Fifth Biannual Anthropology Research Day

Friday 22.01.2021
13:00–16:45
Online (via Zoom)
5. Biannual Anthropology Research Day

Please join us for a discussion of the research presentations by:

**Greg Ward:** *Public Drinking and Space: A Comparative Ethnographic Study* [13:00-13:35]

**Isabel Soucy:** *Social Mask-wearing in Japan* [13:35-14:10]

**Salma Said:** *Geographies of alternative mothering: the case of “Revolutionary Mothers” in post-coup Egypt* [14:10-14:45]

**Coffee Break: 14:45-15:00**

**Kostadin Karavasilev:** *Worlding mental illness diagnoses in Bulgaria* [15:00-15:35]

**Natalia Kalicki:** *Intervention & Resistance: Negotiating National Ethos in a State-Sponsored Museum in Warsaw* [15:35-16:10]

**Pakak Sophie Boerner:** *Policy Violence against Indigenous populations* [16:10-16:45]

The presentations will be held **live** – max. 20 min. per presentation, followed by open discussion.

**Registration:** Please send an email to markus.hoehne@uni-leipzig.de until 21 January 2021 in order to register and receive the zoom link.
Scotland – with whisky – and Germany – with beer and wine – have economies which are dominated by the production of alcohol. Yet how alcohol is consumed in public space differs considerably between both. Using these two case studies, whilst moving on from the problem/hedonism dichotomy which permeates much of social and health research on alcohol, this study will investigate the spatiotemporal phenomena which impact on public drinking the urban environment. This multi-sited ethnography will incorporate Actor-Network Theory, which is increasingly becoming an important tool in the research of cities as well as alcohol. To investigate this, various actors, such as drinkers, kiosk owners, policy makers and social workers will take part in interviews which will be contrasted with (sober) participant observation to gain a holistic picture of the human and non-human actors, and how they interact with one another. As drug deaths in Scotland skyrocket in the wake of becoming the first nation in the world to put a minimum price on units of alcohol, this study will add an anthropological edge to our understandings of how space and public drinking are negotiated. Ethnographically reflections of drinking in German cities will be used to uncover the extent to which environment factors are at play.
Isabel Soucy: *Social Mask-wearing in Japan* [13:35-14:10]

The project centers around Japanese youth who wear face masks for social reasons rather than medical, either to hide their appearance or to avoid social interactions. It combines approaches from material culture and ritual studies and aims to add new insights to the discussion around the sociality of Japanese youth, particularly in regards to social and economic pressures that have been exacerbated in the past two decades. Rather than only seeing masks as a sort of collective automatism derived from pandemics, government guidelines or air pollution, the project seeks to reveal their transformative potential in social interactions and self-perception. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with University students in Tokyo, and young people in the district of Koenji. They will be supplemented by observations in public places. I expect to find 1) that masks have a comforting effect both psychologically and physically 2) that they allow the wearer to go about their day without being distracted or unsettled by other people’s expectations and concentrate on what they want to achieve 3) that while socio-economical changes Japan has underwent might play a role in creating social distance and competitiveness, the pressures and expectations Japanese youth face is shared by young people around the world.
Salma Said: Geographies of alternative mothering: the case of “Revolutionary Mothers” in post-coup Egypt [14:10-14:45]

My research question is: What does it mean to be “revolutionary mothers” raising children in post-coup Egypt? To answer this question, I explore the doing of motherhood within activist circles in contemporary Egypt. My research focus is on motherhood as an identity, as a performance and as a sphere of resistance and conflict in post-revolution Egypt. In the center of my research is a social group of politically engaged women who organized themselves to mainly share the experience of becoming mothers under military dictatorship and to create space for themselves and for their children. I follow the lives and experiences of these mothers who themselves choose to associate their practices of motherhood with their political activism and organize under the name “Revolutionary Mothers”. The aim of my study is to provide a rich ethnographic account of the politics of the most intimate spaces, processes and practices of motherhood by mapping revolutionary motherhood in terms of bodies, private and public spaces. I am also accounting for the affective dimensions of alternative motherhood in looking at their fears, hopes and disappointments as impacted by the wide protest movement that started in 2011.
Kostadin Karavasilev: *Worlding mental illness diagnoses in Bulgaria* [15:00-15:35]

Set in Bulgaria, this work employs the concept of worlding to illustrate how mental illness diagnoses emerge through practices and in turn shape the very same practices required for their emergence. This research proposes that mental illness diagnoses and practices related to them sustain each other as they form a double helix-like connection. Tracing the dynamic relational emergence of mental illness diagnoses through various contexts, such as the doctor’s office, the workplace, and the family, this work highlights the potential of the concept of worlding in enriching medical anthropological research on how mental illness diagnoses emerge in everyday care practices in and especially outside a clinical context. Furthermore, the work foregrounds the potential of expanding the concept of worlding by relating it to ideas of performance and performativity.
This research examines the interplay of Poland’s current political discourse across different scales, starting from inside of an established art museum. Frictions arise when the public programming of inclusive liberal-left curators and coordinators passes through the hands of a newly right-wing PiS-appointed directorship at a contemporary art center. I hone in on a part of the cultural political economy which involves negotiating a changing regime of rule, here appearing as a process of mediation between a top-down nationalist agenda and an international artist residency. I look at the museum as a site where the conflict of national identity unfurls, with a before-after comparative narrative focused on the reordering of social-bureaucratic structures and cultural mandates. In the second part of this research, I look at the skill of negotiation at local, national and international levels as embodied by museum administrators, who switch between formal duties and activist roles to secure space for art practices existing in Warsaw and beyond. To this end I look at how this position plays out in the transnational art-world arena, in art institutions, and on the streets, particularly when acts of local activism creep into the museum.
Historically within the US there has been a practice of "Policy violence" against natives. Discriminatory historical acts such as "Indian Termination" or the "Indian Removal Act" have been as recent as the 1940’s. The expectation that as Indigenous individuals gain governmental representation and recognition these policies would become obsolete or corrected, however while the writing and phrasing of policies may have changed, discrimination through policy acts continue to marginalize Indigenous communities. My research topic will be to understand how policy violence continues to perpetrate certain systems of governmental abuse, as well as understand the changing forces in government met to reform such issues. In a 4-month long fellowship I will be working under an Alaskan representative understand the process in which bills, and policies are written and implemented; as well as gaining further understand as to how policy violence remains relevant in social conversation.