**Where Do We Go from Here? Envisioning the Future of European Network for Psychological Anthropology, EASA, Stockholm, 15 August 2018**

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As an early career researcher, I am honoured and excited to be included in this round-table talk along with those whose works have shaped mine in the field of psychological anthropology!

 My undergraduate training was in psychology, obtained at the Atma Jaya University in Jakarta, Indonesia. Most of the textbooks we read were in English and composed of studies carried out by psychologists primarily based in ‘Western’ countries, and drew on contexts that were generally far away from where we were. I don’t recall sitting in a seminar, at least not at the bachelor level, where the issue of context (social, cultural, geographical, historical, etc) was earnestly debated. The lack of reflexivity, however, did not worry me at that time. I was keen on learning the various terms and concepts new to me, strongly rooted in psychological discourse. After all, it is a discourse that promises a gateway of understanding the human condition, psychopathology and treatment.

After graduating, I worked at one of the first non-governmental organisations in Indonesia providing psychological care. It was there where the issue of context, and particularly ‘culture’, started to play a significant role. In short, the intriguing concepts I had learned during my studies were often difficult to apply in the everyday language of ‘counselling’ in non-Western settings. This challenge was harder to ignore in Aceh, where I worked within a project that facilitated psychosocial care to survivors of the devastating tsunami in 2004. The scale of loss was unimaginable, and the responses designed to assist those affected came mostly from external sources. There was a noticeable rise of “trauma healing” projects, and with that the trauma discourse.

I continued my research interests in the area of social trauma, while delving into the studies of human rights, violence, conflict and peace. Again, I faced similar frustrations that too often resulted in me arguing in the corner against what I perceived as universalistic and reductionist views of the fellows around me. It was the need to contextualise psychological as well as other concepts that can have direct impacts on people’s lives, and the need to explore other subjectivities and experiences that brought me to social and cultural (and psychological) anthropology.

It is not the tensions and overlaps between universalistic and relativistic approaches that I want to emphasise here with my input. Although, I believe this remains an important contribution we as psychological anthropologists can bring to cross-disciplinary discussion tables through our ethnographic evidence. Rather, it is the question of how we can move beyond this focus. The background to this roundtable states that, nowadays, the assumption that Western-derived psychological and bio-psychiatric insights are imposed on other social groups no longer holds absolute truth, or at least is open to debate. I agree, and this is much due to the efforts and critical works of the anthropologists here today and beyond this panel. I do wish to highlight, however, by sharing my journey into this subfield as a non-European anthropologist, the ongoing relevance of this statement on the ways knowledge in psychological anthropology is produced.

In hindsight, the way psychological concepts and interventions were imparted in my experience was not as unidirectional as it may have first appeared. At least it was not for me, which rendered through the chain of collaborations (for example in the example of my NGO work earlier, this typically starts with trainings by ‘Western experts’ to local psychologists from urban settings, and then the latter or both to “local-local” experts, to survivors or project beneficiaries). This process of multidirectional interpretations, when added with a degree of reflexivity, indeed produces more context-informed psychological insights. Psychologists and psychiatrists alike have the upper hand in presenting data in generalized, and hence more ‘valid-like’ language. I do enjoy reading the articles they publish, and at the same time I think about how an anthropological lens could add nuance to their findings.

One way that I can imagine an ENPA moving forward is the strengthening of collaboration with fellow psychological anthropologists in non-European contexts, and to pay more attention and make transparent the chain of epistemic collaborations we go through. It is necessary to have this network to foster dialogue and co-operation among the European society of psychological anthropologists, but also to encourage the growth of interest in anthropologically-derived psychological insights among scholars and practitioners in the various contexts we work in.