

The European Network for
Psychological Anthropology (ENPA)
Third Biennial Conference

**ANTHROPOLOGIES AND PSYCHOLOGIES
IN INTER/ACTION – ENGAGING
INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES**



11-13 June
University of Münster



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CONFERENCE BOOKLET

Tuesday, 10 June, 18:30 – 20:00

SOFT OPENING AND FILM SCREENING, WITH INTRODUCTION AND Q&A

***Pasung*: A multimodal exploration of shackling and confinement of people living with mental illness in Indonesia**

Robert Lemelson, UCLA

Robert Lemelson, PhD, Adjunct Professor of Anthropology UCLA. Lemelson is a cultural anthropologist, ethnographic filmmaker and philanthropist. He has conducted visual psychological anthropology research in Indonesia for over 25 years. As the founder of Elemental Productions, the 2020 Recipient of a "New Directions Award" from the General Anthropology Division of the American Anthropological Association, he has directed and produced over fifteen ethnographic films on a range of topics, including mental illness and genocide. He is also the recipient of a 2017 "Creative Scholarship Award" from the Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture for his significant creative contribution to the field. He is the co-author of [Afflictions: Steps Towards a Visual Psychological Anthropology](#) and [Widening the Frame with Visual Psychological Anthropology: Perspectives on Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigma in Indonesia](#). View his work at elementalproductions.org.

Pasung (working title) is a multimodal interactive website made by a collaborative team of American and Indonesian anthropologists, filmmakers, and mental health care advocates exploring personal experiences of shackling and psychiatric care in Indonesia. Our project acknowledges shackling both as a human rights violation and a situated response to a complex social predicament. We ask why, despite longstanding national efforts to end pasung, it is still used, how the practice fits into pathways of treatment, and what the experience is like for those involved. The website offers a feature-length film on the experience of one family shot over the course of a decade; short interviews with state and private clinicians, alternative treatment providers, patients, and family members which situate shackling within the broader ecosystem of mental health care in Indonesia; an interactive timeline of psychiatric care and the anti-shackling movement; and comparative multimedia pieces on the restraint and confinement of people with mental illness around the world, including the United States. Guided by the theories and praxis of visual psychological anthropology, critical global mental health, and anthropological studies of power and confinement, this project addresses the tensions and possibilities in the provision of mental healthcare in Indonesia.

Wednesday, 11 June, 09:30 – 19:30

Keynote: Reflections on Aceh, 2004-2024

Byron J. Good and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, and Department of Anthropology, Harvard University

Byron Good, PhD, is Professor of Medical Anthropology, Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, and Department of Anthropology, Harvard University. Prof Good has a long trajectory of work on theorizing psychological anthropology, on culture and mental illness, subjectivity, and haunting/hauntology. Since 1996, he has been collaborating with colleague in Indonesia in both basic and action research focused on early psychosis and mental health services, particularly in Yogyakarta, and post-conflict mental health care in Aceh. Prof Good delivered the 2000 Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures and Oxford University's 2010 Marett Lecture. He was President of the Society for Psychological Anthropology 2013-2015 and was awarded the SPA's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017.

Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good (*not present in-person*), PhD, is Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine Emerita, Harvard Medical School and the Department of Sociology, Harvard University. Prof Good conducts comparative work on 'medicine's modernist projects,' the rise of biotechnologies, end of life care, and global bioethics. Her long interest in political subjectivity has included work with Indonesian artists and women's response to traumatic violence in post conflict Aceh. Prof Good is recipient of the 2019 William Silen Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Mentoring from Harvard Medical School and the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Psychological Anthropology. Profs Mary-Jo and Byron Good edited the journal *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 1986-2004.

On December 26, 2004, a massive tsunami swept across the coastal areas of Aceh, the Indonesian province on the northern tip of Sumatra, killing 160-180,000 people. As nearly 200 humanitarian organizations arrived in response, much of the world first became aware of a major civil war being waged up in the inner hills of Aceh. The tsunami precipitated a peace accord, signed on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki, leading to a near complete cessation of violence. Shortly after, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) contracted with the two of us to lead mental health programs in post-conflict areas Aceh. We designed and directed a major Psychosocial Needs Assessment, then advocated successfully for IOM to support mental health outreach teams going directly into the first 25, then an additional 50 villages to respond to the remainder of violence. In

this presentation, we will reflect back on what Indonesians would call a major ‘action research project.’ On the one hand, we describe this program of activities and the findings of the outcome studies, and reflect on the potential for ‘intervention as a site of ethnographic investigation.’ On the other hand, we reflect on our own psychological experiences of that work, how it influenced our thinking, writing, and theorizing. We briefly describe, for example, how these experiences have led to two decades of writing about haunting and hauntology as core to psychological anthropology. At the end, we briefly describe our recent returns to Aceh, reflecting on the long-term effects of responses to disaster.

ROUNDTABLE: HOW IS PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY A NECESSARY AND RADICAL PROJECT OF ENDURING VALUE IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES?

Organizer: Edward D. Lowe, Soka University of America

Given over a century of rampant anti-psychologizing sentiment in social and cultural anthropology and an anemic concern with global social, cultural, and historical variability in the psychological sciences, it is surprising that psychological anthropology is flourishing a century after its founding. Meetings of psychological anthropologists are well-attended and filled with crucial new research contributions. Its leading journal, *Ethos*, has published four complete quarterly issues of high-value scholarship for five decades. Premier academic publishers continue to publish essential volumes, such as the soon-to-be-published *Cambridge Handbook of Psychological Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 2025). *What is the secret to psychological anthropology’s enduring value for anthropology and psychology?* This roundtable invites an international body of participants to speak to this question. In addition to reflecting on their own research contributions and expertise in the field, roundtable panelists are also invited to consider Robert Levine’s provocative answer that psychological anthropology’s project to include psychological and psychiatric topics in anthropology and evidence from all world cultures in the psychological sciences is *necessary* for these disciplines to create a valid understanding of the human condition. Moreover, Levine claimed that psychological anthropology presents a *radical challenge* to conventional thought in the social and biomedical sciences. Despite occasionally withering criticism, psychological anthropology endures because it retains both these necessary and radical features. If so, panelists should also consider exciting new interventions for the future.

Participants:

Bambi Chapin, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Edward Lowe, Soka University of America

Keir Martin, University of Oslo

Victoria Kumala Sakti, University of Münster

Thomas Stodulka, University of Münster

LAB 8: LOOKING BACK: A PRACTICE OF COUNTER-GAZE

Organisers: Yohannes Mulat Mekonnen Visual, University of Bonn & Ulan Garba Matta, University of Münster

Audio-visual and related representation technologies are no longer at the periphery of social research methodologies. Beyond their significant contribution to knowledge production and dissemination, these media, like any other tools, introduce their own set of challenges in researching the human experience. One key issue is the hierarchy these tools impose in fieldwork—the one in possession of the recording device often assumes a position of Power over the subject being recorded. This audio-visual lab invites participants to engage in an experimental exercise that makes visible the power dynamics embedded in the act of looking through a camera lens. By positioning participants in front of a camera but instructing them to describe the person standing behind it, the lab seeks to reverse the conventional subject-object relationship inherent in visual perception and ethnographic representation. This lab aims to facilitate an embodied experience of counter-gaze, an intervention that critically examines how visual and narrative representations shape subjectivities and one's experience of self. By reversing the traditional direction of looking, we invite participants, both in fieldwork and in everyday encounters, to question entrenched hierarchies of vision and explore new ethics of representation, self-perception, and visual dignity.

Target Audience

This lab is suitable for social scientists, artists, and anyone interested in the ethics of representation, identity negotiation, and decolonial methodologies in research and visual representation.

Lab Structure

Ideally, the lab will take place in a dedicated room where participants can engage in sessions individually or in small groups (maximum of three). Each session will last between 15 to 30 minutes. The material produced during the lab will be curated and presented as an installation on the final day of the conference, offering a reflective space for discussing the experiment's outcomes and implications. To facilitate this experience, the lab will utilize two DSLR cameras, an audio recording device with necessary accessories, and an editing computer.

PANEL 17: CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR: A MULTI-CULTURE, MULTI-METHOD APPROACH (Danhua Zhu, Laura Diprossimo, Hannah J. Hermens, Anneliese Skrobanek, Eve Holden)

Chair: Danhua Zhu

Social development is inherently a multi-faceted and transactional process, where children's various social skills are formed through interactions and relationships with others, but also actively shape them in return. One overarching aim of the social development field is elucidating these socialization processes and their contributions to children's development of social behavior. This panel approaches such aim by highlighting five papers with families in different cultures and diverse research methods. The first longitudinal study uses the still-face paradigm and examines the emerging sense of agency in infant vocalization from families in Germany and Ecuador. The second paper analyzes everyday video recordings of peer interactions in the German preschool setting to investigate preschoolers' peer conflicts and the influences of child age, social understanding, and strategy use on conflict outcomes.

The third experimental study centers children's helping and sharing prosocial behavior during laboratory tasks in relation to requests across cultures of Germany, Japan, and Ecuador. The fourth paper explores Chinese children's independent and interdependent self-construals through drawings and its moderating role in linking parents' emotion socialization reactions to parent-reported prosocial behavior of children. The final paper presents a self-developed coding scheme to measure children's imitation during everyday interactions and its uses in coding naturalistic video recordings across four cultures. Altogether, this panel contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of children's development of key facets of social behavior (i.e., infants' sense of agency during social

interaction, children's conflict and prosocial behavior, and children's imitation) and appeals a multi-culture, multi-method approach to study social development.

The emerging sense of agency in infant vocalisations: A longitudinal cross-cultural investigation

Laura Diprossimo (presenter), Helen Wefers, & Joscha Kärtner

University of Münster, Germany

Five-month-old infants growing up in Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) contexts increase their non-distress vocalisation rate when the typical social responsiveness is interrupted in the still-face paradigm. This increase in vocalising, also known as vocal extinction burst, is assumed to reflect infants' active attempts to re-establish contingent responses, thereby indexing their emerging agency over vocalisations. Two-month-olds do not yet exhibit this response, suggesting that the social efficacy of vocalising is learned between 2 and 5 months, potentially driven by accumulating experiences of social contingency. This longitudinal study examines the gradual emergence of a sense of agency in infant vocalisations in the transition period of 3 and 4.5 months of age. Critically, it also assesses the variability of this process in two cultural contexts (urban Germany; Andean, rural Ecuador), which are documented to differ in their relative emphasis on distal and proximal modalities during early interactions. We predict that a group-level vocal extinction burst will be observed at 4.5 months. If early contingency experiences shape this development, the vocal extinction burst should be modulated by the cultural context, with infants from urban Germany showing greater sensitivity to the interruption of distal contingencies. If the sense of agency gradually emerges over ontogenetic timescales, the magnitude of the vocal extinction burst should increase from 3 to 4.5 months of age. Findings will inform our understanding of communicative and vocal development in diverse contexts.

Preschool children's peer conflicts – Influences of other-oriented strategy use, age and social understanding on conflict outcomes

Hannah J. Hermens (presenter)¹, Paula Döge², Luisa M. Lüken¹, Judith Silkenbeumer¹ & Joscha Kärtner¹

¹ University of Münster, ² Euro-FH University of Applied Science

Previous studies show that young children's consideration of others' needs (other-orientation) during peer conflicts can lead to outcomes that benefit both conflict parties (i.e., win-win). These win-win solutions tend to increase as children grow older, likely due to the development of their socioemotional skills. However, studies on unequal conflict outcomes, with only one party reaching their goal (i.e., win-lose), are relatively limited. This study examines whether age, social understanding, and children's conflict behavior

influence the conflict outcomes (both mutually beneficial and individual win in unequal situations). We analyzed 792 dyadic peer conflict instances from everyday video observations in several preschools, involving 54 target children (aged 44 to 73 months), and 198 peers (aged 11 to 73 months), using multilevel logistic regression models. The analysis indicates that win-win outcomes are associated with a greater use of other-oriented conflict strategies by both involved parties, the use of more strategies overall by the target child, and older age of the peer. Additionally, in conflicts where the outcome was win-lose ($n = 484$), the win of the target child was more likely when the target child was older, adopted more self-oriented strategies, and the peer displayed more other-oriented behaviors and was younger. These findings support the hypothesis that the conflict strategies of both parties significantly influence the conflict resolution. Mutual benefits are more likely achieved through the employment of other-oriented strategies by both children, particularly when the children are of similar ages.

The influence of requests on children's prosocial behavior – an experimental cross-cultural study

Anneliese Skrobaneck (presenter) & Joscha Kärtner

University of Münster

Early cross-cultural research has shown that choice restrictions do not universally influence children in the same way (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Choice restrictions in the form of requests decreased prosocial motivation in vignette studies with U.S. and Canadian adults (Buchtel et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2011) and children (Goyal et al., 2019). Similar effects were found in behavioral studies on actual prosocial behavior in German children (Rapp et al., 2017). However, the influence of choice restrictions on prosocial behavior is yet to be investigated more thoroughly across different cultures. In this project, we tested $N = 275$ 6- to 8-year-old children from three cultural contexts (urban Germany, urban Japan, rural indigenous communities in Ecuador) in three conditions in a between-subjects design: A no request condition, an experimenter request condition and a maternal request condition. The study was conducted in a lab space where children performed in a helping task and a sharing task. We measured quality and quantity of helping, quantity of sharing and obtained self-reports of children's perceived obligation, desire and satisfaction with helping and sharing. Our results reveal both cross-cultural similarities and differences: Contrary to our expectations, all children helped and shared more after a request. Also, although the observed behavior was similar across cultures, children's self-reports revealed cross-cultural differences in how obligatory, how desirable and how satisfying prosociality was perceived.

Parental socialization of positive emotions and Chinese children's prosocial behavior: Moderating roles of children's self-construal

Danhua Zhu (presenter)¹ & Julie C. Dunsmore²

¹ University of Münster, ² University of Houston

Parents play central roles in socializing children to behave prosocially (Pastorelli et al., 2016). Collectivistic cultures like China value cooperation and self-regulation to achieve interpersonal harmony, likely resulting an endorsement of prosocial behavior (Chen & French, 2008). Our study with Chinese families aimed to explore children's prosocial development in family systems and cultural context. We focused on the influence of parental supportive reactions to child positive emotions as one effective emotion socialization practice on children's prosocial behavior and the potential moderating role of children's self-construal (independence, interdependence) as a culturally informed factor on the relation.

Participants were 75 parents with their 7- to 11-year-old child from a rural town in Henan province, China (86.7% mothers, 13.3% fathers; 42.7% boys, 57.3% girls). Parents completed online questionnaires in Chinese and children were given five minutes to draw a picture, *Myself as an Adult*. Drawings were later coded for content related to independence and interdependence. Correlations indicated that children whose parents endorsed stronger supportive reactions showed more parent-reported prosocial behavior. Furthermore, moderation results demonstrated that this association was stronger for children with lower independent self-construal and for children with higher interdependent self-construal.

Results may suggest that children whose own self-construal is more consistent with Chinese cultural values emphasizing interpersonal harmony show greater responsiveness to parental influence in regard to enacting cooperative and communal behavior with peers. Our study expanded the understanding of prosocial development in middle childhood and using drawings as an open format to measure children's self-construal yields unique methodological contributions.

Measuring imitation from naturalistic behavioural observations of children across four cultures

Eve Holden (presenter)¹, Sarah Wright¹, Thomas Huxtable¹, Claire Sutherland², Lara Wood², Jing Xu³, Kathleen Corriveau⁴, Emma Flynn⁵, Sarah Pope-Caldwell⁶, Bruce Rawlings¹ & Sheina Lew-Levy¹

¹ Durham University, ² Abertay University, ³ University of Washington, ⁴ Boston University, ⁵ University of Warwick, ⁶ Georgia State University

Imitation is central to how children acquire instrumental behaviours and cultural conventions. However, developmental research almost exclusively measures imitation using experimental paradigms. It is unclear how findings apply to real-world settings, challenging the ecological validity of our understanding of imitation. Methods measuring imitation within naturalistic contexts are sparse, and where present are described in limited detail, and with participants of limited diversity and age ranges.

We are developing a coding scheme to measure imitation from naturalistic videos of children aged 3-17 across four cultural contexts. These sites contrast in key cultural dimensions such as economy, formal education participation, household structure, and socialisation norms and values. The coding scheme is designed to capture (a) task imitation in which children copy instrumental actions; (b) vocal imitation in which children reproduce a sound emitted by a demonstrator; and (c) bodily imitation in which children copy conventional behaviours via bodily movement such as pointing. Key variables in the scheme include behaviours being imitated, demonstrator characteristics, pedagogical behaviours, social environment, and behavioural context.

I will discuss challenges encountered and overcome during video coding, including how we approached designing the coding scheme to make it suitable for use across cultural settings and ages, and how the scheme will allow us to explore questions about how age-based imitation bias is enabled and constrained by children's social setting and pedagogical interactions. Our coding scheme will be a useful tool for developmental psychologists and anthropologists to expand understanding of imitation in ecologically valid contexts and across cultures.

PANEL 2: SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH AND BEYOND THE LIFECOURSE (Carolina Remorini, Lavinia Tanculescu-Popa, Scarlett Eisenhauer, Ahmet Dikyurt, Tamar Kaneh-Shalit, Dalit Simchai)

Chair: Carolina Remorini

Exploring potential Inter/Actions between anthropologists and health professionals in the approach to Early Childhood Development

Carolina Remorini, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The fundamental premise of Early Childhood Development (ECD) research and public policies worldwide is the assumption that human developmental potential is universal, irrespective of the circumstances in which an individual's life unfolds. The evidence employed in prevailing discourses on ECD is primarily derived from research conducted

in the domains of developmental psychology and neuroscience, with a significant proportion of these studies being conducted in minority world contexts and subsequently extrapolated to global populations.

It has become increasingly evident that a comprehensive understanding of child development necessitates a consideration of the cultural environments in which these individuals develop. Furthermore, there is a growing recognition of the fact that the environments in which children are studied or evaluated are, in fact, cultural environments, and that the parameters, instruments, and models used in such evaluations are cultural products of scientific and professional communities. However, there is a noticeable absence of reflection on the cultural biases embedded in clinical interventions and in the devices designed to monitor and evaluate child development.

In this paper, drawing upon the central theme of this Conference, I explore the potential inter/actions between anthropologists, psychologists, pediatricians, and other specialists working in the field of ECD. I will focus on integrating anthropological lenses and concerns with approaches and proposals taken for granted in clinical settings. To raise these reflections, I will draw on my work experience as an anthropologist who has conducted research in different childrearing contexts, as well as in clinical settings that deal with children's growth and development in Argentina and Catalonia.

Technology Adoption, Workplace Loneliness, and the Aging Workforce in a Cross-Cultural Context

Lavinia Țânculescu-Popa, Hyperion University

As digital transformation accelerates, senior employees (aged 50 and above) face increasing challenges in adapting to workplace technologies, often leading to shifts in professional identity, social integration, and overall well-being. This study explores the intersection of aging, technology adoption, and workplace loneliness from a cross-cultural perspective, examining how different societal norms, values, and labor structures shape older workers' experiences across multiple countries.

By employing a comparative, phenomenological approach, the research investigates how senior employees navigate digital tools in diverse cultural settings, highlighting variations in perceptions of technological ease, organizational support, and inclusion. The study also examines how cultural attitudes toward aging and work influence the extent to which senior employees feel connected or isolated in increasingly digital work environments. Furthermore, it addresses the role of workplace relationships and collective practices in either mitigating or exacerbating feelings of loneliness among older employees.

Ultimately, this research provides insights into how organizations can implement culturally sensitive, inclusive technology strategies that foster intergenerational collaboration, reduce workplace isolation, and enhance the professional engagement of senior workers. By situating the study within a broader anthropological framework, it contributes to understanding how digital transitions reshape the lived experiences of aging employees in a globalized workforce.

Entering future-shaping discussions on emerging technologies: An ecocultural approach

Scarlett Eisenhauer, Regionales Kinderbüro (Langenthal)

In the tradition of the Whiting's psychocultural model of child development, a plethora of theories have built on their tradition including Weisner's ecocultural activity settings, Worthman's bioecocultural microniche and, more recently, action landscapes (Worthman, Cummings & Lende, 2023). Broadly speaking, these theories aim to understand development as an interaction between individuals, culture, and environments. However, anthropological discussions are often placed in past-tense observations (Pink 2021), missing opportunities to effectively inform and communicate with decision makers and future-oriented innovative social or technological design processes.

Emerging technologies are of particular interest in this context. Emerging technologies enter the mainstream, our homes, and social lives at high rates in what are called socialtechnological systems. Particularly children are likened to lab rats in techno-social experiments, as described in the Financial Times article (2024) entitled: "We must stop the smartphone social experiment on our kids."

Theories and methodologies focused on activity settings and ecocultural environments provide one avenue for understanding emerging technologies' impact on (children's) development and through accumulated impact on our future societies. My colleagues and I suggest that a useful way to evaluate the outcomes of these technologies is to systematically examine how they impact the activity settings in which children spend their time. This somewhat interactive paper presentation aims to explore a methodological approach for integrating ecocultural approaches into developmentally relevant, non-academic and future-shaping discussions, including, but not limited to, policy and design.

Transgenerational Trauma, Cultural Trauma, Refugee Studies, Cyprus, Displacement, Emotion

Ahmet Dikyurt, Arizona State University

This study examines transgenerational trauma in Cyprus due to the ethnic conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s and the island's subsequent division. Through semi-structured interviews with second and third-generation Cypriots, whose parents were refugees or were forcefully removed from their homes because of the conflicts, this study explores the narratives of displacement and loss through a trauma studies perspective. Through an analysis of the ethnographic data, the analysis shows that both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities have witnessed forms of both psychological transgenerational trauma and cultural trauma due to conflicts, loss, and division. Yet, they also hint at the possibility of reconciliation through mutual understanding and respect. This research shows the importance of the perspectives of second and third-generation Cypriots to fully understand the complexities of the Cyprus conflict and its lasting effects on identity and communal belonging.

Pedagogies of Neoliberal Subjectivity in Academic Institutions

Tamar Kaneh Shallit & Dalit Simchai

Tel-Hai Academic College

Academic institutions around the world have been developing an organizational care system for students that expands beyond pedagogy and knowledge acquisition. In our lecture, we discuss this care system, "Academic Care," as a lens through which to discuss pedagogies of neoliberal subjectivity enacted by academic institutions in Israel.

Our ethnographic research includes: participation in institutional activities as lecturers, interviews with employees who partake in the caring system (workers of the Students' Dean office, department chairs, etc.); and an analysis of policies, rules. The research shows that faculty and employees who engage in Academic Caring view students as subjects in the process of becoming adults. They see their roles as facilitators of this transition to adulthood.

We argue that faculty members' actions and views are shaped by neoliberal subjectivity. This idea is saturated with contradictions: on one hand, subjects are expected to be independent individuals, self-reliant, calculative etc. At the same time, the therapeutic discourse overlapping with neoliberal notions of the self constructs subjects as fragile and needing the support of various experts.

We show that students are viewed as consumers with entitlements to demand tailored services. On the other hand, they are seen as vulnerable, fragile, and childlike subjects.

We claim that academic institutions solve this contradiction by defining students as subjects in the process of becoming and by viewing their role as mentors and ideal parents. With this reframing, academic institutions emphasize their role as “socialization agents” leading students in their process of becoming adult neoliberal subjects.

PANEL 7: STRUCTURAL VIOLENCES AND THE STATE (Gil Hizi, Marium Javaid Bajwa, Corina Tulbure, Keshav Sawarn, Tirthankar Chakraborty, Yura Hyeon)

Chair: Marium Javaid Bajwa

Psychological idioms and the performances of ethnonational exceptionalism

Gil Hizi, Goethe University Frankfurt

Notions of victimhood and collective trauma have long been mobilized for political ends. What is distinct in recent years is the scope and ubiquity of this process, evident across different regions and forms of communication. The rise of right-wing populism and the political usages of commercial digital media have contributed to the conflation between politics, entertainment and self-help in new ways. In this process, politics is increasingly configured and performed through new conflations between the individualized therapeutic self and the ethnonational collective. This paper discusses this phenomenon based on research in psychological settings in urban China and comparisons with data from Eastern Europe and Israel. I describe how psychological discourses correlate citizens' self-vulnerabilities and empowerment with ethnonational processes. Through engagement with Sara Ahmed's theory of affect, I propose to enhance our attention to the role psychological practitioners play in narrating social and political processes rather than treating psychology as either a-political or an objective intervention upon pre-existing political forces. While psychological interventions can facilitate positive forms of intercultural dialogue in conflict resolution, they also encourage, in many cases, citizens' selective evaluation of human lives their immediate emotional experience takes precedence over concerns with justice and systemic equality. Thus, academics, activists, and therapists must pay more attention to ways by which psychological idioms and practices may underlie claims for recognition and exceptionalism in ways that buttress ethnonational hostilities.

Colorism in the Indian Subcontinent—Insights through Situated Affectivity

Marium Javaid Bajwa, University of Münster

Consistent discriminatory practices associated with dark and black skin color underpin the persistence of colorism and racism in the Indian subcontinent. To understand better how skin color ideologies occupy the mind of people with the effect of marginalizing those with dark skin color and promoting whiteness as a social capital, we will apply the paradigm of situated affectivity. The conceptual tools developed in this framework will help to see how the environmental structures that perpetuate colorism have a pervasive influence on individuals' values and their emotional repertoire from a very young age. After having documented how the minds of individuals are invaded with discriminatory colorist positions, we will present how people indulge in processes of user-resource interactions assumed to help regulating their affect, that in turn, result in re-enforcing again colorist and racist ideologies and practices.

Governing Through Resentment: Loss and Border Attachment

Corina Tulbure, University of Barcelona

In recent decades, territorial borders have gained prominence in political discourse, being reinvested with social and political significance. How can we explain the current attachment to borders and their weight, not only in political rhetoric but also in everyday life? In an era marked by insecurity and inequality, borders have been instrumentalized as symbols of safety, legitimizing and normalizing violent security practices at state borders while concealing global inequalities. As a result, citizens are reassured that they are being protected—both by someone and against someone—while structural problems such as inequality are displaced onto the relational sphere. In this context, emotions such as fear, fueled by insecurity and loss, have been transformed into resentment toward those who cross borders, reinforcing the perception of borders as guarantors of protection. We argue that borders have become an ideological construct, with border resentment serving as a tool to govern insecurities by fostering attachment to borders and resentment toward border-crossers. To explore these emotional transformations, we analyze political discourses from recent election periods in Spain and Romania, focusing on discursive performance and textual analysis, as well as interviews and ethnographic fieldwork with state practitioners and NGOs.

Health Migration, Structural Disparities, and Interdisciplinary Perspectives: A Sociocultural Exploration in Post-COVID Rural Jharkhand

Keshav Sawarn, Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines); Indian Statistical Institute

This research examines the intersection of health migration, structural inequalities, and interdisciplinary perspectives in rural Jharkhand, India, focusing on marginalized communities. The post-COVID era has exacerbated existing health disparities, leading individuals from rural and tribal areas to migrate in search of better healthcare. This migration is driven by systemic failures within local healthcare systems, characterized by insufficient resources, poor infrastructure, and societal marginalization. The study adopts a multidisciplinary approach, integrating anthropological and psychological frameworks to understand the complex factors influencing health migration. Psychological anthropology provides insights into emotional and subjective aspects, while anthropology explores cultural and social dimensions. The research investigates how power asymmetries, systemic violence, and identity formation within healthcare systems impact migration decisions. It critiques the imposition of biomedical models on rural communities and challenges the universalizing assumptions embedded in healthcare interventions. Using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and qualitative interviews, the study emphasizes the need for collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches to address health disparities. It proposes innovative health policies prioritizing community-based solutions, decolonizing practices, and building equitable systems of care that reduce migration. This work contributes to the dialogue between anthropology and psychology, offering new perspectives on health, culture, and subjectivity in marginalized communities while aiming to inform academic research and policy reforms to reduce health inequities.

‘Pedagogy of fear’: An ethnohistorical enquiry of affective governance and institutionalization of ‘good students’/potential disruptors in a democracy.

Tirthankar Chakraborty, Freie Universität Berlin

In this paper, I examine fear is operationalized (in a democracy) to create a subservient sensibility in the citizens, not as a by-product but as a direct method/tool of governing through shaping behaviour. Through an ethnohistorical method of intensive fieldwork and archival research, this paper will explore the practices of arousing fear in the citizenry, how this fear was experienced, and how it shaped the everyday lives of those who were targetted, the university-going student population in Calcutta during the 1960s and 70s – during the Naxalite movement. I argue it to be the point of departure, in a nascent democracy, as massive surveillance, the crackdown on dissent, and governance through

fear were routinized in the Indian polity. Using the analytical framework of political affect, this study will theorize the institutionalization of fear in the mind, body and habits of ordinary and extra-ordinary members of the student population during a revolutionary movement. This refers to the politics of memory, affective behaviours, change-insensibility and ideas, and how individuals and societies 'fall in line' to not be an outlier in the states' perspective. The routinization of governing by fear and the 'culture of silence' (Freire 2000) instilled by the democratic state has not been explored, especially in the context of South Asia, and particularly, India. Unlike the studies which have focused on the threats as subjects to be feared, this study wants to focus on the institutionalization of fear amongst the subjects who are deemed as threats - which has hitherto not been studied.

PANEL 5: THERAPIST / PSYCHIATRIST PERSPECTIVES (Hagar Hazaz Berger, Anne Birgitte Leseth, Sagi Berger, Tiago Pires)

Chair: Hagar Hazaz Berger

"Hell touched me too": Shared traumatic event- From the eyes of the therapist
Hagar Hazaz Berger, Ono Academic College

A door closes behind two people, providing privacy and complete confidentiality for the details shared between the patient and the therapist. A familiar scene in psychological treatment includes a couch where the patient can recline alongside a nearby tissue box. However, mental health support during mass disaster events often lacks these elements. The traditional therapy room disappears and is replaced by temporary and changing environments—a hotel room or a house converted into an emergency center for people to come and go. This description of a shifting therapeutic space following a national disaster comes from an ethnographic study conducted shortly after the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, in Israel. The research examines the role of psychologists in Israel who had to mobilize immediately to provide mental health support to victims of the attack. Its aim is to explore the immediate response of mental health professionals and the personal difficulties they encounter due to societal expectations – to be "mental health medics". This situation created complex therapeutic and personal dilemmas, forcing psychologists to adapt to new treatment structures, both in terms of physical settings and the blurring of therapist-patient boundaries. My question was: What are the effects of these cultural expectations on therapists' experiences, and what can be learned about the exposure of mental health professionals to such events? Understanding the cultural, psychological,

and ethical dimensions of treatment in this context is crucial for developing effective support systems during crises.

The risk and potential of diversity and interdisciplinarity in psychiatry

Anne Birgitte Leseth, Oslo Metropolitan University

If professional expertise becomes more fragmented, diverse, and poorly integrated, will it be diluted? This paper draws on literature and pilot research from a planned project on psychiatry and diversity. We argue that professional expertise can be improved by understanding diversity better. The psychiatrist has traditionally an expert role in the team around patients in mental health care, particularly in the treatment of seriously ill patients. However, the role of psychiatrists is in a state of upheaval. New ways of working in mental health services create new challenges. The gradual spread of evidence-based medicine and new forms of institutional organization based on bureaucratic accountability, have imposed constraints in decision making, reducing the scope of personal judgement. Flattened hierarchies, multidisciplinary teams, cross-disciplinary teams, lack of collegium, culturally diverse patient populations and growing resistance to medicalization all put pressure on psychiatrists. The prestige of and trust in psychiatry has declined relative to other medical specialties, and globally there is a crisis in the recruitment and retention of psychiatrists. We hypothesize that these pressures on psychiatrists could be approached ethnographically as encounters with diversity (e.g. cognitive, demographic, social value). Anthropological theories on culture are frequently applied in research on psychiatry, as well as in developing cultural manuals in client-psychiatrists' encounters. However, these theories often represent outmoded and insufficient perspectives on diversity in a broader sense. Mental illness is associated with greater socioeconomic costs than other diseases. A better understanding of the challenges and potentialities of psychiatrists' expertise can therefore have huge benefits.

Getting a-way with it: The Intersection of the Theoretical and the Popular in Psychoanalysis.

Sagi Berger, Tel-Aviv University

I propose that these interactions give rise to new psychoanalytic terms that blend with everyday culture, which then return to the analytic setting through the patients. During the lecture, I will discuss three concepts that are commonly used in popular daily discourse but are also frequently encountered in therapy: **Fomo**, **Gaslighting**, and **Imposter**. I will argue that these concepts possess a "psychic essence" and are products of a shared psychoanalytic and social creation. I will elucidate the term "gaslighting" through Bateson's concept of the "double bind", Liang's "compulsion of madness", and Anzieu's

notion of "paradoxical communication". I will examine the term "FOMO" from an existential perspective to illustrate the interactions between analytic, scientific, and popular discourse. Furthermore, I will analyze the concept of the "Imposter" through both lyrical and philosophical lenses, incorporating some ideas of psychoanalyst Adam Phillips. Through brief clinical vignettes, I will demonstrate how these concepts emerge in therapy as analytic objects (Green) and explore the possibility of their collaborative use. Finally, I will discuss how fostering a shared mental reality can help overcome the inherent "confusion of tongues" (Balint) present in the analytic situation. The analyst's openness and recognition of the existing analytic knowledge within the patient's psyche—in the context in which they live and breathe—can facilitate a freer and more shared exploration of the analyst's mind and emotional pain within their cultural and social environment.

Anthropology and psychoanalysis in the early days of Italian ethnopsychiatry

Tiago Pires, Bulgarian Academy of Science

The role of culture in the conceptualization, development, and treatment of mental disorders became a global topic during the Cold War. However, this mediation between social aspects and psychopathology varied, following different paths. This paper aims to understand how Ernesto de Martino's thinking became the epistemological basis of ethnopsychiatry in Italy, especially through the dialog between anthropology and psychoanalysis. Demartinian theory can be regarded as a foundational framework for cultural interpretations of subjectivity, as well as for the expression and management of psychological suffering. This perspective transcends the diagnostic manuals established by Anglo-Saxon psychiatry. In this paper, I will analyze some of his publications regarding the mythical-ritual aspects of the Italian South (tarantism), specifically his book entitled "The Land of Remorse", published in 1961. De Martino established an epistemological break with the psy sciences of the time by understanding tarantism as an autonomous and legitimate symbolical-ritual language used by a population in difficulty to cope with subjectivity suffering, instead of considering this phenomenon as a physiological or mental pathology. De Martino is recognized for his historical contributions to ethnopsychiatry and transcultural psychiatry, but also as a forerunner in the Italian context of what I call a "decolonization of mental health".

How Much Home Do We Need?

Yura Hyeon, University of Münster & Freie Universität Berlin

The sudden appearance of Yemeni asylum seekers on Jeju Island, at my home. My personal experiences with multiple migrations initially motivated me to engage with them.

Yemenis carried multiple sites to South Korea and led me to their tremendous migration routes and homes, problematizing 'field', unveiling the ethnographer's positionality as a migrant. In the era of the 'migration crisis', addressing migration and migrants through assimilation and integration models has been a key agenda among the nation-building/keeping projects. However, these approaches have also been critically reflected. In response to the question of living together, scholars have emphasized the possibility of a new community or space of belonging beyond identity categories or groupings in contemporary diversified societies. Yet belonging is problematized; the feeling of 'non-belonging' also emerges and gains scholarly attention. Rather than the language of belonging and solidarity, the notions of commoning and sociability is suggested to capture the dynamics of contemporary citizenship struggles. My research is grounded on about three-year ethnographic observation and conversation with Yemenis who mostly received the humanitarian sojourner status in South Korea. The legal status needs to be renewed every year, rendering institutional precarity, also enabling their hypermobile life and border crossings to accomplish their aspirations. The research highlights their dynamic homemaking and expansive mobility and how these affect their home feeling, non-belonging, and alternative emotions beyond the binary of belonging and exclusion in their new home, South Korea. The anthropological inquiry investigates what truly matters to Yemeni refugees and even questions whether these concerns are significant in our coexistence.

LAB 4: BRIDGING DISCIPLINES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE ON APPROACHES TO ANALYZING OBSERVATIONAL DATA IN SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Organisers: Marta Giner Torr ns¹, Natalia Siekiera², Jorge David Mantilla Salgado³, & Karla Garc a⁴

¹University of M nster, ²Jagiellonian University of Krak w, ³Universidad de Otavalo, ⁴University of Munich

This lab brings together psychologists, anthropologists, and scholars from related disciplines, for an interdisciplinary exchange on methodological approaches to analyzing culture within social interactions.

Using video recordings from the Kichwa community in Ecuador, M nster (Germany), and Kyoto (Japan), which capture mealtime preparation involving mothers and their two-year-old children, participants will explore how different disciplines observe and analyze

behaviors in naturalistic settings. Through collaborative analysis of the selected video sequences, participants will deepen their understanding of discipline-specific methods and perspectives. Working in interdisciplinary groups, they will discuss and reflect on diverse analytical strategies. Four scholars—two with an anthropological background and two with a psychological background—will moderate discussions, offering their expertise to stimulate an interdisciplinary exchange. Overall, this lab aims to encourage ongoing dialogue and collaboration between psychologists, anthropologists, and scholars from additional disciplines in cross-cultural studies. By engaging with alternative analytical frameworks, participants will gain insights into how interdisciplinary perspectives can enhance and be applied to their own research practices. We also hope that this lab will serve as a platform for researchers seeking to forge lasting collaborations in interdisciplinary research.

This is an in-house lab (a standard seminar room equipped with a projector should be adequate)

Maximal number of participants: 30

(ONLINE)

PANEL 23: MENTAL DISTRESS AND TRAUMA (Maria Elisa Dainelli, Marco Sassoon, Jasmina Polovic, Puteri Aellisya bt Mohd Amaddy & Florence Toh Haw Ching, Sweetie Kujur)

Chair: Marco Sassoon

The contagion of suicide - Good and bad death in ethnoclinical context

Maria Elisa Dainelli, Independent researcher

My contribution stems from three years of research work, as an anthropologist, in the field of ethnoclinical mediation in Tuscany, Italy.

The case I want to examine concerns the accompaniment of mourning and the analysis of the concepts of good and bad death in a group of Nigerian people housed in a migration center in the province of Livorno. Following the suicide of one of their compatriots, they had to deal with the oppression of their grieving process and with a silence imposed to quell discontent and riots among users.

The facts analyzed can be ascribed to what R. Beneduce describes as “ethnographies of the third kind”. They are composed of critical, fringe scenarios in which indifference and unbalanced power relations describe conditions of humiliation and violence suffered both in life and in death. The central element of these contexts concerns precisely the impossibility of celebrating funeral rituals.

The contribution will therefore focus on the description of the ethnographic case and the way our multidisciplinary equipe conducted the therapeutic process. Following Tobie Nathan's approach, large settings were places to question power imbalances and where to provide space for users to confront each other. I will describe the therapeutic process and steps we cross during months to arrive to a resolution of the individual and collective impasse the group was fallen into.

Death before dishonor. Psychosocial distress and urban survival in the aftermath of forced-return migration to Dakar

Marco Sassoon, University of Cologne

Migration from Africa to Europe has become increasingly precarious due to repressive European border policies, leading to an increase in forced returns to home countries. Although forced return is recognized as a risk factor for readjustment and psychosocial health, research on this aspect is scarce. This paper presents preliminary findings from an ongoing ethnographic study of the psychological and social well-being of forced returnees in the urban area of Dakar, Senegal. Combining critical border studies, medical anthropology, and psychology with a decolonizing approach, I describe the return challenges faced by two Senegalese migrants of different ages and backgrounds. Forced return can trigger psychological distress, expressed in relevant socio-cultural idioms, and marginalization through the experience of dishonor, resulting in the rupture of family and community bonds. Returnees cope with these challenges through active tactics of resilience, which I analyze in relation to available care systems, their accessibility, and perceived adequacy.

Anxiety in Session: Covid-19 as Cosmological Disruption

Jasmina Polovic, University of Oklahoma

My contribution to the field of psychological anthropology stems from a three-year fieldwork and clinical work as a psychological and psychiatric anthropologist with Slovenians experiencing distress within the Covid-19 pandemic context. I present three different types and causes of anxiety focusing on the one that is induced by the lack of cultural framing as experienced with the Covid-19 pandemic. Mental health professionals usually treat such distress, *inter alia*, in connection to isolation, one's personal history, changed relationship dynamics, or challenging economic situations. I demonstrate how anthropological framing of the Covid-19 as a disruption in the cosmological order along with developing treatment techniques, accordingly, has helped to speed up recovery and reintegration of the "patients" as well as reduce the use of medication. Recognizing

culture as a fundamental mechanism for psychological stability suggests that it also plays a critical role in the emotional landscapes during the Covid-19 pandemic and in people's sense-making. I draw comparisons in such cosmological disruption among Slovenians with later collaborations on the projects of mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic among Emirati mothers in Abu Dhabi (UAE) and Oklahoma residents in the United States. The emotional landscapes of such disruption seem to follow a similar pattern of uncertainty, disorientation, fear, and/or anxiety as a result of lacking cultural referential anchor points, whereas, examining the narratives people have employed to make sense of their experience shows cultural variations in the pathways, forms, and expressions of emotional normalization among different cultural worlds.

Navigating Complex Trauma in Children's Novel *A Monster Calls*

Puteri Aellisya bt Mohd Amaddy & Florence Toh Haw Ching
Universiti Putra Malaysia

It is widely acknowledged that the development of a child is largely dependent on its primary caregivers. Various forms of traumatic experiences in childhood lead to long-lasting developmental arrests. Most of the time, however, these impediments are only discovered in adulthood when individuals find themselves faced with numerous setbacks across a myriad of functioning. By then, the work of recovery becomes complicated due to deeply ingrained thought and behavioural patterns which are difficult to restructure. Discourse surrounding complex trauma should therefore be broached earlier, particularly as the formative years surrounding the emerging generations have become increasingly challenging. The study attempts this through the reading of Patrick Ness' children's novel, *A Monster Calls* (2011). In the text, 13-year-old Conor, the protagonist, struggles with an absent father, a terminally ill mother, an inattentive grandmother and bullying in school. The sense of abandonment, neglect and abuse experienced culminate to manifest complex trauma in the character. Consequently, he develops an insecure attachment with an imaginary non-human entity identified as a yew tree monster. The paper discusses the journey which Conor undergoes as the monster re-parents him through the ordeals. The protagonist eventually learns to accept his feelings while processing his grief. The significance of this study lies in the use of literary works as a medium to identify the psychological struggles which children may encounter. It is hoped that the study instigates important and meaningful discussions with young readers to foster healthier coping mechanisms in the face of life's inevitable struggles.

Silence Stigma and Suppression: Crisis of Unheard and Neglected Mental Health in Eastern Plantation in India

Sweety Kujur, North Bengal University

Numerous amounts of pressure and stress disturb mental health of people, which is inevitable and universal. Harsh reality is that, in India, that too in rural areas, people are unaware of the term 'Mental Well-Being'. India, is known for its diversity in culture, caste, language, society, religion etc. Is lacking behind mental wellness hence, it needs to improve access to quality mental healthcare across diverse population.

According to WHO, India has undertaken several policy initiatives under Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 and it is predicted that during 2012-2030 our mental health issues is estimated at 1.03 trillion (productivity losses and other indirect expenses). MHFW (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) through NMHS (National Mental Health Survey) 2015-16, report said that there is treatment gaps between 70% and 92% for various mental disorders shows, inadequate care. Factors contributing to this gap include social stigma, lack of awareness, and insufficient mental health infrastructure. In addition to that according to reports by Sapiens Labs, 2023, indicated that the youth are facing significant mental health challenges, with data suggesting a decline in mental well-being among younger population.

This paper is solely based on the present scenario of selected area by the author and understanding, analyzing, solving the problem through applied anthropology is presented through qualitative methods during her field work. For this survey, sample size was small i.e, 30 were youths and 20 were married women till aged 55.

PANEL 3: DECENTRALISING WESTERN PSYCHOLOGIES (Betül Yıldırım, Maha Nator, Annigje van Dijk, Jorge David Mantilla Salgado)

Chair: Jorge David Mantilla Salgado

Decolonial Approaches to Intercultural Communication: Challenging Othering and Reclaiming Indigenous Knowledge

Betül Yıldırım, Clinical Psychologist

This paper explores decolonial approaches to intercultural communication, focusing on the theoretical implications of challenging Western-centric frameworks. It critically examines how conventional intercultural communication models often contribute to processes of "othering," reinforcing discrimination, racism, and marginalization. These

models, deeply rooted in Western epistemologies, perpetuate unequal power dynamics in intercultural interactions. By integrating Islamic principles such as *Ādāb al-Munāzarah* (respectful debate) and *Ta'ruf* (mutual recognition), the paper argues for a more inclusive and equitable theoretical framework for intercultural dialogue. The discussion draws on Recep Şentürk's concepts of Rooted Revival and Open Civilization to critique both conventional decolonial approaches and the dismissal of Western thought. Rooted Revival advocates for revitalizing indigenous knowledge systems while allowing for innovation, while Open Civilization emphasizes pluralism and dynamic cultural exchange. This theoretical exploration highlights the need for a shift in intercultural communication that resists colonial legacies and epistemic violence. It calls for reclaiming indigenous intellectual traditions to foster a more cooperative and inclusive approach to intercultural engagement, challenging the structures of othering that underlie traditional communication models. Ultimately, the paper contributes to the broader conversation on decoloniality by advocating for a more equitable, transformative theoretical framework that prioritizes mutual recognition and cultural inclusivity.

The Materiality of Memory: Objects and Identity in Druze Reincarnation Stories

Maha Nator (presenter), University of Haifa

Carol Kidron, Avihu Shoshana

Avihu Shoshana, University of Haifa

This study examines the Druze belief in reincarnation, where death marks a transition in the soul's journey, leading to rebirth in a new human body. Associated to this belief is "Notq," a phenomenon where individuals remember and talk about their previous incarnation.

Drawing on thematic analysis of interviews with 45 Druze adults in Israel who have experienced Notq, the research highlights the psychological and collective significance of objects in these stories. Objects in Notq narratives bridge the tangible and spiritual, acting as mnemonic devices that foster connections with the deceased and facilitate the intergenerational transmission of memory.

Beyond their mnemonic role, objects in Notq serve as evidence, reinforcing spiritual beliefs and mitigating skepticism through tangible proof. Moreover, Encounters with the family of the previous incarnation and the diverse contexts in which Notq is recited among the Druze are often marked by feelings of curiosity, attentiveness and doubt. Objects associated with these stories can evoke powerful reactions, such as excitement, awe, and reverence. These responses, in turn, deepen the sense of belonging and reinforce the belief in reincarnation.

In a society where religion is considered secret and access to the formal teaching of the religious text is inaccessible to non-religious members, Notq stories and their associated objects provide a tangible link to Druze religious identity. This study illuminates the interplay of material culture, memory, and belief, contributing to broader discussions on doubt, evidence, truth, and authenticity in alternative epistemologies.

‘Doing Research’: Interdisciplinary Illness Narratives and Mental Health in Burkina Faso

Annigje van Dijk, KU Leuven

In this paper, I turn to ‘the patient’ – instead of the researcher or mental health professional – as a potential expert in interdisciplinarity. I draw on one-year ethnographic research with patients of a psychiatric ward in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. In Burkina, as in many other countries, psychiatry is not necessarily the dominant framework used to interpret and/or treat mental troubles. Patients often embark on ‘therapeutic trajectories’ – a search for healing that includes trying out different forms of therapy (religious, ‘traditional’, psychiatric...), sometimes simultaneously. Such trajectories are usually seen as problematic by mental health professionals, as they supposedly delay the arrival at or encourage people to discontinue psychiatric care. Looking from the perspective of ‘patients’ and their close relatives, however, another picture emerges. Following my interlocutors as they were (re-)constructing their lives and narratives after encountering psychiatry, I learned that engaging in different forms of treating and ‘knowing’ mental troubles was a very critical and reflexive endeavour, sometimes even referred to as ‘doing research’. Doing this helped my interlocutors navigate a complex mental health landscape and their own vulnerable position in it – giving them agency over their own narrative. Rather than showing a disregard for psychiatry (or biomedical treatment), their stories demonstrate how psychiatric words and technologies can become part of what we could see as interdisciplinary illness narratives. Taking patients’ expertise seriously means recognizing that their stories offer valuable insights into what it means to think interdisciplinarily in mental health—insights that researchers and mental health professionals should take seriously.

Integrating Kichwa Epistemologies in Psychology and Anthropology Education: A Case Study of Curricular Decolonization at an Ecuadorian University

Jorge David Mantilla Salgado, Universidad de Otavalo

This paper examines the integration of Indigenous Kichwa epistemologies within the anthropology course of the psychology undergraduate program at Universidad de Otavalo, Ecuador. The study explores how the introduction of Kichwa concepts of well-

being (suma kawsay), personhood, and community relations generates productive tensions with classical anthropological theories traditionally taught in the course. The investigation addresses three key aspects: first, the methodological challenges of teaching Indigenous knowledge systems within a Western academic framework; second, the theoretical dialogues and conflicts that emerge when Kichwa epistemologies encounter established anthropological paradigms; and third, the implications of this limited but significant curricular intervention for psychology students' understanding of cultural diversity in mental health approaches. The findings reveal both the possibilities and limitations of introducing Indigenous knowledge through a single course. This case study provides insights into the practical challenges of decolonizing psychology and anthropology curricula within existing institutional constraints, while pointing to opportunities for more comprehensive future reforms.

PANEL 20: HEARING VOICES IN HISTORY (Annette Hornbacher, Joop de Jong, William Sax)

Chair: William Sax

Hearing voices or having other “hallucinations” is often taken to be a sign of psychopathology, but these phenomena can be experienced and interpreted in a variety of ways, some of them rather positive. Drawing on decades of research in Africa, South Asia and Indonesia, the anthropologists and psychiatrist in this panel discuss a number of cases where auditory and visual perceptions of non-material beings are regarded positively. They advance hypotheses about why such “hallucinations” are valued and even cultivated in some contexts and devalued in others. Relying on the works of Taylor, Marriott, and others, the panelists explore why it is that such experiences have so dramatically declined in the “modern” world.

How to hear voices: Esoteric knowledge techniques in Bali

Annette Hornbacher, Heidelberg University

In modern Western societies, hearing voices or seeing persons who are not part of the material world is understood as a subjective hallucination rather than a perception of the real world, and it is attributed to subjective states of confusion or trauma, and even associated with psychosis and schizophrenia. This implies the idea that – aside from dreams - a mentally healthy subject is identical with him/herself and separate from the world he/she inhabits. Charles Taylor therefore distinguishes a modern “buffered” from a pre-modern “porous” self, which matches anthropological dichotomies of “individuals” vs

“dividuals”. My paper engages with such ideas of ontologically, culturally and historically different selves on the grounds of my fieldwork in contemporary Bali, where states of trance possession and ideas about usually invisible agents are valued as crucial forms to connect with *niskala*, the unseen dimension of the world. This does not mean that Balinese have a different culture specific character as Mead would have it. While spontaneous ritual possession has attracted the interest of many anthropologists, my paper will focus instead on the rarely noticed body techniques of esoteric specialists aiming to cultivate their ability to hear voices or to see the immaterial *niskala* agents in the material world.

Collective Trauma Processing: dissociation and hearing voices as a way of processing postwar traumatic stress in West Africa

Joop de Jong, University of Amsterdam

In most war zones around the world, mental health professionals are often not available, live in urban areas, and have a different socio-cultural background than the survivors of the armed conflict. In the aftermath of mass violence, how does the local population cope with social suffering and traumatic stress? I will use the concept of “Collective Trauma Processing” to analyze how a mass dissociative cult, the Kiyang-yang in Guinea Bissau, offered the local population a pathway to mitigate the consequences of protracted and widespread political violence. About ten percent of the ethnic group of the Balanta heard voices and often became clairvoyant and clair-olfactory. The voices told them to radically change their lifestyle. I will first argue that within clinical psychology and psychiatry little attention is paid to local cultural healing mechanisms addressing traumatic stress. To compare trauma processing mechanisms across the globe, I will propose a comprehensive model discerning five ontological dimensions that are considered to be involved in suffering and are addressed in healing approaches. I describe similarities and differences between academic psychological healing traditions and Collective Trauma Processing among the Balanta in Guinea Bissau. The Kiyang-yang movement uses the idiom of dissociation as a collective expression of distress and as a vehicle to process social suffering and traumatic stress.

Voices of the Dead in the Western Himalaya

William Sax, Heidelberg University

In the Indian federal state of Uttarakhand in the West Himalaya, people often speak with their dead ancestors. This occurs when the ghost of a recently-deceased family member causes trouble and must be pacified, and also during periodic festivals, in which the dead often participate. I will illustrate the speech of the dead with several short video clips and

then discuss its paralinguistic features, including its remarkable similarity to certain kinds of lament associated with newly-married women. I will conclude by offering an explanation of the frequency of such speech in terms of the ethnosociological model of the “dividual” Hindu person developed by my guru, McKim Marriott. This model bears a striking resemblance to Charles Taylor’s notion of the “porous self,” but diverges sharply from the model of the person that is implicit in contemporary psychiatry.

PANEL 13: THE TROUBLE OF FEELING: PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY (Kostas Yannakopoulos, Irina Savu Cristea, Panos Tsitsanoudis, Sara El Dayekh, Mona Elisa Behnke)

Chair: Mona Elisa Behnke

This panel aims to bring together various theoretical standpoints and research methods, from ethnographic to historical and archival practices, from the anthropologies of gender and sexuality, to anthropologies of affect, emotion, and psychosocial support. With the intention of staying with the trouble that feeling brings to our disciplines, we aim to explore the ways in which psychological anthropology can emerge as a significant field of researching gendered and sexualized relationalities. Along these intersections, we aim for a research ethos that allows us to delve into the complexities and ambiguities that permeate power relations as lived and experienced material. From practices of care and support to histories of violence and repression, the questions around affects and emotions today, remain pressing. What tightrope do mental health professionals have to walk to help their clients navigate gendered experiences of migration and loneliness? How is professional care work practiced amongst counselors working with gender-based violence? How is emotional labor articulated through gendered emotional vocabularies across public and private spheres? How are gender binaries and sexual hierarchies negotiated through various affective languages and queer negations? How are patriarchal scripts and heteronormative meanings around intimate femicide articulated through a common psychological grammar that underlies our current perceptions of violence in intimate relationships? Revolving around those questions, we aim to ask many more.

Masculinities, erotic dominance/submission and negative feelings in Greek homoerotic literature

Kostas Yannakopoulos, University of Aegean

In postwar Greece, according to public perception regarding sexual behavior, men are divided based on the gender to which they are assumed to belong, and not based on the gender of the sexual partner they choose. “Man”/Andras is the one who “penetrates,” who “acts upon” either a woman or a man. Faggot/sissy “Poustis/aderfi” is the one who, like the woman, is “acted upon” – is “penetrated.” The “man” is considered normal, since his “active” sexual behavior corresponds to his male anatomy, even when he participates in a homosexual relationship. In contrast, the “poustis/aderfi” is considered abnormal, since his “passive” sexual behavior does not correspond to his male anatomy.

These public perceptions of (homo)sexuality constitutes the ideological basis of the writings, especially poetry, of Dinos Christianopoulos. Christianopoulos born in Thessaloniki in 1931, was one of the prominent representatives of the old (postwar) generation of Greek homosexual intellectuals. In the writings and interviews of Christianopoulos the gendered/sexual dichotomy andras-poustis/aderfi was accompanied by the worship of an “authentic”, “natural” but also nearly sadistic masculinity of the peasant and working class men and the submission to them of the poustis/aderfi. Also, the poet express feelings such as shame, isolation/loneliness, and sometimes self-hatred regarding his homosexuality. This humiliation, “self-shattering” of poustis/aderfi, his “masochism” and the negative feelings regarding homosexuality echo queer psychoanalytical analytical categories, theories of affect and queer negativity.

My aim in this paper is to explore the perceptions/theories of Christianopoulos and put them into conversation with the queer psy/affect theories.

Gendered emotional vocabularies articulating emotional labor across public and private spheres in the north of Bali

Irina Savu Cristea, University of Münster

“It’s not natural to see women getting emotional” is a statement I often heard during my fieldwork in Bali. The idea that women use emotions more (and better) than men, is shared by most of my interlocutors. While the logical/masculine versus emotional/feminine dichotomy often transpires through their explanations of behavior in the public sphere, the opposite is used to ascribe gendered roles in the private sphere (and the frequent local social events). Here, women are seen as emotionally savvy than men, more logical, able to calm themselves and others, and men are thought as unable to control their emotions and bodies. The definition and the construction of self among Balinese women is based on a high control over their (and others’) “negative” emotions,

continuous efforts to maintain “harmonious” (non-conflictual) relationships, a non-confrontive attitude, solving problems in a calm manner, and enduring.

Most of the women define themselves as the “compass” that guides their husbands by managing their emotions. Moreover, they take on the responsibility of being the “core” that holds the family together, harmonious, happy, because men are perceived as unable to do it. This paper describes the gendered emotional vocabulary in the Balinese context, which plays with the dichotomies of feminine harmony/calmness/control versus masculine chaos/irrationality/explosion. Additionally, it explores the tropes ascribed to “natural” masculinity (irresponsible/childish/playful behaviour) and femininity (responsible/problem-solving/controlled/balanced behaviour). Finally, it points to tensions in the gendered vocabulary that paradoxically maintain essentialized definitions of gender, perpetuate strict gendered roles and unbalanced emotional labour.

Negotiating the psychic drive: Affect, gender and violence in the intersections of psychological and judicial apparatuses

Panos Tsitsanoudis, Freie Universität Berlin

The psycho-legal framework which aims to describe a criminal act as the result of intense affective forces that can “block thinking,” has been a frequently employed discursive resource in the legal and public negotiations around intimate femicide in Greece. In Greek criminal law, what appears as the “boiling of the psychic drive” [vrasmos psixikis ormis] is a conceptual framework that describes the psychic state of the crime in parallel with the moment when a physical element reaches its transformation point (e.g. boiling water). The metaphor of boiling indicates an affective boundary that has been crossed, as well as a moment when someone partially ceases to be fully responsible for their actions. As a result, it constitutes the basic element for the discursive construction of the subjective domain of limited responsibility. This psychological scheme is often used as the main defense strategy of the perpetrators of these crimes, while at the same time it is present in many everyday discussions and popular representations of femicidal violence. Based on preliminary results of various ethnographic and archival material, I aim to further discuss the epistemological presuppositions of this concept and its theoretical consequences for affect and emotion in relation to violence, gender and responsibility. By analyzing these ‘negotiations of the drive’ in the intersections of psychological and juridical apparatuses, I aim to explore the ways in which different patriarchal scripts and heteronormative meanings around intimate femicide in Greece are embedded into a wider epistemology of affect which lies at the heart of current perceptions of violence in intimate relationships.

Treading lightly into the heavy lives of lonely men: how psychosocial counselors and the male migrant divorcees of Berlin shape each other, and shape Berlin

Sara El Dayekh, Freie Universität Berlin

The umbilical cord is an elastic thing. Leaving one's home country does not mean one's home country has left them. The treads of migrants on "host" land echo strongly—deliberate, almost always with consequence. And when they stumble, whether or not they seek help to get back up highly depends on the help allowed in the society they find themselves in, and equally affects that society. Male migrant divorcees, a group of people often silent, (a)shamed, and forgotten, find themselves in a plot very different from the one they had envisioned for themselves and their families when they first embarked on their migration journey. The work of psychosocial counselors in providing support that is necessary for, and more importantly accepted by, these men, at that moment in time, is the work of intricate tailoring: from the very language chosen to describe the help being offered (a conversation? a counseling service?), to the format (support groups? one-to-one sessions?), the medium (face-to-face meetings? online? Phone calls?), even the setting (at the camp? in an office? on a walk?). Ideally, the therapy is shaped by the client, and the client, in turn, is shaped by the therapy. What kind of life can a male migrant divorcee have now that he's single? Who does he need to be to afford such a life? And how can counselors help their clients walk this tightrope: adapting to this new reality within a new reality, in ways that are meaningful to them and manageable where they are?

The catharsis of the *hot table*: Emotional labor and the exchange of energies in an Indonesian Women's Crisis Center

Mona Elisa Behnke, Freie Universität Berlin

In cases of violence against women, care and empathy are often neglected by the social surroundings of survivors, leading further to silencing and/or stigmatization. Women's Crisis Centers (WCC) in Indonesia are a relevant space for women and children who experience(d) gender-based violence to develop new pathways in the aftermath of traumatic experiences. Care work, in the form of a non-judgmental, active listening gives affected women the possibility to express individual needs and receive support from psychologists and advocates alike. However, care work also takes place among the staff. It is a relevant component in the working environment to ensure services and the mental health of employees who challenge established patriarchal epistemes on a daily basis. Listening and professionally responding to the often disturbing experiences of the clients requires a lot of mental and physical strength by the professionals, and simultaneously is characterized by them being filled with negative

energy after counseling sessions. Therefore, for each counselor, collegial but also personal strategies of catharsis become an essential to let built tensions dissolve – and recharge with positive energy - being ready for the next client. Through participant observation and interviews with (former) employees in a local WCC in Central Java, the paper explores how care is practiced through the emotional labor of psychological and legal assistants (*pendamping*) during and after counseling. It presents how internal understandings of energy exchange become a metaphor for the emotional labor in an important, and equally challenging field.

**PANEL 10: MENTAL HEALTH: DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, AND MEDICATION
(Johan Nærøy, Clara Fabian-Therond, Dhruv Gautam, Matt Hiller A.M. LCSW)**

Chair: Lavinia Tanculescu-Popa

"Bipolarity": Categorical and dimensional understandings of the bipolar diagnosis in Oslo, Norway, Johan Nærøy, University of Oslo

In our psychiatric world of today, where is illness located? My master's project investigates how the concept of 'the bipolar,' in its various iterations, is discursively construed by both psychiatrists, psychologists and patients in Oslo, Norway.

The city of Oslo hosts an "infrastructure" of treatment centres, research institutions and a large patient organisation, all working on bipolar disorder, and all with a strong biomedical bent. Through ethnographic style interviews with those who participate in this infrastructure, I explore the bipolar diagnosis, with all its inherent tensions, porous boundaries, and multiform meanings. I try to take the classic "reification critique" of diagnostic constructs and elucidate just how these objects of psychiatry look like for the people involved in creating and using them. Throughout, I discuss the relation between illness, person, and diagnosis, as well as that between the quality of 'the bipolar' and Norwegian society today.

The project must also be seen against the backdrop of a changing psychiatric environment, where many (from both within and outside) urge the discipline to move away from categorical and entity-based understandings of mental illness, and towards various dimensional approaches. I want to take this moment in time to reflect on the future of psychiatry, anthropology, and the relation between them.

"I Would Never Take the Meds Myself": Ethnographic Reflections on the Personal Life of Psychiatrists

Dhruv Gautam, Universität Leipzig

In a small psychiatric OPD in a public hospital in Delhi, a psychiatrist (Dr. A) prescribes Risperidone to a 7-year-old child with suspected autism and prodromal psychotic symptoms. When asked about the efficacy and side effects of this atypical antipsychotic, Dr. A shares that she personally wouldn't take any of these medicines due to their severe side effects, describing this as her 'personal' choice. She also mentions that she doesn't trust psychotropic drugs, believing that Yoga and Jyotishi (astrology) are better mechanisms to address psychic distress. According to her, all forms of psychic distress ultimately arise from an 'imbalance of energies' that can be corrected through a unison of personal practices with planetary movements. Outside the clinic, in the college canteen, she reveals personal struggles that align with symptoms of 'depression' but resists categorising her experiences psychiatrically, despite frequently prescribing SSRIs to patients with similar symptoms. In what ways does the 'personal' affect the 'professional' practice of psychiatrists? What are the ways in which psychiatrists allow or disallow their personal experiences, personality type and cultural beliefs guide their practice and in turn their understanding of recovery? This contribution - based on ongoing ethnographic fieldwork in three psychiatric outpatient departments in a public hospital in New Delhi, India - explores how psychiatrists navigate the boundaries between their personal experiences of trauma, their beliefs about the efficacy of medication, and the legitimacy of locally attuned healing modalities in their professional practice. By challenging the notion of a monolithic biomedical psychiatry, this contribution highlights the complex social processes at play that lie at the heart of psychiatric diagnosis and treatment, emphasising how psychiatrists try to integrate or sever the links between the 'personal' and the 'professional' in clinical practice.

Ontological Curation and the Management of Enchantment in Ketamine Treatments

Matt Hiller A.M. LCSW, University of Michigan

Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork, this paper examines how mystical experiences are therapeutically managed at a ketamine infusion clinic in the United States. Ketamine is a dissociative anesthetic and has been hailed over the last decade as a miracle treatment for depression. Although it has long been used in surgery and has a history as a recreational drug, it is increasingly described as a psychedelic because it can induce dream-like, hallucinatory states. Similar to other psychedelics, these experiences are often viewed as catalysts for mystical states.

In this paper, I explore how these mystical states conflict with the dominant ethos of clinical rationality in biomedicine. On one hand, mystical states are treated as therapeutic resources capable of provoking profound personal change. On the other, they introduce an ontological pluralism that fits uneasily with the secular metaphysics of medicine. I argue that clinicians navigate this conflict by engaging in practices of what I call “ontological curation,” in which mystical experiences are selectively validated based on their perceived therapeutic benefits.

The Place Where We Live. Outline of a theory of trauma through the ethnography of an Aboriginal support group (Sydney, Australia)

Edgar Tasia, Université de Liège

Our contemporary understanding of trauma is primarily based on biomedical and psychiatric knowledge (Van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisæth 2007). While the literature on the subject is abundant, it tends to define the phenomenon in a relatively homogeneous and essentialist manner: trauma is located “inside” the body.

Advocating for a redefinition of the concept, several anthropologists have highlighted the limitations of this view (Fassin and Rechtman 2007; Kirmayer, Lemelson, and Barad 2007; Young 2001). These scholars approach trauma as a cultural, collective, and socially constructed phenomenon. As a result, it is no longer epistemologically understood as a “disease” but rather as a “discourse”—a social construct that is sociologically and culturally relevant, allowing for the generation of meaning and action within a given society. In this perspective, trauma appears to be located “outside” the individual.

Both of these approaches have strengths and weaknesses, but neither is entirely satisfactory. Drawing on an ethnographic example from previous research—an Aboriginal support group in Sydney, Australia—I aim to challenge these perspectives by proposing a third approach, based on the notion of “potential space” developed by D.W. Winnicott. I seek to demonstrate that trauma as well as resilience—another concept often associated with it—occur neither “inside” nor “outside” the body but rather *in-between*: in this “place where we [actually] live” (Winnicott 1971: 140), where we encounter others and where our conceptions merge with our perceptions. In doing so, my goal is to show that anthropological and psychological approaches to trauma should—and can—work together.

PANEL 14: NEW MEDICAL HUMANITIES IN INTER/ACTION (Joanne Chung-yan Wun, David Vogel, Ragna Winniewski, Mira Krebs)

Chairs: Mira Krebs & David Vogel

The panel assembles a heterogeneity of individual research interests all of them with an affiliation to the field of Medical Humanities but with an emphasis on phenomenology and psychopathology. Besides introducing the various individual topics encompassing empirical and theoretical research in anthropology, philosophy and psychiatry, we aim to discuss potentials and hurdles of inter- and transdisciplinary endeavours between academia, clinical or therapeutic practice and beyond in reference to the mentioned context. The final discussion will be concretized by adverting to our local activities of the “New Medical Humanities Cologne”, raising questions on collective efforts regarding approaches, intentions and challenges of cross-disciplinary dialogue. The “New Medical Humanities” in Cologne are a loose network of engaged researchers working at the interface between philosophy, anthropology, psychology and more on topics of health, illness and well-being with a particular focus on the human life-world. Sample issues for the debate may concern the fruits of mutual intellectual stimulation and support between the agents of different academic disciplines as well as difficulties raised by structural and institutional logics. In the final discussion, we are eager to stimulate exchange with the other panel participants on their experiences, approaches and solutions of inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration in the fields of Medical Humanities and Psychological Anthropology.

A Phenomenological Study of Implicit Memory

Joanne Chung-yan Wun, University of Cologne

Adopting the perspective of phenomenology, this talk discusses the notion of “implicit memory”, which is usually defined as knowledge that escapes one’s conscious awareness but that affects the ongoing acts and experiences. Whereas such influences of implicit memory are testified in various psychological experiments, the phenomenological approach aspires to complement it by situating implicit memory and its influences within the life- world (Lebenswelt) and lived-experience (Erlebnis), the core concepts of Husserlian phenomenology. This will be unfolded from three perspectives. In perception, implicit memory, which includes not only knowledge learnt from past experiences but also one’s convictions, dispositions, and habits, shapes what Husserl terms the affective relief structure (affektives Relief) of the perceptual field. The affective relief structure pre-determines the subject’s potential attention (interest) or ignorance (disinterest) to external stimuli and hence anticipates the different perceptual results among individuals. Implicit memory also manifests as body memory that prescribes the

lived- space of an individual subject. Similar to affective relief but revealing exclusively the bodily aspect of the unconscious, body memory delineates a subject's spatial-temporal zone of attraction and repulsion/prohibition. The "sedimented" past leads one to, for instance, unconsciously and physically avoid (be repelled) certain objects loosely associated with traumatic experiences. Finally, implicit memory can be made explicit through reproductive association. While psychology speaks usually of memory retrieval, what is overlooked is the more fundamental phenomenon of the mingling and interlacement among memories, which in reproduction results not in direct retrieval of a single piece of memory but rather what Husserl calls a *Scheinbild*, which might or might not have pathological implications.

Time and Temporality in Mental Disorder

David Vogel, University Hospital Bonn

Alterations in the experience of time are a common yet underreported feature of mental illness. Despite the extensive study of the psychopathology of time experience and temporality, its exploration plays a neglectable role in clinical diagnostics. This discrepancy is most clearly illustrated by the examples of major depressive disorder and schizophrenia. In both diagnostic groups, we may find comprehensible and detectable psychopathological syndromes in the form of an "inhibition of becoming" in depression and a "temporal fragmentation" in schizophrenia. Based on recent empirical-psychopathological studies, we attempt a descriptive psychopathology of the experience of time in these disorders. Merging the operational claim of contemporary health sciences with the holistic approach of anthropological and phenomenological psychopathology we discuss our results in terms of their applicability to psychotherapy.

Fragmented habitualisations and forced continuity: on embodied and narrative selves in dementia

Ragna Winniewski, University of Cologne

The prospect of losing one's mind, that is dementia's literal translation, insinuates a frightening image that consists in losing one's place in the world in which layer upon layer of one's self disappears along with a lifetime of memories. Against this notion of a diminished and diminishing self – dominating the dementia discourse – a phenomenological account of dementia stresses levels of the pre-reflective and relational self that allow for engaging with the world and attuning to the other through embodied habits which are sedimented in our implicit body memory (Husserl, 1970; Fuchs, 2012). Alternative models of selfhood can underpin bodily and culturally sensitive notions of people with dementias creating care approaches that are demedicalised,

deinstitutionalised and supportive of the person. Ethnographic case studies on multisensory engagement, for instance, show how states of well-being can emerge by turning to someone's affective identity via interbodily resonances and therapeutic atmospheres. By involving such forms of social affordances and scaffolds we contribute to a form social responsivity. Besides treating elderly persons who show signs of forgetfulness and other cognitive decline as patients who need to be cured, we should also see them as the new persons they have become.

A feeling of welcome in the context of a 'lost' self-world-relationship

Mira Krebs, University of Cologne

My presentation begins with a brief remark on the phenomenological description of a "loss of natural self-evidence" in schizophrenia and especially the dimension of a changed self-world-relationship experienced by a person in a condition alike. Relying on phenomenological conceptions, the category of self-world-relationship or intersubjectivity is supposed to play a crucial role in the development of psychosis and is marked by phenomena such as a person cannot grasp the "common sense"-world and -interactions anymore, by perplexity, an unfamiliarity of the world typically followed by the estrangement of the self on a pre-reflexive level. I then propose that feeling welcome is a means to re-build the "lost" or changed relationship between a person and *her world. Based on examples from my ethnographic fieldwork in a psychiatric ward specified in treatment of people with psychotic disorders I focus on the moment of arrival which will be analyzed in terms of affective or atmospheric motives that either have been articulated or "observed". To sum up, I will hint toward subsequent factors of analysis, namely the team understood as a collective of the individual staff members and the emergence of a dynamic community spirit evoked by all people in the psychiatric setting independently of their current status or condition. As a hypothesis I suggest that, next to the biological dimension of medication, a feeling of welcome can be seen as major factor of the initiation of a process of recovery for a person who suffers from a heavy transformed self-world-relationship in psychosis.

(ONLINE)

PANEL 21: INEQUALITIES IN (MENTAL) HEALTHCARE: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY (Helmar Kurz, Amalia Campagna, Barbara Stöckigt)

Chair: Helmar Kurz

Discussant: Barbara Stöckigt, Charité Berlin

(Mental) healthcare systems worldwide meet various challenges, particularly the insufficiency of resources for patients of lower economic classes and rural areas. What is more, in many places therapeutic settings remain “zones of abandonment” (Biehl 2005), particularly when affiliated with official healthcare sectors. However, some philanthropic, religious-spiritual, and private agencies provide “good examples” of (mental) healthcare (Basu et al. 2017). Changing governments and contesting policies have impacted local, translocal, and global (mental) healthcare supplies, maintaining inconsistencies in (mental) healthcare. Further, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has clearly illustrated that structural violence (Farmer 2005) and chronicity of crisis (Vigh 2008) still shape inequalities in access to health resources in both the Global North and Global South. Philanthropic organizations have always been essential health resources, and not only for marginalized social groups but they have been widely ignored in public and academic discourse. This panel wants to address around the following leading questions, focusing on mental health practices but integrating all health-related aspects of human well-being: 1) Strategies between actors. What are the contemporary challenges/opportunities of diverse actors within the field of (mental) health in their particular localities? In which spaces do they intervene? Where are they excluded? What trends can be identified? 2) Content of action and intervention in the field. What is currently at stake? What are perspectives and practices? How do divergent actors respond to (mental) health challenges? 3) Political regulation. How do state and official healthcare institutions relate to contesting and complementing approaches? Do forms of cooperation exist? Do obstacles exist?

Mental Health Practices at the Intersection of Bureaucracy and Care in Italy

Amalia Campagna, University of Milan

Over the last three decades, the Italian healthcare system has experienced significant transformations, including medicalization and managerialization, which have profoundly impacted both professionals and patients. In this context, Italian mental health care suffers from a steady decline in public attention and investment and is witnessing a return to custodial practices - a phenomenon also known as 're-institutionalization'. Additionally,

increasing bureaucratization is imposing a progressive standardization and formalization of care practices that contradicts the empathy and care required to respond to mental health issues appropriately, leaving professionals conflicted.

In this scenario, the ethics of medical practice—particularly significant in psychiatry, where it was addressed and shaped throughout the long process that led to the closure of mental asylums in the 20th century — is being narrowed down to the legal aspect of responsibility. Fostering a culture of indifference (Herzfeld 2021), bureaucracy has weakened the alignment among professionals, patients, families and other stakeholders in the mental health field, leaving many feeling isolated and anxious about managing the subject of responsibility. Drawing on ongoing PhD research at an Italian public Mental Health Center, this paper reflects on the role of responsibility in psychiatry: what are healthcare workers responsible for? What are patients responsible for? Is there a connection between practitioners' representations of responsibility and the ongoing processes of bureaucratization and reinstitutionalization? The first findings of the research will be shared and analyzed through the lenses of the anthropology of organizations and the anthropology of ethics.

The Making & Unmaking of Inequality in Brazilian (Mental) Healthcare

Helmar Kurz, University of Münster

Brazilian health-political culture displays a wide range of structural violence and inequalities framed by power relations, corruption, and political mismanagement. This has resulted in the marginalization of society's weaker members who often seek support in religious/spiritual approaches complementary to official (mental) health/care policies.

Spiritist explanatory models and practices have complemented psychiatric discourse and practice ever since the 19th century. Whereas they have been dismissed as unscientific in their European countries of origin, concepts and ideas have experienced high estimation in Brazil, where they still shape the mental health care sector. Spiritist epistemologies and methods address patients' and practitioners' postulations for holistic (bio-psycho-social-spiritual) approaches and sustained care where public health institutions fail. Throughout the 20th century, Spiritist institutions have complemented and substituted the public mental health care sector and continue to do so due to the psychiatric deinstitutionalization policy.

Worldwide, patients complain about dehumanizing approaches in biomedical psychiatry. However, political decision-makers and media attempt to condemn alternative approaches to (mental) health. It has probably been most visible throughout the Covid19 pandemic but is valid for the entire (post)colonial strategy of promoting biomedicine and psychiatry according to European models of self and health while denying deviant socio-

cultural practices and notions of well-being. This contribution exemplarily investigates complementary and alternative approaches to (mental) health in Brazilian Spiritism on a triangular level: Translocal Relations (negotiation of global and local approaches), Healing Cooperation (integration of local and global approaches) & Aesthetics of Healing (affective aspects of local approaches).

ROUNDTABLE: PUBLISHING IN PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Organizer: Thomas Stodulka, University of Münster

This roundtable brings together scholars, editors, and reviewers to reflect critically on the current landscape of publishing in psychological anthropology. We explore how to navigate the tensions between interdisciplinary depth, particularly at the intersection of anthropology and psychology, and the need for accessible communication across diverse audiences, including editors, reviewers, and broader publics. Contributors will share their strategies for ethically and evocatively representing personhood, affect, and experience, especially in light of the field's ongoing methodological and ethical commitments.

The roundtable will also address the peer review process as a site of both friction and possibility: How might we reimagine review cultures in more constructive, dialogical, and caring ways? We consider recent trends in the field, from the rise of collaborative and decolonial approaches to concerns about gatekeeping and over-professionalization. Participants will also discuss the expanding role of open access and multimodal formats (such as video, audio, and graphic narrative) in shaping the future of psychological anthropology, asking what possibilities and limitations they bring.

Participants:

Katja Liebal, Universität Leipzig

Anita von Poser, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Naomi Leite, SOAS London

Uwe Wolfradt, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Edward Lowe, SOKA University

Thursday, 12 June, 9:30 – 21:00

KEYNOTE: WITHIN AND BEYOND BORDERS: UNDERSTANDING ASIAN IMMIGRANT PARENTING AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT

Charissa S. L. Cheah, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Charissa S. L. Cheah, Ph.D., is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and President of the Society for Research on Adolescence. A cultural developmental scientist, her research seeks to understand how individual, relational, and contextual factors shape the development of youth and their families across different cultural contexts. Prof. Cheah employs mixed-method, longitudinal, and cross-cultural approaches to illuminate risk and resilience processes. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, the Association for Psychological Science, and the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, and her research has been recognized by a Fulbright Research Fellowship and the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Faculty Award in Scholarship or Research.

How do immigrant parents raise their children amid cultural transitions and racialized experiences? This keynote draws from a program of research examining parenting and development among Asian immigrant families, focusing on how culture and context shape family processes and youth outcomes. I will present studies with Chinese and Korean immigrant families that illuminate the culturally specific and shared meanings of parenting behaviors such as warmth and control. These studies reveal both culturally specific and universal interpretations of parenting behaviors and how cultural context moderates the association between parenting and children's emotional expression. I will also highlight research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time of heightened anti-Asian racism, to examine how Chinese immigrant parents engaged in racial-ethnic socialization and how adolescents navigated their racial-ethnic identity. These studies reveal how parenting adapts to shifting sociopolitical conditions and how adolescents actively respond to messages about race and belonging. Spanning early childhood through adolescence, this work illustrates how developmental tasks—such as emotional development and identity formation—are embedded within cultural and sociopolitical contexts. By centering the experiences of immigrant families, this research highlights the dynamic interplay between parenting, culture, and youth development, as well as the resilience and agency of families navigating life within and beyond borders.

ROUNDTABLE: GLOBAL INTERVENTION AND CULTURE-SENSITIVE PRACTICE - CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

Organizer: Joscha Kärtner, University of Münster

This roundtable brings together experienced scholars to discuss conceptual foundations and current practices and developments in the field of global intervention towards healthy development in children, adolescents and adults. Related to this question, there is a lively debate about the scale (global vs. local) at which standards, criteria and best practices can and should be defined and which implications this has for science (e.g., theories, evaluation studies) and practice (e.g., strategies for implementation and scale up). What are the conceptual and practical challenges to global intervention? What are constructive ways forward to support healthy development and to contribute meaningfully to the field? This roundtable invites an international body of participants to speak to these questions. In addition to reflecting on their own research contributions and expertise in the field, the roundtable is designed to foster dialogue and mentorship with the audience and to catalyze ideas and imaginations for future inter/actions between psychologies and anthropologies.

Participants:

Heidi Keller, University of Osnabrück
Tina Malti, University of Leipzig
Gabriel Scheidecker, University of Zurich
James Davies, University of Roehampton

LAB 3: ASSESSING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXTS FROM INFANCY TO CHILDHOOD – STIMULATING INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE AND FIRST STEPS TOWARDS A MULTIMODULE INSTRUMENT

Organisers: Helen Wefers¹, Marta Giner Torrén¹, & Solveig Jurkat²

Discussant: Jorge David Mantilla Salgado³

¹University of Münster, ²Leipzig University, ³University of Otavalo

The importance of culture in development is increasingly recognized and has stimulated a number of cross-cultural studies in the field of developmental psychology. However, relatively little scientific endeavor in this area has been devoted to the development of research methods aimed at the systematic assessment of *culture*, more specifically, of

aspects of infants' and children's living environments, which are linked to other elements of their developmental systems. At the same time, in order to advance our scientific understanding of developmental processes and outcomes, more complete models of the links between cultural communities and parental ethnotheories and associated forms of coregulation and structuring, are crucial. Therefore, together with our Ecuadorian colleagues, we developed semi-structured interviews addressing the average expectable environments of 7-week-old infants, 2-3-year-old and 4-9-year-old children growing up in two cultural milieus, namely Kichwa communities (Andean Ecuador) and Münster (urban Germany). The interviews included questions about daily and weekly routines and activities, time budgets, social contacts and inherited customs of childcare. In this methods-lab, we will present *typical* environments of infants and children in both cultural milieus based on these interviews and – together with lab participants – will work on central dimensions that may characterize similarities and differences between developmental environments. Importantly, to stimulate interdisciplinary exchange about the research methods, Jorge David Mantilla Salgado, our anthropological colleague, will comment on the semi-structured interviews. Overall, this lab aims at the further development of research methods towards a multimodule instrument. We warmly invite colleagues from all disciplines to participate and engage in interdisciplinary exchange!

Modalities: Presentation – interdisciplinary exchange and commentary – condensation together with lab participants

Aim: Further development of research methods towards a multimodule instrument

PANEL 8: AFFECT, EMOTION, AND EMBODIMENT (Jelena Kupsjak, Juan González-Hernández, Natashe Lemos Dekker, Ari Ofengenden)

Chair: Natashe Lemos Dekker

Becoming with the Wind: Weather, Affect, and the Entangled Materialities of Social Life in Dalmatia

Jelena Kupsjak, University of Zadar

This paper examines *južina* not as a discrete meteorological event but as an intra-active phenomenon—an entanglement of atmosphere, affect, and sociality that shapes daily life in Dalmatia. More than a south wind, *južina* is an embodied condition, a collectively recognized force that co-emerges with human experience, structuring moods, altering rhythms, and legitimizing states of disarray. It is not simply a backdrop to social life but

an agentive presence through which emotions, bodily sensations, and temporalities materialize in specific ways.

Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork this paper explores how *južina* interacts with human bodies, discourse, and collective sensibilities. It is not merely invoked as an explanation for irritability or melancholia—it is co-produced through social interactions, atmospheric attunements, and lived materialities. Through this lens, the question is not how does *južina* affect people?, but rather how do people and *južina* become with one another?

By centering *južina* as a materially present and culturally co-constituted force, this paper invites reflection on the inseparability of weather, affect, and social worlds. How does *južina* manifest as a force of intra-action between atmospheric conditions, psychological states, and cultural narratives? In exploring these entanglements, this paper contributes to interdisciplinary conversations on the phenomenology of climate, the cultural psychology of weather, and the more-than-human agencies.

The functional meaning of effort and suffering. Anthropological narratives in high-performance sports

Juan González-Hernández¹ (presenter), María Nuria Romo-Avilés,¹ & Miquel Torregrosa-Álvarez¹²

¹ University of Granada, ²Autonomous University of Barcelona

The idealization that societies make of athletes as all-powerful, almost superhuman beings, unapproachable by discouragement, above suffering or limits, helps the process of constructing the athlete to convert the generalized character into beliefs of overcoming, of victory as a measure of success and failure, or invulnerable strength in the face of adversity. The ability to endure, ignore, or play through pain or suffering is common in many sports (Young, 2004), becoming highly valued, encouraged, and often socially rewarded (Smith, 2016). The notion of “endurance” in sports such as ultrarunning or swimming, cycling and its supernatural efforts, Formula 1 or Rally drivers to achieve improvement and high cognitive and physical abilities. Connected to the culture of reference, each athlete is interpreted through their forms of suffering (e.g., tolerance, redemption, deservingness) (Jirásek & Hurych, 2012; Spencer, 2012), describing different expressions of vulnerability, helplessness, threat or struggle that emerge under cloaks of pain or perceived value.

Method

Describing an anthropology of suffering, through diverse personal narratives (“*little stories*”), we uncover how high-performance athletes construct themselves personally

and athletically through physical agony, emotional turmoil, and spiritual suffering. The present work aims to explore the significance of the psychosociological construction of the athlete in the pursuit of perfection to win, excel and achieve sport success, influencing the self-regulation of impulses or the emergence of temperamental traits, forming part of a constellation of subclinical factors underlying variables of self-concept and self-esteem, psychological adjustment (e.g., fears, suffering, tolerance to effort or pain) and social relationship (e.g., competitiveness).

Grief Politics: COVID-19-related Loss and Collective Action in Brazil

Natashe Lemos Dekker, University of Amsterdam

Brazil is one of the countries most heavily affected by Covid-19. Bereavement has led to the emergence of new civil society organizations, forms of memorialization, and local initiatives. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews with people who lost relatives due to Covid-19 in Brazil, and who have become politically active as a result, this paper discusses how grief is transformed into political action. The circumstances of loss were such that many deaths occurred under traumatic circumstances, while delayed vaccination campaigns evoked the sense that many deaths could have been prevented. For my interlocutors, a sense of meaninglessness and injustice prevailed. I discuss their experiences and objectives in becoming politically active, and show that transforming grief into political action is not only a way to collectively share experiences and support, or to demand recognition and justice in society, but also a way to maintain their loved one's presence. In so doing, I underscore the power and agency that may result from shared losses as they bring forth change and action.

The Psychology of Everyday Resistance – Agency in the Face of Power Asymmetries

Ari Ofengenden, Tulane University

This paper explores everyday resistance as a form of agency among marginalized and disempowered communities. Focusing on the subtle, often invisible acts of defiance—such as humor, gossip, feigned ignorance, or small-scale subversion—it examines how individuals navigate and resist systemic oppression in their daily lives. These acts, though rarely overt or organized, reveal the cognitive, emotional, and relational processes that underpin resistance, offering a window into the psychological strategies employed by those without formal power.

This contribution would like to show the culturally specific ways in which anger, hope, and solidarity sustain resistance, as well as the cognitive processes involved in interpreting and subverting dominant power structures. Anger, often dismissed as destructive, is reframed as a vital emotional force that fuels resistance, enabling individuals to recognize injustice and mobilize against it. Hope, on the other hand, emerges as a psychological anchor, sustaining long-term efforts to challenge oppression even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Solidarity, as both an emotional and relational bond, fosters collective agency, transforming isolated acts of defiance into shared struggles for dignity and change. Together, these emotions form a complex psychological ecosystem that underpins everyday resistance, revealing how marginalized communities navigate power asymmetries with resilience and creativity. This paper will examine the specificities of how these three emotions play out in several sites of resistance. And will look to understanding of resistance as both a collective and deeply personal phenomenon.

PANEL 12: MENTAL HEALTH:DISORDER AND DYSFUNCTION (Florin Cristea, Ward Keeler, Kirsten Marys Brown, Kwartarini Wahyu Yuniarti, Sudarshan R Kottai)

Chair: Ward Keeler

Navigating the unknown. Mental pain, uncertainty, and self-isolation in Bali and Java

Florin Cristea, FU Berlin

Mental pain is commonly defined as an experience situated on a continuum between cognitive appraisal of the painful event and the affective disposition of the person experiencing it. Drawing on ethnographic material and interviews on severe psychiatric disorders in Bali and Java, I will try to understand what mental pain does to the person experiencing it, as well as to their immediate environment. To answer this question, I will first describe the salient attributes of mental pain as they emerged during my conversations with outpatients and observations of their milieu. These were a challenged “realness” of the experience of mental pain, its ability to take hold of one’s subjective experience, an elusive and relational quality, and a perceived ambiguous and indeterminate temporal plane. Moreover, I will describe the uncertainties of people navigating a severe psychiatric disorder (health, sanative, social, and behavioral uncertainties), and I will suggest that the salient attributes of mental pain contribute to the makeup of these uncertainties. Finally, this paper illustrates that the interrelated nature of

mental pain and experienced uncertainties can inform certain illness behaviors, particularly instances of self-isolation.

Addressing PTSD with a Balinese Shadow Play

Ward Keeler, University of Texas, Austin

The bombs that exploded in the tourist center of Kuta, Bali, Indonesia, in October, 2002, caused terrible death and injury. A number of residents of Bali, Indonesian and foreign, wanted to help people deal with symptoms that we have learned to label PTSD. The group developed the idea of collaborating with a Balinese shadow puppeteer, named I Madé Sidia, to create a performance whose aim was to explain to people that many difficulties they were facing—listlessness, loss of appetite, sexual impotence—stemmed from the aftereffects of the bombings. The resultant shadow play performance was called *Wayang Skateboard* because, innovatively, several performers used skateboards to move quickly behind the screen.

The play demonstrates contrasting international and Balinese ideas about how best to address trauma: by naming and processing an individual's emotional distress, or by asserting one's ability to put such distress aside and so becoming ready to reenter normal social interaction with others. It highlights a focus on selves seen as endowed with unfathomed depths, combining a post-Enlightenment individualism and post-Freudian understanding of intra-psychic conflict, versus a focus on selves seen as defined in and through interaction. The first take on selves implies dealing with trauma by reestablishing an individual's self-understanding, thereby attaining clarity about current experience. The second one encourages actors to reengage with others without regard to the past, because only through interaction can the past be dismissed and overcome.

COMPOSIT-B: COMparative Phenomenology of Spiritual and Interpersonal Threat Beliefs

Kirsten Marys Brown, University of Sheffield

Threat-related beliefs encompass persecutory delusions observed in clinical populations, sub-clinical forms of suspicion and mistrust, as well as beliefs held across the general population, such as persecutory supernatural beings. Prior research has predominantly focused on dysfunction and investigated the neural and cognitive mechanisms thought to underlie persecutory delusions. Yet, their overlap with other kinds of threat-related beliefs, and the role of the individual's social environment in shaping these experiences, remains underexplored. Tanya Luhrmann and Julia Cassaniti's 'Cultural Kindling' hypothesis put forth the idea that the way in which social groups conceptualise and set up expectations

about particular experiences may influence the phenomenology of those experiences—for instance, voice-hearing. With this in mind, this study aims to explore: i) the phenomenological similarities and differences between perceived threats from supernatural beings (the demonic/ supernatural evil) and human beings, and ii) the extent to which the social context mediates meaning-making and attributions of persecutory intent. The present paper will reflect on the findings from my, currently ongoing, comparative ethnographic research carried out over 10 months. This is based on fieldwork and qualitative interviews (n=12) conducted with adults attending an Evangelical church reporting experiences of demonic attack, and individuals attending peer support groups for paranoia. Data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Anthology: Mental Health, Local Insights, and Interventions in Indonesia

Kwartarini Wahyu Yuniarti, Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta

The navigation of life is deeply embedded in multilayered meanings. Sensory anthropology offers a lens through which intrapersonal narratives unfold, while cross-cultural studies provide broader frameworks to examine these complexities within interpersonal relationships. Learning from diverse cultural perspectives enriches our understanding of human existence. However, many of these insights remain underexplored within mainstream academic discourse. These local resources not only deserve recognition but should also be examined rigorously to elevate them into the realm of scientific inquiry.

Indonesia, an archipelagic nation of 17,380 islands and 1,331 ethnic groups (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs), holds a wealth of wisdom on health, psychopathology, and therapeutic interventions. My presentation will explore local perspectives on healing, combining fieldwork findings from Indonesia with reflections on youth mental health in a developed European country.

This session aims to ignite further interdisciplinary research collaborations. Potential avenues include the treatment of psychotic patients in Indonesia, altered states of consciousness in traditional healing, and a comprehensive documentation of existing healing practices and local philosophies of health and life. Examples include *weton* (numerology), *ruwatan*, *ruqyah*, the philosophy of *nrimo ing pandum* (acceptance of one's destiny), concepts of *indigo*, *kerauhan* (spiritual possession), faith healing, resilience in facing natural disasters, traditional massage, and tarot. Additionally, I will touch upon transcendental meditation and its intersections with local spiritual traditions.

By acknowledging and researching these indigenous insights, we can enrich the global discourse on mental health, fostering a more holistic and culturally sensitive approach to psychological well-being.

Diagnosing disorder, Sugarcoating Suffering: Exploring the space-attitude-administrative complex of community mental health programmes in Kerala

Sudarshan R. Kottai, Indian Institute of Technology Palakkad

Community mental health makes a persistent presence as a policy initiative for ensuring affordable, accessible and quality mental health care in government policy documents in India. Drawing from an ethnography of government-run community mental health clinics in Kerala, South India, I offer a person-centered account of the lived experiences of 'patients' thronging these clinics to illustrate how diverse social sufferings ranging from domestic violence to homophobia get universalized and homogenized into psychiatric syndromes and diagnoses expanding the boundaries of abnormality.

The physical space of consultation and the medical activities carried out with pharmaceutical flavour reflect the attitude of the state and mainstream psychiatry in India towards mental health which I call as medicalized space-attitude complex.

Lastly, I bring to light how people in Kerala resort to psychiatry as a function of their quest for modernity as the state is well known for its impeccable record in health care systems. The bombardment of mental health awareness among the most literate people produces a subjectivity that reinforces medical frameworks about distress. I call for a paradigm shift from the 'global' nature of mental health awareness to one that emphasizes the locally relevant structural/ social determinants of mental health.

PANEL 6: ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES AND METHODS (Judith Albrecht, Rafaella Gallo, Kate Hedley Wilson, Cyrille Cartier, Joseph Couvre de Murville)

Chair: Judith Albrecht

Spiro-ethnography: Breathing and Tracking Epistemic Violence and Trauma Through Ethnographic Respiration

Judith Albrecht, Humboldt University Berlin

A spiro-ethnography assumes that breathing exists at a phenomenological level, one that is subject to change and follows its own form of relationship with the environment and others. This paper reflects on the changes in my breathing over the course of 6 years during which I conducted ethnographic research on violence, trauma, and language in the context of legal and social justice in Germany. It serves as the starting point for a

series of reflective pieces on breathing and what this process means in terms of ethnographic research. Breathing can be a very visible, even connecting act, but is, for the most part, done unnoticedly. Our breathing is a deeply rooted expression of feelings and affects. When we focus on the breathing of different people in a room, breathing becomes a spirometer – the measure of whether we can breathe well in such a situation or not –revealing and giving shape to invisible effects such as power relationships and the impact language has on individuals or collectives and their bodies. Based on my ethnographic material of trials and various court room situations, this paper serves to essentially re-enact the relationship between language, violence, and breathing. The paper argues – by allowing attention to be given to breathing and its respective transformation, that these two acts should together play an important role in how intersectional ethnographic work and affective scholarship is conducted. In that sense Spiro-ethnography foregrounds a different way of listening and writing.

Exploring Change through Photography: A Laboratory and Group Therapy Initiative in a Mental Health Day-care Center

Rafaella Gallo, University Münster

This paper explores an experimental approach to group therapy implemented in a public mental health day-care center in Salerno, Southern Italy. The participants were granted access to a photographic laboratory and encouraged to engage in various photographic activities as a means of self-exploration and emotional expression.

As a photography instructor, I ran the laboratory for approximately three years, from 2018 to 2021, in close collaboration with the director and the staC of the facility. The participants' photographs were then used in group therapy sessions to co-construct "metaphorical objects," using the images as starting points for the conversations. The aim was to facilitate and enhance the participants' agency and autonomy. Photography as a tool of self-expression positively modified the internal dynamics of the group, allowing the participants to bond and mutually support each other in their photographic practice and in addressing new challenges.

This paper examines how anthropological methods and approaches shaped the activities of the photographic laboratory and helped navigate the difficulties and challenges of working within the context of a public mental health facility. By highlighting the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration, the paper aims to demonstrate how such approaches can help break conventions and overcome restraints.

Art Therapy with Survivors of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking: An Exploration of Power Transference and Countertransference.

Kate Hedley Wilson, Art Psychotherapist

This thesis examines the dynamics of power, transference, and countertransference in art therapy with survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) in the UK, particularly when facilitated by White art therapists. Using Patricia Hill Collins' (1990) concept of the matrix of domination, the study explores how overlapping systems of power and oppression shape lived experience and impact the therapeutic relationship. In this context, art therapy emerges as a complex space that may reinforce or resist these hierarchies, requiring ethical navigation of power dynamics through critical engagement with 'power (counter)transference'. MSHT survivors from diverse cultural backgrounds are underrepresented in art therapy research, limiting guidance for culturally attuned support. Moreover, art therapy in the UK is predominantly composed of White art therapists who may unintentionally reinforce harmful power relations in cross-cultural contexts. This literature review uses qualitative, heuristic methods influenced by critical realism. Researcher positionality and reflexivity shape thematic focus and analysis, challenging traditional paradigms by incorporating a first-person perspective. The research first examines the conditions under which 'power (counter)transference' arises by situating survivors, therapists, and the field of art therapy within the UK's power structures. It then assesses whether current art therapy practices adequately address cultural and structural nuances in 'power (counter)transference.' Findings reveal a lack of engagement with this concept in multicultural settings and limited critical examination of art therapists' complicity with oppressive power dynamics. The thesis offers social justice-oriented guidance to address these gaps, advocating for 'intersectional self-reflexivity' (Talwar, 2019) in practice and pedagogy to support White art therapists in critically navigating 'power (counter)transference'. Recommendations include future art therapy research that includes survivors in multicultural settings and considering the healing and liberatory impact of art therapists critically engaging with 'power (counter)transference'.

Collective Silence as Knowledge Process: Arts-based Ethnography of a Women's Collective

Cyrille Cartier, University of Zadar

This paper examines arts-based ethnography of the Women to Women collective, one program of an art organization in Croatia connecting people with varied migrant backgrounds.

Collective, art-based, knowledge production is an integral part of my creative, collaborative, and critical autoethnography focusing on the organization of which I am a co-founder and working member, Živi Atelje DK. This feminist, epistemological approach steps beyond simply encouraging people to be research partners. Whereas formal interviews and questionnaires often reinforce power asymmetries and language barriers dividing researchers from research subjects, this arts-based ethnographic practice invites participants to create their own knowledge to share or not as they wish.

For several months, once weekly, women artist-experts participate in collective, creative, silent sessions. No overt words, symbols or signals are exchanged. In silence, participants respond introspectively to prompts through writing, drawing, or simply sitting.

Despite long-term ties, we are each occupied with the time, worries, and social reproductive labor from other aspects of our lives. Noise is a constant. Rarely is there time for stillness in silence. Collective, creative, silence supports cognizance of who we are in space, what surfaces in quietude, and how we explore meaning.

Opportunity for knowledge creation empowers individuals and communities. This empowerment connects partially to arts-based ethnography's constructive emotional and cognitive impact. The process itself takes absolute precedence over any outputs on paper. Collective, silent, artistic practice will uncover new ways of creating and sharing knowledge potentially culminating in individual and collective empowerment, collaborative art, and written academic output.

Reexamining the Consciousness Paradox: Applying Freudian and Bakhtian Approaches Using Hamlet as Case Study

Joseph Couve de Murville, Hildesheim University

The paradox of consciousness, how individuals gain self-awareness, remains a critical concern in psychological anthropology. Freud's psychoanalytic methods have traditionally framed consciousness as repressed desires and internal conflicts. Bakhtin's dialogical theory emphasizes the relational, socially constructed nature of selfhood. While both perspectives examine the self, they differ profoundly: Freud emphasizes internal psychological forces as the mechanism of individuation; for Bakhtin external, communicative process instigate self-awareness. By juxtaposing these theories, a deeper understanding of the consciousness paradox emerges, moving from an obsessional attachment to internal psychological dynamics to the relational dimensions of selfhood.

Choosing an iconic piece of Western literature serves a dual function. First, Hamlet as a case study offers rich material for exploring the consciousness paradox, through the play's depictions of complex psychological states and relational dynamics, indeed

questioning the nature and limits of self-awareness. Second, by exposing the (monological/proto-) Freudian interpretation as a dominant form of Eurocentric self-identification (or of simultaneously elevating and pathologizing the self) the application of Bakhtinian frameworks to explore Hamlet's existential struggle breaks free of the containment (or isolation) that has seemed inevitably intrinsic to the paradox of consciousness. For Freud, Hamlet's unresolved Oedipal conflict explains his paralysis of action; applying Bakhtin's dialogism, Hamlet's failure to engage in meaningful dialogue with others induces his isolation and tragic fate.

This study's frameworks of analysis have implications for future interdisciplinary studies bridging psychology, literature, and cultural theory, and social movements such as feminism, post-colonialism, and pan-continental/ global conceptions of identity and dialogical modes of growth and exchange.

(ONLINE)

PANEL 22: SELF AND SUBJECTIVITY (Lamprini Maria Xiarchi, Itzel Cadena Alvear, Rotem Klinger, Nargis Vasundhara)

Chair: Panos Tsitsanoudis

Caring for older persons: Subjectivity, lived experience, and the structural shaping of care

Lamprini Maria Xiarchi, University of Borås

This study explores the lived experiences of registered nurses caring for older persons in Greece and Sweden, emphasizing how care may be shaped by subjective experiences, emotional engagement, and structural constraints. Using a phenomenological approach, it examines how nurses navigate professional responsibilities, diverse institutional frameworks, and interpersonal relationships while responding to the complex needs of older individuals.

Through this study, the complex balance between systemic demands and the deeply personal nature of caregiving is brought to the fore. Nurses describe the need for adaptability and professionalism while working within healthcare structures that often impose rigid expectations. Care for older persons extends beyond medical tasks, requiring an ongoing negotiation of presence, emotional labor, and relational engagement, particularly visible within home settings and in collaboration with family caregivers.

Through insights from caring science and psychology, the medical-oriented models of care are challenged while human experience becomes core in caregiving. This study reveals how care unfolds in dynamic, situated ways, shaped by subjective experience, emotional connections, and the fluid nature of caring relationships. By addressing these complexities, the research offers insights into the challenges of balancing professionalism with the inherently relational aspects of care. It calls for a deeper engagement with the subjective and experiential dimensions of caregiving, advocating for approaches that honor both the dignity of older persons and the lived realities of those who care for them.

Affective Entanglements: Racialized-Feminized Lived Experiences of Pain in the case of endometriosis

Itzel Cadena Alvear, National Autonomous University of Mexico

I explore how cognitive sciences such as psychology, together with biomedical sciences, are invested in how we understand pain and affectivity in the case of chronic painful conditions such as endometriosis. Departing from feminist theorizations around the interconnectedness, I seek to show how the affective realm in the lived experiences of feminized and racialized bodies with chronic painful conditions are intertwined with the cognitive and biomedical sciences as institutions embedded in Western societies. Western biomedicine has systematically segregated, excluded, and neglected feminized and racialized bodies, perpetuating epistemic, affective and gendered violences. In the case of painful conditions, feminized bodies such as cisgender women, have been depicted as “hysterical” or “exaggerated” when reporting their testimonies of pain (Fricker, 2017), influencing in their quality of life. Feminist epistemologies have criticized this androcentric and colonial basis of scientific practices (Harding, 2019; Blazquez, 2011). Under the colonial-modern paradigm, racialized and feminized bodies are categorized as “other”, being marginalized by structures of knowledge production such as cognitive sciences. Through the scientific narrative and technological artifacts, the colonial-modern paradigm has naturalized the structures of oppression, impacting in how certain bodies will be treated as bodies of knowledge, and as liveable bodies.

Reclaiming the voices of experts by experience who live with endometriosis, I analyze this interconnection based on the following notions, inspired by the new feminist materialisms (Barad, 2007): (i) affective entanglements; (ii) intersubjective entanglements; (iii) spatio-temporal entanglements; (iv) interdependence entanglements. The case of pain in feminized and racialized bodies living chronic conditions such as endometriosis shows the intersection between the lived experience of pain caused by the condition itself and, the adverse encounter with biomedical practices, which are shaped by cognitive values and norms rooted in the colonial-

modern paradigm. Beyond understandings of pain as the affective response to bodily damage, here I understand pain in relation to the notion of “doloridad” (Piedade, 2021) from latinamerican feminisms, where pain furnishes bridges of interdependence, feminist resistance and caring connections. In this case, patients, also known as experts by experience, face the historical neglect of their lived experiences perpetrated by the Western biomedical institutions by continuously generating communities of care and resistance as fugitive points from the oppressive colonial-modern paradigm which still considers them as disposable objects and non-human entities.

Modern distress and lifestyle migration: The false promise of a pure relationship with one’s self If it's too long it can also be just the second part - The false promise of a pure relationship with one’s self.

Rotem Kliger, Bar-Ilan University

This presentation presents a qualitative ethnographic exploration of professionally successful lifestyle migrants that had relocated to Tzununa, a village on the shores of Lake Atitlan, Guatemala, which is home to an indigenous Maya community but has also become a popular destination for lifestyle migrants and global travelers. These individuals, originally from urban cities in the U.S. and Europe, engage in workshops aimed at addressing modern distress; including loneliness, anxiety, chronic stress, phone addiction, the commodification of the self and more. While they continue participating in different new age workshops and ceremonies, Migrants depict postmigration healing practices as embedding popularized therapeutic narratives that amplify introspective self-dialog reproducing hypercapitalist and emotional capitalist “liquid-modern” unstable and disengaged selfhood.

Although researchers have extensively theorized the societal underpinnings of modern/late-modern alienation and the suffering “empty-self” and critically examined the role of therapeutic discourse in healing troubled subjectivity, while also examining alternative therapeutic practices from the Global South commonly referred to as “New Age”, the scholarship has yet to empirically ground the way emotionally distressed yet seemingly successful late-modern subjects experience and critique the zeitgeist of late-modernity and seek healing. Scant attention has been given to the particular self-reflexive processes of critical late-modern subjects as they claim to escape the emotional precarities of liquid-modernity, not seeking healing at home, but rather relocating to foreign lands where they have yet to successfully heal, instead reproducing potentially distressing configurations of liquid modern selfhood and self-care.

Dis/locating into the Urban: An Ethnography of Migrant Domestic Workers in India

Nargis Vasundhara, Independent Researcher

The evolution of paid domestic work and the idea of servitude has become increasingly attached with the modern Indian elite over the last few decades. In urban or metropolitan centres of India, female domestic workers are largely impoverished migrants from rural areas who have migrated with their families for lucrative employment. Their present-day figure stands large at 90 million within the unorganised and informal Indian labour markets. Despite the shift of care work as a commodified service, paid domestic work is still taken for granted and remains unrecognised in the Indian legal framework. Migrants encountering the city for the first time often express overwhelming feelings of dislocation and bewilderment towards the unfamiliar urban culture of the metropolis. The experience of settling into the city and creating a space for themselves, both physically and psychologically, is an isolating transition for rural migrants. For the domestic workers, the process of migration is not a seamless transition: from her village, to the city slums, and finally into the urban home for employment. They all form breaks in her biography. This paper derives its focus from the dislocated rural lives of the migrant by her shift into the urban diaspora, which leads not just to her physical relocation, but a mental and emotional readjustment to her new environments. A disjuncture or a sudden jump aptly characterizes the female migrant's life-cycle as she leaves home to be gainfully employed in the unfamiliar city. Data was collected over fourteen months at an urban slum/working-class neighbourhood/*basti* located within an affluent colony in south Delhi, where I engaged with oral histories and visual ethnographies as qualitative research methods. Oral history as a methodological tool for has allowed this study to account for upheavals and changes experienced in social lives and interpret local histories of women workers. In-depth interviews, focused-group discussion and open-ended surveys with the women have facilitated in revealing subjectivities encountered in their lived realities. The paper aims to draw away from the simplistic understanding that migration is an objective process of physical relocation. The intent to delve into the subjective experiences and the individual accounts of migrant women workers. Narratives of women workers recounting their initial employment encounters in urban homes are insightful in recognising and situating their subjective migratory experiences. Thus, the focus of this paper lies in an attempt to highlight the resilience affirmed by female domestic workers as a community, as their transition from rural to urban lifestyles require them to constantly negotiate the spaces they move from and settle within.

LAB 1 (PART 1 and 2): ETHNOGRAPHIC ECHOES: ACCESSING EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE THROUGH ARTISTIC METHODS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Organizers: Sonja Keßner¹ and Jeanne Rohleder¹, Julia Koch Tshirangwana², & Annika Strauss³ on behalf of the Ethnographic Echoes Network

¹ Owdnegrin Performance, ² University of Göttingen, ³ University of Münster

This Lab proposal originates from the interdisciplinary workshop Violence in the Field, organized by Annika Strauss (University of Münster) and Julia Koch Tshirangwana (University of Göttingen) in collaboration with Sonja Keßner and Jeanne Rohleder of the Owdnegrin Performance Collective from Berlin. Held in Münster in September 2024, the workshop served as a critical forum for examining the methodological, ethical, and experiential dimensions of conducting research in contexts marked by violence.

Through artistic research and theatre methods participants encountered questions of accessing and processing data tracks inscribed in their bodies and the importance of recognising such embodied knowledge not only as valid but as epistemologically insightful. The aim was to deepen the analytical approaches to their research material and strengthen the networks of bodies that facilitate ethnographic research

To access the embodied information, the participants engaged in various theatre methods - object improvisation, automatic writing, scenic re-enactments, and poetic translations. The workshop inspired organisers and participants alike to create a sustainable network to support each other with deepening their comprehension of processes of accessing, understanding and representing embodied research data in performative ways. It also facilitated the incorporation of artistic methods into their research and analysis.

Given the relative neglect of the researcher's body and senses as part of the process of knowing, analysing and understanding the world within academia, the newly founded network „Ethnographic Echoes“ would like to address that gap by facilitating a Lab during the ENPA conference.

Modalities:

The Lab will be divided into two parts. In part one „Ethnographic Echoes“ will share experiences and artistic outcomes of their workshop in Münster in the form of a performance lecture. The performance lecture will also include methodological and theoretical background of the endeavour Part two is a practical workshop that offers methods to explore connections between body, emotions and cognition and to access the

embodied knowledge around anthropological research processes through artistic practices. Practical requirements are a room that allows for movement, a projector and a bluetooth box or other audio device. Part two is limited to 20 participants, part one has no maximum capacity. People who want to take part in the practice workshop are kindly asked to sign up for both parts. We expect the performative lecture to take about 60 minutes, while the practical workshop will take 120 minutes or longer, if that is possible.

Modalities: lecture-performance (60 mins); methodological exercise (120 or a bit more)

Media: projector, speakers

Pedagogy: Lecture/conversation and Practical exercises.

Space: for the practical lab - a room to house 20 people and allow for them to move around.

PANEL 1: SOCIALISATION/CHILDREARING (Melody Ngaidzeyuf Ndzenyuiy, Anna Felleiter, Anni Kajanus, Leberecht Funk)

Caregiving in Multiple Contexts: How Everyday Activity Settings Structure Parent-Infant Relations in Cameroonian Nso Families

Melody Ngaidzeyuf Ndzenyuiy (presenter)¹, Katja Liebal^{1,2}, Roman Stengelin^{1,3}, Thomas Stodulka⁴, & Daniel B.M. Haun¹

¹ Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, ² Leipzig University, ³ University of Namibia, ⁴ University of Münster

Infant development varies across cultures, with parents shaping social and cognitive skills through diverse caregiving practices. While psychological research often emphasizes active engagement in structured contexts, ethnographic work highlights the role of passive exposure and socio-spatial organization in shaping early experiences. Parenting systems including primary care, body contact, body stimulation, face-to-face context, object stimulation, and vocalization and their ethnotheories are heterogeneous and influenced by eco-cultural contexts adding a layer of complexity to caregiving practices.

This study examines caregiving within everyday routines in Majority World communities, focusing on the Nso of Cameroon, where caregiving is embedded in family life. Using a mixed-method approach, we observed 51 parents (43 mothers, 8 fathers; mean age = 34 years) of infants (mean age = 8.2 months) through one-hour naturalistic focal video recordings and picture card interviews. Observational data were coded for (1) infant-directed and non-directed experiences, (2) parenting systems, and (3) spatial

organization. Generalized linear mixed models assessed caregiving patterns, while regression analyses explored associations between caregiving behaviours and spatial positioning.

Findings indicate that household chores especially laundry and cooking serve as key caregiving contexts, with parents structuring interactions through proximity, movement, and task-related engagement. Reflexive thematic analysis identified three caregiving domains: Embodied Security & Sensory Nurturance, Social & Cognitive Engagement, and Practicality & Cultural Continuity. Parents varied in beliefs about whether three-month-olds should engage in face-to-face interactions or observe.

By embedding parenting within activity settings, this study refines interpretations of infant parenting, providing a framework for contextualizing conclusions typically drawn from lab-based research.

Culture-specific prompts shape early social responsiveness

Anna Felleiter¹, Adejumoke I. Ayede², Lea Fiedler¹, Moritz Köster¹

¹ University of Regensburg, ² University College Hospital Ibadan

Across cultures, being responsive to others' requests is viewed as a keystone behavior in early prosocial development (Brownell, 2016; Dahl, 2015; Keller, 2022). Social responsiveness has been shown to emerge in the context of culture-specific socialization practices (Keller & Kärtner, 2013; Giner Torrens & Kärtner, 2017). In relational cultural contexts, parents typically use assertive prompts, whereas in autonomous cultural contexts, they employ deliberate prompts, both shaping early prosocial behavior in culture-specific ways (Köster et al., 2016). Early social responsiveness has been mostly investigated in dyadic interactions and correlation. Thus, the functional relevance of culture-specific requests for the emergence of social responsiveness is not fully understood. This study systematically investigated the effect of culture-specific prompts on social responsiveness in 115 children aged 24–30 months from Ibadan, Nigeria (a relational cultural-context), and Regensburg, Germany (an autonomous cultural-context). To test the implications of different requesting styles experimentally, we designed a task where the experimenter prompted the child to hand over three objects, one time using an assertive prompt, and the other time using a deliberate prompt. We found a clear difference in young children's social responsiveness. Regensburg children responded significantly better to deliberate prompts, whereas Ibadan children responded significantly better to assertive prompts. This interaction was almost fully explained by the culture-specific scaffolding styles shown by mothers, when entered as a covariate into the model. These results demonstrate a functional role of culture-specific interaction contexts in shaping early social responsiveness. Implications for cognitive and motivational underpinnings of prosocial behavior will be discussed.

Learning not to help in China and the UK – cultural elaboration of empathy in childhood

Anni Kajanus, University of Helsinki

Helping is one of the key features of human sociality. The ethnographic record is pervaded by accounts of people doing things with and for each other from a young age (Lancy 2020). In developmental psychology, a large body of experimental work has shown that by the time they begin to walk and talk, children are already helpful in many situations. They do not learn this from adults; the propensity to help is biologically based (Warneken 2016). While doing research on children's cooperation in Nanjing, China, and London, UK, it became clear to me that school-aged children were socialized into *not helping*, rather than helping. To understand how people make decisions about helping, I bring together three levels of culturally grounded analysis: helping behaviors, the cognition of empathy, and its emotional underpinnings. I draw from cultural ontologies of personhood to show how in London, children are expected to be generally helpful, but not at a great cost to themselves, while in Nanjing, there is less emphasis on general helpfulness, but highly costly helping is expected in particular relationships.

Socialization of Emotion in the East German Countryside

Leberecht Funk, Independent Scholar

In this paper, I introduce my interdisciplinary research about the socialization of emotion in a kindergarten and in families in a rural community in the Prignitz in the East German state of Brandenburg. While most anthropologists working in Euro-American societies focus on the urban exotic other, I decided to study rural East Germans, a minority group with low socioeconomic status and low levels of education which is underresearched by psychologists and anthropologists. By looking at the interplays between parental educational ideologies, educational goals and socialization practices, I explore if there are significant differences in the emergence of socioemotional pathways and the formation of social relationships between rural East Germans and urban Euro-American middle-classes who are also known as *Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic* (WEIRD) people. My research is organized along three important dimensions: social class, the rural-urban divide, and the East-West divide in Germany and Europe. These dimensions help me to see more clearly the sociocultural and geographical limitations of WEIRD people as a hegemonic social formation. It is my aim to show that allegedly optimal global standards in Early Child Development reach their sociocultural limits not only in the Majority World but also in the very Euro-American societies from which they stem from. More precisely, I want to demonstrate through my research that

the universality claim put forward by attachment theory, on whose premise national social policies and transnational intervention programs are based, does not hold. The deconstruction of WEIRD normative orientations is a precondition for overcoming epistemic violence.

Emotional socialization goals in different ecocultural contexts in Brazil and the Amazon

Lília Iêda Chaves Cavalcante (presenter), Bianca dos Reis Fonseca & Deira Jiménez Balam

Federal University of Pará

This study explored the socialization goals of mothers and fathers with children under 36 months, considering differences across distinct ecosocial contexts. The research focused on emotional socialization goals reported by participants from rural farming communities in Apeú, PA (32), and two urban centers—Belém, PA (36), and Rio de Janeiro, RJ (120). Belém and Rio de Janeiro represent urban environments that reflect Western middle-class norms, whereas Apeú's rural villages are characterized by a hybrid autonomous-relational model, showing growing educational development. A Chi-square test of independence revealed significant differences in how caregivers from different contexts prioritize certain socialization goals. Specifically, the goal of 'Self-Maximization' showed a statistically significant association with the type of ecocultural context ($p = 0.0210$, $df = 2$), suggesting that this goal is not uniformly valued across settings. Caregivers from urban areas were more likely to endorse self-oriented goals, aligning with individualistic cultural norms. Similarly, the goal of 'Emotionality' also differed significantly by context ($p = 0.0067$, $df = 2$), indicating that emotional development is emphasized differently depending on the environment.

To further investigate these trends, odds ratios were calculated comparing rural (Apeú-PA) and urban (Rio de Janeiro-RJ) samples. The Mantel-Haenszel test ($p = 0.0045$) showed that parents in rural settings were 3.444 times more likely to cite emotional goals than those in Rio, suggesting a strong contextual influence on emotional socialization. Regardless of context, 'Caregiver-Centered' strategies were consistently recognized as key to achieving socialization goals. Overall, the findings highlight the influence of ecosocial environments on parenting priorities and support the development of culturally sensitive interventions to foster emotional awareness and child development across diverse settings.

LAB 2: WRITING WHEN EYES ARE FILLED / FIELD WITH TEARS

Organiser: Hagar Hazaz Berger, Ono Academic College

What happens to an anthropologist studying a disaster or war zone? But not only that, what happens when she is part of the population dealing with the disaster? How does she manage to create and research in such a field while she herself is going through the crisis event that usually also encompasses physical or mental pain and loss?

In this workshop, I will present a methodological tool I have developed called "Ethnostory." This tool is inspired by the field of literary anthropology, which examines the role of literature in the lives of societies and the individuals within them. It also poses key questions: What role does writing play in the accumulation of anthropological knowledge? How are anthropological texts created? Can these texts be viewed as part of the literary genre? What is the distinction between the representer and the represented? (Rapport, 2018). This interdisciplinary methodology combines anthropology, literature, and psychoanalytic theories, offering a fresh perspective on fields of conflict, crisis, and disaster. It examines the power of imagination in crisis events while creating a distance that allows researchers to reflect and process these events. As Veena Das states, "Some realities need to be fictionalized before they can be apprehended" (Das, 2007:39).

The writing workshop will create a shared poetic space for researchers to explore "Ethnostory" method and its benefits for the anthropological discipline during times of crisis and disaster, among other contexts.

The lab is intended for 10-12 participants, we will need a quiet room and comfortable tables for writing.

PANEL 19: ADDICTION IN TRANSITION: FROM TREATMENT TECHNOLOGIES TO AGENTIVE SELVES (Alastair Parsons, Suzana Jovicic, Jesse Proudfoot, Lucy Clarke, Wesam Hassan)

Chairs: Alastair Parsons & Suzana Jovicic

The anthropology of addiction has blossomed in the last two decades, moving from more piecemeal engagements to a more coherent conversation that has brought addiction into sharper relief and shown its viability to speak to larger processes of sociality and selfhood. This panel aims to consolidate and expand on some of the genre's broad foci, but also to

probe future trajectories of the anthropological lens on addiction beyond critique. It explores the space between addiction treatment modalities as 'technologies' that aim to shape the personhoods of the people they treat, the subjectivities formed through various renderings of what it means to be an addict, and where lived experiences and the possibility for agentic self-definition complicate therapeutic/legal/social concepts of addiction. In particular, the shift towards agency may provide a common denominator in which participatory processes bring together disciplines in novel ways. This panel explores the complex interplay between addiction, agency, and recovery across diverse cultural, institutional, and economic contexts. By examining themes such as powerlessness, porous selfhood, vernacular therapeutic practices, and speculative economies, the presentations interrogate how addiction is shaped by structural forces while also opening up spaces for precarious or transformative forms of agency. The aim of the panel is to identify points of confluence and contention that may direct future research and flesh out potential for constructive approaches.

Life on life's terms: Powerlessness and precarious agency in addictions recovery

Jesse Proudfoot, Durham University

The 'Twelve Steps' of Alcoholics Anonymous have provided a foundational set of concepts about recovery from addiction. In transitional living facilities such as halfway houses, twelve-step discourses are increasingly put to new uses as they are adapted to people struggling with drugs as well as incarceration. One concept central to such institutions is powerlessness, in which users admit that they are 'powerless over their addiction'. Powerlessness, embodied in slogans like "living life on life's terms", is presented as a key tool of recovery, enjoining participants to accept their lot in order to recover. This injunction has faced sustained critique from progressive drug scholars. Feminist and anti-racist scholars argue that those already disempowered in everyday life are unlikely to benefit from embracing powerlessness. Similarly, researchers have highlighted its therapeutic inadequacy, noting strong correlations between relapse and belief in one's powerlessness. Drawing on fieldwork at a Chicago transitional living facility, this presentation explores how powerlessness operates in settings serving marginalised people. I demonstrate how powerlessness becomes a point of both identification and struggle for residents, with some embracing it to describe their experiences of structural violence, while others resist powerlessness, asserting their own free will in their experiences of drug use and incarceration. This question of agency, I argue, emerges as a key problem for the critical study of addiction, which has made remarkable interventions through its focus on the structural conditions driving addiction as well as critiques of neoliberal discourses of the rational actor that underpin recovery discourse. In doing so however, we have somewhat ceded the field of agency, which remains a key aspect of

any process of recovery. Beginning to theorise this space of precarious or 'strategic' agency is the goal of this paper.

Boundedness and porousness for non-theist members of Twelve Step Fellowships in London

Lucy Clarke, University of Kent

Charles Taylor, alongside others, has articulated that the modern secular human subject is uniquely bounded (or 'buffered' in his terms [Taylor 2007]). The secular self is one which cannot be taken over by demons, Gods, or other 'cosmic forces which breach the boundary' (ibid.: p37). Rather, what a person experiences is theirs alone, a manifestation of the self rather than of outside forces. Secular selfhood is bounded, and the boundaries between self and other are clear-cut. This bounded self could cause tension for secular Twelve-step fellowship (TSF) members. In TSF terms, addiction is a state of being which takes over the self. That is, addiction invades and overcomes the self. Behaviour is not understood (as in rationalist-secular discourse) as emerging from an agentive, autonomous, decision-making mind, but rather as intertwined with and emerging from affective states that one experiences, things which happen to 'me' rather than emerge from 'me'. Here the self is porous, vulnerable to the infusion and influence of 'addict' sensibilities if action is not taken.

Following on from fieldwork with TSF groups in London, this talk looks at the articulation of addiction for non-theist and secular members. I explore how the people I worked with manage boundedness and porousness. It asks how non-theist TSF members negotiate being variously 'buffered', 'bounded' or 'porous' selves, how this impacts their recovery, and which forms of affect or behaviour are rendered aspects of the self, are externalized as not-self, or are understood as somehow both at once.

"Up to You (laow dtae khun):" Beyond the Addicted Subject at Wat Thamkrabok

Alastair Parsons, University College London

Wat Thamkrabok is a Buddhist monastery in Thailand that has offered an addiction therapy since 1959, at no cost, to both a Thai and international clientele. This paper draws on a year's ethnographic research there that was aimed to respond to what I saw as two questions emerging from the anthropological literature on addiction. First, it was a response to the paucity of research on vernacular or locally situated conceptions of substance use problems existing independently of biomedical influence. I aimed to discover how a community of monks made sense of addiction (tdid-yaa-sep-tdid) when, in 1959, withdrawing opiate users unexpectedly petitioned them for help. Second,

following qualitative researchers' consistent observation that institutions treating addiction have agendas for shaping the personhoods of the people they treat based on how addiction is conceived of, I sought to explore what kinds of personhoods a Buddhist-informed therapy would encourage. This paper is about how I discovered neither of those questions make sense at Wat Thamkrabok, and about what exists there instead. I propose that because monastery's therapy is entirely a reflection of their idiosyncratic Buddhism, it is not obvious to them that addiction is a discreet entity setting some people apart from others. Moreover, because of their conviction that self-transformation is always "done for oneself," patients have significant freedom to define the terms of their own projects of recovery. Based on this, I argue that what Wat Thamkrabok has is not a vernacular concept of addiction, but a vernacular response to people, which opens up new vantage points for the anthropology of addiction regarding the possibilities of therapeutic communities and both the allowances and complications of agentic choice therein.

Addiction, Agency, and Speculative Economies

Wesam Hassan, London School of Economics and Political Science

This paper explores addiction as a site of negotiation between treatment technologies, economic infrastructures, and emergent forms of agency. Drawing on the ethnographic research on gambling and cryptocurrency speculation that I conducted in Turkey, the paper examines how individuals labelled as (addicts) navigate regimes of control while also leveraging addiction as a form of economic strategy. While addiction treatment often operates through biomedical, legal, and psychological interventions that seek to mould selfhood, speculative economies create parallel infrastructures where risk-taking is valorized rather than pathologized. This complicates dominant narratives of addiction as merely a disorder to be managed. By engaging with people who move between addiction treatment programs, informal financial networks, and digital speculative markets, I situate addiction here within broader shifts in economic subjectivity. How do people negotiate the contradiction between treatment regimes that frame addiction as a loss of control and speculative domains that reward high-risk engagement? What forms of agency emerge in the interstices of governance and self-fashioning? I argue that foregrounding addiction as a fluid and relational category also challenges static understandings of agency in addiction discourse. I posit that addiction is not only shaped by treatment technologies but also by economic conditions that reframe dependency, self-discipline, and aspiration. In doing so, the paper calls for an interdisciplinary engagement that moves beyond critique to consider how addiction, agency, and speculative practices intersect in unexpected ways.

“Something sleeping that shouldn’t be woken up.” – Negotiating the Traffic Light Model in an Internet Addiction Clinic

Suzana Jovicic, University of Vienna

The addiction clinic, my fieldwork site located in Austria, generally adheres to a strict abstinence-based model for treating addictions such as alcohol, drugs, or gambling, despite harm reduction approaches gaining traction in German-speaking regions. However, the rise of substance-independent addictions, like internet addiction, has challenged this framework, as abstinence remains impractical in a digitalized society.

Central to the clinic’s treatment of internet addiction is the use of a “traffic light” metaphor. Patients self-classify their internet practices as green (safe), orange (borderline), or red (problematic). This seemingly simple metaphor promises calculated, cognitive agency in a therapeutic setting otherwise sensitive to avoiding narratives of addiction as a failure of willpower. While the traffic light approach incorporates patients’ expertise in unprecedented ways compared to abstinence models, it introduces interpretative vagueness: when in-patients participating in the 8-week detox programme return from their weekly home visits, treatment success remains self-defined, sometimes leading to a vague sense of intangible failure. Therapists’ efforts to remain neutral do little to resolve this ambiguity. Unlike alcohol addiction therapy, where relapses are openly acknowledged and viscerally discussed, internet addiction lacks clear markers of progress or relapse. Instead, there is a lingering sense of being on the verge of slipping into what one therapist described as “something sleeping that shouldn’t be woken up” or awaking a “stomach worm”, as one patient phrased it.

This work-in-progress paper explores how the emerging spaces for agency highlight the tensions between the dismissal of control and metaphors that implicitly rely on control – not just behavioural control, but also interpretive control that might eclipse a bodily experience of behavioural addiction that seems disembodied due to the absence of a substance invading the body. It therefore explores how therapists and patients navigate this potentially participatory space together in the midst of shifting paradigms in addiction treatment.

PANEL 4: THERAPY / CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OR EXPLORATIONS / PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC CONTEXTS (Andrés Sánchez Guerrero, Philipp Berger, Orly Tal, Arnav Sethi)

Chair: Andrés Sánchez Guerrero

The Legibility of the Foreign World: Understanding Non-Understanding as a Basic Attitude that Enables Intercultural Encounters in Psychotherapeutic Context

Andrés Sánchez Guerrero, Universitätsklinikum Münster

The ways in which socio-cultural diversity affects psychopathology are multifarious. Correspondingly, intercultural psychotherapy may be thought to require a particular approach. Current proposals that address the challenges posed by cultural diversity to psychotherapeutic work typically focus on the need to improve responsiveness to a series of differences concerning very specific issues (e.g., ethnicity, cultural identity, models of mental suffering, the relationship between patient and healer). The relevant literature is, thus, full of suggestions concerning concrete strategies, policies, clinical practice guidelines, and technical interventions intended to face the ‘challenges of multiculturalism’. A fundamental problem of this corpus of recommendations concerns the fact that they are all rooted in particular views of the differences at issue—views that have themselves particular socio-cultural origins. In this context, it seems recommendable to characterize in the first place the general basic attitude that permits the encounter between a patient and a therapist even under conditions of an apparently minimal congruence of their life-worlds—instead of articulating further recommendations. In this contribution, I propose to characterize this attitude in terms of an ‘understanding non-understanding approach’. Discussing a series of topoi that are part of the hermeneutic phenomenological reflection on the dialectic between sense and its various counterparts, I elaborate on the suggestion that understanding requires uninterrupted work at the limits of understanding. I contain that the basic attitude at issue does not primarily have to fit multiculturalism but a fundamental experience of human existence: being-in-the-world involves dealing with alterity.

“Even a single light dispels the deepest darkness” – Kindness-based trauma therapy for children and adolescents

Philipp Berger¹, Katrin Rothmaler¹, Tyler Colasante¹, & Tina Malti^{1,2}

¹ Leipzig University, ² University of Toronto

“Even a single light dispels the deepest darkness.” – This quote by Mahatma Gandhi points to an inner, positive force within humans that can provide guidance and clarity even in the face of adversity. Traumatic experiences—such as violence, conflict, and abuse—cast long shadows on children’s development and mental health, posing significant risks for their emotional well-being. Traditional trauma therapies often focus on modifying dysfunctional thoughts and emotions, yet recent research highlights the value of third-wave approaches that cultivate positive psychological resources. Here, we propose *kindness* as a transformative and humanistic concept in trauma therapy for children and adolescents. Kindness, understood as a *caring and compassionate attitude toward oneself and others, fosters a deep appreciation of human dignity*. It is a universally accessible resource—one that every individual has experienced and carries within them. We argue that integrating kindness into trauma therapy can address key challenges in existing interventions, such as high dropout rates and the risk of emotional overload or retraumatization. Kindness contributes to mental health in profound ways: Extending kindness to others not only enhances their well-being but also strengthens our own. Experiencing kindness—whether from others or through self-compassion—cultivates trust and fosters a sense of safety and belonging. By nurturing kindness in trauma therapy, we aim to illuminate a path to recovery, empowering children to (re)discover their inner strength and (re)build meaningful connections with themselves and others.

Embodying Empathy: Buddhist Influences on Empathy in Psychoanalytic Practice

Orly Tal (presenter) and Michal Pagis

Bar-Ilan University

While existing research has examined the psychologization of spiritual concepts in therapeutic settings such as mindfulness, less attention has been paid to the inverse process: how psychological concepts become imbued with spiritual meanings. This ethnographic study investigates how Buddhist ideas influence psychoanalysts’ understanding and practice of empathy, particularly within a community of self-psychology practitioners who view empathy as foundational to their clinical practice. Through participant observation and in-depth interviews with psychoanalysts and

psychologists, this research examines two key questions: How do psychoanalysts integrate Buddhist concepts into their clinical practice of empathy, and what challenges emerge from this integration? The study reveals a complex process of hybridization where practitioners attempt to bridge Western secular and Buddhist approaches to empathy. The findings suggest that this spiritual-psychological hybridization transforms empathy in three significant ways: it becomes (1) an embodied practice grounded in spiritual techniques of somatic awareness and bodily attunement, (2) an ideological-moral stance transcending its traditional role as a therapeutic tool, and (3) a site of tension between ideal and practical application. This research contributes to our understanding of contemporary therapeutic practice by illuminating the processes of translation between psychological and spiritual frameworks, while highlighting how the sacralization of psychological concepts reshapes clinical practice, practitioner experience, and the therapeutic relationship itself.

‘Thoughts Inaccessible’: Psychiatric Mental State Examination and the Production of Diagnostic Uncertainty

Arnav Sethi, University of Cambridge

This paper asks: how do embodied, sensed and felt dimensions of psychiatric diagnosis shape clinical and diagnostic uncertainty? This uncertainty is produced through the linkages that psychiatrists make between thoughts and speech. When patients are minimally verbal, mute or communicate atypically, thoughts become inaccessible, which sometimes produces diagnostic uncertainty. The mental state examination (MSE) is a fundamental clinical psychiatric tool to assess a patient’s behaviour, speech, mood, thought, perception, cognition and insight. In many ways, the MSE is to psychiatry what ethnography is to anthropology, particularly in terms of the shared proclivities for descriptive observation and linguistic expression. Drawing on participant observation in year-5 medical student classrooms where mental state examination is taught, I describe the pedagogy of MSE in psychiatry, focusing on how psychiatrists are trained to make these linkages between thoughts and speech. I then draw on clinical ethnographic vignettes from a community learning disability team and an inpatient mental health unit in Central London to outline the discontinuities in translating this pedagogical practice into clinical practice. Here I focus on the production of diagnostic uncertainty in case conferences where clinicians describe the impossibility of conducting MSE, especially when patients communicate atypically. The paper discusses the erasures of clinical intuition and unconventional modes of expression from psychiatric training when this otherwise well-established pedagogical precept of accessing thoughts through speech becomes impossible. The work of clinical intuition, sensing and feeling is foregrounded in some of these cases, wherein psychiatrists’ document in their MSE entries that certain patients’ thoughts are inaccessible.

(ONLINE)

PANEL 25: HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION (Sofia Bowen, Agita Lüse, Mu-Jeong Kho, Cristina Maria Tofan, Anna Altukhova)

Chair: Carolina Remorini

Don't Blame My Mind: Bureaucracy, Mental Health, and Workers' Struggles in Chile's Labor Security Network

Sofía Bowen, Universidad Católica de Chile

Recognition of occupational mental health problems and access to treatment in Chile are constrained by rigid, complex, and morally charged bureaucratic structures. This presentation explores how workers navigate the socio-labor health and welfare network and their constraints, highlighting their struggles, suffering, and acts of resistance and self-determination. In recent decades, the rise of psychiatric complaints within workers' insurance companies has sparked public debate about workplace relationships, occupational injuries, and diseases. Moreover, an ongoing and complex discussion is unfolding over who should be held accountable for the "risks" that may harm workers' psychological well-being.

Through an ethnographic approach, I analyze the negotiation of responsibility in encounters between workers, occupational doctors, 'psi' therapists, and public officials. I argue that although medico-legal mechanisms tend to minimize workers' experiences and place the burden of responsibility on them, their responses to institutional rejection cannot be interpreted as merely passive or docile. Instead, an insubordinate stance emerges, challenging imposed stigmas and categorizations while seeking to legitimize psychic suffering as a consequence of work. Rejecting psychiatric diagnoses, filing insurance claims, appealing rulings, and lodging complaints are analyzed as forms of refusal and self-determination—acts that resist mechanisms attempting to individualize and psychologize their suffering. In the context of a weakened social security system and ongoing transformations in neoliberal labor policy, we reflect on how sick leave and complaints become spaces for the reconfiguration of subjectivities, citizenship, and political action to reject social and labor injustices. In this scenario, 'small acts' of resistance emerge as focal points that encapsulate, reflect, and mobilize the historical struggles of Chilean workers.

Environment and hospitals: grass-roots insights

Agita Lūse

Rīga Stradiņš University

In 2015 the UN General Assembly announced the '2030 Agenda', a sustainable development framework. In 2020 the European Commission's *Green Deal* was launched. In 2022, the European Parliament adopted a directive on corporate sustainability reporting (CSRD). Hospitals are often among the largest employers thus they are among the first in the EU to start compiling sustainability reports. Their boards are already assessing carbon footprints and devising ways to reduce them. Besides, they ought to consider sustainability in such areas as working conditions, equality, diversity and inclusion.

The CSRD as well as healthcare institutions represent care for human populations. Unlike UN Conventions which also demand care, the CSRD delegates the caring work to enterprises. How is the '2030 Agenda' philosophy being translated into governance, embodied in strategies, mid-term plans, and everyday relations? The care is envisioned to be seeping down, from the higher to the lower strata, to interweave whole organizational cultures. That, however, cannot be accomplished without embracing new ways of knowledge production and adjusted channels of communication.

A niche for psychological anthropology opens here for it promises to pinpoint sources of care in mundane relationships. Its empirically grounded insights can complement those of business administration and human resources management, disciplines based on deductive reasoning. Anthropological insights would be of a particular relevance in hospitals, where the treatment outcomes largely depend on whether the employees feel cared for. The paper will draw on data from case studies conducted in three hospitals in Latvia.

Thorstein Veblen in Retrospect and Prospect: How can the Basic Income Act as a Trigger to Self-Organise for a New Resilient System of Energy Community?

Mu-Jeong Kho, University College London

In contemporary-capitalism, deepening the various socioeconomic inequalities-crises, it is inevitable to make major 'adaptations.' The fundamental 'challenge' must be institutional: the established-institutions are inadequate, so a greater period-of-experimentation like 'basic-income' is necessary. This is why we should look at the basics-of-institutional-theory, particularly in Post-Keyensian (as Marx-and-Keynes) traditions, outside the ruling-neoliberal-consensus. Nevertheless, the truly-deep concern, which puts this literature vulnerable in challenging the ruling-consensus, is the weak-

connection to radical-theory, particularly of economic and psychological anthropologist Thorstein Veblen, on the-issue: in this crisis, how can a basic- income act-as-a-trigger to self-organise a new resilient-system-of-energy-community? This question leads to sub-questions: (1) how does the capitalist-system-of-energy get to organisation-structuration in real- world (objectivity); (2) what is its 'truly-deeper originator' of crisis; (3) how (whether) can a basic-income (truly) act-as-a-trigger for self-organisation (in philosophical-value and history); (4) if-untruly, what normative-solutions are, addressing the current political landscapes-of-possibilities between reformism- versus-radicalism. This paper, which defines 'self-organisation' as 'institutional-process-of-change-with-struggle to reorganise-reconstitute-restructure an order-out-of-disorder,' aims to critically reflect on the questions with institutional-matrix of self-organisation structured by market vs. non-market; pro-capital vs. anti-capital, through applying a deeper-understanding of radical-theory of Veblen into an empirical- case-study (with quantitative-data-analysis) on Korea's energy-system during the last-decade. By doing so, this paper argues: beyond superficial-issues of market-versus-State, and Keynesianism-versus-neoliberalism, there are deeper-issues of 'structuration' within capitalist-systems-of-energy in Korea, which most institutional-theories in Post-Keynesian-literatures have well addressed, and have argued that a basic-income can act-as-a-trigger to self-organisation. However, these are in turn only-valid when truly-connected to radical-theory, particularly of Veblen connecting 'basic-income' with long-term vision, beyond such capitalistic-system.

Anthropomorphism and Punitive Responses Toward Artificial Intelligence: An Integrative Review

Cristina Maria Tofan, Romanian Academy

Iasi Branch and Alexandru Ioan, Cuza University

As artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly integrates into human social and professional environments, its anthropomorphization—attributing AI with human-like traits—has implications for human attitudes and moral responses. This integrative review examines the intersection of AI anthropomorphism and punitive behaviours, addressing how perceived agency, intentionality, and social value influence human responses to AI misconduct. Drawing from literature in psychology, ethics, and human-computer interaction, this review explores (1) how the cognitive and emotional mechanisms of social relationships are driving punishment toward AI, (2) the role of AI's social integration in shaping punitive versus rehabilitative tendencies, and (3) generational differences in AI accountability, particularly among older employees with extensive technology adaptation experiences. Using specific search syntax, I used an integrative review

approach and searched four main databases (Web of Science, Scopus, PsycINFO, and PubMed) for peer-reviewed articles. Preliminary results on over 250 papers indicate that anthropomorphized AI is more likely to be assigned moral responsibility and subjected to harsher punishment, aligning with theories of social agency and retribution. However, AI perceived as socially valuable or integrated into cooperative roles may be more likely to be "retrained" than deleted, reflecting parallels with human moral rehabilitation. Additionally, older professionals may exhibit greater leniency in AI punishment due to accumulated experience with technological errors, raising questions about intergenerational differences in AI ethics and trust. This review contributes to the ongoing discourse on AI governance, ethical design, and human-AI collaboration, offering insights into the evolving moral landscape of artificial agents. The implications extend to AI deployment in workplaces, law, and human resource management, where AI accountability remains a key challenge. By synthesizing interdisciplinary perspectives, this study provides a conceptual framework for understanding and anticipating societal responses to AI misbehaviour in increasingly autonomous and socially embedded systems.

Exclusion and selection with a human face

Anna Altukhova, Humboldt Universität Berlin

What role can psychologists play in an NGO aimed at helping orphans escape from state-run institutions for children with disabilities in Russia? While one might expect support and care to address the psychological consequences of long-term institutionalization, the reality is different. In this paper, I will trace the history of one NGO that was created in the early 2000s and still exists, focusing on the role of the psychologists within it. I argue that initially, their task was to meticulously *select* children in order to decide who must stay within the institutional system and who theoretically would be able to integrate into the society of *ordinary* people. According to psychologists, the right to leave the institutional system was given only to those who would not become *idlers*, which corresponds with the Soviet ideology of exclusion, however, with the new *philanthropical* face. Consequently, for several years, the NGO sifted all the orphans within one specialized institution to identify the most *promising* candidates. Others ended up in state-run institutions for adults with no regrets. In this paper, I will show how it happened that the civil society structures—such as the NGO I observed—started contributing to exclusion alongside the state and how the very specific understanding of psychology and its tasks contributed to that. Thus, I suggest that this paper can offer insights into two broader questions: what forms can psychology take in a post-Soviet context when dealing with marginalized groups and people who were subjected to lifelong institutionalization?

FILM SCREENING WITH INTRODUCTION AND Q&A

Tremulous Images: two filmic experiments about sound and war memory in Okinawa

Rupert Cox, Granada Center for Visual Anthropology

Rupert Cox is the Director of the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology, University of Manchester. He is interested in the intersections between art and science and anthropology that draw on practices from sound art, and documentary film and are directed towards innovative forms of public engagement. The works to be screened represent long-term collaborations with Japanese acoustic scientist Kozo Hiramatsu, and UK-based sound artist, Angus Carlyle.

How does sound make the memory of a place? How do people hear the sounds of the place they live in against an experience of trauma and remember sounds that may no longer be present in that environment or exist as a natural feature of the environment? These two experimental films: 'Cave Mouth and the Giant Voice' and 'Zawawa', address these questions through interdisciplinary collaborative research bringing together perspectives from acoustic science, anthropology, sound art and film, to reflect on the experience of individuals and communities living around the US military bases on the island of Okinawa.

Zawawa: the sound of sugar cane in the wind. Experimental film by Angus Carlyle & Rupert Cox (2017)

It is a strange and bitter irony that the US naval bombardment which launched the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 was called the 'typhoon of steel', invoking the turbulent winds that annually buffet this small island. Okinawans sought shelter from the battle in natural features of the environment such as caves and within sugar cane fields, creating memories that reside in the sounds of these places today. This film, the result of a ten-year collaboration between a landscape artist, an acoustic scientist and an anthropologist attempts to listen in on and make sense of these sounds through the stories of individuals and the recordings of these sounds. Their words, solidified as text and witness to the history of the US occupation of the island and expressed through the mixing of images and sounds of natural elements, military machinery and ritual practices convey the experience of many Okinawan lives, suspended between the American wars of the past, present and future.

Friday, 13 June, 9:30 – 18:30

KEYNOTE: EMPLOYING THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMAGINATION TO UNDERSTAND WHY MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEMS ARE FAILING UNDER NEOLIBERALISM: A UK CASE STUDY

James Davies, University of Roehampton

James Davies obtained his PhD in Social & Medical Anthropology from the University of Oxford in 2007. He is now Associate Professor in Medical Anthropology and Psychology at the University of Roehampton, London. He is also a practicing psychotherapist, having worked clinically in various settings, including the NHS. He is co-founder of the Beyond Pills All-Party Parliamentary Group, Westminster, UK, and has been an advisor to the UK Government & Public Health England. He is author of numerous books including the bestselling: *Sedated: how modern capitalism caused our mental health crisis* (Atlantic 2022), and *Cracked: the unhappy truth about psychiatry* (Icon 2014). He also co-edited 'Emotions in the Field: the psychology and anthropology of fieldwork experience' (Stanford Uni Press 2011), and is a founding member of the European Network for Psychological Anthropology (ENPA).

In this presentation, Dr. James Davies recruits the anthropological imagination to illuminate the socio-political drivers of the current crisis in poor mental health outcomes. Using the UK neoliberal context as the site of analysis, he will expose how the mechanisms of medicalisation, depoliticisation, commodification, decollectivisation & productivisation have enabled the sector to expand its reach and fiscally flourish despite presiding over worsening outcomes. By struggling to survive under longstanding neoliberal arrangements, the sector has become an adroit handmaiden of economic directives, but at the expense of generating the good clinical outcomes we all want and deserve.

Roundtable: Psychological Anthropology at the Crossroads: Critique beyond Echo Chambers and Moralized Discourse

Organizer: Jeta Rexha, University of Münster

The roundtable creates a space for three contemporary research projects to present their work and open space for reflection and exchange in the adjacent Q&A session. The roundtable aims at challenging disciplinary echo chambers, engaging with the moral and political implications of critique, and thinking through new directions for psychological anthropology in a spirit of openness and rigour.

Participants:

Paūlah Shabel and Mariana García Palacios, Universidad de Buenos Aires

Annika Strauss, University of Münster

Birgitt Röttger-Rössler, Freie Universität Berlin

OPEN MIC COFFEE BREAK

Moderator: Lavinia Tanculescu-Popa

The open mic session offers a space for participants to share reflections on the evolving dialogue between anthropology and psychology. We invite contributions that explore current challenges, emerging questions, and possibilities for future directions in psychological anthropology. The session also aims to gather ideas on how the European Network of Psychological Anthropology can further support its current and potential members and strengthen connections across the community.

PANEL 18: LIVING NEURODIVERSITY: CONTEXTS, CHALLENGES, AND CRITICAL REFLECTIONS (Kathrin Bauer, Anya Ovcharenko, Brittany R. Franck, Jaya Mathur, Bingjing Yang)

Chairs: Kathrin Bauer & Anya Ovcharenko

Neurodiversity has emerged as a powerful paradigm, reframing conditions such as autism and ADHD as natural variations rather than pathologies. By challenging deficit-based models, it has opened up new possibilities for understanding and supporting neurodivergence. However, as it has gained prominence, it risks becoming a universalizing framework that overlooks context-dependent lived realities, particularly beyond the Global North.

The panel explores tensions between unifying diversity and respecting difference and the commodification of neurodivergence within neoliberal contexts. As calls for decolonization and diversification intensify, alongside the rise of universalizing theories and interventions for neurodivergent individuals, this panel interrogates the dominance of Western frameworks and their implications for international neurodiversity advocacy.

By examining the struggles, disabilities, and societal norms that neurodivergence challenges, this discussion reveals the cultural and structural forces shaping concepts of normality and difference across diverse settings. This panel aims to foster dialogue that bridges critical scholarship and lived experiences, challenging existing paradigms while finding new ways to think about neurodiversity within a multicultural context.

Navigating Neurodiversity at the Intersections of Migration and Autism: A Qualitative Study with Autistic Migrants in the UK

Anya Ovcharenko, University of Exeter

With 280 million international migrants worldwide, human mobility is a defining feature of contemporary society, shaped by globalization, climate crises, and conflict. Simultaneously, the past decade has seen a significant rise in adult autism diagnoses across the Western world, exemplified by the UK's National Health Service reporting a surge in autism assessment referrals. Despite extensive research on migration and autism as separate phenomena, their intersection remains underexplored, rendering autistic migrants largely invisible in social sciences research.

This study investigates the intersection of autism and migration, examining how displacement and resettlement reshape understandings of autism while using autistic experiences to illuminate migration as a multifaceted social, cultural, and bureaucratic process. Grounded in empirical ethics and medical anthropology, the research draws on decolonial feminist scholars María Lugones and Mariana Ortega to challenge dominant

discourses and singular truths about being and normalcy. By centring the lived experiences of autistic migrants in the UK, the study reveals nuanced dynamics in the formation of medical conditions, identity, adaptation, and systemic barriers.

Preliminary findings, based on in-depth interviews, demonstrate how autism is both shaped by and shapes socio-political and cultural environments. By critically engaging with neurodiversity through the multiplicity of lived experiences and cultures, the research underscores the fluidity of autism as a construct that intersects with other identities, medical conditions, and traits, shifting across socio-cultural and geographical contexts. It advocates for understanding neurodevelopmental conditions as embedded within and responsive to their environments, offering transformative insights into reimagining support systems to better address the needs of those directly affected.

Rethinking Neurodiversity: ADHD, Lived Experience, and Sociocultural Contexts in Colombia

Kathrin Bauer, Freie Universität Berlin

Neurodiversity has gained traction as an alternative to deficit-based models, offering a more affirming framework for conditions such as ADHD. While this perspective has opened up important discussions, more empirical engagement is needed with lived realities and the ways neurodivergence is embedded in broader sociocultural contexts. Just as biomedical models risk imposing culturally inadequate understandings, applying neurodiversity frameworks uncritically across contexts warrants scrutiny. The increasing prevalence of self-diagnosis and the framing of neurodivergence as an identity further complicate these discussions, raising questions about how conditions are recognized, how the boundaries between disability, divergence, and ordinary variation shift, and what shapes these distinctions.

Based on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork in urban and rural Colombian communities, this paper explores how ADHD emerges and is recognized, framed, and negotiated in different sociocultural settings. Through participant observation and interviews with families, teachers, and healthcare professionals, I examined how ADHD-associated behaviors are understood as biomedical conditions, social problems, or simply aspects of childhood—and in some communities, remained largely absent or unobserved. This raises questions not just about recognition but about the conditions under which neurodevelopmental differences emerge and become socially meaningful.

These findings underscore the need for a context-sensitive, inductive approach that prioritizes lived experiences and the broader sociocultural contexts in which neurodivergence takes shape. Considering multiple perspectives across diverse communities fosters a more grounded understanding – one that helps affected individuals

make sense of their experiences while informing practical applications that improve their lives.

Disorder, Divergence and Distress: Borderline Personality Disorder and the Pragmatics of Diagnostic Accumulation

Brittany R. Franc, University of Arizona

This paper draws on two years of (auto)ethnographic research with 51 individuals who have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD) in the United States. BPD has been the subject of decades-long debate including calls for its eradication as a psychiatric label or for it to be repositioned within neurodivergence frameworks. Critics point to the harms of labeling people with “disordered” personalities and argue that high rates of co-morbidity and diagnostic shifts evince its limited clinical value. My fieldwork reveals that the BPD label offers opportunities and risks, derived not only from the diagnosis but also from the labels that accumulate around it in individuals’ diagnostic trajectories, ranging from mental illness to neurodevelopmental disorder diagnoses. Taking a socio-ecological approach to diagnosis, I explore diagnostic accumulation as a pragmatic process in which people navigate distressing experience amidst competing relational and therapeutic demands, within social and clinical worlds in which each diagnosis is valued differently in terms of eliciting emotional and material support. I argue that moving between pathology- and neurodivergence-focused diagnoses enabled my interlocutors to seek care and access self-understanding and connection, but these diagnoses also involved difficult trade-offs. While neurodiversity is a more positively framed pragmatic tool which might be marshaled for the empathy required to build a stronger social world, in practice some found that this framework bypassed the reality of living with BPD, and the (traumatic) biographical and relational particularities underlying their distress.

Paying Attention to Attentionality: An Account of the Social Life of ADHD in India

Jaya Mathur, Jawaharlal Nehru University & Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

ADHD, once viewed solely as a childhood neurodevelopmental disorder detectable only in school settings, is undergoing a significant redefinition in India. An increasing number of adults across demographic, educational, and professional contexts are now being diagnosed, and the condition is being rearticulated as a form of neurodivergence and a disabling chronic illness. Although much of the available information—often derived from global search engines and social media—is steeped in Global North perspectives, the

lived reality of ADHD in India emerges through locally nuanced, socio-politically embedded, and vernacular expressions.

This shift occurs during a broader therapeutic turn in Indian society, where the resurgence of pop psychology via digital media and the commodification of psychotherapy among middle-class populations are reshaping public understandings of mental health. In this context, the present research project explores the local life of ADHD among urban young adults through an ethnographic approach.

Drawing on fieldwork that includes interactions with both diagnosed and undiagnosed individuals, as well as engagements with psychiatrists, psychotherapists, counsellors, and patient collectives, the study sheds light on the lived experience of ADHD. It interrogates questions such as: How do individuals forge intimate, affective, and relational lives around the ADHD label? What does it mean to be diagnosed, to self-diagnose, and to live with ADHD? And how is a patchworked ecology of care mobilized around this contested illness?

Through its empirical and conceptual contributions, this research seeks to join and enrich the global conversation on neurodivergence, marking one of the first ethnographic studies of ADHD in India.

Contesting ADHD Diagnosis: Neurodiversity and Ways of Being in China

Bingjing Yang, University of Pittsburgh

Under the influence of positive psychology emphasizing mindfulness, self-care, and nurturance, an increasing number of young Chinese are reporting symptoms on their own, seeking diagnoses, training, and treatment for ADHD. What position does ADHD and its diagnosis occupy in the Chinese context, and how is it enacted by those who suffer? In China, adult ADHD is now more commonly understood as a mental illness, yet an uneven collective cognition is riddled with porous gaps between societal perceptions and individual experiences. Adults with ADHD from diverse backgrounds occupy various positions within the ADHD matrix, with some acting as lay medical knowledge transmitters introducing the concept of neurodiversity to the domestic community, while many hold ambiguous attitudes towards the concept and its applicability. The evolution of neurodiversity as a “progressive,” “Western,” and “politically correct” concept has become entangled in the life politics of adult ADHD.

This study aims to answer how young adults living under the description of ADHD, as unruly subjects, intermingle their identifications, personal expectations for happiness, and living strategies with their proximity and alienation from neurodiversity. I argue that by maintaining a certain distance from the particularization implied by neurodiversity, the adult ADHD community in China has developed a unique way of living under its name. To explore this, I have adopted an evocative ethnographic method combined with

autoethnography to conduct discourse analysis while sustaining research relationships with online ADHD communities on WeChat and Xiaohongshu. These platforms, rich with psychological and psychiatric knowledge from the global North, serve as spaces where young adults diagnosed with ADHD seek peers and construct a moral community.

LAB 7: CONFRONTING RUPTURE: AN EXPERIMENTAL LAB ON METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATION, ETHICS, AND CARE IN PSYCHANTH (Anita von Poser, Edda Willamowski , Sarah Willen)

Organizers: Anita von Poser¹, Edda Willamowski¹, Sarah Willen²

¹ Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, ² University of Connecticut

In this in-person Lab session, participants will roll up their sleeves and experiment with methodological innovations in psychological anthropology that support new forms of engagement at the intersection of rupture, ethics, and care in the present geopolitical moment. The session will open with a discussion of how dynamics of rupture currently affect participants' fields of research and practice, with a focus on the sensory, affective, and existential dimensions of rupture and radical disruption. The session will then move through two hands-on opportunities to experiment with methodological innovations that we have used productively in our own ethnographic work. The first methodological exercise will involve developing, experimenting with, then debriefing about a mode of online multimedia journaling, following the style of the Pandemic Journaling Project (<https://pandemic-journaling-project.chip.uconn.edu/>). Participants should bring a smartphone/computer/tablet. The second exercise will again involve developing, experimenting with, then debriefing about a mode of experiential and relational inquiry involving 'go-alongs,' framed as sensorially attentive movements, to reflect in-/exclusion and vulnerability through shared experiences and spatiality. In each exercise, participants will consider the ethnographic potential of the experimental method; its potential as a mode of both practicing and witnessing dynamics of care and caring; and the associated ethical burdens, challenges, and opportunities it introduces. The session will conclude with a discussion of how these and similar forms of methodological innovation might help psychological anthropologists confront the ethical, relational, and analytic demands that weigh upon us in a moment of rupture and disruption at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

Additional Note

For this Lab session, we would like to meet in a space that can accommodate both methodological exercises. For the first methodological exercise, we will gather in small groups to draft journaling prompts, which will then be shared and discussed collectively. For this exercise, we have two specific needs: 1) a room containing large whiteboard and dry erase markers or, alternatively, a pad of easel-sized post-it pages (to stick on the walls) and markers; and 2) a space with internet access (so participants can experiment with the journaling interface using their phone/tablet/computer). During the second methodological exercise, we will take the discussion outside. We will walk with moderate pace in small groups and encourage the participants to invite the senses, to first listen, smell, taste, touch before taking notes or photos of the environment and materialities that evoke or literally affect specific feelings and thoughts. One group will depart into the Botanical Garden right behind the venue, another group will follow the green ring surrounding the old town (Promenade) and a third group will head towards a lake (Aasee).

LAB 5: DE-ILLUSTRATING HIERARCHIES: CONCEPTS, VISUALS AND PRACTICE

Organizers: Pablo Dohms (Illustrator), Mona Elisa Behnke¹, & Mayssa Rekhis²

¹Freie Universität Berlin, ²University of Gothenburg

We invite you to a lab at the intersection of visual art and research, to creatively explore key concepts in anthropology and psychology! For this lab, we will focus on the concept (and practices) of hierarchies. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchies of Needs (1943) is one common example of a visualization of research outcomes in social sciences. For some the pyramid becomes a visual representation of levels of human needs, others understand the form as a tipi, inspired by the indigenous housing of the Blackfoot in North America he researched (and who are at odds with his interpretation). Decades later, social scientists creatively engage with their material and open the knowledge to a wider audience through comics, films, or visuals. Building on written texts and other material that talk to/about hierarchies and that participants (and organizers) will bring to the session, we will experiment with illustrating a paper, an excerpt of choice or a proposed text/material, touching on hierarchies and society in psychology, anthropology, or allied fields.

During the session we will creatively investigate: What are the key elements in the text/material we want to explore visually? How are those elements connected? How can we depict what is written in the text? What do others see in the illustration? What insight have we gained through the illustration process?

Aims, and format:

The lab will be co-facilitated by a multidisciplinary team, in art and anthropology. It will start with a short introduction, presenting examples of artistic visualizations of concepts and possible approaches on how to develop scientific text-based illustrations. Equipped with the insights of a professional illustrator, and creative materials, we will hands-on visually engage and explore the various dimensions of the proposed texts, and see how conceptions of hierarchies overlap, entangle, and gain new forms. The outcomes of the lab will be exhibited in the conference venue, allowing broader engagement with these visual representations of hierarchies, in psychology and anthropology, and elsewhere. Because of the need to limit the number of participants to fifteen to allow better interactions, the lab will require prior-registration (on a *first-come, first-serve* basis). ***Please write an email to one of the organizers of this lab in case you are interested.***

PANEL 15: BOUNDED AND RELATIONAL INDIVIDUALISMS IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND PSYCHOTHERAPIES (Arsenii Khitrov, Sean M. Dowdy, Meghna Roy, Keir Martin, James Davies)

Chairs: Keir Martin & Arsenii Khitrov

Discussant: James Davies, University of Roehampton

Anthropologists have long been critiquing psychotherapy or coaching, understood as ‘technologies of the self’ for allegedly assuming a particular form of ‘the self’ and ‘individualism’ as universal, which in fact, as the critique goes, is Western and modern. The model of individualism that anthropological critiques have long focused on is a ‘bounded’ individual whose core or essence is conceived of as being outside of or prior to social relations, failing to take into account culturally variable models of personhood that lay more stress on its social or relational nature. These critiques have a long history in anthropology and are now widely spread and accepted within disciplines such as psychotherapies themselves. This is despite a long history of psychotherapeutic approaches that stress the relational construction of the person and push at the boundaries of bounded models of the individual. The spread of old and new psychotherapies and related technologies of the self, such as coaching, across the globe raises new ethnographic questions about the extent to which they can be seen as

promoters of this bounded 'individualism', or what kind of 'individualism', if not this one, or if they promote 'individualism' at all, and whose interests this might serve. Psychological anthropology and anthropological psychology are uniquely equipped to explore this puzzle.

In this panel we reflect on this question and in particular, the question of whether new forms of 'individualism' are best understood via the bounded individual versus relational person dichotomy that has often structured anthropological critique. In particular, we explore the possibility of ethnographically analysing forms of personhood that can often be characterised as 'individualistic' in that they value and focus on the allegedly inner emotional world while stressing its relational origin. We explore the ways in which these forms of 'relational individualism' can be seen in many contemporary technologies of the self.

Personal boundaries or healthy relationships in the family? The limits of the bounded 'individualism' model in contemporary Russian Psychotherapy

Arsenii Khitrov, University of Oslo

Existing literature suggests that psychotherapy often promotes ideals of personal boundaries, responsibility, and autonomy from external relationships, whether with family, colleagues, or friends. In this paper, based on a 10-month ethnographic study of psychotherapists in training in a major city in Russia, conducted from October 2021 through June 2022, I argue that the aspirations of my interlocutors centre around seemingly contradictory interpretations of autonomy. They seek autonomy from both the state and the corporate sector. They aspire to practice a moderately cosmopolitan lifestyle unbound by any specific location. Simultaneously, they emphasise the need to reconfigure their own and their clients' relationships within multigenerational families. I explore this contradiction through the concept of the 'individualism within a therapised relational unit', which can refer to an individual or collectivities, such as multigenerational families, depending on the context of the discussion. What is crucial for my interlocutors is not the autonomy of a single individual as such, but the autonomy of a unit undergoing transformation through psychotherapy and thus becoming distinct from the bundle of other untherapised connections.

Time Corrigible and Incorrigeable: Three Illustrations of Polychronic Personhood

Sean M. Dowdy, Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute

This paper is an experiment in "reverse anthropology," which is to say it takes as its standpoint a non-modern worldview to critically engage and understand the metaphors of modernity. The metaphor of concern here is that of "individuality" in the fields of

psychotherapy and anthropology and what the concept disavows, namely the problem of *temporal deixis*. Central to modernist ideas of individuality, as well as its critiques that point to a more social-relational model of personhood, is a rather rigid distinction that personhood can be temporally defined in terms either synchronic (structural, phenomenological) or diachronic (historical, epigenetic, onto/phylogenetic). This paper argues that a nonmodern view of personhood, alternatively, tends to define personhood in *polychronic* terms—i.e., that who we are now is what we were then, in previous times but in different bodies/containers, and that these past personas impress upon us in the present a need to modify the repetition while acknowledging the power of its compulsion. This is the folk theory of the Karbi people in Assam (India) who have a unique conception of reincarnation as applying only to alternating generations. Interestingly, it is also the therapeutic theory of psychoanalysts working on recovery from transgenerational trauma. Illustrating real-life instances of both theories in action (in the anthropological field and on the psychoanalytic couch) and then comparing them to the author's inexplicable preoccupation with his maternal great-grandfather, this paper attempts to throw a wrench into the unimaginative gears of contemporary anthropological theory about time, psyche, and personhood.

The Making of the Self at a Counselling Training Programme in India

Meghna Roy, University of Oslo

In this presentation, I ask how the self of the trainee is shaped by psychological counselling training as a technology of the self. The average trainee is a privileged caste middle-class woman in early twenties. Hence, the common discourse in India is that psychotherapy makes a person self-indulgent leading to disintegration of the family. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork at a postgraduate programme in Counselling Psychology in southern India, I observe that the trainee views her identity as an extension of or in opposition to her family members. During self-work, or inner work mandated in training, the individual trainee often seeks to transform her self in relation to her family. Amid widespread stigma associated with psychological taxonomies of mental illness in South Asia, trainees use counselling practice “to break the pattern.” Pattern refers to the layered subjugation of gender, caste, class, religious and ethnolinguistic minorities as well as patterns of coping that do not serve her well anymore. Trainees attempt to repair what they perceive as fractured personhood of significant others in family by means of sustained self-reflection. In self-work, trainees may at once assume identities of their grandmothers, mothers and themselves. Enmeshment with family members as a source of their suffering and identity thus reveals family life as integral to becoming a counsellor.

A boundary is not a barrier: relational individualism and the rise of Chinese psychoanalytic psychotherapy

Keir Martin, University of Oslo

Over the past 30 years, psychotherapy in China has gone from being denounced as a 'useless or harmful bourgeois intervention', to being a widespread practice, involving millions of people. In academic discussions, this is often framed as part of a wider growth of 'individualism' in Chinese society. While this framing might be accepted by some participants in some contexts, the meaning of 'individualism' in academic and practitioner discussions is unclear and often shifting, however.

Some anthropologists describe 'Individualism' as a technology of 'responsibilisation' in the service of state directed projects of market oriented neoliberal governance. In this paper, I argue that such analyses obscure much of what makes psychotherapy increasingly appealing to large numbers of participants. I argue that psychotherapy is often conceived of as a practice that encourages freedom within rather than against social entanglements. If the mode of personhood that it encourages can be described as 'individualism', then it is an 'individualism' that differs significantly from ideas of neoliberal responsibilisation and from ideas of 'bounded' individualism familiar from many anthropological critiques.

PANEL 9: MIGRATION, BELONGING AND IDENTITY (Vladimer Lado Gamsakhurdia, Till Manderbach, Maroš Ondrejka)

Chair: Vladimer Lado Gamsakhurdia

"Nomadic Migration and Identity Formation: A Dialogical Exploration of Self-Transformation in Transnational Movement"

Vladimer Lado Gamsakhurdia, Tbilisi State University

This study illustrates that migration is a complex process encompassing both one-way and multi-directional movement between one's country of origin and a foreign destination. Individuals may relocate in and out of their native land, experiencing diverse cultures and nations. The paper explores the intricate and multi-dimensional cultural developments that influence the research subject's identity formation. Even those who initially intend to settle permanently in a new country may find themselves compelled to move elsewhere or return to their homeland due to various cultural, political, economic, or legal

circumstances. This research primarily focuses on nomadic migrants—individuals whose migration journeys are shaped by these fluctuating factors—and aims to investigate their lived experiences and identity formation.

The study delves into the ongoing evolution of the dialogical self, the process of self-exploration, and the shifting perspectives on societal roles, values, and cultural perceptions of both the home and host countries. It highlights that while dominant I-positions may persist in name, their underlying meanings can shift significantly. A detailed examination of a research subject's six-year migration journey offers insights into these changes. The study emphasizes the role of support programs and services in influencing migration choices while also underlining the significant impact of external sociocultural, political, and financial elements on individuals' decisions to move abroad. Furthermore, it demonstrates that past migration experiences and initial expectations strongly affect migrants' ability to adapt to new environments. This research argues that the dialogical self is inherently marked by internal contradictions, showcasing the influence of external voices and evolving self-perceptions.

The village on Instagram - “Stayers” in Zaza Kurdish communities affected by emigration negotiating belonging and collective practices

Till Manderbach, University of Münster

As diasporic communities are mainly studied through migrating individuals, those who “stay behind” receive less attention. The combination of a large-scale exodus (following civil war and collapse of the village economy), ecological destruction (here: dam projects), economic integration and the availability of digital communication is unlikely to leave the lives of village dwellers unshattered. The Zaza-Kurds of Turkey are experiencing such a situation. However, on first sight, their online self-representations seem emphasize “tradition” and continuity. In my contribution I am following the online self-articulations of Zaza-Kurdish villagers to uncover a more complex set of meanings that are negotiated when collective practices and conceptions of belonging are under pressure. I am starting from the premise that stayers too are active agents who acting upon their situation.

This work is the first part of a dissertation research project that engages with the Zaza-Kurds of Turkey as a Middle Eastern minority that is positioned in-between national, religious and language groups thereby challenging homogenizing tendencies across these fields. It will be completed by on-site fieldwork in two villages and interviews with individuals across the multi-sited diaspora that is characteristic for the Zaza-Kurds and other Middle Eastern communities in the 21st century. My theoretical framework integrates anthropological approaches to migration and diaspora with theories of collective memory

(Assmann), spatial approaches (Lefebvre, Massey) and German-Scandinavian Critical Psychology (Holzkamp).

What Does It Look Like When You Feel Safe? Exploring Identity At The Time of Uncertainty Thorough Visual-participatory Methods

Maroš Ondrejka, Slovak Academy of Sciences

This presentation examines the role of visual-participatory methods in exploring identity formation and alteration within the context of uncertainty. By integrating participatory action research (PAR) and ethnography, this study emphasizes how visual tools—particularly the photo-voice method—can serve as an effective means of capturing and interpreting identity beyond the constraints of verbal expressions. Traditional approaches to identity research have often relied on predefined labels that may fail to reflect the fluid and evolving nature of personal and collective identity. This presentation will demonstrate how visual methods provide a platform for individuals to articulate their lived experiences through imagery, allowing for a richer, more nuanced exploration of identity. In particular, this ongoing dissertation thesis research highlights how collaborative partners negotiate and navigate safety within their environments, revealing the interconnections between spatial perception and identity expression. By documenting their surroundings and experiences, participants construct visual narratives that challenge external categorizations and offer new frameworks for self-definition. These methods facilitate collaborative analysis, enabling participants to take an active role in the co-construction of knowledge rather than being positioned as research subjects. The preliminary findings underscore the transformative potential of participatory visual methods in fostering deeper engagement with identity as a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon. By foregrounding individual agency and reflexivity, this approach enhances our understanding of identity as a lived and visualized experience. This research contributes to ongoing discussions on innovative methodologies for identity studies, demonstrating the value of integrating participatory and visual approaches in capturing the complexities of selfhood and belonging.

LAB 6: TOO MUCH INFORMATION? A DIALOGUE ON AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND 'LIVED EXPERIENCE' IN MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND WRITING

Organisers: Naomi Leite, Kiara Wickremasinghe, & Feven Cofré Eyob
SOAS, University of London

At a time when mental health arises in everyday conversation in the academy — researcher self-care, trauma-informed pedagogy, trigger warnings on syllabi, well-being workshops — we ask, what are the risks and rewards of psychological self-revelation in scholarship? Bringing the 'whole self' into one's research and writing, whether as methodological reflexivity, memoir, or autoethnographic experimentation, raises complex epistemological and ethical questions, even more so when the object of study is mental illness. Though it is still uncommon, in recent decades a handful of medical and psychological anthropologists have integrated their own illness narratives and encounters with healthcare institutions into their research and writing (Martin, 2007; Lester, 2019; Armstrong, 2023). For anthropologists, autoethnography may offer an accepted research method, though it has attracted criticisms around subjectivity, representation, and ethics. For those in the psy-disciplines, however, such self-revelation tends to appear only in popular-audience memoirs (Jamison, 1996; Linehan, 2020). Yet it has become increasingly common for psy-researchers and granting agencies to express appreciation for 'lived experience' as a contributor to research, typically through the inclusion of 'experts by experience' on research teams—as if academic expertise and experiential expertise could not coexist in one person.

This lab offers space for open, interdisciplinary discussion of methodological, epistemological, theoretical, representational, and professional dimensions of integrating self into mental health research. Through interactive exercises, experimental writing, and dialogue, we will collaboratively explore pathways for creatively deploying 'lived experience' in our work, navigating vulnerability, and finding balance between self and wider context, both personally and professionally.

Aims, Modalities, Media, Pedagogy, Space, and Format

The aim of this lab is to collaboratively draft a charter for integrating self-revelation into mental health research and writing, to be published on the ENPA blog. This manifesto will incorporate insights, reflections, suggestions, and theoretical and methodological support for autoethnographic/reflexive work by anthropologists and psy-specialists, offering a source that researchers can cite as scholarly justification for adopting such methods in future work.

The lab will be in-person, analog, experiential, and interactive, with a mixture of brief presentations by the organisers as prompts, writing exercises, and open discussion. We will be in a single room throughout, ideally one with a whiteboard and moveable chairs or

a seminar table so that we can be facing each other. Participants should bring writing materials (laptop and/or pen and paper).

NOTE: We would like to cap participation at 12 persons. Please contact lab organizers by email in case you are interested.

PANEL 16: ANTHROPOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND SELF-UNDERSTANDING: EXPLORING EDUCATIVE CONTEXTS AND POSSIBILITIES (John Loewenthal, Arturo Marquez Jr., Ildze Jakunova, Surya Pratap Deka, Mingyue Li)

Chairs: John Loewenthal and Arturo Marquez Jr.

The fields of anthropology and psychology share a common educative power to expand people's worldview and understanding of themselves. This panel explores how anthropological and psychological frameworks in educative contexts catalyze novel ways of apprehending social worlds and individual lives. Constructively, concepts aligned with lived experiences may offer a springboard for new forms of knowledge production, reformed intersubjective relations, critical reflections, solace, and emancipation. Adversely, some educational contexts may not be appropriate for the processing of the personal while concepts may shape distorted or unethical understandings of the self. By foregrounding 'self-understanding' as an analytic, this panel explores how vocabularies and concepts from anthropology and psychology give voice and meaning to personal experiences in the act of rendering life and society comprehensible.

Themes explored in the panel include existential pedagogy, ethics and responsibility, self-care as a learned practice, relational conceptions of wellbeing, and online therapeutic education. Papers draw from (auto)ethnographic research, teaching experience, and clinical practice and consider some of the following questions: Can anthropology increase its relevance to students by engaging personal aspects of their lives? How, when, and why might the connection of concepts to personal experience be helpful or harmful? What ethical cautions are most important for educators? How does mental health vocabulary play out in people's lives, relationships, and imagined futures? How can self-understandings arise through healthy relational processes? Is mutual healing possible, and under what conditions without people being used? How do power dynamics and colonial legacies endure in educative engagements?

Self-Understanding in Teaching Anthropology: Moving Beyond a Deficit Model in Community Colleges

Arturo Marquez Jr., Imperial Valley College

The community college system in the US provides access to higher education and pathways to social mobility for millions of people. Teaching anthropology in community colleges offers students their first and often only opportunity to explore human evolution and diverse worldviews while pursuing two-year degrees or fulfilling transfer requirements to four-year colleges. Engaging with anthropological frameworks encourages students to reflect critically on what it means to be human and to examine their assumptions about the human condition. Based on recent projects (2023-2024 and 2024-2025) at a community college in Southern California that assess student success and retention rates with the aim of strengthening teaching practices, this paper argues that engaging with anthropological concepts fosters greater self-understanding which is essential in students' professional development. By challenging the 'deficit model' of education that limits autonomous learning and critical reflection (Rancière 1991), this paper draws on existential pedagogy to emphasize the importance of self-understanding and personal growth in teaching strategies aimed at bolstering student success and retention rates. This paper offers insights on positioning self-understanding as foundational in teaching anthropology in educative contexts aimed at professional development, which may inform teaching practices across various disciplines, enhancing student engagement and success.

Ethics of shaping self-understanding in therapeutic practice and anthropological education

John Loewenthal, SOAS, University of London

This paper critically addresses ethical risks and responsibilities of influencing others' self-understandings. Parallels are drawn between psychotherapeutic practice and anthropological education wherein the client/student exposes themselves to the influence of a therapist/educator. The ideas and affective power of perceived authorities can shape the meanings people ascribe to their lived experiences and their cultural and family histories. Verbal and affective feedback and (implicit) endorsements can shape understandings of self, others, pasts, and futures. Psychotherapists may veer towards forms of psychological diagnosis in their employment of theory to interpret predicaments. Such formulations of distress could have as much to do with the training and subjectivity of the therapist as the lifeworld of a client. Anthropologists similarly have different interpretations of the social and cultural world informed by their identity, research, and

politics. The specialist knowledge of a therapist or educator may therefore be grounded in notions that do not correspond with the experiences of another. Accordingly, self-understanding is susceptible to projections and distortions. Relativistic and critical stances can also be scrutinised. Such reflexive endeavours can illustrate the constructed nature of identities and beliefs. Decentring egos and bursting cultural bubbles threatens to undermine the coherence and stability of people's sense of self. The paper draws on the author's therapeutic training and practice and experiences of delivering anthropological education. Key considerations arise surrounding our responsibilities to others. Can knowledge and criticality harm? How cautious to be with suppositions and claims? When is it more ethical to stay silent or to speak?

Learning to practice self-care in Latvia

Ildze Jakunova, University of Helsinki

This paper discusses self-care as a skilled practice young people rely on in their everyday lives in Riga, Latvia. During fieldwork, working with 18-30-year-olds with depression and anxiety, I noticed that narratives detailing their initial stages of mental health struggles usually follow a common pattern, describing how people come to recognise, identify, and address their challenges. For them, this learning process includes engagements with specialists and resources on mental health care, usually informed by psy disciplines, as well as interactions with their social circles. Furthermore, a longer-term collaboration with interlocutors revealed a more detailed view, as they continually adjust their practices based on their observations, judgements and ongoing interactions with others. My paper aims to examine how people acquire self-care skills and discuss the role these skills play in their lives in the current care landscape.

When asked about their futures, most of my interlocutors indicated uncertainty and discussed leaning on their skills to navigate mental health struggles. For many of them, their experiences of depression and anxiety contrast with cure-oriented medical treatment models, as they see their struggles as something unpredictable and potentially without a clear endpoint. Considering the "unfinishedness" of their depression and anxiety experiences, I argue that self-care skills become particularly relevant, especially in conditions where specialist services are inaccessible due to structural, organisational or financial barriers. Moreover, this "know-how" offers guidance on how to navigate the uncertainty of life with mental health struggles and imagine futures.

Reformulating wellbeing in relational terms

Surya Pratap Deka, University of Cambridge

Wellbeing in education has gained increasing attention, particularly in the post-Covid-19 landscape. Most wellbeing research in psychology originates from what Henrich et al. (2010) call Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Developed (WEIRD) contexts. The WEIRD perspective assumes wellbeing is an internal, subjective state of an “autonomous, self-contained entity separable from the social and material world” (O’Toole & Simovska, 2022). Though presented as universally applicable, critics across disciplines argue that the WEIRD conception is a culturally specific, overly individualistic view, which devalues context, and overlooks the variety of ways in which diverse cultures construct and pursue wellbeing. This has led to calls for more context-sensitive and cross-disciplinary research in wellbeing. Despite growing interest in “context” within wellbeing research, it remains an under-theorized and variously (mis)used concept in education research.

This paper rethinks wellbeing as a relational and situated concept, amenable to ethnographic inquiry. Drawing on the anthropology of ethics (Laidlaw, 2023), I examine wellbeing through a 15-month ethnographic study with a refugee community, framing it as an anthropological concept tied to notions of “the good” (Robbins, 2013) - the overarching values and aims that guide human action, evaluation, and experience. Wellbeing, in this view, emerges through intersubjective processes, where individuals engage in “collectively organized action contexts” (Emirbayer, 1997) to shape lives worth living. By centering relationality, this approach challenges individualistic models of wellbeing and highlights its embeddedness in ethical and social life. I discuss the methodological implications of this reformulation and its potential to enrich both anthropological and psychological approaches to wellbeing research in education.

Realizing by Acting: Biopolitical Shifts Among Emerging Therapists in China’s Online Psychological Education

Mingyue Li, Freie Universität Berlin

Bearing with the rapid and fundamental transformations in East-Asian societies, rising demands for self-awareness, self-recognition, and even self-therapy merge as responses to ambivalent modernity—either as a form of runaway or reconciliation. My research cuts onto the edging intersectionality between psychological healing and the biopolitical shifts, showcased by observations from the platform of Home of Therapists (HoT, “咨询师之家”)—one of China’s largest communities for both licensed therapists and psychological enthusiasts, where participants engage not only to obtain certification but also to explore their self-understanding. Accordingly, I would particularly examine the specific case on

identity of duality—owing to the special embeddedness of HoT, these therapists-in-training act not only as professionals who guide visitors, but also, as individuals, confronting their own vulnerabilities (e.g. navigating transference and countertransference) under supervision. Another layer of duality lies within the dimension of temporality—through targeted interviewing and biographical analysis fed by ethnography, I would try to scope agentic transformations—from intrinsic to extrinsic, potentially traumatic schema to disciplined model of social role, learning to practicing—illustrated through their motivations, trajectories, practices, and most expectedly, realizations. Under the microscope of psychological anthropology, this study will engage with the classic biopolitical theory and critical theories as supplements for perspectives, to portray therapeutic practitioners as a reflexive miniature of unsituated social mentality. Beside from empirical contribution, this research advances theoretical debates on the biopolitics of self-understanding, highlighting a new possibility for fostering mental resilience and civil/ethical consciousness in post-trauma contexts.

(ONLINE)

PANEL 24: MENTAL HEALTH AND EMBODIMENT (Agnieszka Chwieduk, Pooja Venkatesh, Camila Toledo, Govind Dhaske, James Sevitt)

Chair: Camila Toledo

Ethnographic listening. Towards psychological well-being in migrant detention

Agnieszka Chwieduk, Adam Mickiewicz University

Guarded Centres for Foreigners (GCF) are cross-cultural and totalizing institutions that foster the loss of psychological well-being (salutogenesis, Antonovski 1979) of social actors. Detained migrants and the guards who supervise them experience trauma resulting from such a system of dependency. Migrants, by virtue of GCF procedures, including compulsory interviews, develop an emotionally costly use of 'victim scripts'. GCF-staff, on the other hand, conceal the negative effects resulting from the surveillance of people, under the mask of a 'competent force' discourse. My anthropological research in GCF therefore involved a number of cognitive-ethical aporias, mainly the validity of using ethnographic interviewing. The case I will analyse concerns the abandonment of this technique in favour of an attitude of 'empathetic listening and accompaniment' of the interviewees (guardian and migrant). This situation raises important questions about the process of constructing ethnographic knowledge: 1/ if there was an abandonment of the interview in the name of an intuitively understood „attitude of care” for the interviewee's psychological well-being, what content did I reach as a result?;

2/ what ethnographic weight do they have?; 3/ what competences would an anthropologist have to possess in order to responsibly undertake such an attitude and what would define such an attitude? In response, I will define ethnographic listening using elements of a mediation technique - the 'transformative conflict model' (Bush, Folger 2016) - and point out, not without doubt, the possible benefits for anthropological research of working with memory and emotion (not only in detention settings).

Translating Touch: Gunis' crafting of a massage in Udaipur, Rajasthan

Pooja Venkatesh, Central European University, Vienna

This paper considers how Gunis, or traditional healers in Rathodi malish (local massage) and bone setting, are introduced to techniques of Australian based Myotherapy. Massage practice is one among other forms of skilled, kinesthetic practice—such as mountain climbing, martial arts, and horse riding-

- where touch is central and practiced in a deliberate way. In massage practice, touch is not only therapeutic to the patient, but also an action that explores a patient's ailment, and the primary communicative channel through which practitioners work with patient to identify pain points. Approaching the acquisition of massaging skills from an apprenticeship perspective (Lave, 2012; Downey, 2014; Stoller, 1989) I argue that the learning of therapeutic massage does not primarily operate by acquiring specialized jargon or a rigid curriculum, nor does it solely rely on observational learning or action copying. Instead, it is acquired through and with touching someone else, by learning to be touched, and by bridging both sets of experiences. In other words, by learning not only how to touch, but also by learning what it is like to be touched, a learning that involves knowing how to touch and read the patient while being both the masseuse and patient, progressively as one gains expertise throughout the learning process. I argue that knowledge is created and sustained dynamically through an interplay of bodies and gestures and requires understanding how pedagogies of sensation emerge

What are universities communicating to students about mental health? A critical analysis of universities in the UK and Chile.

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Mental health has become a global problem. Among populations affected by mental health problems, recent research indicates an increase in mental health problems among university students following the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase, together with a greater awareness of the problem, has prompted various social institutions, including

universities, to develop and reinforce policies and strategies to address the specific challenges of student mental health. This has resulted in the strengthening and/or creation of units within the institutions that address student mental health. This trend has affected countries in both the global north and south.

Parallel to these efforts, a body of emerging research suggests that the methods used to raise mental health awareness through institutions, technologies, and other means might have negative consequences for young people. This includes concerns about young people identifying with psychiatric pathologies or the influence of certain mental health concepts, such as the idea of trauma, on how students perceive and interpret everyday life challenges.

This study situates itself within this discussion and aims to analyze, through critical discourse analysis, the written materials provided by universities in England and Chile to raise awareness about mental health among students. The objective of this analysis is to understand the underlying conception of mental health in these materials and to explore the similarities and differences between the Global North and the Global South regarding this matter. This exercise would allow us to glimpse what is being communicated to students and to think about the implications of these messages on the university students.

***Jata* Cutting Trauma and Caste-Gendered Subjectivities in Biomedical Coloniality: Epistemic Erasure of Embodied Knowledge in India**

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Biomedical paradigms and cultural-psychosocial understandings of embodiment are fundamentally at opposites, as evidenced in the removal of matted hair (*jata*) among marginalized women in India. Within indigenous epistemologies, *jata* emerges as a culturally and psychosocially established phenomenon that carries spiritual, aesthetic, and embodied religious-based significance. Beyond that, it is a distressful health problem with inadequately explored etiopathogenesis. The scientific temper, inspired by modern medicine, often frames *jata* as a pathological condition requiring immediate cutting, overlooking its spiritual, social, and psychological significance. Such abrupt dismissal of *jata*, devoid of cultural sensitivity, can induce trauma, manifesting as ontological insecurity, identity fragmentation, and socio-cultural alienation. This paper theorizes *jata* cutting trauma as a uniquely structured form of bodily and epistemic violence, situated within the complexity of the varna-caste order that controls bodily aesthetics, hierarchically graded dehumanization, and religious-based purity alongside biomedical coloniality. Through structural operation, this trauma exhibits a systemic, intersectional, caste-coded act of control over subaltern subjectivities. Ontologically speaking, *jata* removal means cutting off its embodied resonance as a lived psychosocial divine being. This paper contributes to theorizing *jata* cutting trauma, one that moves beyond

biomedical pathologization, and asserts indigenous aesthetic and cultural healing practices while rejecting the subjugating approaches that control bodies under the pretense of medical treatment. This research proposes jata-cutting trauma as an epistemological and therapeutic crisis that necessitates an integrative care paradigm combining biomedicine, cultural anthropology, social work, and cultural psychology.

Emotional Reflexivity: ethical and methodological dilemmas of “disliking” the views and behaviors of research participants

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Arguably, empathizing with research participants who one feels emotionally and morally inspired by – whose views and actions one “likes” – is easier than engaging with research participants whose views and actions one is offended by or strongly “dislikes.” Such experiences highlight potential limitations of empathizing with certain research participants, or with certain dimensions of their worldviews and personalities. In this way, “disliking” the views and behaviors of research participants presents a profound challenge to the foundational ethnographic commitment of being an empathetic and “impartial observer,” at the same time as presenting an important opportunity to carefully examine the inescapable participant-observer tensions inherent in ethnographic fieldwork.

In this presentation, I reflect on how I processed difficult feelings and experiences both during and after my fieldwork, and how I have integrated these psycho-social dynamics into my ethnographic writing by analyzing these emotional experiences as ethnographic findings that can help develop social theory.