SESSION 5

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: NEW EMERGING FIELDS OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES FROM THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

PAPER ABSTRACTS

Museums and anthropology in a digital world

MAGDALENA LAINE-ZAMOJSKA
University of Jyväskylä
magdalena.laine-zamojska(a)jyu.fi

While digital cultural projects are relatively new phenomena, there is a long history of influences and interrelation between museum studies and anthropology. Digital technologies have brought new challenges to both disciplines and have resulted in new research practices, approaches and fields of study being developed. Digital technologies have been strongly present in museums since the 1960s; however, it was the arrival of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s that brought the most radical changes to museums. The internet and new technologies became easily accessible by ordinary people; both museum professionals and museum visitors. A huge demand for new applications and technological solutions has since developed, leading to a number of questions being raised, such as: How have these new technologies been developed? How has anthropology contributed to these technologies and new digital projects? What are the newest trends in museum informatics and how do ethnographic methods and tools influence them? And, how might an anthropological background contribute to these new fields of study in a digital context?

Drawing on a number of practical examples and my own research into virtual museums, I will explore these new fields of research and approaches related to museums from the anthropological point of view. Moreover, I will demonstrate a number of methods, which are widely used in ethnology and anthropology and examine their use in the context of digital museums. Finally, ethnographic action research and its potential use in the implementation of digital projects will be discussed.

Anthropologist as a double agent

TIINA SUOPAJÄRVI
University of Oulu
Tiina.Suopajarvi(a)oulu.fi

In this anthropological research, our aim is to study the rhetoric that computer engineers in the UrBan Interactions (UBI) Programme produce as the decision makers in the design of a ubiquitous city. At the same time, we aim to produce new knowledge on citizens' ICT usage, which might guide the engineers in their future designs. Thus, the engineers are the objects of this research, but, simultaneously, we will cooperate with them by, for example, discussing and planning the methodological and theoretical frames for our "user studies". This cooperation has, unsurprisingly, proved to be challenging, starting from the usual difficulties in finding a common language, to institutional and temporal differences over how the research should be conducted.

In my presentation, I will discuss this double relationship between the engineers and myself as an anthropologist. Following Marilyn Strathern (2007), I ask "'How much'

interdisciplinarity is possible?" I will also talk about multidisciplinarity in the sense of loose disciplinary cooperation; and whether a transdisciplinary goal of shared theoretical understanding is totally impossible in our case? In addition to this conceptual discussion, I will reflect on the analyses we have made of the computer scientists' powerful agency position in planning and executing the UBI Programme. The plans for constructing a new ICT infrastructure to the city centre were made by representatives of the university, the city and industry, but the original idea came from computer scientists, and their role in the execution of the plans has been crucial. I also will reflect on my own double agency, and ask whether it has affected my interpretations? Has my subject position as a researcher changed during the process, and what are the ethical considerations of this double agency? I will also discuss the potential pros and cons caused by this position.

Anthropology, STS and the built environment: a cautious celebration

EEVA BERGLUND
Goldsmiths College
eeva(a)eeva.co.uk

Anthropological, ethnographic research built on a commitment to in-depth yet self-consciously partial understanding, has benefited significantly from intense theoretical engagements with the new science and technology studies (STS).

This is not surprising. STS has been an important intellectual movement in itself, significantly influenced by anthropology. Even for scholars not working on science or technology, ideas such as actor networks and heterogeneous constructions have been very fruitful. Analyses of "hybrid" or culturally diverse forces and complex causal networks that shape life have been able to proceed without presupposing fixed political and epistemological hierarchies. STS has also allowed anthropologists to flaunt familiar conceptual boundaries and to generate highly inventive analyses of, for instance law, kinship and intellectual property. Recently STS has been increasingly invoked by anthropologists to address pressing problems concerning built infrastructures. Examples include studies of third world urban growth, of architectural controversy, of the politics of European planning regimes, and of urban activism.

Anthropologists interested in the built environment have found STS's facility to include semiotic and material processes with each other, and to analyse these together with economic and power relations, to be easily adapted to an ethnographic mode of enquiry.

Accordingly, the paper will argue that STS could and should make contemporary anthropology more robust in general. However, it should not be treated a magic formula to help overcome conundrums over epistemological privilege (e.g. its confusion with colonial history) or for drawing elements into the same analysis that appear incommensurate (e.g. the solidity of walls with the ephemeral idea(l)s of urban developers). In fact, STS can become an anti-intellectual political tool in a broader social context where it can become associated with nihilistic claims that everything is "constructed" and thus inconsequential.

Kaliningrad's fragmented landscape

MICHAEL AMUNDSEN
Tallinn University
amundsen(a)tlu.ee

My paper will be an exploration of the fragmented landscape of Kaliningrad, Russian Federation. The city has had three distinct epochs German, when the city was called

Konigsberg, Soviet after World War Two and Russian from the end of the Soviet Union to the present. Each of these epochs has left a distinctive layer in the cityscape. The change from the German to the Soviet era of the city entailed a trauma, an ethno-architectural rupture, whereby the medieval city was destroyed, the German population expelled and a planned Soviet city was built. In the Russian era, the exigencies of capitalism have seen the restoration of German cultural artifacts and the construction of 'German' style buildings for tourism. All of this has left a profoundly unusual cityscape. Inspired by Benjamin, the phenomenological, impressionistic perspective of the *flaneur* is employed in a panoramic and historical analysis. The construction of medieval 'kitsch' is examined through the prism of the neo-Marxist critique of post-modern urban geography as practiced by Harvey. My methodology involves walking the city, photography and interviews.

Crossing swords or shaking hands? The dilemmas of the international collaborator

AJEET N. MATHUR
Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad
anmathur(a)iimahd.ernet.in

The growing need for interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity and crossdisciplinarity. are present in their most profound manifestation when researching barriers to business collaboration This paper presents vignettes from the Finland-India Economic Relations project to show how differences in approaching a shared phenomena from which experiential learning is derivable gets coloured by institutionally embedded frames of discovery and invention in new knowledge creation. The paper argues that the differences in research practices are not merely about methods but about core values, norms, beliefs and attitudes to life and the world. In such circumstances, knowable concepts derived from practice can remain unknown to research communities if the horizons of experience are limited by the scope of methodologies. The paper proposes an open systems framework for locating dilemmas of the international collaborator before constructing a research design and favours action research as a promising way.