

en-cbanp

Centre for Anthropological Studies on Orthodox Christianity

Centre for Anthropological Studies on Orthodox Christianity is a working group set up in September 2012 to realize scientific project: Anthropological Theories and Social Life of Orthodox Believers in Local Communities of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

Project Objectives

Based on our scholarly work within the newly emerging subfield of anthropological research – anthropology of Orthodox Christianity, we contend that there is an increasing need of developing new analytical tools in the field of anthropological theory of religion. The Orthodox perspective, with congregations numbering well over 200 million, is largely neglected. Western global supremacy resulted in misrepresentation of the Eastern tradition in scholarly work, and so far, virtually no social science paradigms have been developed to analyze the patterns of the Eastern Christianity (Hann&Goltz 2010). Currently dominating paradigm in anthropological theory (e.g. Geertz 1966), while pretending to universal validity, is in practice applicable only to privatized religiosity of Western societies. Also, recent critique of anthropological theory's theological inspirations (e.g. Asad 1993; Cannell 2005), exposing Christian origins of categories used for describing religious phenomena, does not pay sufficient attention to the fact that the categories deemed to be universally Christian are in fact related to Western Christianity only. The need of incorporating of categories embedded in anthropology of Orthodox Christianity is particularly salient for newly emerging "anthropology of Christianity" (Cannell 2006; Hann 2007), so far distorted by the emphasis on the Protestant, or Western, perspective. Orthodox Christianity has been a periphery of anthropological interests, both as a research site, and as a point from which anthropological definitions are formulated.

The consequences of misrepresentation of Orthodox Christianity in anthropological research can be understood as shortcomings not only in terms of anthropology of Christianity, or anthropology of religion but anthropological theory in general. Currently, anthropology is lacking analytical and theoretical tools for researching Orthodoxy as a religious doctrine in relation to its various practices of social life. There is hardly any platform for discussion and co-operation between the researchers working on anthropology of Eastern Orthodoxy in post-socialist and Western countries. Due to different origins of the discipline in various European countries, and different traditions of its development, deeply influenced by political history of the areas with predominantly Eastern Orthodox population, researchers investigating the same area of studies tend to use different theoretical idioms and approaches.

At the same time we believe that comparative research is necessary for defining the scope of common research problems in different parts of Europe, as well as for understanding their local dimensions. Our Working Group is engaged in multi-sited fieldwork in different countries of prevailing Orthodox population in the European East (Russia, Ukraine, and Poland), and South (Bulgaria, Serbia). This, we hope, will facilitate the comparative perspective, and at the same time prevent us from generalizing local particularities to all Orthodoxy, or Christianity. However, our project consists both of field research and academic seminars dedicated to discussing their implications for anthropological theory. By organizing seminars and international conferences, the Centre would like to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information among the researchers working within the field.

Members of the Centre

1. [Magdalena Lubańska](#) [1] – anthropologist of religion, assistant professor in the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Warsaw, coordinator of the Centre. In her research she focuses on the issue of religious syncretism and Muslim-Christian relations in post-Ottoman territories (especially sacrificial rites, healing practises; religious materiality). She is also interested in the epistemological problems involved in the representations of Islam and Orthodox Christianity in anthropological literature.

She carried out fieldwork in South and South-Western Bulgaria and Polish-Ukrainian borderland.

Her dissertation thesis about religious syncretism and anti-syncretism in Muslim-Christian communities in South-Western Bulgaria has been recently published in Poland (*Synkretyzm a podziały religijne w bułgarskich Rodopach* (Warszawa 2012). Her papers were published in „Ethnologia Balkanica”, „Ethnologia Polona”, „Byłgarski Fo?k?or”, „Sprawy Narodowo?ciowe”, „Slavia Meridionalis”, „Fundamenta Europaea” and other works.

Na skróty

- [Dziury](#)
- [Katalog biblioteki](#)

2. Agata ?adykowska – social anthropologist, doctoral student in the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Saale. Her dissertation addresses the issues of the interrelation between Orthodoxy, education and morality, in the light of the post-socialist change in European Russia.

In her research she focuses on the issues related to religion (in particular Orthodox Christianity) and various dimensions of post-socialist transformations. She carried out long-term fieldwork in Estonia, Latvia, European Russia and Poland.

Her papers in 2010-12 were published or accepted for publication in: „Anthropology Today”, “European Journal of Higher Education” [special edition about Russia], “Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions” [special edition about Orthodox Christianity], „Cargo”, and Publishing House Berghahn Books.

3. [Ewa Klekot](#) [2] – anthropologist and translator, assistant professor at Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw.

Main research interests: anthropology of art, especially visual arts, folk and popular art, vernacular forms of artistic expression and heritage studies.

In 2010–12 published in "International Journal of Heritage Studies", „Ethnologie Francaise”, „Etnoloska Tribina”, „Konteksty”, „Etnografia Nowa”; author of numerous translation of seminal works in anthropology, cultural history and related areas.

Contact

We invite interested researchers to contact us at: antropologia.prawoslawia@gmail.com [3]

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[More information in polish](#) [4]

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Odnosi

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