

Invitation and call for papers

Symposium

“Anthropology of Men, Masculinities and Health”

Keynote lecture by Matthew Gutmann (Brown University)

Freie Universität Berlin (FUB), 15-16.05.2009

For a long time ethnography was written by men for men and about men without any reference to gender hierarchies and men's gendered subjectivities. Men were treated as unmarked category or normative baseline on which knowledge about a certain society or culture could be built upon. The Feminist and Postmodern Critique challenged patriarchal social science and raised awareness about the situation of women within the gendered politics of everyday life. Subsequent to this movement there has been a growing number of studies focusing on men as gendered subjects, bound to construct their identity in relation to subordinated women and femininities, as well as in opposition to a number of marginalized 'other' masculinities. Ethnography has played a pivotal role in demonstrating the cross-cultural variance in models for and of manhood, and in recognizing the intersections of gender identities with social class, ethnicity, images of 'race' and sexuality. In this context, major attention has been paid to discourses about divergent models of masculinity as historically constructed ideal types challenged through illness, suffering, and unemployment in post-industrial, late-capitalist societies.

In recent times, a growing number of scholars call for a shift of focus from discourses about hegemonic or subordinate masculinities, towards a more intricate study of social practice including the ambiguous and context specific performance of manhood. While there are still certain dominant models of and for masculinity (and femininity), complex modes of switching between divergent subject positions within time and space are found to be at odds with monolithic identities both self-ascribed and attributed by conventional social science. Notwithstanding some notable exceptions the embodiment of manhood in relation to the somatisation of social relations, as well as the bodily expression of illness and suffering are largely under-theorized. By extension little is known about how medical technologies and public health change, if at all, male patient's and healer's subjectivities. Although gender has received significant attention in Medical Anthropology, research was dominated by female studies. Men's health and men in medical practice are still under-researched issues. There are few factors determining this state of affairs. One of them is traditionally strong connection of Medical Anthropology to marginalized and oppressed groups, and feminist critique. Another factor is various masculinity ideals throughout the world that influence men's mutedness in the context of illness, pain and suffering. This has also a negative impact on conventional methodologies in Medical Anthropology.

We are looking for papers that will offer fresh and various approaches to manhood and masculinity in the context of health, theory, methodology and practice. For purposes of this symposium and a planned volume we will not define masculinity or manhood, but will rather invite authors to work with diverse definitions and understandings of the term and phenomenon, thus leaving it fluid. Also, we are interested in a variety of topics related to male presence in the field of medicine. Some issues might include, but are not limited to:

- Men's reproductive health and the biopolitics of masculinity
- Gender-based violence and public health
- Men's occupational health
- Men and Sexually Transmittable Infections
- Preventive medicine and male health practices; health and illness behavior, and health seeking
- Men's health movements
- Female dominated practices (e.g. abortion) and male identity
- Men in patient's family and healing process
- Knowledge production / gendering knowledge
- Male professionals working with medical science and technology
- Medicalization and masculinity including ageing, erectile dysfunction etc.

- Challenges in health care in a multicultural world with focus on different concepts and norms of masculinity
- Men and substance (ab)use
- Changing directions in treatment of men
- Presentation of men and medical issues in media, literature, movies, theatre, art etc.

We invite scholars and researchers with background in anthropology, ethnology, qualitative sociology etc. to submit proposals for the symposium. The volume which will follow this meeting will consist of thematic chapters based on submitted articles of the contributors. We do not accept works that have already been published. Participants will be given access to all papers no later than a week in advance of the symposium.

Please send an abstract (300 words), affiliation and short presentation of the author(s) to Aleksandra Pytko - aleksandra.pytko@hf.hio.no

Deadline for abstracts is 14. February 2009.

Notification about accepted papers will be sent within 2 weeks after the deadline.

If an abstract is accepted, a full draft paper should be developed and submitted by 1. May 2009.

There will be no fees for the symposium. Nevertheless, participants are requested to cover and arrange for travel and accommodation on their own.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Organizing Committee:

Aleksandra Pytko – MA in Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, Norway. Currently she is working as a research assistant at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Oslo University College and Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo. Contact: aleksandra.pytko@hf.hio.no

Danijel Loncar – MA in Anthropology and MA in Archaeology from University of Zagreb, Croatia. Currently he is an independent researcher cooperating on various health-related projects with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS. Contact: danijel.loncar@ffzg.hr

Hanspeter Reihling – MA in Social Anthropology at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. He is a PhD candidate currently working as research associate at the Institute for Social Anthropology, FUB. Contact: h.reihling@fu-berlin.de

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