

Rezensionen

Bangstad, Sindre (ed.): *Anthropology of Our Times. An Edited Anthology in Public Anthropology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 126 pp. ISBN 978-1-137-53848-2. Price: € 85,59

For two decades, we have been hearing that anthropology's profile is too low. Anthropologists have responded. New courses and degree programs, new book series, journal sections, and entire journals centre on public or – its close ally – engaged anthropology. Yet public engagement, Thomas Hylland Eriksen reflects in his preface to Sindre Bangstad's valuable new anthology, is not this century's brainchild. Early anthropologists strove to influence policy and attract a wide audience. Cocooning only came when the quest for scientific legitimacy was bolstered by post-War growth; beforehand anthropologists were simply too few to talk only to themselves. Even then, Eriksen notes, anthropology retained its share of public figures.

Meanwhile, for practising anthropologists disciplinary introversion was never feasible. And in many countries, public engagement has been more expectation than specialty. Bangstad mentions in his introduction that anthropologists in Norway and France have long records as social commentators. Later in the volume, Claudio Lomnitz remarks that, although diminished by neoliberal reform, anthropologists in Mexico “had a tremendous public role, due to their role in the Mexican revolution” (78). So too for other Latin American countries, where anthropologists focused on their home societies are recognized public intellectuals.

Thus, if calls for more public anthropology are disputed, the challenge is often also to under-acknowledged disciplinary hierarchies: between “applied” and “academic” research, between anthropology in the United States and elsewhere, between publications in English and those in other languages. As Bangstad admits, “beyond anthropology's increasing Anglo-centrism, hardly a week ... goes by without the publication of an [accessible] anthropological monograph ... [on] a topic of potentially wide public interest” (9). Bangstad's call for disciplinary reflexivity is therefore apt and holds both for the political economy governing our lives and scholarship and for how, in addressing particular publics and counterpublics, we also construct them.

“Anthropology of Our Times” is a case in point. Bangstad was drawn to anthropology as an undergraduate in 1990s Norway by anthropologists' prominence as public commentators. Moving home in 2007, he sensed waning

public interest in the anthropological perspective, symptomatic perhaps of rising xenophobia. In an attempt at re-engagement, he organized a series with “internationally acknowledged anthropologists” whose work spoke to “issues central to public and media debates” (18). Held in Oslo from 2009–2014 and aimed at non-specialists, the events saw Bangstad and a co-host converse with the visitor for an hour, before moving to audience questions. Bangstad reworked the transcribed interviews for publication. The first three – with Matti Bunzl, John and Jean Comaroff, and John Bowen – appeared in *Ethnos*. Subsequent talks – with Magnus Marsden, Richard A. Wilson, Claudio Lomnitz, and David H. Price – comprise chapters 2 to 5. Chapters 6–9 are based on subsequent email exchanges with Didier Fassin, Ruben Andersson, Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi, and Angelique Haugerud.

Bangstad remarks that the collection reflects a “level of ‘Euro-American-centrism’” and is “insufficiently representative when it comes to gender” (19). I cannot disagree. Haugerud is the only woman profiled, although Bangstad recounts that two female guests opted out, one for reasons unknown; the other because she preferred not to revisit an interview where the audience attacked her for wearing a headscarf and being soft on Iranian Islamism. We do not get much sense of audience reactions otherwise, as the open discussions are (unfortunately) omitted, but the collected transcripts are uniformly thoughtful; I was carried along by many chapters, which provoked reflection on “what anthropology is and may be,” as Bangstad put it to Fassin (116).

Several featured anthropologists remind us that fine-grained, extended ethnography is indispensable for breaking up the certainties of pundits. Marsden's thoughtful discussion of the complexity of lived Islam in Pakistan and Afghanistan is one case in point; Ghassem-Fachandi's discussion of violence in Gujarat is another. Complementing these, Lomnitz's perspective, straddling history and anthropology, highlights the inseparability of method and epistemology. Ethnography is an “embodied practice,” making it impossible to escape the social generation of data. Historians exposed to ethnography firsthand will thus approach the archives “in a radically different way” (75).

For his part, Fassin credits initial training in medicine for an “outdated” commitment to “realism and responsibility”: however constructionist his anthropology, he remembers the “concrete problems” facing agents of

humanitarianism or legal justice (110). Still, he remarks later, his anthropological perspective leads him not to moralize but to discern “moral issues ... usually not visible to the agents” (126). Here lies the heart of his distinction of critique from criticism, where critique requires disciplinary autonomy but not disengagement. Indeed, he sees public ethnography as multi-phased, extending to analysis of its “public afterlife” (119).

Fassin calls for reflexivity about what happens when “our” ideas travel. Wilson speaks to how attending to “their” ideas can dislodge stock anthropology narratives on human rights. Twentieth-century anticolonialists created an international community partly through the language of human rights, and African countries are central to the International Criminal Court. Together, these challenge a “knee-jerk neo-colonial” view of rights as only a Trojan horse for Western power (56).

Two chapters speak acutely to complexities of involvement. Price, with his unparalleled record of documenting for scholars and wider publics the longstanding links between the US military and anthropology, is very clearly opposed to these entanglements. But, recognizing how debt pulls students into military/intelligence work, he does not criticize. Instead, when approached, he suggests resources should they develop a critique of their own.

Andersson articulates the dilemmas of tackling what he calls the “illegality industry” surrounding irregular migration. His analysis of border security argues that migration as such is not the economic problem. Border policing is. When Bangstad wonders if focusing on economic arguments is risky, Andersson says he is not displacing human costs, but adds: “both lines of argumentation ... are constantly at risk of subversion by powerful interests. ... This just goes to show how hard it is to navigate these borders between public messaging and theoretical discussion ... but we have to try, or others ... will step in and do a worse job of it” (136). Likewise, Price observes: “People just need to take the initiative [on critique] and know that there might be some consequences,” probably not dire ones (102). As for initiative-taking, Haugerud observes that the opportunities extend far beyond op-eds in prominent newspapers. Talks in schools, work with community groups, contributions to local media, expert testimony, “and of course the classes we teach,” are among the many sites for doing anthropology that matters (195).

Bangstad’s book ends with Haugerud’s interview – a fitting cap absent a separate conclusion. Her insights stem not simply from her own extensive engagements but also from her close study of satirical activists in the US. Among other lessons, she suggests that effective opposition requires “multiple mobilizations.” These “shape and energize one another” such that it is a mistake to say, “any particular mobilization ‘makes nothing happen’” (201).

What of “Anthropology of Our Times?” Bangstad notes that the public engaged in Oslo were not as wide as he hoped. Reporters were largely indifferent and the audience was mostly middle-class and educated: perhaps more a case of talking about anthropology in public than public anthropology as usually envisioned? Nevertheless, the volume is one mobilization that can shape and en-

ergize others. Anthropologists-in-training and seasoned scholars alike will find both encouragement and direction in its pages.

Robin Whitaker

Baptista, João Afonso: *The Good Holiday. Development, Tourism, and the Politics of Benevolence in Mozambique.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2017. 280 pp. ISBN 978-1-78533-546-4. (EASA Series, 30) Price: \$ 120.00

Nearly every academic aspires to coin a neologism that goes on to become part of the professional lexicon. Often this results in some creative, if questionable, linguistic gymnastics. In “The Good Holiday,” however, João Afonso Baptista makes a compelling case for both the originality and utility of the neologism he introduces to ground his analysis. The term is “developmentourism,” which Baptista defines as a particular dynamic in which “development and tourism are merged into one singular practice” (22). He argues that there is currently no existing label to describe this specific phenomenon. The closest worthy contender – “development tourism” – refers to excursions to view sites of economic development, as in the ubiquitous visits by international donors to tour projects to which they contribute funding. Baptista contends that developmentourism is distinct from this, in that focus of the latter is the development impact of tourism itself. In this way, Baptista asserts, “development is tourism, and tourism is development ... not only are tourists’ motivations and actions fused with development work, but the professional undertakings of development employees are also indistinguishable from tourist activities” (12 f.).

So defined, developmentourism is part of the growing trend in so-called “ethical consumption” more broadly, by means of which actors can claim that their purchases are not undertaken for mere personal pleasure, but in fact contribute to some larger social good – even a form of progressive activism. In developmentourism, similarly, participants can witness the good uses to which the revenue they bring is put. This, then, is the meaning of the “good holiday” in Baptista’s title, allowing tourists to “experience and confirm their own positive and preponderant role in helping the local population” (177). Developmentourism thus offers the potential for a productive “win-win” fusing tourists’ self-interest with social aims in paradigmatic neoliberal.

Baptista’s analysis is grounded in a case study of a particular tourism project in Mozambique in relation to which he conducted ethnographic field research over the course of several years. Called the “Covane Community Lodge,” this was the first self-styled “community-based” tourism development within the country. Initially financed by a Swiss NGO, the project was intended to support conservation within the nearby Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP), an important protected area in Southern Africa (E. Lunstrum, *Articulated Sovereignty. Extending Mozambican State Power through the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. Political Geography* 36.2013: 1–11; A. Spenceley, *Tourism in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. Development Southern Africa* (23.2006.5: 649–667).