and  
Transcultural Studies (Universiteto str. 5)

## **JUNE 16, 2022 (Thursday)**

- 8:00-9:00** Registration and morning coffee  
(near Aula Parva Hall)
- 9:00-10:00** Opening talk (Prof. Steve Lyon and Prof. Victor de  
Munck) (Aula Parva Hall)
- 10:00-11:30** Keynote talk (Aula Parva Hall)  
**Prof. Chris Hann *Anthropology, Science and  
Politics: Renewing the Vocation***
- 11:30-13:00** *Lunch break*
- 13:00-15:00** **Panel sessions**

**Panel session no. 1** A. Binderis room

**RECONSIDERING ANTHROPOLOGICAL DATA, THEORIES  
AND METHODS.** Chair: Anna Romanowicz (Jagiellonian  
University in Krakow)

- James Rose (The University of Melbourne). *Resolving Vertical and Horizontal Knowledge Structures: Science and Social Anthropology*
- Vladimir Panov (Vilnius University). *What Can Practice Theory Contribute to Linguistics?*
- Michael James Winkelman (Arizona State University). *An Ethnological Model of Religion: Ecological and Biogenetic Determinants*
- Ann Feuerbach (SUNY Nassau). *An Easy Framework to Organize Complex Data*
- Anna Romanowicz (Jagiellonian University in Krakow). *In Search of a Universally Applicable Concept of (the Middle) Class*

**Panel session no. 2** Hindi room

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF ART AND PERFORMATIVE PRACTICES.** Chair: Narius Kairys (Vilnius Academy of Arts)

- Steven C. Fedorowicz (Kansai Gaidai University). *Tenbun: The Intersections of Performance, Place and Ethnographer in a Japanese Standing Bar*
- Liene Ozolina (Latvian Academy of Culture). *Art and Activism for Beginners: A Case Study of Socially Engaged Art in Post-Soviet Neoliberalism*
- Rūta Petrylaitė (Aarhus University). *Understanding and Experiencing Intimacy Through Brazilian Zouk Dance*
- Narius Kairys (Vilnius Academy of Arts). *Fiction Film – the Future of Ethnographic Film?*

**Panel session no. 3** J. Kovalevskis auditorium

**WHAT IS HAPPENING TO “TRADITIONAL” FORMS OF LOVE, FAMILY AND MARRIAGE?: A PRELIMINARY ACCOUNT USING THE FREELIST AND PILESORT METHODS TO EVALUATE CHANGES ACROSS GENERATIONS IN LITHUANIA.** Chair: Victor C. De Munck (Vilnius University)

- Kristupas Maksvytis (Vilnius University). *“Romantic Love” Across Generations: A Preliminary Account Using the Freelist to Evaluate Changes in Lithuania*
- Jūratė Charenkova (Vilnius University). *Conceptualizing “Children” Across Generations: A Preliminary Account Using the Freelist Method to Evaluate Changes in Lithuania*
- Žygimantas Bučius (Vilnius University). *A Freelist Appraisal of Marriage in Lithuania*

- Rapolas Vrubliauskas (Vilnius University). *Filming the Methods of Freelist and Pile-sort from Beginning to End*
- Ieva Jokuzyte (Vytautas Magnus University). *Conceptions and Misconceptions of Polyamory*
- Victor C. De Munck (Vilnius University). *Making Connections Across Cultural Models*

15:00-15:30 *Coffee break*

15:30-16:30 Excursion at Vilnius University

16:30-18:30 **Panel sessions**

**Panel session no. 4** A. Binderis room

#### **LEGACIES OF HISTORICAL FAMILY STRUCTURE.**

Chair: Inés Gil-Torras (European University Institute)

- Klāvs Sedlenieks (Riga Stradins University). *Growing up in Europe: A Century of Theoretical Self-Deception*
- Inés Gil-Torras (European University Institute). *Historical Legacies of the Pre-Industrial Family Systems: Cohabitation*
- Fadwa El Guindi (University of California, Los Angeles). *Suckling Makes Kinship More Fluid*
- Dwight Read (University of California, Los Angeles). *Some People Think Kinship Terminologies Are Hard to Understand... But Is This True?*

**Panel session no. 5** Hindi room

#### **NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY: CASES AND PATTERNS.** Chair: Gitika De (University of Delhi)

- Gintautas Mažeikis (Vytautas Magnus University). *Territorial Defence Forces, Voluntary Battalions and Horizontal, Political Self-Organization During the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine (2004; 2013-14)*

- Rashmi Singh (Jindal Global University). *Trying for a Ticket: Candidate Selection and Party Politics in India*
- Indrė Balčaitė (Vilnius University). “Good” and “Bad” Brokers: *Negotiating Agency Amidst Uncertainty in Undocumented Phlong Migration From Myanmar to Thailand*
- Kristina Garalytė (Vilnius University). *The Politics of “Suffering and Struggle”: Dalit Student Activism on Indian Campuses*

**Panel session no. 6** J. Kovalevskis auditorium

**ANTHROPOLOGY OF EMBODIED PRACTICES: CHALLENGES AND ADVANTAGES. THE SOUTH ASIAN PERSPECTIVE.** Chair: Kristina Dolinina (Vilnius University); Discussant: Asif Majid (University of Connecticut)

- Urmimala Muni Sarkar (Jawaharlal Nehru University). *Learning to Unlearn: The Practice-Theory Interface as an Anthropological Tool*
- Sarah L. Morrelli (University of Denver). *Practitioner-Researcher Perspectives on Kathak Character Performance*
- Hannah Manila (University of Helsinki). *Dancers and Scholars Moving Online: New Opportunities and New Challenges in Studying Bodily Practices in Social Media*
- Kristina Dolinina (Vilnius University). *How Much Does the Body Know? In Between Traditional and Contemporary Trends in North Indian Dance Kathak*
- Indrakshi Tandon (American University in Dubai). *Anthropologist? Or Female anthropologist?*

**19:00-22:00** Reception

## JUNE 17, 2022 (Friday)

8:30-9:00 *Morning coffee*

9:00-10:30 Keynote talk (J. Kovalevskis auditorium)  
**Prof. Smadar Lavie** *Who Can Publish Decolonized  
Ethnography and Cultural Theory With the Anger it  
Deserves? Unclassified Lloronas and the Academic Text*

10:30-11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00-13:00 **Panel sessions**

**Panel session no. 7** A. Binderis room

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY  
AND PROMOTION OF PEACE.** Chair: Douglas P. Fry,  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

- Douglas P. Fry and Geneviève Souillac (University of North Carolina at Greensboro). *Transitioning From War to Peace: Key Attributes of Non-Warring Peace Systems*
- Alberto Gomes (La Trobe University). *Indigenous-Inspired Peace Ecology*
- Ralph Araque Gonzalez (University of Freiburg). *Conflict and Cooperation in Late Bronze Age Sardinia: A Prehistoric Peace System?*
- Leslie E. Sponsel (University of Hawai'i). *Escaping the Echo Chamber of Hobbesian Pseudoscience: Serious Science About the Positive Concept of Peace*
- Richard B. Lee (University of Toronto). *Hunter-Gatherer "Warfare" and Peace Systems: New Light on Old Debates*

**Panel session no. 8** Hindi room

**SOCIOCULTURAL FISSURES: PROBLEMS FROM THE PAST IN THE PRESENT.** Chair: Kasi Eswarappa (Indira Gandhi National Tribal University)

- Rosina Nasir (Jawaharlal Nehru University). *Exploring the Expedition of Islam From Syncretism to Universalism in India: A Case Study of Religious Conversion*
- Afsara Ayub (Jawaharlal Nehru University). *Understanding the Various Narration of Violence Through the Lens of Religious Conversion in India*
- Rangaswamaiah Archana (independent researcher). *Effects of Rural Transformation on Gender and Work: A Case Study From Karnataka, South Asia*
- Anshu Singh (Centre for Women's Development Studies). *Constructing Pollution in Pre-School Stage: A View Into the World of Children Geographies in the Era of Environmental Changes*
- Kasi Eswarappa (Indira Gandhi National Tribal University). *Precarious Livelihoods of a Nomadic Community: An Ethnographic Study From Andhra Pradesh, South India*

**Panel session no. 9** J. Kovalevskis auditorium

**ECOLOGIES OF THE SIX REALMS: BUDDHISM, SOTERIOLOGY, AND THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN.** Chairs: Saskia Abrahms-Kavunenکو (The University of Copenhagen), Kristina Jonutyte (Vilnius University)

- Saskia A. Abrahms-Kavunenکو (The University of Copenhagen). *Shown by the Marron's Claw: Ecological Receptiveness as Mindful Praxis*



- Kalzang D. Bhutia (University of California Riverside). *Bodhisattva Pests: Negotiating Generosity in Multispecies Engagements in Agricultural Communities in Western Sikkim*
- Hedwig Waters (University College London). *The Poor Man Versus Nature: Using Buddhism to Justify the Illegal Wildlife Trade in Eastern Mongolia*
- Kristina Jonutyte (Vilnius University). *Nonhuman Entanglements in Urban Buryat Buddhism*
- Aivaras Jefanovas (Vilnius University). *Interspecific Communication as the Pattern Linking Indigenous People of Arctic Yakutia and Wolves Into Socio-Ecological Relations*

**13:00-14:00** Lunch

**14:00-16:00** Panel sessions

**Panel session no. 10** A. Binderis room

### **DARK ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE NEW FIELDWORK-SITES.**

Chair: Ida Harboe Knudsen (Vytautas Magnus University)

- Victoria D. Sanford (City University of New York). *Anthropological Methods for Documenting Human Rights Violations and Genocide*
- Ievgeniia-Galyina Lukash (National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy). *Ethnographic Approach and Cultural Models Framework in Research on Recreational Drug Use*
- Linas Tavaras (Vilnius University). *Legal Opium Farms in India: Historical and Ethnographic Perspectives*
- Ida Harboe Knudsen (Vytautas Magnus University). *Popular Perceptions and Lived Realities for Lithuanian Inmates in Danish Prison Facilities*

**Panel session no. 11** Hindi room

**CULTURE, KNOWLEDGE, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:  
GENERATING AN INFORMED DIALOGUE BETWEEN  
POLICYMAKERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.**

Chair: Giovanni Bernardo (Northern Illinois University)

- Eric C. Jones (University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston). *From Soil and Community Relationships to Social Justice: Application of a Cultural Model of Ecuadorian Quichua Farmers*
- Kateryna Maltseva (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy). *Socioeconomic Status and Causal Pathways to Health Disparities*
- Halvard Vike (University of South-Eastern Norway). *Cultural Models and the Possibility of Solidarity*
- Bennardo Giovanni (Northern Illinois University). *Making Local Knowledge Relevant to Tongan Climate Change Policy Makers*
- Claudia R. Strauss (Pitzer College) and Mohaddeseh Ziyachi (Queen's University Belfast). *Outline of a Critical Cognitive Anthropology*

**16:00-16:30** *Coffee break*

**16:30-18:00** Keynote talk (J. Kovalevskis auditorium)

**Prof. Bumochir Dulam** *Environmental Nationalist  
Shaping of Neoliberal Policies and the State in  
Mongolia*

**18:00-onwards** *The Culture Night of Vilnius*

## JUNE 18, 2022 (Saturday)

9:30-10:00 *Morning coffee*

10:00-12:00 **Panel sessions**

**Panel session no. 12** A. Binderis room

### **ETHNICITIES, IDENTITIES AND THE STATE: ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSIGHTS FROM FIELDWORK SITES.** Chair: Kristina Šliavaitė (Vilnius University)

- Neringa Klumbytė (Miami University). *Temporality of Sovereignty and the New War Frontiers*
- Ugnė B. Starkutė (Vilnius University). *Coloniality and Ethnic Identity: Not Enough Indigenous?*
- Kristina Šliavaitė (Vilnius University). *“We Are All Poles (and Catholics)”: Doing and Managing Ethnicity and Religion in the Schools With Polish Language of Teaching in Lithuania*
- Monika Frėjutė-Rakauskienė (Institute of Sociology at the Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences). *“Pro-Russian vs Pro-Lithuanian?”: Ethnic Dimension in Narratives Among Lithuanian Russians on Processes of Restoration of Lithuanian Statehood in 1990s*
- Agnieška Avin (Vytautas Magnus University). *Rethinking Ethnicity Through (Im)mobility: The Case of Lithuanian Roma Migration to Great Britain*

**Panel session no. 13** Hindi room

**CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOSITIES IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND BEYOND.** Chair: Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson (Vilnius University)

- Gautam Chakrabarti (Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)). *When “Dharma” Reaches out to “Darna”: Towards a Nuanced Cultural-Political Ethnography of Indic Interest in the Romuva*
- Eugenijus Liutkevičius (Vilnius University). *The Theory of the Three-Dimensional Perception of Reality in Evangelical Christianity*
- Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson (Vilnius University). *The Process of State Recognition of the Old Baltic Faith Romuva Movement*

**12:00-12:30** *Coffee break*

**12:30-13:30** Keynote talk (J. Kovalevskis auditorium)

**Prof. Vytis Čiubrinskas** *Social Anthropology in Lithuania: Challenges, Resilience, and Particularity of the Discipline*

**13:30-14:00** Closing word

**14:00-15:00** *Lunch break*

**15:00-21:00** *Excursion to Trakai*



## Keynote talks





**Chris Hann**  
(Max Planck  
Institute for Social  
Anthropology)

In 1999, Chris Hann came to Berlin where he became the founding Director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, a position he held until his retirement in August 2021. In internet searches for the most important living anthropologist, Professor Hann's name comes up regularly in top ten lists. Professor Hann was born and raised in Wales and is a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales. His work has sought to integrate his interest in comparative economics, largely inspired by the work of Karl Polanyi, with an interest in religion. His early fieldwork sites were Hungary, Poland and Turkey. In 2016, he began fieldwork in Xinjiang, China studying social support and kinship. Professor Hann has received numerous academic awards for his work as an anthropologist. Among those awards are the Curl Essay Prize in 2015, the Rivers Memorial Medal in 2016 and the Huxley Memorial Prize in 2019. He taught at Cambridge and the University of Kent before he took on the position of the founding director of Social Anthropology at the Max Planck Institute. In describing his work Professor Hann writes that it is "...designed to break down disciplinary boundaries and contribute to a better understanding of Eurasia in world history. The concept of Eurasia is the principal frame for all research in my Department."

## **Anthropology, Science and Politics: Renewing the Vocation**

10:00-11:30, June 16, 2022, Aula Parva Hall

In Germany, the discipline known traditionally as Völkerkunde or Ethnologie is currently (as a result of anglophone dominance) being rebranded as Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie. Similar developments can be observed elsewhere in Europe. Whatever the exact name, this discipline is usually classified with the humanities. Sometimes it may be assigned to the social sciences. Real science is assumed to lie elsewhere. For a long time, however, anthropology was a holistic field of inquiry, transcending contemporary demarcation lines that separate natural science from social science and humanities. In the German language, all three can lay claim to the mantle of science (Wissenschaft). In questioning evolved institutional boundaries, contemporary anthropologists of all specializations can rediscover their original vocation. All must be aware of the political dimensions of their work. The second part of the lecture will illustrate this point with reference to the current situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (N-W China).





**Smadar Lavie**  
(University of  
California, Davis)

Smadar Lavie is a professor of anthropology at UC Davis. She authored "The Poetics of Military Occupation" (1990), which received an honorable mention in the competition for the highly prestigious Victor Turner Award. In 1996 she co-edited "Displacement, Diaspora and Geographies of Identity." Her ethnography, "Wrapped in the Flag of Israel: Mizrahi Single Mothers and Bureaucratic Torture" (2014/2018), received an honorable mention from the Association of Middle East Women's Studies. The book was also a finalist for the Clifford Geertz Competition of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion. Lavie won the American Studies Association's 2009 Gloria Anzaldúa Prize and the "Heart at East" Honor Plaque for lifetime service to Mizrahi communities in Israel-Palestine.

## **Who Can Publish Decolonized Ethnography and Cultural Theory With the Anger it Deserves? Unclassified Lloronas and the Academic Text**

9:00-10:30, June 17, 2022, J. Kovalevskis auditorium

Gloria Anzaldúa's autohistoria-teoria presents subaltern theorization and autoethnography as testimony. Nevertheless, subaltern women anthropologists from the Global South are not part of the North American "woman of color" classification of Latinas, African-Americans, and Asians. They are therefore expected to use the U.S.-U.K. formula of dispassionate (post)colonial scholarship. The underlying assumption for the unclassified woman ethnographer from the Global South is that she comes from her country's cosmopolitan elite. She is therefore required to deploy the detached Northern social science language. This presentation calls academic publishers to remove the elite label from the unclassified Women-of-Color authorship, and publish them in the manner of the decolonized, emotive Anzaldúa auto-ethnography of bearing witness.



**Bumochir Dulam**  
(National University  
of Mongolia)

Bumochir Dulam is a professor of anthropology and chair at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, National University of Mongolia. In 1998, he completed an MA at the National University of Mongolia in Mongolian philology and in 2000 a PhD at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. His earlier works focused on shamanism, ritual and religion. In 2000, he completed a MPhil and in 2006 a PhD in social anthropology at the University of Cambridge. For his latter PhD, he conducted fieldwork among Mongolian minorities in Qinghai, China, with a focus on the performance and function of elaborate expressions of respect in local politics. From 2015 to 2019, he completed a post-doctoral research project at UCL on resources, mining, environment, mobilization, nationalism, neoliberalism and the state. He has conducted fieldwork in Mongolia, China and Kyrgyzstan and published numerous articles, monographs and anthropology textbooks.

# Environmental Nationalist Shaping of Neoliberal Policies and the State in Mongolia

16:30-18:00, June 17, 2022, J. Kovalevskis auditorium

In the 1990s, the rulers of Mongolia adopted neoliberal policies and appealed to foreign investors in order to develop the mining sector to bolster the national economy. As a result of the expansion of the mining industry and its consequent destruction of the environment, pastoralists in rural areas began to experience environmental degradation and shortages of water. Therefore, in 2000, people in rural areas started to protest against gold mining companies. By 2005, activists managed to unite eleven river movements across the country and in 2006 closed down the operations of 37 gold mining companies. In 2009, they lobbied for the “Law to prohibit mineral exploration and mining operations at headwaters of rivers, protected zones of the water reservoir and forest areas.” The lobbying was successful and led to the suspension of 1391 exploration licenses, 391 mining licenses and closed down operations of 242 gold mining companies. In 2010, mining companies took the government to court and the Supreme Court found the government guilty, ordering it to enforce the law and to compensate mining companies affected by the law. In this talk, I show how environmental nationalist activists fight against gold mining companies and how the state shapes neoliberal policies by rethinking the environment and the political configurations of the state.



**Vytis Čiubrinskas**  
(Vilnius University,  
Vytautas Magnus  
University)

Vytis Čiubrinskas is a Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania and visiting Professor at Vilnius University, and Associate Professor at the Department of Anthropology, Southern Illinois University, USA. He has lectured in Switzerland, India, and China. In 2012–2014 he led a comparative research project on the impact of globalization and transnationalism on the fragmentation of young persons' patterns of belonging as an ethnic minority. This project was multi-sited, extending across borderland and diasporic cases in the UK, USA, Poland, and Lithuania. In 2014–2019 he was engaged in an international project, led by the University of East Finland, on transnational families in the Baltic-Nordic migration space and on return migrations to post-socialist Europe. Since 2020 he has been leading an international project on return migration and social remittances in Croatia, Lithuania, and Poland and, as a partner, is involved in an interdisciplinary research project on identity and social memory by migrants to trans-Volga Russia and Kazakhstan. He is on the Editorial board of two international journals: *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* and *Urbanities: Journal of Urban Ethnography*. He wrote a book on anthropological theory, co-authored a book on globalization and transnationalism from ethnic minority, borderland, and diasporic perspectives, edited a volume on comparative identity politics, citizenship, and transnationalism of East European immigrants in the USA, UK, Ireland, Spain, and Norway and guest-edited (in 2018) a special issue of *Ethnologie Francaise*.

# Social Anthropology in Lithuania: Challenges, Resilience, and Particularity of the Discipline

12:30-13:30, June 18, 2022, J. Kovalevskis auditorium

The discipline of sociocultural anthropology has particular connotations in Central/Eastern Europe. German scholarly contributions played a major role in setting academic agendas for the development of social anthropology in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe. Herder's "recognition of the unique spirit of each people, conceived of as each being a separate organism, developing according to its own specific trajectory" made a synonym of the terms nation and folk (Hann 2007) and laid the ground for "studying peoples", first, all Germans, defined as just peoples (Völkerkunde) and as those peoples who belong to the nation as folk (Volkskunde). Such a division had a lasting effect on scholarship in Central and Eastern Europe during the era of nationalist mobilization, which followed the collapse of the region's empires in the nineteenth and the Soviet bloc at the end of the twentieth century.

As is widely acknowledged (Gellner 1996, Verdery 2007), the distinction between "national ethnology" and sociocultural anthropology is influenced, if not made, by ideological and political tropes: one is "nation-building" and the other "empire-building" anthropology. In regard to such nationalist and colonial backgrounds, particular directions in the politics of knowledge supported the idea of Völkerkunde (or a people's studying discipline[s]). Hence, different epistemologies were employed, (re)producing, or at least leading to "hierarchies of knowledge" between Western (cosmopolitan) and Central and Eastern (national) scholarship (Buchowski 2004).

What are the contexts where particular ideologies, methodologies and epistemologies were produced and reproduced as well as contested in the field? This presentation is a participant-informed

reflection on the professional practicing (by teaching and doing research) of this discipline(s) in the course of ongoing social and institutional changes in Lithuania during the last three decades. My aim is to link the local politics of the discipline with dominant discourses regarding a national culture and follow-up research policies it promoted in Lithuania during the period of post-socialist change. I will try to unpack the influence of dominant discourses, national identity politics as well as EU-nization and globalization on the research and teaching strategies of the discipline.

## Panel and presentation abstracts





# 1. RECONSIDERING ANTHROPOLOGICAL DATA, THEORIES AND METHODS

Chair: Anna Romanowicz (Jagiellonian University in Krakow)

This conference was motivated by a desire to counter an overarching hydraulic meta theory of what represents valid and reliable knowledge and data in anthropology by positing a confluent theory. The hydraulic meta theory posits an inverse relationship that can be understood as antagonistic between science and the humanities, in which the two do not mix. This panel reflects a confluent meta theory where the triad of science, empiricism, and humanism interlace and inform each other in constructing knowledge of the anthropological kind.

The five panelists indeed lay out a variety of innovative means to capture, represent and insufflate knowledge in ways that data are not merely, like a collection of butterflies pinned in a glass display, but are morphologically dynamic. Further, as Rose suggests, anthropological research “does not conform” with typical science or humanistic productions of knowledge in part due to the distributive reach of cultural knowledge which varies across societies (a kind of horizontal knowledge). These presentations do not only engage us because they bring a wider range of ways to glimpse the diversity in human societies, but also provide means to deepen our knowledge of humanity and its most important invention, culture.

James Rose, The University of Melbourne

## **Resolving Vertical and Horizontal Knowledge Structures: Science and Social Anthropology**

In pedagogic sociology, expert discourses corresponding with academic fields and disciplines exhibit three variable features that can be measured across analogic vertical and horizontal axes. These features include a) variable semiotic structures that each discourse uses to organise its expert knowledge; b) variable sets of rules by which each discourse reproduces and distributes its knowledge within the academy; and c) variable grammars that each discourse uses to perform these organisational and distributive functions. Historically, social anthropology has been characterised as reflecting “horizontal” rather than “vertical” measurements of all three features, distinguishing it not only from natural scientific disciplines such as biology, chemistry and physics, but also from other social scientific disciplines such as economics and linguistics. However, the expert discourse of social anthropology incorporates within it specialised technical branches that do not conform with this characterisation. Specialist social anthropological expertise in cultural idea systems such as kinship, language, religion and economics, among others, exhibit combinations of knowledge structure, distributive rules, and grammar, that reflect an emerging consilience with the vertically organised features of natural science discourse. This talk presents a pedagogic sociological analysis of contemporary formal empirical social anthropology, highlighting a growing verticalisation in the discourse of its specialist branches.

Vladimir Panov, Vilnius University

## What Can Practice Theory Contribute to Linguistics?

The talk aims to build bridges between the social sciences and linguistics. Contemporary mainstream linguistics rests on certain assumptions about the nature of its research object. By and large, it accepts the Saussurean “langue”—the language system—as an entity logically prior to its real-life implementation (i.e., “parole” – speaking). As a consequence, linguistics focuses on the modeling of individual knowledge of language, whereby language as a system is seen as a “cognitive” phenomenon. In my talk, I argue that this view, despite its undeniable success in establishing linguistics as an autonomous discipline, has its limits. I propose an alternative foundation for the science of language by arguing that language is not only a cognitive phenomenon but, first and foremost, a social one, and is to be treated as such. This view can be supported by a family of approaches in social sciences known as practice theory associated with Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens and others. I will report how their ideas have been recently applied by some linguists in treating concrete linguistic phenomena. Finally, I will discuss how practice theory can be reconciled with contemporary cognitive linguistics and linguistic typology.

**Michael James Winkelman, Arizona State University**

## **An Ethnological Model of Religion: Ecological and Biogenetic Determinants**

Cross-cultural research provides an empirically derived model of religious practitioner types, their characteristics, selection-function features, and the social complexity features of the societies where they are found. Social predictors of the individual practitioner types in their relationships to subsistence and sociopolitical conditions (foraging, intensive agriculture, political integration, warfare and community integration) reveal the factors contributing to social evolution of religious organization. The fundamental forms of religious life are identified in the relations of the selection processes for religious practitioner positions to their principal professional functions, revealing three biogenetic structures of religious life: 1) alterations of consciousness used in healing rituals, manifested in a cultural universal of shamanistic healers; 2) kin inheritance of leadership roles providing a hierarchical political organization of agricultural societies, manifested in priests who carry out collective rituals for agricultural abundance and propitiation of common deities; and 3) attribution of evil activities, manifested in witches who are persecuted and killed in subordinated groups of societies with political hierarchies and warfare. These systematic cross-cultural patterns of types of ritualists and their activities provide a basis for inferring biogenetic bases of religion and models for interpreting the activities, organization and beliefs regarding religious activities of past societies.

Ann Feuerbach, SUNY Nassau

## **An Easy Framework to Organize Complex Data**

The holistic and multidimensional nature of anthropological research results in an enormous amount of data, but the problem lies in how to organize it in such a way as to be useful for identifying complex patterns across the different fields. This presentation proposes a basic framework for organizing metadata into categories that will primarily facilitate inductive research. The method begins by separating the data into categories: Space (where), Time (when), Matter (What and Who), and Energy (How), and then separates these into two categories: empirical data, and ideational data. This leaves the question of “Why”, as the primary question. This method reduces preconceptions by separating out the tangible evidence from the intangible, and allows the evidence to be understood and tested from different perspectives.

Anna Romanowicz, Jagiellonian University in Krakow

## **In Search for Universally Applicable Concept of (Middle) Class**

There has been a steady revival of class analysis in South Asia since its decline, which occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The study of the middle class has become the main focus of the revival in class analysis. Yet, as anthropologists discuss middle class lifestyles, values, etc., they seem, at the same time, not to be interested in clarifying the concept of middle class—a concept which could be utilized for various case studies irrespective of socio-cultural contexts. In some cases, the middle class has been understood via extremely subjective premises, that is, as a designation for whoever happens to claim to be middle class.

This approach significantly diminishes the input anthropologists can make in studying inequality. In my presentation, I discuss contemporary anthropological approaches to the middle class. What is more, on the basis of my ethnographic fieldwork in Delhi, I lay foundations for a theoretically and empirically grounded concept of middle class. I argue that social class is less of an identity and more a relation of inequality—a proposition that is in line with the canonical application of a class framework. This is a point which, in a time when class is taken to be on par with such socio-cultural identities as gender, race, caste, etc., seems to have been forgotten.

## **2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF ART AND PERFORMATIVE PRACTICES**

Chair: **Narius Kairys**, Vilnius Academy of Arts

To paraphrase Shelley “Artists are the soul and legislators of a good world.” In a world where artists seem to be increasingly ignored as significant members of the social sciences, this panel offers ethnographic case studies that show the importance of humanizing people not only as symbols of normative culture but as signifying the world of performance, play, dance and art. The panelists provide a tapestry of studies that show how the arts illuminate life and connect individuals to society in ways that make life worth the journey. How does one make an ethnographic film? What is the place of a bar in Japan? How do you connect art to neoliberalism in Latvia? Can ethnographic film be fiction and reflect reality? These questions are more than academic reflections, as they aim to reinsert people, play and art back into the canvas of studying and portraying humanity.

Steven C. Fedorowicz, Kansai Gaidai University

## **Tenbun: The Intersections of Performance, Place and Ethnographer in a Japanese Standing Bar**

Gerald Berreman described a dilemma within ethnography: “how to be scientific and at the same time retain the humanistic insights—the human relevance—without which no account of human beings makes sense” (1966: 346). He suggests that, rather than choosing one or the other, ethnographers should develop a methodology that is both insightful and scientific. How to accomplish this in practice is still a question for ethnographers today? This presentation is a visual ethnography of a *tachinomiya* (standing drink bar) in Osaka, Japan, called Tenbun. The bar features many kinds of food and drink in a “grimy” (Farrer 2019) and lively atmosphere, populated with an array of colorful characters. Following the recent work of Coker et al. on the concept of *ba* (place, space), this research describes Tenbun as more than a location. Rather, it is “a co-emergence of performance, place and peoples” (2021: x). The ethnographer plays a dual role as an immersed participant at Tenbun and later as a distanced cultural analyst. My attempt to describe Tenbun in both insightful and scientific ways uses multimodality (Collins et al. 2017), sensory ethnography (Pink 2009) and photography.



Liene Ozolina, Latvian Academy of Culture

## **Art and Activism for Beginners: A Case Study of Socially Engaged Art in Post-Soviet Neoliberalism**

In this conference presentation, I offer my first ethnographic reflections on a 5-month long programme for young artists called “Art and activism for beginners” that took place in Latvia in 2021. The programme was organised by a local arts organisation and around twenty participants expressed interest in creating socio-politically engaged art. I examine, on the one hand, what it means to do activism when words like “solidarity”, “class” and “social justice” are rarely heard in the Latvian public discourse due to their echoes of the Soviet socialist past; and, on the other hand, how the process of creating socio-politically engaged art is shaped by the neoliberal context within which it takes place as activism itself becomes a project with tight deadlines, specific expected outcomes and strict budgeting. I explore how the imaginations of activism and resistance are shaped by (1) collective Latvian memories of the Soviet past; (2) contemporary neoliberal structures and political subjectivities; (3) and Western activist discourses of solidarity building, anti-capitalism and anti-racism. Drawing on this ethnographic material, I seek to engage with and contribute to the conference theme regarding the potential for ethnographic research to address and deepen our understanding of contemporary social problems.

Rūta Petrylaitė, Aarhus University

## **Understanding and Experiencing Intimacy Through Brazilian Zouk Dance**

Intimacy is often understood ambiguously and considered as a feeling in a relationship. In this talk, I consider intimacy as a quality rather than a feeling in a relationship and I seek to broaden the understanding of where intimacy can be practised and found. I explore what role intimacy plays in Brazilian zouk dance and how it is understood and experienced among dancers. Using ethnographic fieldwork and ethnographic data, analytical concepts from sociology and anthropology, I discuss intimacy and its elements in a dance context using an anthropological perspective. I introduce a brief history of Brazilian zouk dance, the reasons why it is important to study this particular partner dance and intimacy. I reflect on the process of fieldwork experience. The findings suggest that (1) Brazilian zouk dance provides a safe space to find and exercise both physical and emotional intimacy and that (2) many Brazilian zouk students choose to practice Brazilian zouk dance due to the opportunity to embrace their own vulnerability and imperfection, as well as accepting the imperfection of the other person.

Narius Kairys, Vilnius Academy of Arts

## **Fiction Film – the Future of Ethnographic Film?**

The impulse to produce a visual record of encounters with indigenous cultures fuelled by colonialism appeared at the very moment of the technological inventions of the nineteenth century. Ethnographic films, or films concerned with an ethnographic subject, have been produced since the birth of cinema, even though most anthropologists have had reservations about the scientific credibility of ethnographic films, choosing to do their research using a linguistic approach only for their research. Finally, anthropologists have heard Jean Rouch's paradoxical idea expressed in his influential essay "The Camera and Man": "The time has come for ethnographic films to become films" (2003: 44). Some theorists (e.g. Jay Ruby) have argued that ethnographic films should only be made by anthropologists and only for anthropological purposes. I argue that contemporary filmmakers, such as Lithuanian filmmaker Šarūnas Bartas and Russian director Aleksey Fedorchenko, successfully challenge the rigid distinction between art and ethnography, fiction and reality, and prompt us to rethink the definition of ethnographic film.

### **3. WHAT IS HAPPENING TO “TRADITIONAL” FORMS OF LOVE, FAMILY AND MARRIAGE? A PRELIMINARY ACCOUNT USING THE FREELIST AND PILESORT METHODS TO EVALUATE CHANGES ACROSS GENERATIONS IN LITHUANIA**

Chair: Victor C. De Munck, Vilnius University

The panel consists of researchers who have been collecting data for a year on how Lithuanians across four age grades (18-29; 30-39; 40-59 and 60+) perceive romantic love, marriage and children. Using two systematic emic methods, freelisting and pilesorting, we have collected data from samples from these age groups. This study is motivated to shed light on the global decline in marriage and fertility rates and what appear to be radical changes in love relations according to Illouz (2018), Regnerus (2017). While there are many reasons for the “Second Demographic Transition” our focus is on three areas of intimate relations—love, marriage, and children. Not so long ago there was talk of the Malthusian population bomb; now there are apocalyptic fears of massive ethno-national extinction due to radical changes in the pillars of family: love, marriage, and children. We present initial data from Lithuania to describe contemporary cultural models across generations and to discover how they articulate, adapt, or oppose traditional (western) models of love, marriage and family.

Kristupas Maksvytis, Vilnius University

## **“Romantic Love” Across Generations: A Preliminary Account Using the Freelist to Evaluate Changes in Lithuania**

Freelisting is an initial systematic and emic method that is used to find out the main features or concepts that comprise a particular cultural domain. A cultural domain is anything that many members of a culture share a common understanding about. Freelisting is a simple and straightforward task in which you ask a sample (usually around 30 is sufficient) to list all the kinds of X where X can be contagious diseases, things they like about their job, qualities of a successful student etc. We decided to ask people to list all the things that come to their minds when they think of romantic love. Given that researchers have shown that ideas of romantic love have changed significantly in recent times we thought it would be interesting to conduct free lists with four different age groups (18-29 y. o.; 30-39 y. o.; 40-59 y. o. and 60+ y. o.) to compare both differences and similarities. While the free listing is just the first phase of a research project it allows us to elicit terms that reflect salient features of the concept of romantic love and provides an extensive array of terms that show the distribution of ideas related to romantic love.

Results reveal that three older age groups use very similar terms when defining romantic love (for example, respect, trust, understanding, family) with physical aspects of love (sex, passion) ranking lower. The youngest group of participants (18-29 y. o.) mostly associate romantic love with sex, warmth, and being together. Interestingly, all age groups with the exception of 30-39 y. o. often associate romantic love with family. Differences and similarities of “romantic love” between all four age groups will be discussed in more depth during the presentation.

Jūratė Charenkova, Vilnius University

## **Conceptualizing “Children” Across Generations: A Preliminary Account Using the Freelist Method to Evaluate Changes in Lithuania**

This part of the panel will provide an overview of the research findings in relation to children. Based on the freelist answers of the respondents, we can identify the main terms most frequently mentioned and see the differences prevalent in the four age groups. For example, while the majority of respondents associated children with responsibility, the top of the survey data for the 60+ age group is joy. The respondents of this group also stand out in that their list of concepts has the lowest number of words with negative connotations, unlike the 18-29 age group, which tend to provide associations with negative connotations. This gives us reason to question why these groups associate terms related to children so differently. The data also allow us to compare the responses of the different groups on the topic of children with the data on love and marriage and to look for similarities and differences.

**Žygimantas Bučius, Vilnius University**

## **A Freelist Appraisal of Marriage in Lithuania**

In this presentation, I will present results of data collected between April 2021-January 2022 on how Lithuanians across four age grades (18-29; 30-39; 40-59 and 60+) perceive marriage. The data was collected using the systematic emic method of freelisting, which is intended to find the main concepts that comprise a particular cultural domain. A cultural domain is any coherent culture construct that many members of a culture share a common understanding about. Freelisting is a simple and straightforward data eliciting methods in which you ask a sample (usually around 30 is sufficient) to list all the kinds of things (or concepts) you associate with some cultural domain. The domain may be a coherent set of things such as kinds of healthy foods, contagious diseases, prestigious jobs, or it can be more abstracts, such as what you associate with social justice, Russia, or in this case marriage. Our research group decided to ask a sample of Lithuanians to “list all the things that come to their mind when they think of marriage.” The instructions and question were all done in the Lithuanian language. Given that researchers have shown that ideas of marriage have changed significantly in recent times we thought it would be interesting to conduct freelists with four different age groups to compare both differences and similarities. While freelisting is just the first phase of a research project it allows us to elicit terms that reflect salient features of the concept of marriage and provides an extensive array of terms that show the distribution of ideas related to marriage. This report shows some of these results.

Rapolas Vrubliauskas, Vilnius University

## **Filming the Methods of Freelist and Pile sort From Beginning to End**

There is much written on freelisting and descriptions of how to do it, but we decided to make a short film that shows all the operations from making up a question, having people do the freelist, to the process of cleaning up a freelist. Next, we have the operations of the pile sort, and both methods as taking place within the framework of this enquiring encounter. For our purposes we try to show the reality of the freelist and pile sort methods as an undertaking focused on the subjective experience of another, their agency, as well a way of gouging their identity and factors determining it's shape. The subject matter may change but the methods remain a useful tool for amounting academic consensus. We see the use of these methods as a simple and effective way of mapping relations and helping the subjects articulate matters concerning love, marriage and children.



Ieva Jokuzyte, Vytautas Magnus University

## **Conceptions and Misconceptions of Polyamory**

Inquiring about polyamory in Lithuania it is interesting that most people either have never heard of it, or off headedly reject that it exists in any serious form in Lithuania. Yet there is a thriving and growing Polyamorous community here. Do people who are polyamorous have the same ideas about romantic love as non-polyamorous people? Research has shown that gay and straight young adults share the same cultural models of romantic love, but do polyamorous and monogamous people also share the same model? Through in-depth interviews and freelists we explore how polyamorous love is different from monogamous and how this concept is understood or misunderstood by others.

**Victor C. De Munck, Vilnius University**

## **Making Connections Across Cultural Models**

The interweaving of cultural models of love, marriage and children pose an important theoretical question about the nature of cultural models as atomistic models, and integrated parts of a larger foundational model or a series of causal connections. I try and show these connections as a cultural molecule rather than a model.

## **4. LEGACIES OF HISTORICAL FAMILY STRUCTURE**

**Chair: Inés Gil-Torras,**  
European University Institute

The contributors to this panel engage diachronic changes that have taken place in family structures and the wider kinship systems. Panelists engage in both macro and micro level descriptions and analyses. The presentations on suckling and on a new theory of kinship terminology provide significant advances both to the formal study of kinship and to the reasoning that informs micro-level behaviours by which non kin are incorporated into the kinship system. The presentations on family structures trace past family legacies to the present to show how current family structures invoke beliefs and values rooted in earlier family structures. For instance, the pan-European fear of the “disappearing family” may well be an output of historical commonalities among European kinship systems. The importance of these studies is that they engage genealogical structures through historical conjunctions with formal, statistical, diachronic and ethnographic data for the analysis of macro and micro processes.

Klāvs Sedlenieks, Riga Stradins University

## Growing up in Europe: A Century of Theoretical Self-Deception

Western anthropologists invented the concept of kinship to describe the “other” which seemed to be integrated by kin ties. While European (broadly speaking) kinship principles rested on the assumption that birth-related ties must be re-evaluated and replaced by choice-based ones during the process of growing-up, the societies with strong “kin ties” seemed to be lingering in social childhood. I use Western social theories not as sources of intellectual wisdom, but as ethnographic artifacts produced by the intellectual elites of the societies under scrutiny. Theoretical assumptions like status contract, *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft*, strong-weak ties, bonding-bridging social capital—all reiterate the same vision of social change where the past, and early social life is associated with ties produced through birth and the future is associated with choice. A similar framework (flesh vs spiritual kinship) was advocated by European Christians since early Medieval times. Many of these theories draw direct parallels with (European) assumptions of individual development: if birth-related ties are not severed, pathology of sorts results. The fear (or prediction) of the constantly disappearing European family also is a part of the general narrative of growing up in Europe. I argue that we need to start looking at European kinship not via theory that was developed to describe the “rest” but as an integral part of European social fabric and consequently evaluate the stream of global theories (e.g., proposing ends of history) in a world where Europe heads towards the periphery.

Inés Gil-Torras, European University Institute

## **Historical Legacies of the Pre-Industrial Family Systems: Cohabitation**

This presentation aims to provide a cultural explanation for the rise of cohabitation during the last decades in Europe. I approach this phenomenon from the field of historical legacies of pre-industrial family systems. The Second Demographic Transition theory has pointed to the ideational change towards individualism and anti-conformism as the main causes for the rise in cohabitation. The literature on legacies of historical family systems recently confirmed a connection between preindustrial family features and the persistence of current values and attitudes. Using the data of Emmanuel Todd on historical European family systems, the EVS and census data, I provide a preliminary empirical study that connects the features of pre-industrial family systems with cohabitation and the values associated with it currently. I relied on descriptive statistical data for 13 European countries at the sub-national level.

**Fadwa El Guindi, University of California, Los Angeles**

## **Suckling Makes Kinship More Fluid**

This virtual presentation shares recently gathered field data from a research project on the phenomenon and practice of suckling which was carried out in the Arabian Gulf. Suckling refers to the kinship practice by which women suckle babies not their own which results in permanent kinship relations that share properties identified as key to the identification of a bounded set of social relations known as kinship. Suckling kinship is characterized by having a set of kin terms, as creating relations which extend horizontally and vertically for generations, is bound by incest regulations and, significantly, was discovered in research analysis to function transformatively in a structure that underlies kinship as a category consisting of the incorporation of persons to become kin through the path of birth, marital unions, and suckling. Suckling is therefore considered inhered in a triadic logical structure underlying kinship relations.

Dwight Read, University of California, Los Angeles

## **Some People Think Kinship Terminologies Are Hard to Understand...But Is This True?**

This presentation addresses precisely the theme of the Conference: “Old Discipline, New Trajectories.” Kinship research, from the time of Lewis Henry Morgan in the 19th century, has been central to the anthropological discipline and within kinship research the study of kinship terminologies has been critical as the kin terms making up a kinship terminology define and organize the kinship relations through which the initial social identity of individuals formed through sexual reproduction is established. Morgan made a distinction between descriptive terminologies, such as the English kinship terminology, that are faithful to the distinction between lineal and collateral genealogical relations arising through procreation and classificatory terminologies, occurring largely in North and South America, Asia, Australia and the Polynesian Islands with kin terms identifying kinship relations inconsistent with the lineal-collateral distinction. The classificatory terminologies, long the bane of anthropology students, are seen as hard to understand. But is that the case? In this presentation, I discuss a new theory for the study of kinship terminologies that makes the classificatory terminologies as easy to understand as the descriptive terminologies.

## **5. NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY: CASES AND PATTERNS**

**Chair: Gitika De, University of Delhi**

Political ethnography has traversed complex and novel areas of investigating power and politics since the establishment of the field of political anthropology in the early 1940s. The study of processes of state formation and the constitution of power, the relationship between structure and process, the study of individual interests and political action have been some of the staple of political anthropology's formative concerns. Newer concerns in political anthropology emerged with the establishment of newly independent states and their dynamic relationship with processes of globalization and issues of identity and ethnicity within national territories. Concomitant with these emerging concerns, theories and method in political anthropology responded by re-focusing on anthropology's favoured methodology: ethnographic fieldwork that provided grounded understanding of the practice of politics while also seeking to discern patterns applicable to a cross-cultural frame of reference.

This panel invites proposals from social and cultural anthropologists to reflect on their practice of political ethnography through case studies of their research that seek to lay out their ethnographic field methods while situating them within the methodological traditions of political anthropology. The aim is to facilitate mapping the current research trends in political anthropology and reflect on the broader methodological patterns and innovations in political ethnography. Case studies may include but are not limited to the following: (a) Identity and Ethnicity; (b) Political Activism; (c) Gender and Politics; (d) Local Politics (e) State and Social Movements.



Gintautas Mažeikis, Vytautas Magnus University

## **Territorial Defence Forces, Voluntary Battalions and Horizontal, Political Self-Organization During the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine (2004; 2013-14)**

This report analyses Ukraine's horizontal political self-organization during the Russian aggression. Authoritarian, vertical power and horizontal civic self-organization are viewed as opposed forms of political organization in this report. The concept of horizontal civic self-organization is also based on the idea of participatory democracy and on my experiences in Ukraine. In short, this report is based on my personal experiences, interviews and open sources. Jack Snyder (2003) in his book "Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War" conducted similar research. He emphasized the interrelation of anarchism and autonomism. Similar considerations are presented in "Anthropology and Anarchism" written by Sophie Accolas, Jacob Durieux and Ariel Planeix (2018), especially with regard to the concepts of autonomism and direct action.

This study of Ukrainian society and culture is related to such other anarchist movements as the Cossack organization of military communities, the Zaporozhian Sich (Запорозька Січ), the anarchist movement of Nestor Machno, partisan resistance to the Nazi and Soviet occupation in Galicia, that is, to the Banderites (бандерівці). This experience was also deepened and expanded during the Maidan Revolutions of 2004 and 2013-2014, as well as the experience of the volunteer battalions organized in 2014. During the 2022 war, horizontal civil self-organization encompassed territorial defence forces, voluntary battalions such as in Azov or Diepr, and partisan resistance in the occupied territories of Ukraine. It should be noted that horizontal military self-organization does not negate unified leadership at the strategic or operational level, but provides a great deal of

initiative and creativity, dynamism and ingenuity when it comes to specific battlefield tactics for both defensive and offensive purposes. Territorial defence units and volunteer battalions use a mixed supply model, learn to organize self-sufficiency, make efficient use of the enemy's military and food resources, and take better care of the health of their soldiers.

The more participatory horizontal democracy and the voluntary activities of non-governmental organizations are developed in peacetime, the better the success of horizontal self-government. In contrast, the strict vertical armies of authoritarian states, even if they have an advantage at the strategic level, lose it due to tactical, local battles and ultimately face great difficulties at the operational level. My report shows that participatory horizontal democracy can play a role not only in organizing the activities of non-governmental organizations in peacetime but also in organizing broad civilian participation for defence during wartime. Horizontal non-governmental democracy conflicts with a bureaucratic nomenclature that associates success with the rise of a vertical power ladder, but it gets along well with the organization of small and medium-sized businesses. The state apparatus and horizontal democracy are partially reconciled by separating functions and creating channels for integration. The same is true between the state army and territorial defence units and voluntary battalions. It is necessary to coordinate their activities by allocating functions and balancing responsibilities. In the Azov-steel district of Mariupol, the defending Azov battalion also took charge of leading the Marine Corps when they were severely crushed by enemy occupiers. This example shows that volunteer battalions can take control over the defence of individual territories of the state.

Rashmi Singh, Jindal Global University

## **Trying for a Ticket: Candidate Selection and Party Politics in India**

Political ethnography has been used extensively in the Global South to examine both the historical trajectories that democracy, electoral practises and popular participation have taken in these countries, and more recently to access the shadowy networks and workings of political competition and clientelism—mainly to address the enduring significance of these relationships and networks in political processes. This presentation looks at candidate selection politics in urban Indian elections, to understand how ethnographic research can navigate some of the informal dynamics and backstage maneuvering in party organisations and selection processes, that can only be accessed partially and situationally to reconstruct their conflation or departure from institutionalised norms and rules—or to locate the locus of de facto power in these organisations. More significantly, ethnographic fieldwork in this context is able to map the differential starting points of aspiring candidates in local elections, their asymmetrical access to scarce information, and the varying chances and changeable situations political actors confront as they navigate the field. By examining selection politics as a series of inter-related processes, this presentation will examine these threads in the context of urban politics in India.

Indrė Balčaitė, Vilnius University

## **“Good” and “Bad” Brokers: Negotiating Agency Amidst Uncertainty in Undocumented Phlong Migration From Myanmar to Thailand**

Saw Ka Su, a Phlong Karen factory employee from Myanmar in Greater Bangkok, said: “If you have a good broker, it’s safer.” Based on semi-structured interviews with undocumented and semi-documented Phlong migrants conducted in Bangkok and Kayin (Karen) State in Myanmar in 2012-2016, I elucidate what they understand as a “good” broker for facilitating undocumented migration. Whereas researchers and policy-makers speak of “human smuggling” and “human trafficking” supposedly distinguishable by the presence/absence of coercion and exploitation, undocumented migrants themselves tend to focus on the character of the broker (cf. Achilli 2018). Migrants and brokers are tangled in a relationship of interdependence within the power structure of the migration industry. Migrants’ considerations when choosing a broker show they are acutely aware of their vulnerability during a clandestine border passage. Hence they seek someone who does not exploit this vulnerability and cares for their safety. Although our interlocutors attributed such behaviour to the broker’s morals, abuse of the Phlong migrants by brokers seemed to have subsided over time. The migrant-broker power balance resulting from the migrant’s financial capacity, connections and eligibility for post-arrival legalisation is a salient feature of undocumented migration dynamic that is otherwise hard to predict.

Kristina Garalytė, Vilnius University

## The Politics of “Suffering and Struggle”: Dalit Student Activism on Indian Campuses

When Dalit students come to describe their social experience they tend to frame it in terms of “suffering and struggle.” Dalits experience suffering at two levels: that of the individual being stigmatized, treated unfairly or abused, and collectively as a group that is looked on with disdain and as inferior to all other groups on the basis of caste identity. Attempting to address the two-sided nature of social suffering, this presentation will contend that there is a need to acknowledge Dalits’ experiences of untouchability, structured by caste hierarchies, to be in line with other great sufferings of humanity. It will also seek to recognize the agentive side of social suffering and the ways it is appropriated by the same “experiencing” subjects in the field of politics. In this talk, I will present an ethnographic account of Dalit student activists on Indian university campuses and how they have critically reinterpreted established cultural practices and processes through the frame of “suffering and struggle” enabling them to exteriorize their experiences of caste discrimination and simultaneously ground their own symbolic capital and position of superiority with regard to other social groups. I will argue that “suffering and struggle” among Dalits has become a unifying trope of the movement—a “master frame” (Benford 2013) of sorts—reflecting, mobilizing and constructing Dalit experience. The question of what happens with the personal experience of social suffering and its content when it enters the field of politics or social movements is relevant not only for Dalits, but also for many other historical and present-day cases of human distress. Finally, this talk will also delve into the methodological and ethical questions relevant to the study of social movements—how to produce a sensitive yet honest representation reflecting the ideas of social movements without uncriti-

cally reproducing them? I will reflect on my concerns emerging during the process of ethnographic writing, and whether my argument, which focuses not merely on experiential, but also on the collective and constructed nature of Dalit suffering, does not go against the major narrative of the movement that takes the experience of suffering as an ontological basis of the Dalit identity.

## **6. ANTHROPOLOGY OF EMBODIED PRACTICES: CHALLENGES AND ADVANTAGES. THE SOUTH ASIAN PERSPECTIVE**

Chair: **Kristina Dolinina**, Vilnius University

Discussant: **Asif Majid**, University of Connecticut

In recent years, significant re-orientations are taking place with regards to the positionality of a researcher within the field of performative traditions. On the one hand, there is a tendency to move away from subjective, researcher-centred knowledge production and interpretation, towards more collaborative research practices, often involving the subjects of research or acknowledging local ontologies. Shared and reflective knowledge production between people with diverse academic and cultural backgrounds opens new challenges to bringing more equality and diversity into long-established academic structures. On the other hand, there is a tendency to bring back the body into academia, making it an equal and valuable participant in the research. This tendency parallels the acknowledgement of the double position of scholar-practitioner. Extensive practise and interpretation of the practice along with referencing to historical and cultural lineages, serve to frame, provide theoretical grounding and legitimate the scholar-practitioner in both academic and performance domains of life. This panel, thus, investigates this double positionality of artist/practitioner-researcher from different perspectives in the context of performative South Asia.

Urmimala Munsî Sarkar, Jawaharlal Nehru University

## **Learning to Unlearn: Practice-Theory Interface as an Anthropological Tool**

The relationship between academics who have worked within the social sciences and practitioners who have been the backbones of art practices—has been an uneasy one historically. Yet, creating a communicative space that encompasses both the practice and academics by which art is experienced is often valuable in both spheres. This communication requires a series of conscious processual unlearning for both stakeholders. Inter-disciplinary exchanges, fieldwork, embodied understandings of skills/ metaphysical structures within performative realms, individual and group participation in sessions on unlearning and acknowledgement of cultural differences are a few of the immense possibilities we may want to explore. It is important to approach practice and theory in a non-hierarchical manner. The talk aims to critically discuss the experience of my writing an auto-ethnography on the experience of having performed a god (Rama) for 25 years and of teaching Dance Studies / Dance Theories for over 17 years. The talk will focus on the possibilities of constructing a methodology for the practice-theory interface in order to be able to understand the idea of doing justice to what Derrida calls “the performative, embodied nature of knowledge production” (Derrida 1999).



Sarah L. Morrelli, University of Denver

## **Practitioner-Researcher Perspectives on Kathak Character Performance**

Kathak involves storytelling in which the dancer may enact one or a myriad of roles. This presentation examines characters performed in “Son of the Wind,” a dance-drama by the Leela Dance Collective. In presenting select scenes from the Ramayana, the production joins a long tradition of retelling diverse versions of the epic in South Asia and beyond (Richman 1991). The Leela Dance Collective is a US-based collective of Indian American, Indian, and non-Indian kathak artists, including this presentation’s author. Insights regarding gender expression, gender-fluidity, and the human condition that arose from performing central Ramayana characters derive from my positionality as a cast member. For example, my own challenges portraying Ram alerted me to various techniques utilized by dance-sisters to build empathetic connections with Ram and other characters. Going beyond traditional “participant observation,” most important to this research dynamic is the dance community’s investment in my artistic development. In this production and elsewhere, my research has been enriched because “interlocutors” have shared insights about artistic processes not just to further my research, but because my proper understanding would lead to successful performances crucial to those of the collective as a whole.

Hannah Manila, University of Helsinki

## **Dancers and Scholars Moving Online: New Opportunities and New Challenges in Studying Bodily Practices in Social Media**

Social media is increasingly becoming an integral part of dancers' lives, including dancers of South Asian dances. Nowadays, dancers can easily advertise their future shows, share photos and videos of past performances and engage in discussions on important dance related topics with their audiences, followers, fans and colleagues. Nowadays there is plenty of online material which lends itself well to the study of embodied practices; dancer-scholars have easy access to this kind of material. I will discuss some of the theoretical, methodological and ethical issues in doing fieldwork online, using examples from my research on kathak dance and the expressions of its guru tradition in social media.

Kristina Dolinina, Vilnius University

## How Much Does the Body Know? In Between Traditional and Contemporary Trends in North Indian Dance Kathak

Along with the ongoing evolution of art forms, influenced by the changing environment and individual creativity, there are ongoing evaluation processes, guided by the dancing community, the patron/institution and audience that are constantly reframing art forms in between the dichotomies of classical or not, authentic or not, historical or not, and timeless or not. The criterion for the evaluation is nothing else but the proportion of permanent and variable constituents of the artistic tradition. Thus, the examination always results in discussions of “what must be fixed” versus “what can be changed,” and “what has to remain the same as earlier” versus “what kind of innovations” could be made without violating the very “nature” of the given art form (Ryzhakova 2016: 100). Like in any other art, in Kathak the dance technique, the aesthetics of movement and proper visual representation of suitable content are the main indicators of value, therefore they can trigger polemics. The question, though, is—“what is the role of dancing and the ‘knowing body’ in this discussion?” Can we consider the body as a valuable agent in the process of dialogue between tradition and transition of embodied practices? This talk is an attempt to examine the relations between tradition and transformation and to distinguish traditional and contemporary tendencies in Kathak through the perspective of the body, the main agent of embodied practices.

Indrakshi Tandon, American University in Dubai

## **Anthropologist? Or Female Anthropologist?**

Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in central India, this talk presents a reflexive account of a female anthropologist's attempts at navigating the field site. As other anthropologists have shown, the field as a place of work for female researchers is not without its challenges. Adding to this body of work that is methodologically consequential for the discipline and its practice, this talk demonstrates that being female and being in the field can at times prove to be mutually exclusive, but also create alliances that help in the uniquely ethnographic goal of inquiring beyond what is often immediately apparent. The field in this context signifies place and space, including the people that occupy them. Subsequently, in this first-person retelling of the author's experience, the everyday struggles that female researchers face in rural India, and indeed other places, are laid bare—particularly against the backdrop of ever-shifting socio-political contexts, and renewed calls for women's rights in post-2012 India.

## **7. ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY AND PROMOTION OF PEACE**

**Chair: Douglas P. Fry, University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

A comparative anthropological perspective reveals not only that some human societies do not engage in war, but also that peaceful social systems exist. Douglas P. Fry and Geneviève Souillac define peace systems as clusters of neighboring societies that do not make war with each other. The mere existence of peace systems is important because it demonstrates that creating peaceful intergroup relationships is possible whether the social units are tribal societies, nations, or actors within a regional system. The presentations in this session explore processes and practices that contribute to peace, assessing the relevance of a peace systems model to understanding peace and conflict from ethnographic and archaeological cases. Alberto Gomes explores peace ecology as the time-honored philosophy and practice of the Semai of Malaysia, one society constituting a broader Orang Asli peace system. Ralph Araque Gonzalez considers the possibility that Late Bronze Age Sardinia constituted an archaeological system based on peace and cooperation, driven by economic and environmental interdependencies, such as water shortage, and facilitated through reciprocal bonds of exchange and collaboration. Leslie E. Sponsel makes use of Yanomami ethnography in an argument for taking seriously the study of peace and peace systems, from both humanistic and scientific perspectives, as he critiques Hobbesian-focused pseudoscience and its longstanding influence within academia and more generally in the media, military, and politics. Richard B. Lee continues in the vein of critique by drawing upon his longstanding work among the Ju/'hoansi hunter-gatherers of the Kalahari to address the contrasting portrayals of the Ju/'hoansi and their neighbors as peaceful and warlike. Gomes points out that from the crises of wars, pandemics, and looming ecological collapse, nonetheless, opportunities can emerge. One such mega opportunity would be shifting the current international system away from war, period, towards a viable global peace system whose norms, values, laws, and institutions not only facilitate tackling existential threats to human existence such as the climate crisis and nuclear proliferation, but also could provide a true human security for all peoples, thus relegating the practice of war to the dustbin of human history.

**Douglas P. Fry and Geneviève Souillac,**  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

## **Transitioning From War to Peace: Key Attributes of Non-Warring Peace Systems**

Peace systems are clusters of neighboring societies that do not make war with each other. Peace systems are important because they demonstrate that creating peaceful intergroup relationships is possible whether the social units are tribal societies, nations, or actors within a regional system. Peace systems scored significantly higher than a comparison group regarding 1) overarching common identity; 2) positive social interconnectedness; 3) interdependence; 4) non-warring values and norms; 5) non-warring myths, rituals, and symbols; and 6) peace leadership. Additionally, a machine learning analysis found non-warring norms, rituals, and values to have the greatest relative importance for a peace system outcome. These results have policy implications for how to promote and sustain peace, cohesion, and cooperation among neighboring societies in various social contexts, including among nations. For example, the purposeful promotion of peace system features may facilitate the international cooperation necessary to address interwoven global challenges such as global pandemics, oceanic pollution, loss of biodiversity, nuclear proliferation, and climate change. Replacing the current international system with a viable global peace system, not only to facilitate dealing with existential threats but also to provide a true human security for all peoples, could prevent future wars and the type of tragedy witnessed in Ukraine.

**Alberto Gomes, La Trobe University**

## **Indigenous-Inspired Peace Ecology**

We live in a world stricken with multiple interlocking crises. While the Covid crisis and violent conflicts in such places as Ukraine and Yemen continue to wreck the lives and livelihoods of many, climate change remains one of the biggest challenges of our times. Based on the premise that out of crises can emerge opportunities for social transformation, my presentation offers one such pathway or possibility for change that I refer to as peace ecology. It is inspired by the time-honored philosophy and practice of the Semai of Malaysia. Semai peace ecology is an articulation (in the two senses of the term: amalgamation and expression) of their well-known peace system (comprising of prosocial cooperation, sharing, egalitarianism, non-violent ethos etc.) and their social ecology (which includes inter alia eco-centrism, biomimicry, regenerative practices, ecological ontology, respect for nature, and living within nature's limits).

Ralph Araque Gonzalez, University of Freiburg

## **Conflict and Cooperation in Late Bronze Age Sardinia: A Prehistoric Peace System?**

Monumental architecture has often been considered by archaeologists to be proof of social stratification and towers were often interpreted as fortifications that confirm warfare and violence. This contribution discusses to the contrary that the Sardinian stone towers, known as nuraghi, and sanctuary complexes from the Late Bronze Age (LBA) are indicators of systematic peaceful cooperation. For the coexistence of independent communities on the island, finding ways of balancing interests and managing conflicts was important and monument building might have been one strategy to benefit intercommunity relations. Bronze Age technologies, most outstandingly metallurgy itself, are contingent on the sharing of raw material resources and the technological knowledge for their processing over sometimes significant distance. Particular subsistence strategies that prevailed in Sardinia, for example transhumance, or geographical restraints, like water shortage, obliged people to collaborate for survival. Strategies for conflict management were crucial to establish reciprocal bonds with the incentive to cooperate for a common gain and to assure the maintenance of fragile local and long-distance exchange systems. Despite evidence for occasional intergroup violence in prehistory, which show that these objectives could not always be met, it is evident that sufficient balance could be kept to allow for major social and technological developments.



Leslie E. Sponsel, University of Hawai'i

## **Escaping the Echo Chamber of Hobbesian Pseudoscience: Serious Science About the Positive Concept of Peace**

The tiresome, counterproductive, and dangerous echo chamber of Hobbesian pseudoscience tends to dominate anthropology as well as the media, politics, military, and other sectors of society. The time is long overdue to escape this ideological hegemony to get serious about peace from a scientific and humanistic perspective. Repeatedly American wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq have clearly proven that systematic mass murder by the war machine does not achieve peace. The wasteful sacrifice of blood and treasure must stop, even though we are currently witnessing the horrors again in Ukraine with the risk of even generating WWII and possibly a nuclear holocaust.

Reflecting on the Yanomami and Yanomami Studies, this presentation takes seriously peace and peace systems from a scientific and humanistic perspective. It proves that this perspective cannot only critique previous Hobbesian pseudoscience, but far more importantly, in addition offer a new constructive view of the Yanomami and Yanomami Studies. Thereby it contributes toward new trajectories theoretically and methodologically with practical positive consequences.

Richard B. Lee, University of Toronto

## **Hunter-Gatherer “Warfare” and Peace Systems: New Light on Old Debates**

A perennial controversy in anthropology revolves around the relative weight assigned to violence and non-violence in human cultural evolution. Studies of hunters and gatherers—recent, historic, and archaeological—have played a key role in these debates. One culture that has often been invoked as evidence are the Ju/’hoansi-!Kung San of Namibia and Botswana. Interestingly, Ju/’hoan data have been marshalled by proponents of both sides of the debate.

Are the Ju/’hoansi-!Kung and hunter-gatherers like them, basically warlike or peaceful? This presentation will evaluate the evidence by drawing on recent innovations in anthropological critical theory and method. Current findings from such authors as Fry, Ferguson, Guenther, and Haas, on ecology, colonialism, history and pre-history, and peace systems theory allow us to construct a more coherent and robust picture of this long-standing debate.

## **8. SOCIOCULTURAL FISSURES: PROBLEMS FROM THE PAST IN THE PRESENT**

Chair: Kasi Eswarappa, Indira Gandhi National  
Tribal University

This panel investigates some deep cultural fissures in Indian society. The authors seek to address social justice issues that have long betrayed the ethos of India that its main independence leaders envisioned. Many of these issues are related to ethno-religious fissures in India. Also, this panel looks at perhaps the largest of fissures, the interests and power of the government and the interests of the proletariat or, in its latest avatar, the precariat, as they seek economic security and wish not to be exploited, underpaid, ignored, insecure and powerless. The investigations into the underbelly of Indian society also extend to more localized issues as the widespread governmental neglect of disprivileged people.

Rosina Nasir, Jawaharlal Nehru University

## **Exploring the Expedition of Islam From Syncretism to Universalism in India: A Case Study of Religious Conversion**

Conversion to Islam during the medieval period of Indian history, though a subject of vital importance, has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. A narrative that Islam offers the prospect of relief for those who suffered from “Brahminical caste-tyranny” is dominant in common understanding, however, no historical evidence has been furnished to substantiate such views (Habib, Habibullah and Ikram). Eaton totally rejects the theory of “religion of social liberation” on the ground that it is a fallacy to read “the values of the present into the peoples or events of the past”. He further asserts the existence of a dichotomy between two strands of Islamic attitudes wherein Indian Muslim imbued in Indian traditions constitute the Little tradition and the preservation of Arab identity attributes by the Ulama constitutes the Great tradition. In other words, while a body of ulama continued to represent “normative” Islam, the masses as a whole followed the Islam of their venerated Sufis. The question arises, was syncretism in Islamic history a concomitant of the Islamizing process or its end product? Whether religious syncretism should be deciphered as an absolute category or an important transitory stage in the conversion process? Do Tauhidic Movements suggest an advanced stage in the conversion process? Also, how to situate a creative tension between the forces of Tauhidic universalism (Great tradition) and of cultural particularism (Little tradition).

Afsara Ayub, Jawaharlal Nehru University

## **Understanding the Various Narratives of Violence Through the Lens of Religious Conversion in India**

The changing role of religion in India has transformed its scope from merely faith and beliefs to a vast number of socio-cultural and political identifications. Hence religion has become one of the important bases for constituting a community, nation, or “civilization” in India. As a result, it is often found that religious identities become the ground for emphasizing differences, and endemic conflict and violence. However, keeping this argument as a central point, this work suggests that every religion is a political religion and religious conversion is a form of protest (for example, an alternate way for subjects like Dalits to stand out against the powerful authoritative structure) or, at times, may help as a transforming agent for a unified political demography. This observation needs further explanation to show how narratives of violence are associated with conversion. In this context, two questions are raised. First, how and why do Hindus contest the religious conversion of Dalits to a Semitic religion and, does it come in the form of pure dialogue or with a subtext of violence? Second, on what basis is violence provoked and legitimized against the new converts to a Semitic religion?

**Rangaswamaiah Archana**

## **The Effects of Rural Transformation on Gender and Work: A Case Study From Karnataka, South Asia**

Conventionally, Indian rural livelihood depended on agriculture. Traditionally, the terms “rural” and “agriculture” were often used as synonyms. However, the Indian rural economy has undergone a drastic change in recent times. Outmigration, agrarian distress, and occupational diversification are some of the instances of this transformation. This study aims to understand why rural households are moving from the agriculture to non-agricultural sectors. Further, we see an association between gender and occupational diversification in the process of rural transformation. A multidimensional perspective is used to understand the phenomenon from a holistic point of view. This empirical study has used semi-structured interviews and case study methods to collect field data. The results show that the transformation of a rural-labor-based economy to a more capital-based economy and opportunities for relatively high wages in the non-farm sectors have enticed members of the agrarian society to leave and seek work in the non-farm sectors of society. Particularly women from lower strata of caste and class have moved out of rural India to work in manufacturing centers.

Anshu Singh, Centre for Women's Development Studies

## **Constructing Pollution in Pre-School: A View Into the World of Children's Mental Geographies in the Era of Environmental Changes**

Children have their own individual constructions of the environment and pollution. To what extent do pre-school children share similar conceptions of both and how do they acquire their concepts? In this presentation, I present data collected from pre-school children to understand the ways children's geographies are constructed in lieu of the rising public concern over land, water, and noise pollution in Delhi, India. The presentation adds to the lacuna in the existing literature about how children view their relationship with and understanding of the environment. I dwell on the everyday construction of normality around the environment and how children view the world as it is without aspiring for an "ideal" concept of urban dwelling or other forms of modern "places".

Kasi Eswarappa, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University

## **Precarious Livelihoods of a Nomadic Community: An Ethnographic Study From Andhra Pradesh, South India**

The terms “livelihoods” and “development” have different nuanced meanings in different societies and among people in a society. Development implies a better quality of life and livelihood, and better access to assets and services for marginal communities. I have developed a theoretical framework for the study of livelihood and development through my own research and from the existing literature on poverty, inequality, marginality, development, civil society, NGOs and livelihood. In this talk, I argue that the factional politics and apathy prevalent in government agencies prevent marginalized group(s) from adequately benefiting from developmental projects or interventions. As a result, the very objective of the developmental interventions has been thwarted. The present study is a qualitative micro-level study that aims to understand livelihood systems among semi-nomadic communities and their adaptive shifts as a consequence of their livelihood status and socio-economic effects of development projects. This empirical study was conducted in a semi-nomadic settlement in Andhra Pradesh with the ethnographic aim of capturing what I refer to as their livelihood system. Further, the talk discusses the kinds of shifts and changes that have occurred in the lives and livelihood of semi-nomadic groups. On the basis of this research, I have sought to raise some pertinent policy questions as to how far the policies, initiated since Independence, have benefited the target group(s)?



## **9. ECOLOGIES OF THE SIX REALMS: BUDDHISM, SOTERIOLOGY, AND THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN**

Chair: **Saskia Abrahms-Kavunen**, The University of Copenhagen; **Kristina Jonutytė**, Vilnius University

Within Buddhist doctrine and practices, human birth is often espoused as being the most precious of all rebirths. As a human one can hear the teachings of the Buddha and dedicate one's body, speech and mind to follow the path toward attaining realisation or assisting others to do so. Buddhist communities are also embedded in extensive relations with the non-human world, engaging ecological systems and the animals that live in them. While some Buddhists seek to preserve their socio-ecological milieu and bring balance to visible and non-visible beings within them, others actively seek to remake them. Many extend their connections to encompass spirits that may inhabit mountains, rivers and other places. Most Buddhist traditions teach the laity to respect their interconnectedness with their surroundings and to value life in all of its forms. Yet, some Buddhist doctrines and practices can cause friction as well as harm, to the non-human world.

Animal capture-and-release is carried out as a way of accruing merit for future lifetimes, but it can injure the animals involved. Some Buddhist organisations provide services to make money by spiritually cleaning ecological damage. For instance, some ritual specialists are involved in placating spirits so that activities such as mining and building in sensitive areas can be conducted without the instigators experiencing negative repercussions. This panel will explore how Buddhists navigate their embeddedness in the more-than-human world in both rural and urban places. How do Buddhists imagine themselves as connected to, or as distinct from, the non-human? How are more-than-human relations and agencies re-imagined in the context of environmental degradation and global warming? What kinds of ritual interventions do Buddhists utilise to better enable the protection of ecosystems? How can these anthropological engagements contribute to understanding Buddhism in the contemporary world?

Saskia A. Abrahms-Kavunenko, The University of Copenhagen

## **Shown by the Marron's Claw: Ecological Receptiveness as Mindful Praxis**

At a Buddhist centre in Western Australia, ecological systems are not left to auto-rewild, nor does such an approach make sense in a place where colonial mismanagement has led to voracious weeds choking rivers and invasive species outcompeting native marsupials. Here, like the eucalyptus forests of southern Europe, the pine forests stand silent and empty of life. Labour to rehabilitate Jarrah forests is carried out daily by volunteers and the centre's resident lama. They work to help re-establish ecosystems that once flourished under the care of indigenous gardeners. Land care, I am told, is one of the Green Tara's (a Buddhist Bodhisattva) most active qualities. She is believed to instantiate the power of the growing ecological movement. Part of this approach involves listening to and noticing the movements of native animals. The return of a species signals success. This talk will explore the notion of animals as companions and communicators in contemporary Australian Buddhism. It will elucidate how, along with acknowledging the preciousness of human birth, certain practices attempt to develop respect for other creatures, including the occasional tiger snake that seeks a warm spot under the blanket of an advanced meditator.

Kalzang D. Bhutia, University of California Riverside

## **Bodhisattva Pests: Negotiating Generosity in Multispecies Engagements in Agricultural Communities in Western Sikkim**

In the eastern Himalayan state of Sikkim, monkeys hold an ambivalent position. They are co-residents of the enchanted landscape of the mountainous state that is filled with spirits, and at times are seen as embodiments of local protector deities (Classical Tibetan: *chos skyong yul lha gzhi bdag*). More recently, however, they have been seen as a nuisance and as pests that threaten human flourishing. Changes in climatic patterns have led monkeys to ascend to higher altitudes, and to venture into human settlements and farmland in order to seek food. The increased frequency of encounters between monkeys and humans are often sites of conflicts, particularly as they attack cash crops such as cardamom. In some villages, these multispecies engagements have had violent outcomes. This talk will draw on ethnographic research and Buddhist textual discussions of human-monkey relations in order to think about how local human and nonhuman communities in Sikkim negotiate boundaries of interaction, particularly around food, nourishment, and flourishing. I will focus on how negotiations over the Buddhist concept of generosity (Classical Tibetan: *sbyin pa*) inform multispecies relations and complicate our understanding of how Buddhists practice ethics with the more-than-human co-residents of our world.

Hedwig Waters, University College London

## **The Poor Man Versus Nature: Using Buddhism to Justify the Illegal Wildlife Trade in Eastern Mongolia**

Whereas Buddhism has been known to mesh with local cosmologies to increase intimacy between the human and non-human worlds; it can also do the opposite. This presentation is based on two years of fieldwork (2015-7) in a remote Mongolian township that was widely engaged in the illegal extraction and sale of local wildlife, specifically medicinal plants and fish. Diverse anthropologists and social scientists have noted that the emergence of universalistic, soteriological religions—most commonly, Christianity—have contributed to the spread of capitalist markets, because the former creates an epistemological division between the “this”—i.e. material, profane, and “the other”—i.e. spiritual, sacred worlds. In this instance, I argue, tracing this development all the way back to the writings of an 19th-century local feudal prince, that Buddhism was locally used as a moral narrative to justify rational usage of material resources, which was then continued during Socialism. Now, in the 21st century, local individuals use lay Buddhist understandings of concepts of “merit” (buyan) and “karmic boon” (hishig) to argue that by helping each other make money, they are raising the collective karma of the town to bring benefits in this and the next life.

Kristina Jonutyte, Vilnius University

## **Nonhuman Entanglements in Urban Buryat Buddhism**

Buryat Buddhism has historically been linked with the rural environment, engaging with local spirits and deities of the landscape. Its temples and lamas were initially nomadic, although monasteries did later settle to serve the nomadizing Buryat population. Buddhism suffered great losses over the 20th century due to Soviet anti-religious policies, but the recent post-Soviet decades have seen a vigorous Buddhist revival, (re)establishing its role in public and private spheres. This religious revival, however, has taken place in a vastly different environment, since most Buryats now live in the city. Buddhism today is thriving under the new urban conditions, but much of its historical, ritual and ideological threads still link it to the previously rural context. At the same time, the urban space is to a large extent seen as devoid of such religious power, and its local spirits and deities are said to have left the city a long time ago. The present talk explores these rural-urban entanglements, looking at the implications of the local spirits and deities fleeing urban lifeworlds of Buryat Buddhists.

Aivaras Jefanovas, Vilnius University

## **Interspecific Communication as the Pattern Linking Indigenous People of Arctic Yakutia and Wolves Into Socio-Ecological Relations**

The talk is based on my long-term ethnographic study conducted in Arctic Yakutia where I investigated social relations between Siberian reindeer herders and wolves. By dealing with human-animal sociality, this talk considers wolves as active social and self-conscious agents who can communicate with humans. Wolves can observe, learn and comprehend signs of human activity and respond to them adaptively. Thus, wolves are real participants in reciprocal relations with humans. My research shows that this relationship is not just a symbolic representation made by people, but an actual dynamic of reciprocal communication initiated and understood by both parties. By recognising wolves as active, communicative subjects, this talk “steers away” from so-called “human exceptionalism” in which human representations and language play the dominant role. It considers whether humans alone are central actors in social relations or whether anthropologists should pay equal attention to non-human beings as actors in their own right. The talk also examines the animistic worldview of an indigenous herding and hunting society, the Arctic Yakutia. Their hunting traditions and vernacular perceptions about animals as non-human beings acknowledge the socio-ecological interaction of humans and animals in their shared Arctic landscape.

## **10. DARK ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE NEW FIELDWORK-SITES**

Chair: *Ida Harboe Knudsen, Vytautas Magnus University*

Dark anthropology refers to realities hidden from plain sight due either to their own or societies' preferences. People in the dark zone of everyday life are seldom visible to the ethnographic gaze and have been neglected in anthropological studies. The panelists explore people who inhabit these dark zones, either on their own accord or due to run-ins with the legal system. These groups or people are the subject of these studies. From these studies, diverse dark zones are revealed which shed light on issues of social justice, the legal system, and human desires.

Victoria D. Sanford, City University of New York

## **Anthropological Methods for Documenting Human Rights Violations and Genocide**

When asked why exhumations of mass graves were important for human rights investigations, the late, great Dr. Clyde Snow famously said, “The bones don’t lie.” From Argentina to Guatemala, Iraq to Sri Lanka, Mexico to Congo, and many other corners of the world, Dr. Snow investigated massive human rights violations and trained a new generation of human rights investigators. In the process, he built a new role for anthropology and anthropologists to investigate and document human rights violations for legal processes in truth commissions and courts as well as for the production of historical memory for society and reclaiming of historical subjectivity for victims and survivors. Drawing on 25 years of experience investigating human rights violations and genocide in Guatemala, I will discuss the theory and practice of forensic exhumations, victim identification, archival and testimonial research and their interplay in legal processes and community desires for justice. I explore the ways in which science, law and justice complement and collide with one another as investigations move forward from the field to legal courts and the court of public opinion. I consider the researcher’s role as both documentarian and participant in the production of history as well as legal precedence.



Ievgeniia-Galyina Lukash, National University of  
Kyiv Mohyla Academy

## **Ethnographic Approach and Cultural Models Framework in Research on Recreational Drug Use**

Combining an ethnographic approach with a cultural model's framework provides methodological benefits for the drug use studies. Singer & Page (2016) stated that the practice of drug consumption is traditionally viewed as a specific public health problem, a deviant behavior, or a practice of indigenous people. However, drug use seems to exist in "normal" circumstances as well. This presentation aims to illustrate the advantages of ethnographic methods and techniques of data collection and analysis with an emphasis on the intellectual framework of cultural models to obtain information about the recreational drug users' perception of themselves, drugs, and "others" in Kyiv, Ukraine. The first attempts to apply this framework were made during the July-December 2020. Empirical data were collected from 30 people who use drugs with the help of free-listing exercise and interview method.

Linas Tavaras, Vilnius University

## **Legal Opium Farms in India: Historical and Ethnographic Perspectives**

Opium in South Asia has been actively collected since approximately 3400 B.C. Due to such a long history of opium cultivation, deep traditions related to the opium plant have developed here over the centuries. Opium is still widely used as an ingredient to make medicines such as codeine, diamorphine, morphine, etc. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are the only states in India where a psychoactive opium plant can be legally grown. Some opium appears on the black market as an illegal drug and for this reason it remains a controversial topic.

Legal opium farms are the very beginning of the opium pathway, which forks either to the medical sector or to the black market. My research focuses on the opium growers who participate in the state-licensed opium poppy husk farms in India. I have decided to conduct research in the state of Madhya Pradesh because statistically, farmers from here produce the largest yields of opium of all the states. By depicting the interactions among opium farmers through observations and interviews, as well as their relation to the ancient psychoactive substance in cultural and historical aspects, I will be able to explain the farmers' distinctive methods for managing the risks inherent to their line of work.

Ida Harboe Knudsen, Vytautas Magnus University

## **Popular Perceptions and Lived Realities for Lithuanian Inmates in Danish Prison Facilities**

The emergence of offenders from Eastern Europe in Denmark has been a returning subject of political concern and media attention, leading to constructions of them as a new “folk devil”: a symbol of a general and concerning condition in society (Cohen 2002 [1972]). In this presentation, I will describe a case study of how Lithuanian offenders have become portrayed as a particularly deviant folk devil in Danish media and in public perception. My analysis examines both society’s concern with Eastern European offenders and Lithuanian inmates’ experiences in Danish detention centres. My objective is to bring to light the connections and dis-connections between the public construction of these inmates through in-depth interviews with them. I will argue that the construction of Lithuanians as folk devils has direct consequences for the manner in which rules and regulations inside detention centres are perceived and executed with regard to this particular group.

## **11. CULTURE, KNOWLEDGE, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: GENERATING AN INFORMED DIALOGUE BETWEEN POLICY MAKERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

Chair: **Giovanni Bernardo**, Northern Illinois University

Cultural model theory offers a way to acknowledge, respect and do justice to local/indigenous knowledge (IK), including traditional environmental knowledge (TEK). Cultural models are embodied and out of awareness. Individuals may not be able to articulate their cultural models but are confident that their behavior and utterances are understood by others who share their social fields of experiences. Cultural model theory assumes individual and group variation within communities. Cultural models are storehouses of connotative meaning that are sensitive to context and self-identity. To study such models, a tri-partite methodology has been developed that calls for the acquisition and extensive analysis (qualitative and quantitative) of ethnographic, linguistic, and cognitive data.

Advocating about “social justice” implies making explicit and rendering relevant indigenous knowledge (IK), including traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), that are both organized in cultural models and held within a community. Are there differences and/or commonalities among the cultural models that stakeholders (e.g., NGOs, social workers, and policy makers) hold? Once discovered, becoming aware of and sharing their cultural models increases the ability of the stakeholders to communicate and understand each other’s point of view. Thus, the adoption of cultural model theory, its methodological path, and the findings it promises potentially generates better policy making and living conditions, i.e., social justice, for communities all over the world.

Eric C. Jones, University of Texas Health Science Center  
at Houston

## **From Soil and Community Relationships to Social Justice: Application of a Cultural Model of Ecuadorian Quichua Farmers**

Since at least the late 1990s, weather changes have been the top concern of Quichua speaking farm families around Cotacachi, Ecuador. This study used a cultural model approach to analyze semi-structured interviews about farmers' daily experiences and their intersection with environmental change. These Andean farmers place soil and relationships at the center of their cultural models of how plants, animals, supernatural forces, climate, the biophysical environment and people interact but they are confused by change in timing and amount of rains and by insufficient interpersonal respect. In order to leverage these cultural models for conversations with larger entities that impact how farmers cope with environmental change, this presentation presents primary tenets of the farmers' cultural model and potential commonalities with other entities or stakeholders.

**Kateryna Maltseva**, National University of  
Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

## **Socioeconomic Status and Causal Pathways to Health Disparities**

During the last few decades we have witnessed a mounting interest in the ways social inequality affects health. An online quantitative study (n=902) conducted in Kyiv during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021) compared objective and subjective socio-economic statuses in the context of health outcomes. Several empirical observations are noted: (1) Knowledge about health and health-related behavior is unevenly distributed in the Ukrainian sample. (2) There is a marked SES gradient in subjective and objective health of surveyed Ukrainians. (3) Current socio-economic status affects individual self-rated health and wellness. (4) Subjective socioeconomic status affects individual health more than objective socioeconomic status. (5) Individuals from low socio-economic status categories face higher current perceived stress levels. (6) Higher SES informants reported better subjective health than lower SES informants even when their objective health parameters were similar. The results are further contextualized using the results of a representative survey based on the ISSP 2019 data set (N=2001) to uncover the content and organization of social axiomatic beliefs Ukrainians have regarding social justice and inequality. The theoretical implications for the studies of health disparities are discussed.

Halvard Vike, University of South-Eastern Norway

## Cultural Models and the Possibility of Solidarity

In this contribution I develop the argument that democratic orders that combine an emphasis on political participation with inclusive welfare policies (such as the Nordic versions) rest on a widely shared cultural model of a specific kind. Insofar as democratic experiments of this type have pursued the goal of social justice rather successfully, at least over a significant period, we may benefit from a more solid understanding of the cultural model underpinning it.

This cultural model, I argue, reflects how social relationships are experienced in social contexts where collective action, reciprocity, and autonomy play an important role. The model is very often mistaken for “social democratic ideology”, but is more fruitfully understood as a specific conceptualization of individual freedom, or autonomy, which in fact does not include a major emphasis on the idea of a state. This model has proved quite resilient in the face of massive, neoliberal initiatives to reformulate ideas of reciprocity and privatize collective goods. I suggest that one important reason for this is the fact that it represents political experiences of a very local, experience-near kind, moored in what I prefer to call “the morality of membership”—a specific conceptualization of the relationship between autonomy and solidarity. More than most other western democracies, Nordic states are heavily influenced by membership organizations, not only in terms of egalitarian symbolism, but also in a direct institutional sense. In my presentation, I want to explore how, in Norden, cultural models of politics play a decisive role in institutional dynamics.

**Bennardo Giovanni, Northern Illinois University**

## **Making Local Knowledge Relevant to Tongan Climate Change Policy Makers**

A Cultural Model of Nature (CMN) is a fundamental part of any IK/TEK and it contributes to the generation of behavior including responses to environmental stressors, i.e., climate change. In 2020, I suggested a CMN for Tongans. It is time to make these findings relevant to the local and international policy makers planning intervention in Tonga. The Tongan Department of Climate Change (MEIDECC) issued in 2017 a document titled *Tonga Climate Change Policy: A Resilient Tonga by 2035*. In 2018, Tonga MEIDECC launched a revised Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change. Similarly, the Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island State project is currently under way.

After a careful reading of the many documents associated with these exemplary projects, one comes out with the idea that a well thought and extremely detailed intervention policy is not only planned, but also already being implemented on the ground, i.e., Tongan villages. However, none of the documents discuss or keep in mind the IK/TEK that it is held by the population involved. In this presentation, I suggest pathways that I intend to explore in order to make accessible and possibly relevant to all the stakeholders the CMN I suggested.



**Claudia R. Strauss, Pitzer College and  
Mohaddeseh Ziyachi, Queen's University Belfast**

## **Outline of a Critical Cognitive Anthropology**

Cognitive anthropology began with Goodenough's influential proposal, "A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members..." (Goodenough 1957). Although many cultural models researchers reject that narrow definition of culture (D'Andrade 1995, Strauss and Quinn 1997), our research typically focuses on learned cultural understandings, and ones that are uncontested. We argue that a critical cognitive anthropology concerned with social justice should also study conflicting cultural models and ones that vary in cultural standing, from taken for granted to controversial (Strauss 2004). In addition, we should consider the social forces that give rise to these varying understandings and that can make it difficult for people to actualize their beliefs. We illustrate these arguments with examples from debates about motherhood in Iran and about immigration and poverty in the United States.

## **12. ETHNICITIES, IDENTITIES AND THE STATE: ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSIGHTS FROM FIELDWORK SITES**

Chair: Kristina Šliavaitė, Vilnius University

In the field of ethnic studies, anthropology has made considerable contributions in developing a constructivist approach to ethnicity by demonstrating diverse ways ethnicity is practiced in different locations and social settings and the ways ethnicity is shaped by top-down policies and negotiated on the ground by ordinary people (see e.g. Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2010) and Andreas Wimmer (2013)). Inspired by this tradition, this session will focus on diverse ways ethnicity is practiced, imagined and negotiated in diverse social and institutional contexts. The session deals with questions of ethnic, national and political allegiances as shaped by social memories and envisioned futures, framed in and by state and its institutions or practiced and negotiated in (post) colonial condition. Ethnicity is seen as constructed and managed in particular contexts and at the same time as a powerful instrument for creating solidarities, motivating action and shaping political processes at the national and international levels.

**Neringa Klumbytė, Miami University**

## **Temporality of Sovereignty and the New War Frontiers**

In the 20th century Vilnius was part of nine states. Most of the border changes had a deadly impact on the communities of Vilnius. Temporality of sovereignty defines not only Lithuania, but large parts of Eastern Europe. In my talk, I ask what do temporal sovereignties engender? I argue that the lands of temporal sovereignties are defined by patriotism, radicalism, and new dystopias and conceptualize new ethnic and national developments at the new war frontiers in Lithuania.

Ugnė B. Starkutė, Vilnius University

## **Coloniality and Ethnic Identity: Not Enough Indigenous?**

During my fieldwork in Sami, I encountered people feeling not enough Sami if they do not practice traditional or other activities considered as Sami. Literature demonstrates similar expectations of authenticity in indigenous communities in Australia (Povinelli 1998a, 1998b), India (Steur 2010, 2011), or South America (Graham 2002). Such expectations of authenticity are formed by the dominant groups that indigenous groups try to answer accordingly to be able to claim their identity. However, their identity is always under question. In a broader sense these cases show how coloniality and power relations shape ethnic identity.

According to Mignolo (2017), coloniality is a matrix of power that is far from over. One of its manifestations, I suggest, is a feeling of inadequacy among previously oppressed people. Such an effect of coloniality could be observed in many other (post)colonial places. For example, in Eastern Europe, being “not enough” European or Western; in the Global South being not enough developed. If coloniality produces the feeling of inadequacy, how do we decolonize it? Who or what has to be decolonized? During the presentation, I will discuss thoughts and ideas emerging from my doctoral research and fieldwork to answer this question.

Kristina Šliavaitė, Vilnius University

## **“We Are All Poles (and) Catholics”: Doing and Managing Ethnicity and Religion in the Schools With Polish Language of Teaching in Lithuania**

The presentation focuses on the ways educational institutions serve as key actors in forming and managing ethnic identities (cf. Andreas Wimmer (2013)). The empirical data comes from schools with a Polish language of instruction in Lithuania. These data were collected during two independent research projects in Lithuania in localities where there is a large Polish population. The focus of the presentation is on the ways school members interrelate language (Polish), religion (Catholic) and ethnicity and how this perception of ethnic-religious identity is revealed and shapes everyday practices at a school.

Monika Frėjutė-Rakauskienė, Institute of Sociology at  
the Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences

## **“Pro-Russian vs Pro-Lithuanian?”: The Ethnic Dimension in Narratives Among Lithuanian Russians on Processes for the Restoration of Lithuanian Statehood in 1990s**

This talk is based on unstructured life story interviews with leaders of the Russian national minority’ civic organizations in Lithuania on their role in the national reform movement (i.e. the Sąjūdis). The interviews focused on the restoration period of Lithuanian statehood during the 1990s. Russians, as well as other national minorities, were active in establishing civic organizations and participating in policy development on national minorities’ rights. According to one of the civic organization leaders, the position of the Russian community concerning Lithuanian sovereignty and statehood was always about “finding a balance among Pro-Russian and pro-Lithuanian identities” and “this balance will not disappear anywhere as long as the old generation is alive.” The talk aims to answer the question, “how the dimension of ethnicity is constructed in the narratives of research participants?” The data was collected from 2021 October till 2022 March in the framework of a research project funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (the project number is S-MOD-21-3).

Agnieška Avin, Vytautas Magnus University

## **Rethinking Ethnicity Through (Im)mobility: The Case of Lithuanian Roma Migration to Great Britain**

The Lithuanian Roma community is, most likely, one of the fastest decreasing ethnic minorities in Lithuania due to massive emigration rates to the West. The official census data and statistical reports prove that the community is in decline despite the still high birth rate among Roma. More importantly, the knowledge of mass migration and community decline is present among Roma themselves. “Where are all the Roma?”—one of my informants once asked in Mažeikiai. “They all moved to England”—was the response.

Transnational mobility for Roma from Lithuania opens new social and economic possibilities abroad, it helps to strengthen their social positions, escape the highly racialized social structures found in Lithuania, and advance in their education. Moreover, it forces them to re-think personal ethnic identity and how one can navigate between “visibility” and “invisibility” of personal ethnicity here and there.

In my conference presentation, I will focus on how ethnicity is constructed, imagined and practiced among Roma families through transnational (im)mobility processes, how transnational (im)mobility experience impacts one’s understanding of ethnicity and how it is related to the everyday practices and imaginations. My presentation will be based on the data gathered during the ethnographic research among Vilnius Roma families in 2020-2021.

### **13. CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOSITIES IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND BEYOND**

**Chair: Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, Vilnius University**

The panel addresses studies on the dynamics of various religions in East-Central European countries. It deals with the processes of (trans)formation of changeable and unstable religious/spiritual ideas and groups dispersed all over East-Central Europe. It also engages past and current socio-religious processes, discussing diverse manifestations, changes and disruptions of religious phenomena concerning contemporary religiosities in (trans) regional and (trans)national levels.



Gautam Chakrabarti, Europa-Universität  
Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)

## **When “Dharma” Reaches out to “Darna”: Towards a Nuanced Cultural-Political Ethnography of Indic Interest in the Romuva**

Using a cultural-historical and comparative ethnographic perspective, I will focus on the various ways in which the Romuva movement is seen in India. My aim will be to examine this rather intriguing belief-system as received and valorised in contemporary India, thus using an Indian perspective. I will not dwell much on comparing resonances between Hindu/Indic ritual-practices as they manifest core religio-cultural concepts and those of the Romuva. Rather I will engage with the performative politics of its categorisation—in India—as a post-Soviet „neo-pagan“ and possibly Hinduphile cultural self-assertion. In the process, there will be references to the Soviet-era origin of the movement and the peculiar societal-cultural and ideological nuances of this historical fact.

Eugenijus Liutkevičius, Vilnius University

## **The Theory of the Three-Dimensional Perception of Reality in Evangelical Christianity**

In this talk, I will present an analysis of the three-dimensional Perceptions of Reality in Christianity through an extended case study of Baptists in Ukraine. I intend to affirm why ethnography should remain a key method in anthropology. While we, anthropologists strive to understand the world from the perspective of our informants, this approach is not as self-evident when studying the life of believers. There has been a tendency in anthropology to keep a more “objective” distance to religion. However, by engaging equally seriously in both religious events and the interpretations of those events by believers, we obtain a much deeper and multifaceted understanding of their life. My research shows that evangelicals do not only orient themselves in space and linear time, but learn to see and interpret reality as timeless, repeating patterns that are evident in scripture. This sense of timelessness gives recent events meaning and helps the believer(s) deal with different kinds of issues and challenges that appear to them in their everyday life. The in-depth understanding of inner theology of evangelical groups can be reached only through thorough ethnographic fieldwork in situ.

Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, Vilnius University

## **The Process of State Recognition of the Old Baltic Faith Romuva Movement**

This talk presents my research into the process of state recognition of the Old Baltic (animistic) Romuva movement by focusing on the perspectives of this movement among diverse social groups in Lithuania. In order to reveal the dynamics of the relationship between Lithuanian religious minorities, the state and society, I analyzed the narratives and the (political) strategies implemented to interpret the role of the Romuva community in Lithuania.

The talk reveals the religious and ritual peculiarities formulated by Romuvans and other similar groups as these are interpreted by the state and affect their relationship to the state. I describe and analyze the means by which Romuvans obtained their legitimacy as a state religious organization. I discuss the strategies Romuvans used for achieving such a status. Further, I address the changes that have occurred in the belief, religious and types of people who become members of these alternative religiosities, starting from the communist regime period up to today. I will also examine the changes and disruptions that are apparent in the religious activities of these alternative religions at both national and transnational levels.





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