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The Edinburgh Anthropology Publications E-Newsletter



An email newsletter to showcase new books, journal articles, book chapters, blogs and more by members of Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh.

In this issue: new and recent works by Edinburgh Anthropology faculty and graduate students

Agustin Diz, Emilija Zabiliute, Morteza Hashemi, Jiazhi Fengjiang, Alex Edmonds, Laurie Denyer Willis, Emma Teale, Laura Jeffery, Neil Thin, Jacob Doherty, Juli Huang, Tobias Kelly & Stefan Ecks

‘Healing the Institution’

Conflict and democratic Sovereignty in an Indigenous Community of the Argentine Chaco

Agustin Diz

***Geoforum* 117: 173-182.**

This article provides an ethnographic exploration of democratic sovereignty in an indigenous Guaraní settlement of Argentina's Gran Chaco. Focussing on legally instituted Indigenous Communities, it analyses political assemblies, elections, and bureaucracy as practices of self-government that mediate indigenous recognition and extend state authority. The article hones in on the 'social drama' of a particular settlement to show how extractive engagements combine with recognition to generate new forms of conflict. As state entities and officials mediate between Guaraní factions, institutionalisation advances, enfolding conflict and replicating state forms among local populations. This makes certain forms of political action legible, while rendering others opaque. By drawing attention to how indigenous leaders and state officials utilise opacity and legibility to further their own agendas I show how democratic institutions are co-produced through everyday interactions. The article argues that procedural efforts to incorporate and recognise indigenous societies through communal institutions have resulted in ambiguous forms of sovereignty. Shifting the emphasis away from multiculturalism to institutionalisation highlights the overlaps between indigenous and national forms of sovereignty and draws attention to the fact that many of the key political relations that structure indigenous recognition partake in broader mechanisms of democratic rule.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.09.019

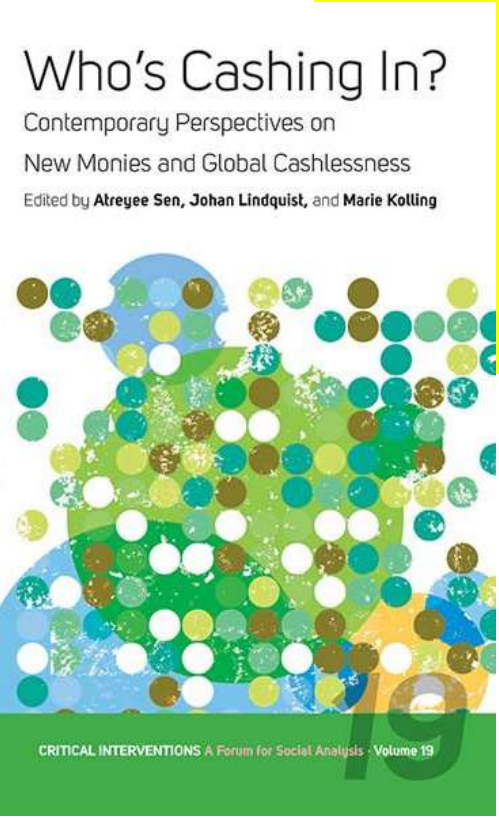
‘Cards Are for Showing Off’

Aesthetics of Cashlessness and Intermediation among the Urban Poor in Delhi



Emilija Zabiliute

In this chapter, Emilija Zabiliute explores how payment technologies such as mobile phone-enabled payments pertain to the lives of the urban poor in the post-demonetisation India. While becoming increasingly widespread after the demonetisation, these technologies and their uses operate on unequal infrastructural terrain and are refracted through social inequalities and unstable income patterns. In this context, the aesthetic production that underlines the use of payment technologies by the urban poor unsettles demonetisation’s technological promise of immediation, and highlights how intermediation, unexpected uses and differentiation of forms of moneys take place.



Who’s Cashing In? Contemporary Perspectives on New Monies and Global Cashlessness

Edited by Atreyee Sen, Johan Lindquist, and Marie Kolling

Berghahn Books, 2020

https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/SenWho



Could we use blood donation campaigns as social policy tools? British Shi'i ritual of giving blood

Morteza Hashemi

***Identities*, 2020**

This article examines the role of the third sector and civil society in addressing the inadequacies of state policies on migration in Europe. It centres on the Imam Hussain Blood Donation Campaign (IHBDC), a faith-based, third sector organisation which is established by second and third generation of Shia Muslim British citizens. The study utilises ethnography and interviews with all of the main figures of the IHBDC activists and many donors across England and Scotland. There are two analytic goals for this study. First, it re-examines the gift-relationship theory of Richard Titmuss on using blood donation as a policy tool. Secondly, it explains how a religious narrative can shape the civic engagement of children of migrants and help them in negotiating their sense of identity in the British context. The idea is that religiously reinforced civic engagement empowers them in their transition to establishing a unique European Shia identity.

https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2020.1856538

Leadership Programmes:

Success, Self-improvement, and Relationship Management Among New Middle-class Chinese



Jiazhi Fengjiang & Hans Steinmüller

Ethnos, 2021

In the last decade, business and life coaching programmes have rapidly proliferated in the People's Republic of China. Such programmes promise radical self-transformations aiming at individual success and social responsibility. The methods of most coaching programmes popular in China today are characterised by strict discipline and emotional expressivity, which are enacted in personal bonds between participants and coaches. This article describes and analyses these processes of self-transformation for the case of the rapidly growing 'Leadership Programmes' (LP). We outline the social background and emergence of LP programmes, present the typical features of LP training and discuss the consequences of self-transformation as seen by participants and outsiders. Altogether, these leadership programmes constitute an important new platform where ethical subjectivities are created and negotiated among new middle-class Chinese; subjectivities that are supposed to be enterprising, responsible, and expressive.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2020.1867605

Making Faces Racial

How plastic surgery enacts race in the US, Korea and Brazil

Alex Edmonds & Soo Yeon Leem

Ethnic and Racial Studies, 2020



https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1791353

Engaging with debates about the re-emergence of the race concept in science, this article opens up facial plastic surgery's expertise of racial phenotypes to inquiry. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and analysis of medical discourse, it analyses how this expertise is made and put into practice in three nations with large cosmetic surgery markets: the US, Korea, and Brazil. Plastic surgery has drawn on the scientific knowledge of race from fields such as anthropology and anthropometry to make racial features (nose and eyes) into an object of medical intervention. Race has been enacted differently, however, in the three national contexts we discuss according to the changing politics of difference and beauty ideals. While contemporary surgery attempts to sidestep the ethical problems raised by earlier scientific racism and whitening practices, it continues to pathologize non-white racial features by operating on traits it sees as "excessive" or merely typical, rather than beautiful.

In Attention to Pain:
Governance and Bodies in Brazil

Laurie Denyer Willis

Ethnographies of bodies have become entry points for understanding the sensorially rich ways that worlds are generated and lived. Here, I adduce a slow-paced ethnographic mode that centers how bodily pain and touch orient attention, with a focus on gendered and racialized violence in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro. In doing so, I make explicit the expectation in Rio's urban governance that resilience means toughening through pain. In turn, I detail how Pentecostal practices of 'healing touch' link pain and hope together, demonstrating the religious work, care, and governance involved in producing and maintaining hope under conditions of violence.

Medical Anthropology 39 (4): 348-360
https://doi.org/10.1080/01459740.2020.1740216

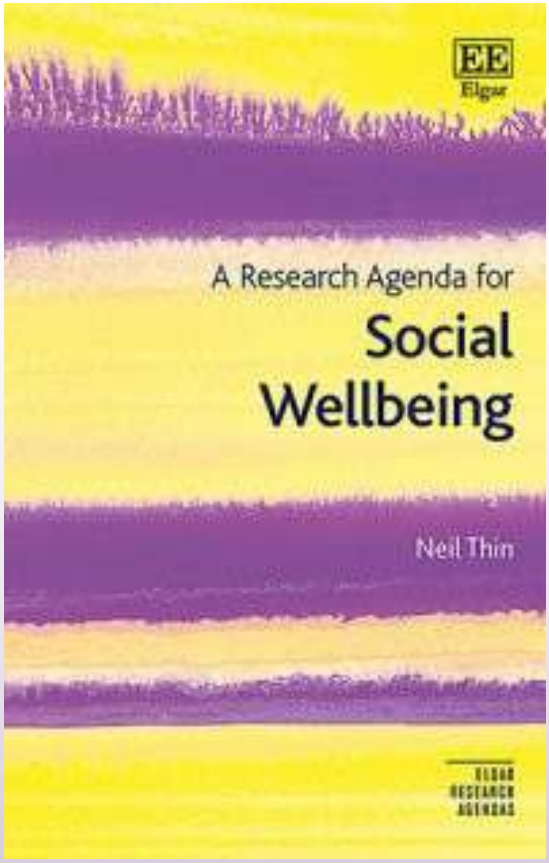
Balancing the Quotidian:
Precarity, Care and Pace in Anthropology's Storytelling



***Medical Anthropology,* 2020**
edited by Sandra Teresa Hyde & Laurie Denyer Willis

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https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/gmea20/39/4



A Research Agenda for Social Wellbeing

Neil Thin

This Research Agenda for Social Wellbeing introduces scholars and planners to the importance of a 'wellbeing lens' for the study and promotion of social flourishing. It demonstrates the importance of wellbeing as a public good, not just a property of individuals.

Synthesising wellbeing research from multiple disciplines, including sociology, public health, urban and social planning, moral philosophy and development studies, chapters illustrate how the wellbeing lens promotes positivity, understanding of a variety of viewpoints and systematic appreciation of lives in their social contexts. Encouraging appreciative learning and aspirational planning, Neil Thin looks beyond the implicit 'OK' line of minimal decent standards in order to appreciate and promote moral progress.

As an illuminating summary of the field, offering new avenues for employing social wellbeing research across multiple disciplines, this book will be key reading for scholars and students of sociology, development studies and anthropology. It will also benefit practitioners, such as planners, evaluators and social workers in need of practical insights into social wellbeing issues.

Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020

https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/a-research-agenda-for-social-wellbeing-9781788976459.html

The Christian Nation Project

https://thechristiannationproject.net/church-in-lockdown/

CHURCH IN LOCKDOWN

Curated by Emma Teale

Drawing on ethnography from the United States, Scotland, and Democratic Republic of Congo, this installation looks at a diverse range of church responses to the coronavirus pandemic. Contributors speak to a range of themes including COVID19's intersection with racial inequalities; contested Church-State relationships in addressing public health; and means of (re) organizing in reaction to a year of massive disruption. This installation captures various imaginations of the post-COVID Christian nation.



Contributors: Frederick Klaits (SUNY Buffalo), Jon Bialecki (UCSD), Emma Wild-Wood (University of Edinburgh), Yossa Way, (Anglican University of Congo), Emma Teale (University of Edinburgh)

Navigating Interdisciplinarity

Negotiating discipline, embodiment, and materiality

Rebecca Rotter, Laura Jeffery & Luke Heslop

Teaching Anthropology, 2021 10 (3): 1-13

This article elucidates some of the opportunities and challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching, drawing on our participant observation as both instructors of anthropological methods and honorary students of marine ecology and geomorphology methods on a research training field course. We argue that interdisciplinary methods training offers educators opportunities for self-reflexivity, recognition of the taken-for-granted aspects of our knowledge, and improved communication of the value of our work to others. However, we also show how decisions about course structure can reinforce disciplinary boundaries, limiting inter-epistemic knowledge production; how one epistemological approach may overshadow others, hindering interdisciplinary learning; and how methods training involves tacit and embodied knowledge and mastery of material methods, requiring repetition and experimentation.

https://doi.org/10.22582/ta.v10i3





Multiple Marginality and the Emergence of Popular Transport: 'Saloni' Taxi-Tricycles in Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Jacob Doherty, Vakaramoko Bamba & Irène Kassi-Djodjo

Cybergeo, 2021

Popular transport is the most significant form of urban mobility in the majority urban world and will continue to play an important role even as cities around the world overhaul and upgrade their transport systems. Since January 2019 a new type of popular transport, taxi-tricycles locally named "salonis," has taken root at the peripheries of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This article offers an initial description of this new mode of mobility, the service it offers, the labor force it draws on, the forms of regulation that govern it, the spatial practices it has engendered, and its implications for sustainable urban mobility. We show that this new transport option has evolved from within the existing norms and practices of the city's existing popular transport sector. Arguing that salonis have emerged at the intersection of multiple overlapping marginality – spatial, infrastructural, socio-economic, legal, and regulatory – we contribute to multi-disciplinary conceptualization of urban margins as a site of infrastructural creation and the production of space. Based on our analysis, we posit three possible future trajectories for salonis: illegality, expulsion, and experimentation.

https://journals.openedition.org/cybergeo/36017

The Ambiguity of Mutuality

discourse and power in corporate value regimes

Catherine Dolan, Juli Huang & Claire Gordon

Dialectical Anthropology, 2021 45(1): 9–27

Special Issue: Value and Politics

https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-019-09569-y.

Corporate values offer a means for consecrating alternative regimes of worth within businesses, explicitly orienting firms around more than the pursuit of profits. This paper examines how corporate values come to be constructed and diffused as a framework for interpretation and action through analysis of Food Co.'s flagship principle: 'mutuality'. Tracing the deployment of mutuality through Food Co.'s internal processes (within the embodied practice and narratives of employees) and external relationships (within Food Co.'s bottom of the pyramid project in Kenya), the paper illustrates how the ambiguity of mutuality forms a strategic resource for the company by (i) sheltering multiple meanings and interpretations, thus enabling resonance among different situations and subject positions; (ii) allowing for syncretism between seemingly opposing and categorically different forms; and (iii) generating a space for negotiation and dealing with uncertainty. Employing these three themes of ambiguity as an organizing frame for our discussion, we highlight how the ambiguity of corporate values absorbs the contradictions emblematic of the 'heterarchical firm' (Stark 2000), while obscuring the obligations and expectations the concept entails as it moves beyond Food Co. to outsourced 'entrepreneurs' in Kenya. Language generates the appearance of equivalence and benevolence while seeking new spaces for accumulation and legitimizing the incorporation of labor on precarious terms.



Pacifist Utopias

Humanitarianism, Tragedy and Complicity in the Second World War

Tobias Kelly

Social Anthropology, 2021 29 (1): 35-51.

In war, the utopian and the dystopian converge. What could be more dystopian than a world of endless violence, and what more utopian than perpetual peace? Yet, at the same time, utopianism has itself been accused of brutality, and those who are opposed to war charged with perpetuating dystopian bloodshed. This paper examines the relationship between war, peace and utopia, by focusing on the ethical conflicts of opposing violence. It does so through the particular example of humanitarianism. Contemporary humanitarianism seeks to oppose the violence of war, but does so by placing limits on war rather than abolishing it, and is therefore often seen as complicit with violence. For many humanitarians, the response to this complicity has been a widespread sense of ethical crisis. In contrast, this paper examines a particular utopian humanitarian tradition, in the shape of British pacifist ambulance workers in the Second World War. This is a form of humanitarianism that recognises complicity, but also retains a utopian commitment to human perfection. The central argument of this paper is that the ethical conflicts of humanitarianism need to be put back into the diverse visions of the human that have run through humanitarian histories.

https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12979

Depression, Deprivation, and Dysbiosis: Polyiatrogenesis in Multiple Chronic Illnesses

Stefan Ecks

Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry, 2021

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11013-020-09699-x

Biomedicine tends to treat "mental" illnesses as if they could be isolated from multiple social and somatic problems. Yet mental suffering is inseparable from complex somatosocial relations. Clinical fieldwork in a deprived area of the UK shows that nearly all the people treated for "depression" are chronically multimorbid, both in their bodies and in their social relations. Mental suffering is co-produced by poverty, trauma, and excessive medication use. Patients' guts are as imbalanced as their moods. Single vertical treatments make them worse rather than better. In the UK, patients in poorer neighbourhoods do not "lack access" to healthcare. If anything, they suffer from taking too many medications with too little integration. I conceptualize the bad effects of excessive interventions in patients with multiple chronic problems as polyiatrogenesis.

Also by Stefan Ecks

"Mental Ills for All: Genealogies of Global Mental Health."
In *The Movement for Global Mental Health. Critical Views from South and Southeast Asia*, eds. W. Sax & C. Lang. Amsterdam University Press, 2021.
https://www.aup.nl/en/book/9789463721622/the-movement-for-global-mental-health

"Multimorbidity, Polyiatrogenesis, and COVID-19"
Medical Anthropology Quarterly 34(4): 488-503, 2020.
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33274530/

"Depression"
with Junko Kitanaka. *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, 2021.
http://doi.org/10.29164/21depression

"Misters Mukharji and Kathotia: the Economies of the City"
with Martin Beattie. *Contemporary South Asia* 28 (4): 446-458. 2021.
https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2020.1842859

