

Book proposition and call for chapters

***Imagining (in) the World: An Ethnographical Perspective***

With foreword by Jonathan Friedman

Globalization entails macro-structural processes such as the decline of exclusive centrality of the West followed by new “softer” and mostly non-coercive forms of global Western hegemony leading to even larger social inequality and polarization of wealth among people and among countries. We understand **the World as unequally structured space** where it is needed to see the global connectivity and mobility as highly stratified processes. There is a great, yet not fully extracted potential in social anthropology to reveal these worldwide processes ethnographically, or to put it in Burawoyian words, to study people in their time and space and by doing so to get an insight into the lived experience of globalization. We think that the unevenly stratified and historically accumulative process of globalization is ethnographically accessible through lives of people when two interrelated levels of analytical work are taken in consideration. First, one can trace the lives of people through the effects of global processes and constellations of contemporary geopolitical and economical relations characterized as a **set of possibilities** for action. Second, we think it is possible to trace global processes on the internal level, that is, in a **set of dispositions** and mental and corporeal schemata. Both levels enable ethnographers to understand logic of practice of studied people in a broader context of globalization which is mostly unobservable by classical method of ethnographical presence.

We decided to narrow down our ethnographical perspective on globalization on studies of **imagination as the locus of unequal power relations**. This focus was even intensified after discussions we had during the panel “Situating Imagination in Times of Globalization” on the 2nd biennial CASA/SASA conference *Of Cosmopolitanism and Cosmologies* which was held in September 2011 in Czech Republic and chaired by Jonathan Friedman. Several important doubts, tasks and questions arose during the discussion. Is imagining the process of free-floating of images, representing, dreaming or rather picturing? Is it collective or mostly individual process? Does it have negative connotations as it had in times of slavery? Or is imagination rather the mystification of reality as Marxist concepts from 1950s and 1960s suggest? Is it an inertial tool of Western hegemony or rather source of resistance?

We believe that answers to above mentioned questions don't lie in theoretical thinking, because there is no possibility to define imagination only on an abstract level. The Appaduraiian aspiration to have abstract generalizations turned out to be problematic and even led some authors to prefer the term “virtual” instead of “imagined”. **Imagination is not a theoretical or ahistorical concept *per se*, but it is a practical activity situated with different meanings in diverse historical times and socio-cultural contexts.** Imagination, as human practice, is socially conditioned and conditioning as well. Thus, tracing and situating imaginations through ethnographical case studies is in our opinion the only possibility to have some empirically based and partially generalizable conclusions. We think that involvement of above mentioned levels of analysis in ethnographical situating of imagination will help us to reveal specific unequal power relations connected to process of globalization as well.

We announce call for chapters written as ethnographical case studies and focused on this topic.

The deadline for proposals for chapters (3-5 pages) is 28 October 2011.

You will be notified about an acceptance of your chapter until 4 November 2011.

The deadline for chapters is **12 December 2011 (8 000-9 000 words)**.

Send your proposals, chapters and eventual questions and doubts to our email contacts:

[bobkurik@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bobkurik@yahoo.co.uk) or [t.ryska@seznam.cz](mailto:t.ryska@seznam.cz)

Bob Kurik and Tomas Ryska  
PhD Candidates  
Department of Anthropology  
Faculty of Humanities  
Charles University in Prague