

Living Through and Acknowledging Disruption: Envisioning Ethnography of Resilience in the Era of Multiple Crises

Colloquium organised by Michal Šípoš and Luděk Brož at the Academic Conference Centre

When?

12 September 2023

Where?

Akademické konferenční centrum – AKC (Husova 4, Praha 1)

Programme

13.00–13.05	Welcome by the Organisers
13.05–14.15	Keynote Presentation Lotte Segal: Knowledge that Hurts (chair – Michal Šípoš)
14.15–14.30	break
14.30–16.00	Unravelling Disruptions: Insights from Ethnographic Studies Zdenka Sokolíčková: Researching Resilience with Child Migrants while Mothering in the Field Iliana Sarafian: Autoethnography as a Method in Times of Crisis Michal Šípoš: Embodying and Imagining the Grief of War Refugees: On the Significance of Loss in Ethnographic Practice (chair – Luděk Brož)
16.00–16.20	break
16.20–17.15	Interactive Workshop: Thinking on Ethnographic Methodologies in the Era of Multiple Crises (discussants – Duško Petrović and Luděk Brož)

[Zoom link to join online](#)

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This colloquium is supported by the NPO "Systemic Risk Institute" no. LX22NPO5101, funded by European Union - Next Generation EU (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, NPO: EXCELES).

Living Through and Acknowledging Disruption: Envisioning Ethnography of Resilience in the Era of Multiple Crises

Sociocultural anthropologists traditionally reflect on their lives before, during, and after fieldwork, as a part of their research. Over the past few years, the researcher's biography has been reconsidered as an integral, rather than a priori or separate, part of the whole ethnographic process. In this colloquium, we would like to explore the interplay between disruptions in anthropologists' lives and ruptures they study.

The literature shows that a researcher's own experience of loss and grief may play an important role in their acknowledgement of the uncanniness of everyday life in different settings. In the face of traumatic loss, anthropologists are likely to do what their profession inspires them to do. Several scholars reveal how they rendered reverberations of discontinuities in their own lives through ethnography.

This colloquium is inspired by Veena Das's definition of ethnography as a form of knowledge making in which researchers recognise their own lived experiences within the scene of alterity. If anthropologists use the self for knowing the social world, how do we utilise our own lives when acknowledging the societal consequences of disruption at individual, interpersonal and local levels? How can we render our own losses into ethnographic research without inclining to epistemic violence and reproducing the universal empire of trauma?

Keynote Presentation

Lotte Segal, School of Social and Political Science, the University of Edinburgh: Knowledge that Hurts

The title of this keynote, 'Knowledge that Hurts', is the title of my forthcoming book. In this talk I will bring to the fore how that title is also a biographical note on what it means to be an anthropologist among people who are hurting, in the multiple senses of the word. What is the physiognomy of that knowledge and why is it important? To the people I do research with, in a language of impact, but also myself. From Cavell's much cited notion of knowledge as acknowledgement I hope to draw the contours of the anthropologist that asks in her work 'What does it mean to know that your children are marked by the experiences of torture perpetrated against their parents?' That even if you tried keeping the spectres of political violence outside your door, such suffering has become part of the fabric that both keeps the family together, and tears it apart, woven into the textures of everyday life? This book is an anthropological examination of knowledge that hurts, asking what thinking with a picture of knowing as acknowledgement might alter for such an examination.

Unravelling Disruptions: Insights from Ethnographic studies

Zdenka Sokolíčková, University of Groningen & University of Hradec Králové: Researching Resilience with Child Migrants while Mothering in the Field

This reflective contribution voices the dilemmas of an ethnographer working with children with migratory background living in Svalbard (Norway), while raising non-Norwegian children in the field. The accounts of bureaucratic bullying, structural racism and slow state violence shared by the participants, next to the Norwegian discourse of 'making the right choices for the child's best interest' nudged me towards leaving the field. At the same time, the painful lived experience contributed to increased engagement in outreach and political advocacy.

Iliana Sarafian, The London School of Economics and Political Science: Autoethnography as a Method in Times of Crisis

This presentation discusses loss and grief by providing an amalgamation of ethnographic and autoethnographic insights of Roma life in the COVID-19 pandemic. The ethnographic material follows a blend of lived experiences, those of a long-

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term fieldwork interlocutor and the researcher. The analysis of the complex and quotidian nature of loss and grief is entangled with questions about methodology and ethics in the case of crises where 'accidental ethnography' and 'participatory listening' are a possibility while employing positionality and reflexivity.

Michal Šípoš, Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences: Embodying and Imagining the Grief of War Refugees: On the Significance of Loss in Ethnographic Practice

This presentation encompasses over nine years of my doctoral research on the lived experiences of Chechen and Ingush refugees, aiming to discuss the significance of loss in ethnographic practice. By examining the complex interplay between my research and personal biography, I assert that anthropologists who experience research participants' losses may attempt to recover everyday life through ethnography. If insufficient self-knowledge impedes the acknowledgement of others' suffering and grief, these ethnographic endeavours persistently translate into personal and epistemological issues.

Interactive Workshop: Thinking on Ethnographic Methodologies in the Era of Multiple Crises

Discussants:

Duško Petrović, University of Zagreb

Luděk Brož, Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences

This session will focus on our experiences of being researchers/anthropologists in the current era of multiple crises. The session will facilitate an interaction between the colloquium speakers, SYRI researchers, and other participants. Our analytical setting will be everyday resilience displayed by individuals and communities who encounter disruption and prolonged precariousness (e.g., artists and art students in Prague, forced migrants, therapists, the chronically ill).

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