University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

4th doctoral students' international conference
June 6 - 7, 2025, Ljubljana

CONVERGING WORLDS: BRIDGING DIGITAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE STUDY OF MEMORY, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL LIFE

The conference examines how cultural practices, memories, and identities are constructed, maintained, and transformed across digital and physical platforms, and offers a hub for PhD students of anthropology and related social sciences to present and discuss their work with peers and academics. It aims to inspire discussion around the continuities and transformations in cultural practices and social realities as digital technologies become central to daily life. International students' contributions offer new insights into how these dynamics influence collective and individual identities in our increasingly digitalized world.

The conference takes place at the **Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology,** Zavetiška ulica 5, Ljubljana (Slovenia) and via this Zoom link:

Meeting ID: 994 1441 1913
Passcode: 643945

Organizing committee:
Prof.dr. Rajko Muršič, Martina Vuksan, Anja Pogladič, Yingying Liu, Liling Yan
doktorska.konferencaeika@ff.uni-lj.si

Schedule Day 1 (Friday, June 6)

Opening and a welcome message

(**12:00 p.m. CET | 3:30 p.m. IST | 6:00 p.m. CST | 6:00 a.m. EDT**

SESSION 1 (12.15 p.m. – 1.15 p.m. CET)
3:45 p.m. – 4.45 p.m. IST
6.15 p.m. – 7.15 p.m. CST
6.15 a.m. – 7.15 a.m. EDT

HERITAGE REIMAGINED: AI, RITUAL, AND THE NEW DIGITAL LANDSCAPES

SREELOGNA DUTTA BANERJEE: Reimagining Cultural Heritage in India: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Preservation and Innovation

FENGGANG JING: Online sacrifice of White Tai in Highland northwestern Vietnam

ALEKSANDRA RENČELJ ŠKEDELJ: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Transformation of the Practices of Preservation, Interpretation, and Experience of Immovable Cultural Heritage

General discussion and Q&A

Quick break:
1:15 p.m. – 1.25 p.m. CET
4:45 p.m. – 4:55 p.m. IST
7:15 p.m. – 7:25 p.m. CST
7:15 a.m. – 7:25 a.m. EDT

SESSION 2 (1:25 p.m. – 2:25 p.m CET.)
4:55 p.m. – 5:55 p.m. IST
7:25 p.m. – 8:25 p.m. CST
7:25 a.m. – 8:25 a.m. EDT

MEMORY, MOVEMENT, AND BELONGING: IDENTITIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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NISHKA NITIN DESHPANDE: Bridging Digital and Cultural Worlds: Ethnographic Insights into Memory, Identity, and Society

LILING YAN: Digital Identity and Community Formation in Online and Offline Hiking Practices

JANA TOMKOVÁ: Echoes of Identity in a Digital Age: Music, Language, and Cultural Sustainability among Carpatho-Rusyns

General discussion and Q&A

Coffee break & networking:
2:25 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CET
5:55 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. IST
8:25 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. CST
8:25 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. EDT

SESSION 3 (3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. CET)
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. IST
9:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. CST
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. EDT

EXPRESSIONS OF IDENTITY: BETWEEN PRIVATE WORLDS, RITUALS, AND RELIGION

RACHID LEBYED: Religious Discourse Analysis in Digital Comments: Mapping Moroccan Interactions with Foreign Rituals on Hespress

MAROŠ ONDREJKA: What Does it Look Like When You Feel Safe? Exploring Identity At the Time of Uncertainty Through Visual-Participatory Methods

MARIA SOKOLOVA: Home Museums: Curating Your Own Narrative in the Time of Abundance

General discussion and Q&A

Coffee break:
4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. CET
7:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. IST
10:00 p.m. – 10:15 p.m. CST
11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. EDT

SESSION 4 (4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. CET)
7:45 p.m. – 8:45 p.m. IST
10:15 p.m. – 10:15 a.m. CST
10:15 a.m. – 10:15 p.m. EDT

BETWEEN SILENCE AND VISIBILITY: SOCIAL LIFE ON THE INTERNET

SMAHAN LAAOUINA: Digital Isolation: A theoretical study into the relationship between online interaction and social disintegration
GEORGI IVANOV: Sensescapes of Silence in All Down Darkness Wide
SARRA CHAHBNE: Media and Social Change: A Netnographic Analysis of Gender Stereotypes in Moroccan Women's Use of Instagram

General discussion and Q&A

Coffee break:
5:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. CET
8:45 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. IST
11:15 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. CST
11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. EDT

SESSION 5 (5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.)
9:00 p.m. – 10:15 p.m. IST
11:30 p.m. – 12:45 a.m. CST
11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. EDT

FROM MOUNTAINS TO MEMES: NATURE AND AESTHETICIZATION IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE

ORLA O'SULLIVAN: Documenting La Llorona: Mountain, Memory, and Myth On Tiktok
PIA KRAMPL: Floods and (digital) communication practices
LAMIAE ZERIOUH: A Virtual Ethnography on Online Socio-cultural Engagement: How do Memes Reshape Moroccan Digital Interactions?

General discussion and Q&A

Closing remarks:
6:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. CET
10:00 p.m. – 10:15 p.m. IST
00:30 a.m. – 00:45 a.m. CST
12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. EDT

END OF DAY 1

Schedule Day 2 (Saturday, June 7)

SESSION 1 (9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. CET)
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. IST
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. CST
3:00 a.m. – 4:00 a.m. EDT

FOLKLORE AND THE DIGITAL TURN: HERITAGE, IDENTITY, AND INTERACTION

YANG HE: Analysis of Motivational Mechanisms for the Inheritance of Oral Literature in the Internet Era: A Perspective of Storytellers
ZHANG YU: Digital Archiving and Cultural Continuity: Sustaining Guzheng Music Heritage Among the Malaysian Chinese Diaspora
MRIGANGO BISWAS: 'Sociality' in The Age of Internet: An Anthropological Perspective on the Digital Space as a Sphere of Social Interaction in Dehra

General discussion and Q&A

Coffee break:
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. CET
1:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. IST
4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. CST
4:00 a.m. – 4:15 a.m. EDT

SESSION 2 (10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. CET)
1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. IST
4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. CST
4:15 a.m. – 5:15 a.m. EDT

DIGITAL WORLDS IN TRANSITION: HEALING, STORYTELLING, AND SUBCULTURES

KAOUTAR AKHOULLOU: From Oralities to Digital World: Moroccan Traditional Healers and the Virtual Sharing of Healing Knowledge
RENE MAURIN: Enslaving the Image: The End of Material Resistance in Image Production and the Disintegration of the Real
BARBORA HAMOUDOVÁ: On the Topic of Modern Technologies: Will the Motorcycle (Sub)Culture Disappear Due To a Digitized and Soundless Electrified World?

General discussion and Q&A

Coffee break & networking:
11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. CET
2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. IST
5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. CST
5:15 a.m. – 5:45 a.m. EDT

SESSION 3 (11:45 a.m. – 12:45 a.m. CET)
3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. IST
5:45 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. CST
5:45 a.m. – 6:45 a.m. EDT

REIMAGINING TRADITIONS: IDENTITY, PLAY, AND EVERYDAY INNOVATIONS

YIHANG HU: The Rise of Rural Live Broadcasting: A New Phenomenon in China's Economic and Cultural Transformation

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FRANCESCA DE NARDIS: The Val Resia Archive-Mediatheque: An Example of Identity Reconfiguration

IVANA DRAKULIĆ: Play and Playing Between Adults in Everyday and Work Life

General discussion

Closing remarks and learnings from the conference:
12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. CET
4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. IST
6:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. CST
6:45 a.m. – 7:00 a.m. EDT

END OF CONFERENCE 1:00 p.m. CET | 4:30 p.m. IST | 7:00 p.m. CST | 7:00 a.m. EDT

ABSTRACTS:

SREELOGNA DUTTA BANERJEE (University of Kalyani, Department of Education, Kalyani, India)

Reimagining Cultural Heritage in India: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Preservation and Innovation

The research explores AI-based technologies which safeguard and archive and distribute Indian cultural heritage contents both tangible and intangible while creating innovative forms of cultural display. The research uses a qualitative methodology to study AI-powered heritage practices by analysing academic publications together with governmental policies and academic journals and scholarly books. The three technologies of machine learning combined with 3D modelling and natural language processing enhance restoration and improvement of archival storage and accessibility. The wide-scale adoption of AI remains restricted in India due to both ethical issues as well as elevated expenses and restricted qualified workforce. The limitations exist despite the fact that AI technology helps cultural organizations undertake data processing transformations and facilitates statistical data analyses and interactive learning functions to preserve culture and educate future generations. Through this investigation researchers show how AI power creates better heritage accessibility alongside cultural pride development for the community. Policy makers along with private sector organizations need to implement measures for rural communities because they encounter structural and funding challenges when adopting AI systems. Through this investigation researchers show how AI power creates better heritage accessibility alongside cultural pride development for the community. The research relies on secondary data and lacks field-based evidence, yet it delivers targeted insights about AI's importance for India at the meeting point of technology and cultural heritage. The combination of policy backing with skill training and public-private collaboration would strengthen AI's capability to protect India's valuable cultural heritage for generations to come.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Cultural Heritage, India, Preservation Innovation

FENGGANG JING (Yunnan Minzu University, Faculty of Ethnology and History, Kunming, China)

Online sacrifice of White Tai in Highland northwestern Vietnam

The White Tai, an ethnic branch of the Thai people residing along the borders of northwestern Vietnam, northeastern Laos, and southern Yunnan Province in China, has long maintained traditional sacrificial rituals in physical spaces. Men conduct ceremonies at household ancestral altars, while women build roadside "small houses" for offerings during festivals such as the Spring Festival and Ching Ming Festival. Since the COVID-19 outbreak at the end of 2019, these practices have shifted to virtual platforms–using social media such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok–to commemorate the deceased. If someone died, locals set his or her social media profile picture as a black-and-white lotus flower and posted a message of sorrow words, meanwhile the comments to this post from relatives and friends are as follows: "Condolences to your family! "or "RIP." This study explores the transformation of White Tai sacrificial practices from traditional to online settings by analyzing their content, form, function, and cultural significance. Drawing on comprehensive fieldwork that combines online investigations with offline interviews, the research reveals that virtual sacrifices simplify rituals, expand their scope, reinforce ethnic identity, promote cultural dissemination, enhance international connectivity, and reduce associated costs. These findings underscore how digital innovations are reshaping ritual practices and sustaining cultural heritage in contemporary society.

Keywords: White Tai, online sacrifice, ritual changes, function and significance

ALEKSANDRA RENČELJ ŠKEDELJ (University of Ljubljana, The Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia)

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Transformation of the Practices of Preservation, Interpretation, and Experience of Immovable Cultural Heritage

Slovenia faces increasing challenges in preserving its immovable cultural heritage. One of the major issues is a lack of awareness of its significance, which can lead to neglect and in the final instance to the loss of important material testimonies of past ways of life. On a symbolic level, heritage plays a crucial role in shaping and maintaining collective identity. It serves as a valuable resource for understanding history, social change and the evolution of social values over time. Its loss may result in the erasure of collective memory and cultural diversity. In search of more effective protection mechanisms, many European countries have been actively incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into their practices. The use of AI is also encouraged in Slovenia's National cultural heritage preservation program that emphasizes in particular the role of AI in documenting and improving access to cultural heritage. This paper, based on a review of existing practices and interviews, explores how AI is transforming the ways in which cultural heritage is preserved, interpreted, and experienced in digital spaces. It examines both the benefits of new technologies, as well as the challenges they present in the area of cultural heritage. It also focuses on ethical issues and the

impact on authenticity, something that has been central for the physical conservation of built heritage. By investigating the intersection of AI use in heritage conservation, digitized heritage, and effects on collective identity, this paper aims to establish a foundation for a more effective use of AI in preventive conservation.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, immovable cultural heritage, collective identity, preventive conservation

NISHKA NITIN DESHPANDE (Adamas University, School of Education, Kolkata, India)

Bridging Digital and Cultural Worlds: Ethnographic Insights into Memory, Identity, and Society

The rapid integration of digital technology into everyday life has profoundly reshaped the ways individuals and communities construct memory, identity, and social relationships. Drawing from interdisciplinary research in digital anthropology, media studies, and cultural sociology, this review paper examines how digital archives, online communities, and interactive technologies contribute to the preservation, reinterpretation, and dissemination of cultural narratives, as well as identity formation, and redefinition of societal structures. It also highlights the role of digital platforms in fostering transnational identities, enabling new forms of social belonging, and challenging traditional frameworks of cultural continuity. At the same time, it critically engages with issues such as algorithmic bias, data commodification, digital exclusion, and the potential loss of localized cultural knowledge. Methodological and ethical challenges in conducting ethnographic research in digital environments, including concerns around representation, informed consent, and the impact of digital surveillance, are also explored. By bridging digital and cultural domains, this review provides a nuanced understanding of the evolving relationship between technology, historical consciousness, and social transformation, offering insights for future research and policy-making.

Keywords: digital ethnography, cultural memory, identity formation, social media, digital archives, transnationalism

LILING YAN (University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa)

Digital Identity and Community Formation in Online and Offline Hiking Practices

This paper explores the converging worlds of digital platforms and offline hiking practices, focusing on how digital tools shape the construction and performance of hiker identities and facilitate the formation and maintenance of hiking communities. Drawing on ethnographic interview data with Slovenian hikers, this analysis examines the role of social media, activity tracking applications, and online groups in mediating the hiking experience. The findings indicate that digital platforms serve as significant spaces for hikers to construct and perform their identities. Individuals curate online representations through photo and video sharing, often showcasing specific gear and achievements. Activity tracking applications like Strava introduce elements of performance comparison, further shaping how hikers perceive and present themselves. These digital performances contribute to evolving individual identities and influence broader perceptions of hiking culture. Furthermore, digital platforms play a crucial role in shaping social life and fostering communities among hikers. Online groups and social media facilitate the discovery of hiking partners, the organization of group hikes, and the sharing of information and inspiration. These digital connections bridge geographical distances and enable individuals with shared interests to connect and engage in offline hiking activities, illustrating a dynamic interplay between online interactions and real-world experiences. This study highlights the dual role of digital platforms in contemporary hiking culture: while they facilitate identity construction and social connections, they also introduce tensions between technological mediation and the pursuit of unfiltered nature experiences. By critically analysing this convergence of online and offline practices, this paper contributes to broader discussions on digital identity, community formation, and the evolving cultural meanings of outdoor recreation in a hyper-connected world.

Keywords: Digital hiking identity, online hiking communities, digital media and outdoor practices, digital ethnography, online-offline convergence

JANA TOMKOVÁ (Charles University, Faculty of Humanities, Prague, Czech)

Echoes of Identity in a Digital Age: Music, Language, and Cultural Sustainability among Carpatho-Rusyn

This paper explores the intersection of music and language revitalization within the framework of the Five-Domain Model (Schippers, 2010), emphasizing its role in constructing and sustaining ethnic identity. Drawing on comparative insights from language and music sustainability studies (Grant, 2014) and the author's own research among Carpatho-Rusyns in Slovakia and Czechia, I examine how traditional and modern music contribute to linguistic resilience and cultural continuity. The

analysis situates these efforts within broader sociocultural dynamics, including systems of learning, community participation, contextual meaning, regulatory frameworks, and the media industry. I study how these tools contribute to maintaining linguistic identity in Slovakia, where the Carpatho-Rusyn language faces ongoing assimilation pressures. Using ethnographic data and theoretical perspectives, the paper argues that music functions as both a tool for linguistic maintenance and an expression of contemporary ethnic identity. In a long-term cultural context, hybrid musical forms – merging folklore and modern genres – offer innovative revitalization strategies while navigating tensions between authenticity and adaptation. The findings suggest that digital music spaces function as vital platforms for fostering intergenerational language transmission and community engagement, ultimately strengthening Carpatho-Rusyn ethnolinguistic identity. The outcomes of our research contribute to broader discussions on cultural sustainability and resilience in minority communities.

Keywords: music revitalization, language sustainability, ethnic identity, Carpatho-Rusyns

RACHID LEBYED (Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Dhar El Mahra, Fez, Morocco)

Religious Discourse Analysis in Digital Comments: Mapping Moroccan Interactions with Foreign Rituals on Hespress

This research aims to analyze Moroccan reactions to religious rituals of other communities by examining comments on videos published by Hespress, Morocco's largest digital newspaper with over 20 million followers. The study focuses on understanding the nature of these interactions (whether positive, negative, or neutral) and the underlying cultural and religious perceptions they reflect. The research methodology employs content analysis of comments to comprehend how Moroccans interpret these diverse religious rituals, while considering the influential social and cultural factors. The study's significance lies in revealing religious and cultural trends within the Moroccan digital sphere, as this platform provides a unique opportunity to observe spontaneous expressions and daily interactions that might not emerge in traditional contexts.

Keywords: religious rituals, hespress, digital interaction, interfaith dialogue, content analysis, Moroccan culture, digital space, religious trends

MAROŠ ONDREJKA (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology, Bratislava, Slovak)

What Does it Look Like When You Feel Safe? Exploring Identity at the Time of Uncertainty Through Visual-Participatory Methods

This presentation examines the role of visual-participatory methods in exploring identity formation and alteration within the context of uncertainty. By integrating participatory action research (PAR) and ethnography, this study emphasizes how visual tools–particularly the photo-voice method–can serve as an effective means of capturing and interpreting identity beyond the constraints of verbal expressions. Traditional approaches to identity research have often relied on predefined labels that may fail to reflect the fluid and evolving nature of personal and collective identity. This presentation will demonstrate how visual methods provide a platform for individuals to articulate their lived experiences through imagery, enabling a richer and more nuanced exploration of identity. In particular, this ongoing dissertation thesis research highlights how collaborative partners negotiate and navigate safety within their environments, revealing the interconnections between spatial perception and identity expression. By documenting their surroundings and experiences, participants construct visual narratives that challenge external categorizations and offer new frameworks for self-definition. These methods facilitate collaborative analysis, enabling participants to take an active role in co-constructing knowledge rather than being positioned as research subjects. Preliminary findings underscore the transformative potential of participatory visual methods in fostering deeper engagement with identity as a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon. By foregrounding individual agency and reflexivity, this approach enhances our understanding of identity as a lived and visualized experience. This research contributes to ongoing discussions on innovative methodologies for identity studies, demonstrating the value of integrating participatory and visual approaches with the aid of AI in capturing the complexities of selfhood and belonging.

Keywords: identity, ontological safety, visual-participatory methods

MARIA SOKOLOVA (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Home Museums: Curating Your Own Narrative in the Time of Abundance

My PhD project examines the phenomenon of private memory-making practices that result in home museums – spaces and sets of objects that create, organize and illustrate life narratives. This research, based on multi-sited (auto)ethnography and discourse analysis, shows that memory-making routines, while often taken for granted, are changing and currently can be described as curatorship, which involves not only collecting, but also weeding and archiving. Curation practices are facilitated by ingenious digital and analogue products designed to help preserve memories, and are affected by media discourses, which encourage keeping "good" memories, while avoiding "

bad" ones. The practices of engaging with private memory objects functionally correspond to professional curatorship in institutionalized museums and thus challenge the default dichotomy between professional curators and their audience, while putting museum making on a spectrum: from professional to everyday activity. Contemplating the contemporary poetics of the ordinary and equipped with a cultural studies lens, we can see our own bookshelves and cupboards as new curiosity cabinets. Home museum curators themselves and their immediate family appear to be the main beneficiaries of their memory-making activities, and their extended families and friends are a secondary, non-essential, but welcome audience. However, while the nature of physical home memory collections limits public access, digital collections of memory objects, such as online photo albums, allow a much wider audience and often change the essence of privacy for home museums. In my presentation, I will describe the phenomenon of home museums and showcase some observations from (auto)ethnography and discourse analysis.

Keywords: private memory making, nostalgia, objects of memory, home museums, ethnography

SMAHAN LAAOUINA (Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdallah University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Fez. Morocco)

Digital Isolation: A theoretical study into the relationship between online interaction and social disintegration

Modern societies are witnessing a radical shift in the patterns of social interaction due to the digital revolution and the emergence of social media and digital technology. Although these tools have fostered interaction across geographical distances, they have sparked widespread debate about their impact on traditional social ties. This paper aims to study the relationship between online interaction and social isolation from a theoretical perspective, focusing on the phenomenon of " digital isolation" as one of the most prominent challenges facing contemporary societies.
The paper draws on a range of theoretical frameworks, including social disintegration theory and social capital theory, to analyze how digital interaction reshapes social bonds. The paper discusses the positive dimensions of online interaction, such as strengthening virtual relationships and expanding social networks, as well as the negative dimensions, which include weakening traditional relationships, increasing dependence on digital communication, and feelings of social alienation.

Keywords: digital isolation, e-interaction, social disintegration, social capital, digital technology

GEORGI IVANOV (University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", Faculty of Philosophy and History, Plovdiv, Bulgaria)

Sensescapes of Silence in All Down Darkness Wide

This paper explores the affective modalities of silence in Seán Hewitt＇s All Down Darkness Wide through the combined methodological lenses of David Howes＇s, (2005) sensory anthropology (sensescapes) and Kinnunen & Kolehmainen＇s (2018) archival approach to affect (touch biographies). In Hewitt＇s memoir, silence is an embodied multimodal and sensory phenomenon, shaped by cultural, environmental, historical, and trans-inter-intra-corporeal contexts that touch and alter his and others' sensoriums. Expanding on this framework, the paper situates Hewitt's work within the broader discourse of identity, memory, and culture in the era of artificial intelligence. AI-driven identity construction or understanding relies on explicit data, struggling to process the lived and implicit affective traces embedded in silence. Identities (queer or not), often shaped by what is sanctioned or culturally silenced, risk misrepresentation in AI-driven narratives that prioritize quantifiable traits. AI's inability to fully grasp the unspoken modalities of silence, archived in human-made autobiographies and other media, underscores the limitations of machine-generated narratives in representing the depth of human experience. By analyzing Hewitt's autobiography as a touch biography, this paper argues that just writing about human experience, preserves the ineffable and shows its existence and resistance to total quantifications and clean-cut datafication that mutes and situates human experience in one static place. By resonating with different fragments of sensescapes, made out of a whole cornucopia of modalities of being and sensing, humans resist all algorithmization with the simple act of silent existence, feeling, and being.

Keywords: affect, silence, touch biographies, sensescapes

SARRA CHAHBNE (Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdallah University, Fez. Morocco)

Media and Social Change: A Netnographic Analysis of Gender Stereotypes in Moroccan Women's Use of Instagram

Motivated by existing knowledge that revealed the extent to which gender roles and stereotypes are perpetuated in the media, this research examines the way Instagram is used to challenge the normative standards of gender relations in society, questioning existing gender roles and demystifying gendered stereotypes. Central to this inquiry is an exploration of the online practices of prominent Moroccan female Instagram content creators who actively resist and subvert gender-based stereotypes. Employing netnography as a qualitative exploratory method, the research adheres to Kozinets' 6-step model, combining observation and online interviews to gather rich qualitative data. By following Kozinets' model, the study gains insights into Instagram's unique affordances as a medium for fostering social influence and gender activism. Further analysis of the

data has revealed the powerful influence of the participants' active gender self-representations on providing a redefined version of gender roles and power dynamics, as the content they produce and distribute is usually loaded with gender-transformative messages. Observing the virtual socialization of users and participants over the course of a nine-month observational period has unveiled a marked shift in gender- related performances, attitudes, and perceptions among followers. This shift is evidenced by the way the participants' followers consistently share the various ways in which heavy exposure to the participants' content has transformed not only their perceptions of gender but also their overall perspective of life as women, driving many of them to take risks, rethink some life decisions, acknowledge their worth, trust their capabilities, and regain their independence and freedom.

Keywords: social media, gender stereotypes, Instagram, Moroccan women, netnography

ORLA O'SULLIVAN (Princeton University, Department of Anthropology, Princeton, United States)

Documenting La Llorona: Mountain, Memory, and Myth On Tiktok

This paper analyzes how Venezuelan migrants document "Loma La Llorona," the Darién Gap's penultimate mountain, on TikTok through videos that foster a shared experience of "being" on the move. I argue that video-makers create "living memory" through documents that can algorithmically survive a video-maker's death–as witness to their lives recalling traces of their dreams. I take social media accounts as archives on platforms that can shape, distribute and destroy memory. The videos exist in a state of precarity to disappearance amid the proliferation of content, an uncertainty that mirrors the risks facing migrants. My paper analyzes the techniques that individuals employ to create the videos; the narratives emerging in transit; and the ways that communities use TikTok to turn generalized spaces of "jungle" into documented places referencing shared histories. The name "La Llorona" refers to one of the Darién's most dangerous mountains and to a pre-Hispanic myth extending from South America to Mexico. Moreover, one cannot find Loma La Llorona on Google Maps, although it is well known among migrants. My paper documents how video-makers reformulate this myth by integrating folklore, photography and travel-blogging while discussing the presence of death as they cross the continent on foot. Video-makers talk about the possibility of dying, of others' deaths, as well as of funerary practices, or their absence, in the Darién. Yet their videos depict an ineluctable moment of hope–of hanging in the balance between the possibilities of danger and the exhilarating prospect of crossing the mountain and defeating death.

Keywords: digital migration narratives, tiktok, loma la llorna, memory, Darién Gap

PIA KRAMPL (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Floods and (digital) communication practices

Natural and other disasters are events that often bear grave physical and psychological implications for people's lives. They are also recorded, shared, and experienced, sometimes in real time, with digital tools and via digital platforms. In this paper, we asked in which instances and when people᾿s practices rely on digital tools when it comes to disasters. Following the focus of the Sonar-Cities project, we focused largely on floods, particularly but not limited to floods that affected a major part of Slovenia in August 2023. We were also interested in how digital tools mediated practices outside of the digital, finding some answers in practices involving alerting family members and neighbours of the approaching or present danger (floods), keeping in touch with community members and authorities after the floods, and authority measures related to relaying information connected to floods. In some instances, the (in)ability to communicate digitally influenced more or less innovative communication practices. As Daniel Miller states in his entry on digital anthropology, "nobody lives just online." Keeping this in mind, we combined desk research on digital tools in relation to floods as well as fieldwork methods, including semi-structured interviews and walking methodologies, contextualising this with relevant literature.

Keywords: floods, digital tools, communication practices

LAMIAE ZERIOUH (University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah (USMBA), Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences (FLDM), Fez, Morocco)

A Virtual Ethnography on Online Socio-cultural Engagement: How do Memes Reshape Moroccan Digital Interactions?

Digital interactions rapidly transform how cultural practices, identities, and social norms are cultivated in online spaces. Among these transformations, internet memes have emerged as a distinct form of digital communication, and so assumed to reshape the ways individuals engage with and interpret contemporary social realities. In Morocco, memes are more than viral humor; they function as interactive cultural texts that redefine social engagement, digital identity, and participatory discourse. This paper explores how Moroccan digital interactions–mediated through memes–are evolving into new forms of community-building and meaning-making in online spaces. Using virtual ethnography, this study scrutinizes the circulation and reception of memes on Facebook within Moroccan social media spaces. By observing how users create, modify, and engage

with memes, the paper aims to uncover how digital interactions contribute to the emergence of new communicative practices, collective identities, and cultural narratives. The exploration focuses on how memes act as vehicles for social critique, identity negotiation, and political discourse, and how they demonstrate the dynamic interplay between online participation and evolving cultural expressions. Postulating memes as sites of digital cultural production, the study seeks to contribute to understanding how digital interactions are not merely extensions of offline communication, but rather, transformative spaces where new modes of expression and cultural participation are continuously cultivated.

Keywords: Virtual Ethnography, online socio-cultural engagement, memes, digital interaction

YANG HE (Minzu University of China, Beijing, China)

Analysis of Motivational Mechanisms for the Inheritance of Oral Literature in the Internet Era: A Perspective of Storytellers

The arrival of the internet age has transformed the way people communicate and has presented both new opportunities and challenges for the inheritance of oral literature. Storytellers in the internet era are the core of the inherit of oral literature, as their growth process, performance practices, and real-life circumstances reveal the motivational mechanisms behind the inheritance of oral literature. The growth of storytellers is based on the iterative development of internet technology. At various stages of internet development, technological advancements have provided a platform for performers to showcase their talents, forming the foundation for the contemporary inherit of oral literature. Storytellers' practices as the direct driving force for the contemporary transmission of oral literature. Despite the continuous shrinking of traditional inheritance domains, storytellers adapt by drawing from traditional texts, displaying oral literature in ways that resonate with modern audiences, thus driving innovation and development in its inheritance. Storytellers' life experiences highlight the opportunities and challenges in the transmission of oral literature. Performers engage in oral literature performances out of cultural identity and are motivated by both spiritual and material rewards; however, the imbalance between effort and reward, along with pressures from daily life, may lead some to abandon their performances. The interplay between opportunities and challenges paints a complex picture of oral literature inheritance in the internet era.

Keywords: oral literature, storytellers, internet era, cultural inheritance, motivation

ZHANG YU (University Putra Malaysia, Faculty of Human Ecology, Selangor, Malaysia)

Digital Archiving and Cultural Continuity: Sustaining Guzheng Music Heritage Among the Malaysian Chinese Diaspora

This study critically examines the role of digital technologies in sustaining the guzheng music heritage among the Malaysian Chinese diaspora amidst intergenerational transmission challenges. Adopting methodologies including digital ethnography, oral history documentation, participant observation, and qualitative interviewing, the research addresses the pressing issue of cultural preservation in contexts characterized by the demise of primary cultural bearers and the aging of second-generation practitioners. The findings underline the necessity of systematically archiving the expertise and practices of aging musicians through digital audiovisual recordings, comprehensive online repositories, and interactive virtual platforms. Such digital initiatives facilitate knowledge dissemination and cultural transmission, enabling younger generations to engage actively in the learning, reinterpretation, and innovation of traditional music practices. Furthermore, digital platforms contribute significantly to bridging intergenerational and transnational divides, thus fostering broader cultural dialogue and continuity. This study underscores digital archiving as a vital mechanism for confronting cultural transmission disruptions, thereby reinforcing the preservation of diasporic cultural identity and promoting active community participation within transnational settings.

Keywords：digital ethnography, cultural continuity, guzheng music, digital archiving, Malaysian Chinese diaspora

MRIGANGO BISWAS (Delhi University, Department of Anthropology, Delhi, India)

'Sociality' in The Age of Internet: An Anthropological Perspective on the Digital Space as a Sphere of Social Interaction in Dehra

The ability of digital media in enabling communication by overcoming the limits of time and space introduces new dynamics to how people maintain connections and associate with people they know. This discussion on the "digital" connecting the offline/physical worlds of its users to the virtually expanding space of "online" has been a significant area of enquiry among the scholars of "digital media and society." Tom Boelstorff, one of the prominent among them, has emphasised the idea of the digital and the physical world being two different but integrated spheres of human activity. Shedding light on this, this paper discusses the concept of 'sociality' as a process of continuously extending and re-establishing social relationships in the context of social media. Advocated by Marilyn Strathern, sociality can be described as a process of inherent connectedness of individuals within a matrix of relationships that shape their identity, while simultaneously being embedded in

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the potential for relationships that reshape this matrix. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in the panchayat area of Shivnath in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, we attempt to contest the dominant narrative of social media being a deterministic force in isolating individuals and diminishing the practices of socialisation in the physical/offline world. Instead, we highlight the digital space or social media in this context as operating in a more ambivalent manner, where it both reflects and re-configures the social interactions and relationships of its users in the online/digital worlds. In doing so, we highlight the role of social realities like kinship, identity and self in a nuanced interaction between our offline and online worlds.

Keywords: sociality, interaction, relationships, digital

KAOUTAR AKHOULLOU (Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities Dhar El-Mahraz Fez, Morocco)

From Oralities to Digital World: Moroccan Traditional Healers and the Virtual Sharing of Healing Knowledge

Folk healing in Morocco has always based on oral transmission of knowledge. However, the increasing impact of internet platforms is shifting how healing practices are considered. This paper highlights the increasing presence of Moroccan traditional healers like herbalists and spiritual healers on social media like messaging apps, and e-commerce platforms. It explores how social media is used to promote their remedies, and medical products. Through the examination of some posts, ads, and YouTube videos of healers, this paper investigates how digital engagement is shaping folk medicine, and the authenticity of traditional practices. Moreover, it questions whether online transmission of healing completes or challenges oral tradition.

Keywords: digital anthropology, oral traditions, traditional medicine, knowledge transmission, traditional healers, and cultural transformation

RENE MAURIN (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Enslaving the Image: The End of Material Resistance in Image Production and the Disintegration of the Real

Image production throughout history has been inherently tethered to advances in technology and the history of thought. The characteristics of produced images thus diverged in their nature and function, undergoing evolutions and revolutions that redefined our communication and observation of the universe, including the world and ourselves. This research pursues two objectives. First, by analysing historical characteristics of images alongside corresponding developments in thought, it investigates how the latest technology-driven revolution may alter our comprehension of reality, social structures, and the humanities. This phase, which I label as the 'enslaved image', is defined by the erasure of material resistance — the friction once inherent in creation and dissemination, enabled by generative technologies. Second, as the implications of the 'enslaved image' are universal and profound, fixating on particularities is a hypnotic preoccupation with novelty. Therefore, I prioritise the epistemic and paradigmatic shifts reshaping not only representation and communication but also the humanities' capacity to interfere with these changes. By situating the 'enslaved image' within Baudrillard's final stage of simulacra and his concept of fatal strategies, I interrogate how humanity might adapt to this new (un)reality. The study confronts critical questions: Does the ascendancy of the 'enslaved image' necessitate an epistemic break akin to Foucault's radical discontinuities in knowledge regimes? How might the humanities not only engage with posthumanist trends but also reclaim ethical responsibility in a world devoid of material anchors?

Keywords: image production, simulacra, epistemic break, Baudrillard, fatal strategies, posthumanism

BARBORA HAMOUDOVÁ (Charles University, Faculty of Humanities, Prague, Czech)

On the Topic of Modern Technologies: Will the Motorcycle (Sub)Culture Disappear Due To a Digitized and Soundless Electrified World?

Authentic (motor)bikers are the building blocks of the motorcycle (sub)culture and its club scene, for which socio-physical interaction, gatherings, rides and road trips are essential. The motorbike is not only a part of their identity, but also a mythical living object with a heart and a soul ‑ the engine. Its sound is, for bikers, one of the most important characteristics. Based on the conducted field research, where I try to apply senzoric etnography, and based on Steven Feld's framework of acoustemology within sonic anthropology, the presentation shows the essential Importance of motorbike sound as bikers are facing production of electric digitized motorcycles, which may even mean the demise of this subculture.

Keywords: (motor)bikers, motorcycle (sub)culture, modern technologies, electric motorcycles, sound, acoustemology, sonic anthropology

YIHANG HU (Zhejiang A&F University, Zhejiang Rural Revitalization Research Institute, Hangzhou, China)

The Rise of Rural Live Broadcasting: A New Phenomenon in China's Economic and Cultural Transformation

Live streaming is becoming a global trend, and this trend has also spread to rural China, leading to the emergence of a new term in China: "Village live-streaming" (including rural live streaming and short videos). "Village live-streaming" reflects the Chinese people's openness and love for new things and is an embodiment of China's freedom and democracy. "Village live-streaming" can not only significantly change the economic situation of villagers, but also meet their cultural needs, and is an important way to protect China's excellent traditional culture. "Village live-streaming" is developing rapidly in China. This article introduces the forms of "Village live-streaming" in China and its positive impact on people's culture. However, it cannot be ignored that China's "Village live streaming" exposes many problems, mainly in terms of its impact on people's health, content flooding, and poor internal quality. In order to deal with possible future problems, this article believes that through village training, integration of new technology, and government guidance, positive effects can be produced on the future development of "Village live-streaming".

Keywords: village live-streaming, live streaming, rural, culture, China

FRANCESCA DE NARDIS (La Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy)

The Val Resia Archive-Mediatheque: An Example of Identity Reconfiguration

This paper presents the results of research conducted in Val Resia (Udine, Italy) between December 2023 and August 2024, aimed at understanding the specific cultural heritagization processes implemented in the Valley. The study identified a context in which the renegotiation of Resian

identity in recent decades has fostered a process of heritagization which I defined as internal, as it is primarily oriented toward the direct involvement of the community, while marginalizing the "touristification", commodification and stagization of cultural practices. A significant aspect of this process is the systematic collection of sound recordings, audiovisual materials, and oral testimonies related to Resian cultural heritage, recently initiated by the community members themselves. The creation of the Val Resia Archive- Mediatheque in April 2024, through a digital platform, brought together both historical documentation previously preserved at ZRC SAZU in Ljubljana and contemporary materials collected directly by the Resian community. This archive thus serves both as a synthesis of the achievements made and as a starting point for new forms of identity redefinition. The implementation of initiatives aimed at safeguarding and disseminating local cultural heritage, enhanced by the use of digital tools, has empowered the members of the Resian community to take an active role in the collection, documentation, research, and promotion of their own culture. This process aligns with the concept of proactive-archiving, developed by Janet Topp Fargion and Carolyn Landau in 2012, and highlights how the establishment of the Val Resia Archive-Mediatheque has initiated a process of generating new meanings related to music, folklore, and all aspects concerning Resian identity. Moreover, the opportunity for all community members to participate, each in their own manner, underscores how the digital environment in this case fosters inclusion, encourages active participation, and strengthens the sense of cultural belonging.

Keywords: Val Resia, Heritagization, Digital Archive, Proactive-Archiving, Cultural Identity

IVANA DRAKULIĆ: (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Play and Playing Between Adults in Everyday and Work Life

Play and playing are considered an important children's activity through which they develop physical, cognitive and social skills. The importance of the joy experienced during play is crucial for general healthy development. Play is present also in the daily lives of adults. Play and playing between adults have different goals, meanings and forms than children's play. They occur in different social contexts. I use the theory of play by Johan Huizinga, who defined the main characteristics of play. I follow other social scientists who have studied play, such as B. Sutton-Smith, D. Graeber, V. W. Turner, M. Csikszentmihalyi, and B. Turk Niskač. My dissertation examines play and playfulness among adults. My focus is divided into two main parts. First, the metaphorical use of the words play and playing in different contexts. Second, the use of play elements in adults' everyday and work life. The key aspects of both areas are characteristics of play. My research aims are to define what play

and playfulness look like among adults and what it means for them to play. In my research, I focus on observing and distinguishing between spontaneous playfulness and professional creativity. I use a combination of different anthropological methods: survey, participant observation, and qualitative ethnographic interviews. In the paper, I will present ongoing research, the theoretical and methodological framework, and partial results of the research. My work will help define and understand playing among adults, which represents an interesting and important cultural phenomenon.

Keywords: play, playing, playfulness, creativity, adulthood