

# Applied Anthropology in Europe

## Historical Obstacles, Current Situation, Future Challenges

*Dan Podjed, Meta Gorup and Alenka Bezjak Mlakar*

**ABSTRACT:** The article presents the state of applied anthropology in Europe, in particular focusing on the application of anthropological knowledge and skills within the private sector. Firstly, the text depicts the historical context, which has had a strong and often negative impact on the developments in contemporary applied anthropology and specifically on applying anthropology in for-profit endeavours. It then provides an overview of this type of applied anthropology in Europe by identifying its main institutions and individuals. Building on this analysis, the article elaborates on extant challenges for its future development, and outlines the most promising solutions. The authors conclude that it is of crucial importance for European anthropology to make the transition ‘from words to actions’, especially in the areas not traditionally addressed by anthropologists, such as business and design anthropology or consultancy work in the private sector. While the discipline has a longer applied history in areas such as development, human rights and multiculturalism, few anthropologists have played significant roles in the efforts usually associated with the private sector. It is argued that anthropology should – also outside the non-profit and non-governmental sectors – shift from being a descriptive, hermeneutical and interpretative branch of social sciences describing and explaining the past or commenting on the present, to an applied discipline intervening in shaping the future.

**KEYWORDS:** activity overview, applied anthropology, Europe, future of anthropology, history of anthropology, private sector

### Introduction

Extending Karl Marx’s assessment that ‘[p]hilosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it’ (1903 [1845]: 133; emphasis added), we argue that the same holds true for many European anthropologists, who have up until now not extensively engaged in applied versions of their discipline. While anthropologists have been active in areas such as development and medical anthropology, and have addressed the issues of migration, human rights and multiculturalism in non-governmental and non-profit organisations, their counterparts in the private, for-profit sector remain a less

common species. At first glance, such a situation may seem surprising since anthropology is – and should unquestionably remain – a well-established and increasingly diversified academic field, offering invaluable theoretical and analytical insights into virtually every topic one might think of. What seems to have been neglected by the discipline, however, is its potential to contribute actively to a number of topical issues of our times related to, for example, information technologies, user experience, design, environment, climate change, urban and economic development, education, employment, administration, policy-making, and to include anthropological approaches in industry and the private sector (cf. van Willigen 2002).



This article addresses three main issues. Firstly, it elaborates on the historical background, which is the source of, we argue, most of the obstacles for applying anthropology outside the more traditional areas of its application. Secondly, the text provides an overview of individuals and institutions in Europe who, despite what we see as unfavourable conditions, have decided to embrace such a form of applied anthropology. Thirdly, it proposes some solutions on how to enhance the currently limited scope of applications of anthropological skills.

## Historical Obstacles

European applied anthropology has been crucially affected by the historical context of anthropology as a whole. In many parts of Europe, the latter has remained a primarily academically oriented discipline with an insufficient influence on the economy, the formation of national and European policies, and the functioning of non-profit organisations. We identify three potential causes for such a state, which largely arise from anthropology and its practitioners themselves: the 'colonial hangover' marked by anthropologists' moral and ethical crisis, different national traditions and language barriers, and disagreement on the meaning of the term 'applied anthropology'. Adding to the general public's and decision-makers' common preference for simple, quantifiable stories – uncharacteristic of anthropology's unconventional, time-consuming methodology (see also Stewart 2014), which results in findings that non-anthropologists may view as idiosyncratic stories with no implications for broader contexts – these might have added to anthropologists' underrepresentation in institutions which greatly influence political, economic and social agendas.

The lingering 'colonial hangover' was caused by the use and abuse of anthropology in obtaining economic and political dominance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, from the early twentieth century, anthropologists had begun to be employed by the British colonial administrators, particularly in Africa, and training programmes for colonial civil servants were at that time introduced at the universities in Oxford, Cambridge and London (King and Wilder 2003: 32). To facilitate colonisation, they were joining the native communities in 'exotic' locations to gather data and train governmental bureaucrats (Kedia and van Willigen 2005: 5). Such 'government anthropologists' came to be perceived as 'second-class citizens, sort of professional collectors of

ethnographic data, who replaced the amateurs of the previous generation' (Sillitoe 2006: 5). However, Jack Goody (1995) and George Stocking (1995) argue against this often stereotypical perception and explain that especially in the post-First World War period, many British anthropologists were actually critical of colonialism. Further, the major source of anthropological funding at the time came from American foundations with reformist rather than imperial interests, which makes the situation at the time even less straightforward (see also Kuper 1996).

The development of anthropology was similarly influenced by geopolitical ambitions of other colonial countries. In Portugal, for instance, applied anthropology was either associated with 'procolonial dictatorial political regime' or seen as a 'non-scientific and purely ideological' stream of anthropology (Afonso 2006: 165). Although not referring to colonialism as such, the former Soviet Union, partly consisting of European countries, is also an interesting case. There, anthropologists – or more specifically, ethnologists and ethnographers – were encouraged to focus on administration of the peoples in 'internal colonies', namely indigenous peoples and ethnic groups. '[A]nthropology came to be entwined with scientific socialism, and as a result its theories and methods were heavily politicized' (Baba and Hill 2006: 182). Thus, a large part of Soviet anthropology was in fact applied and focused on practical problems, as defined by the state.

Applications of anthropology were even more obviously abused in Germany during the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s when many anthropologists openly justified racism, developed applications of racist theory and at least indirectly participated in the Holocaust (Schafft 2004). Andre Gingrich (2005), however, illustrates that the situation was again not as clear-cut as it may appear: while some anthropologists were actually complicit in the crimes, though to different extents, many resisted the Nazi ideology – several of them from a distance, that is in exile. Nevertheless, collaboration of anthropology with Nazism before and during the Second World War strongly marked and hindered the development of applied anthropology in German-speaking countries until the second half of the 1980s (cf. Gingrich 2005: 152).

Although the second half of the twentieth century brought about sobriety, the catharsis has been a long process and the 'colonial hangover' seems to persist until today. For instance, applied anthropologists operating in the private sector would frequently face accusations – particularly from their academic counterparts – of their cooperation with the capital.

Anthropologists often see money as ‘the root of all evil’ (Moeran and Garsten 2012: 9), a perspective arising from their prevailing ‘sympathy for the poor and left wing ideology’ (Stewart 2014).

European countries without historical imperialistic aspirations – or enough political clout – have different reasons for lagging behind. For the most part, continental anthropology and ethnology were historically oriented. Researchers often focused on ‘national ethnologies’, analysing ethnogeneses and remnants of the past. They were closely connected to nation-building processes of the nineteenth century. In those parts of Europe, general audiences still often consider ethnology or anthropology<sup>1</sup> as historical disciplines having nothing to contribute to solving present-day problems (contrary to the situation in the U.S., as assessed by Jordan 2014). Subsequently, it has proven difficult – at least in our personal experiences and those of many of our colleagues – to convince potential ‘customers’ that anthropological approaches could be of use. Further, national borders and linguistic boundaries remain a challenge since European applied anthropologists often publish in their national languages (van Marrewijk 2010). Due to various national traditions, European applied anthropology remains fragmented and lacks ‘supranational hubs’, which would enable intellectual connectivity and transfer of knowledge and research approaches.

Lastly, even the name of the discipline has been problematic (cf. Baba and Hill 2006). The negative connotation of the adjective ‘applied’ caused its intentional avoidance in the names of some associations in the second half of the twentieth century, such as the U.K.’s Group for Anthropology in Policy and Practice (GAPP) or the British Association for Social Anthropology in Policy and Practice (BASAPP), which later merged and formed the Network of Applied Anthropologists of the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) of the U.K. and Commonwealth (Sillitoe 2006, 2007; see also Pink 2006; Wright 1995, 2006). In some countries, endeavours of applied anthropologists remain to be referred to by different names. In Poland, for example, ‘engaged anthropology’ – carrying a slightly more activist connotation – is more common than applied anthropology (see e.g. the special issue of *Prace Etnograficzne*, published in 2010). In some other contexts, business anthropology is understood as an umbrella term for ‘applied, development, economic, corporate, industrial, organizational, and so on’ anthropologies (Moeran and Garsten 2012: 14; cf. van Marrewijk 2010). This clearly shows that the issues related to the discipline’s naming persist.

## Methodology

Despite the obstacles identified above, the practice of applying anthropological knowledge and skills in the private, for-profit sector has consolidated, and the number of European anthropologists engaging in such ventures has grown. This is one of the reasons why our attempt at preparing an overview of the state of the art was by no means simple. Our study mainly relied on identifying individuals, organisations and networks by using online search engines. We also made use of the member database of the Applied Anthropology Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), which helped us to identify additional relevant sources and gather information on particular national situations. European linguistic diversity presented a particular puzzler and our search mainly focused on data available in English, Italian, German, Dutch, Slovenian, Serbian and Croatian languages. Further, many anthropologists working outside academia or in interdisciplinary research institutes have dropped their title ‘anthropologist’, which made identifying them very difficult. In some cases, we became aware of anthropologists working outside academia purely by coincidence, through personal contacts. Accordingly, we acknowledge the incompleteness of our search, which resulted in sampling rather than a thorough overview of the situation. Nevertheless, we are convinced that this first step towards describing the current state of applied anthropology in Europe is needed to raise awareness of what is being done and what remains to be tackled by anthropologists, and hope our exercise will be of assistance in developing future overviews, such as the Global Survey of Anthropological Practice recently initiated by the World Council of Anthropological Associations.

A clarification of what the search for ‘European applied anthropologists’ encompassed is needed at this point. The overview includes individuals with anthropological training (either a bachelor’s, master’s, or PhD degree, even if combined with other disciplines or subjects) who apply their anthropological skills and knowledge outside the ‘conventional’ academic and research institutions<sup>2</sup> as well as those who declare themselves as doing something applied or non-academic as anthropologists. This encompasses both anthropologists who work exclusively outside academia and academics who either teach or write about applied anthropology or cooperate with non-academic institutions. While our search resulted in identifying a few anthropologists based in some of the more conventional applied anthropology areas such as devel-

opment and medical anthropology, we predominantly focused on anthropologists employed in or forming partnerships with the private sector. Another criterion was related to origin and location. We included anthropologists educated in Europe as well as those who have spent a big part of their lives in Europe, whether they currently operate in Europe or abroad.

Common fields of interest covered business, design and organisational anthropology, anthropology of work, policy-making and anthropological consulting. We used 'applied anthropology' as an umbrella term encompassing all the above-mentioned anthropological sub-disciplines. Besides individual applied anthropologists, the overview also contains the main educational and research establishments, private companies, public institutions and non-governmental organisations that recognise anthropology as an applied discipline or put anthropological skills into practice. We included higher-education institutions with bachelor's and master's programmes in applied anthropology and its sub-branches and associations active either on the European or national scales.

Using a simplified van Willigen's (2002) typology of applied domains (see also Kedia and van Willigen 2005), applied anthropologists were 'labelled' according to different fields or sub-disciplines, such as business, organisational, design, development and medical anthropology. The label 'general' was used for those who write and teach about broader applied topics or practice in several fields. We understand business anthropology as a direct application of anthropology during (cultural) organisational change, product and service development, and business consulting (Baba 2006). Organisational anthropology is understood as the study of organisations. While its findings are not necessarily directly applicable, it deals with broader, conceptually elaborated issues that can be used for improving an organisation, such as change perceptions, or identities and diversity in organisations (see e.g. Garsten and Nyqvist 2013). Design anthropology refers to improving the design of or designing and developing products and services, such as tools, infrastructure and technological devices (see e.g. Clarke 2011; Gunn et al. 2013). Development anthropology is involved with issues such as sustainable development or community and social services, be it in 'developed' or 'developing' countries (see e.g. Nolan 2001). Lastly, medical anthropology focuses on health and healthcare. It aims at improving medical conditions, enhancing patient experience or identifying health problems through research, intervention and policy-related initiatives (see e.g. Singer and Baer 2012).

Based on these definitions, our review identified around 300 European anthropologists who practice applied anthropology. Of those, approximately one third are business anthropologists, around one fifth development anthropologists, a similar number are design anthropologists, about 10 per cent organisational anthropologists, about the same number are those who belong to a general field of research and practice, and slightly less than 10 per cent are medical anthropologists. A small percentage of anthropologists identified could not be placed in any of the 'boxes' or could simultaneously be put in two of them. Before presenting our findings, let us emphasise again that our search was by no means exhaustive and our findings should be treated as a sample aimed at giving the impression of the general state of European applied anthropology rather than a complete overview of applied anthropologists in Europe.

## Current Situation

Based on the results of our search, we present our findings according to – loosely defined for the purposes of this overview – geographical regions of Europe: Northwestern Europe, Nordic countries and the Baltic states, Mediterranean region, Central Europe, and Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

### *Northwestern Europe*

We estimate that more than half of European applied anthropologists – as defined earlier in this article – operate in Northwestern Europe, especially in the U.K., Ireland and the Netherlands. In the U.K., business anthropology holds an important position. It is practiced by several companies, such as Experience Research, Stripe Partners and ESRO. The following fields are also well-represented: design anthropology with one of its pioneers Lucy Suchman, who carried out research in Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center, and Sarah Pink, currently one of the leading European researchers (although at the moment partly based at RMIT University in Australia) working on design in relation to engineering, media and technologies; development anthropology practiced by organisations, such as Substance and Anthrologica, and several anthropologists-academics; and medical anthropology with, among others, Rachael Goberman-Hill, Mary Adams and Christine McCourt, who are also active in the ASA Network of Applied Anthropologists.

Applied anthropology in the U.K. is supported by a number of study programmes. University College London, for instance, provides a master's programme

in Materials, Anthropology and Design. Goldsmiths University offers a master's programme in Applied Anthropology and Community Development, and the University of Kent a module in Anthropology of Business. Durham University has developed a multidisciplinary master's programme in Energy and Society focusing on global environmental issues. The U.K. is also one of the rare European countries to have formed a strong network of applied anthropologists. Within the ASA, the Network of Applied Anthropologists was established, which, among others, publishes the journal *Anthropology in Action*. (For a detailed overview of British organisations promoting 'anthropology in policy and practice' in the 1980s and 1990s, see Wright 2006).

The British anthropology's notable orientation towards application is particularly interesting to observe in the context of the recent developments in the U.K.'s higher education. While university research units have been assessed and funds have been allocated to them based on the quality of their research outputs for over two decades in the context of the Research Assessment Exercise, it is only since 2014 that the impact of their research outside academia was added to the equation, in the so-called Research Excellence Framework. Simpson (2015) assesses that many anthropologists have regarded this development as yet another performance management tool characteristic of the increasingly managerialised universities, the direction of which goes against the general spirit of anthropology. However, it has to be admitted that – particularly because anthropology departments scored very well according to the impact criterion – some anthropologists were pleased to see that their work has been acknowledged and rewarded. It is expected that the importance of impact will grow in the future assessment exercises and it will be intriguing to see the influence that this might have on anthropology as a discipline (Simpson 2015; see also Page 2016).

Irish applied anthropology became particularly relevant due to the headquarters of the European branch of Intel Corporation located in Leixlip. Intel's Technology Research for Independent Living (TRIL) is the largest research centre in the world focusing on technology to help the elderly live at home independently. Intel's Innovation Value Institute (IVI) in Maynooth collaborates with Maynooth University, which researches, develops and diffuses new models and methods for IT management and innovation. Maynooth University's Department of Anthropology and Department of Design Innovation now deliver a master's programme in Design Innovation, combining applied

innovation research with industry and training in areas such as design ethnography. Anthropologists were also identified at the Applied Research for Connected Health (ARCH), based in Dublin. This is a research initiative where a multi-disciplinary team conducts innovative and applied research to support the deployment and adoption of connected health solutions.

In the Netherlands, the most important branches are business and organisational anthropology. Alfons van Marrewijk has successfully combined academic and consultancy careers, and has, among others, worked for KPN (a Dutch telecommunications company), the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, and the Dutch railways. Deciding to pursue a career outside academia, Jitske Kramer (HumanDimensions) and Danielle Braun (Danielle Braun Organisatiecultuur & Leiderschap) work in the field of cultural diversity in organisations and corporate anthropology, respectively. Together they run the Academy of Organisational Culture where they offer training in corporate anthropology. One of their visible graduates is Walter Faaij, who works as a sustainability consultant. A few anthropologists also work in public institutions such as the local government (for further analysis of the Dutch situation, see Cohen and Sarphatie 2007; van Marrewijk 2010). Some branches of applied anthropology are supported within higher-education institutions. Utrecht University runs a master's programme – Sustainable Citizenship – which explicitly focuses on putting the theory into practice. VU University Amsterdam offers a master's programme – Culture, Organization and Management. Though based at the Department of Organization Sciences, several lecturers involved in running the degree have anthropological training.

#### *Nordic Countries and the Baltic States*

In terms of our working definition of applied anthropology, the Nordic countries have been particularly strong in design, business and organisational applications. There are several individual researchers and organisations focusing on participatory design and ethnographic approaches in product development. A well-known example is Anna Kirah, the Chief Experience Officer (CXO) of the consulting company Making Waves, based in Oslo, Norway, and operating worldwide. She is an internationally recognised pioneer of human-centred innovation in the design of services, products and organisational change, who has worked with leading companies, such as Microsoft and Boeing. Another consulting company in the field of design anthropology is the Swedish Innovations-

antropologerna. Several Danish higher-education institutions – also non-anthropological – offer curricula linked to design and business anthropology, for example the Business Academy SouthWest in Sønderborg, Aarhus University, Southern Denmark University, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen School of Design and Technology, and Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.

Another important applied anthropological activity – often tightly connected to design anthropology – is business consulting. It is carried out by, for example, Antropologerne, a consultancy based in Copenhagen, Denmark, specialising in the areas of healthcare, education, technology, employment, social welfare, work environment and well-being, food, gender, energy and consumption. It has worked on several projects in the public and private sectors, including the Danish Regions and Young Doctors' association, DONG Energy Distribution, Siemens Wind Power, Precise Biometrics, Arla Foods, and several municipalities, ministries and universities. A similar Copenhagen- and New York-based consultancy is ReD Associates. The company has collaborated, among others, with Adidas, Beiersdorf, Carlsberg, DONG Energy, Intel, Novo Nordisk, Pernod Ricard and Samsung. Also in Denmark, the University of Copenhagen's Department of Anthropology runs AnthroAnalysis, a collaborative platform aiming at creating links between the department and external business, non-governmental and public-sector partners. Under the guidance of Steffen Jöhncke, both staff and students have contributed to projects involving work with some of the Danish ministries as well as private companies.

In Sweden and Norway there is also an important stream of organisational anthropology (for an overview, see Garsten and Nyqvist 2013). Two of the most visible individuals are Christina Garsten (Sweden) who, among others, conducted research at Apple, and Carla Dahl-Jørgensen (Norway). Organisational anthropology is also present at universities such as Stockholm University and University of Gothenburg (Sweden), and the University of Oslo and Trondheim Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway). The latter is also the seat of the Community of Organizational Anthropology, which aims at promoting the role of anthropologists in studies of private and public organisations.

In Finland, research and academic institutions are traditionally oriented towards ethnology and folklore studies. However, some applications of anthropology outside these fields can be found. For instance, Nokia (now part of Microsoft) cooperated with the anthropologist Timo Veikkola, who held the position of Senior

Future Specialist in the Consumer Trends and Experiences group of Nokia Design.

The Baltic States have recently seen a boost in applied anthropology. In Estonia, the Department of Ethnology of the University of Tartu has established a master's programme in applied anthropology. Also based in Tartu is the recently founded Centre for Applied Anthropology of Estonia, which has worked on community engagement, environmental and education-related projects. Based in Riga, the Department of Anthropology of the University of Latvia has paid increased attention to developing students' applied research skills and has engaged them in several projects. Until now, they have developed partnerships with some of the Latvian banks and the parliament.

#### *Mediterranean Region*

Apart from a few exceptions, the Mediterranean region, in which we include France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, is lagging behind the Northwestern European and Nordic countries. In this respect, Italy seems to be a special case as it is home to Experientia, a user-experience design company located in Turin. Another company with a similar focus is Nuxdata, based in Bologna. Italy has also been the base of a world-famous anthropologist and an expert in sustainable development, Dipak R. Pant. An important anthropologist working in the field of the anthropology of law is Antonio Luigi Palmisano, based at the University of Salento, who has worked as an advisor on over fifty international agencies' and states' missions in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Additionally, four associations supporting applied anthropology have been identified: National Observatory of Applied Anthropology based at the University Campus CIELS in Padua, SIAA Italian Association of Applied Anthropology, ANTROCOM Onlus Association for Anthropological Promotion and Research, and ANPIA National Professional Italian Association of Anthropology.

According to Baré (1997), in France there is a prevailing opinion among anthropologists that applying scientific knowledge in practice is absurd. However, such a perception has apparently changed in recent years; there are several state agencies cooperating with anthropologists (e.g. the French Institute of Research for the Development). In addition, several small enterprises and other private institutions have arisen that are constituted by anthropologists, for example 'small cooperative companies' (SCOPs) and associations for promotion of social sciences (including anthropology) as a means of popular education.

Our review of applied anthropology in Spain and Portugal was impaired by our linguistic drawbacks.



Two examples of applied anthropological activities have been pointed out to us by our colleagues. In Spain, the University of Salamanca runs a master's programme in Applied Anthropology, Health and Community Development. In Portugal, the Institute of Art, Design and Enterprise – University (IADE-U) established the ID:CO.LAB, which is an applied research group that uses creative methods, explores the collaborative design process, and user-centred innovation to design sustainable products and services.

#### *Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe*

As the Mediterranean region, Central Europe is also lagging behind, though there are a few promising exceptions. In Austria, business anthropologist Stephanie A. Krawinkler is dedicated to researching the issues of trust in organisations (see Krawinkler 2013). In Germany, we found a trace of development anthropology: [betterplace.org](http://betterplace.org), the biggest German online platform for social initiatives, was co-founded by the anthropologist Joana Breidenbach. In the field of consultancy, the company Insight Europe, co-founded by the anthropologist Jeanne Carré, offers international marketing research and consulting. According to our analysis, applied anthropology in Switzerland has mainly been marked by Martin Ortlieb, a user-experience researcher at Google Zurich.

In Czechia, we identified the Centre for Applied Anthropology and Field Research, which was established at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, and is oriented towards applying anthropological knowledge in the government, municipalities and NGOs. The independent anthropological organisation Anthropictures based in Prague has a similar orientation and has even received the Social Impact Award in 2013, which promotes social entrepreneurship among students in Europe. The private company IdeaSense, also based in Prague, focuses on developing innovation ecosystems and innovative product, service and customer experience concepts. In Slovakia there have also been some steps made towards applied anthropology (Tužinská 2008), which is reflected in ethnology curricula, for example at the Comenius University in Bratislava.

In Slovenia, the course Applied Anthropology and Cultural Management has been available for several years at the University of Ljubljana. Slovenia is also the home of Ergo Institute, founded in 2010 by two of the authors of this article (Alenka Bezjak Mlakar and Dan Podjed). Ergo Institute is the first Slovenian company applying anthropological and ethnographical knowledge in business. Dan Podjed has also been the principal investigator of an industry-oriented inter-

disciplinary project, DriveGreen, which resulted in development of a smartphone application for promotion of sustainable mobility.

At a first glance Eastern and Southeastern European applied anthropology appears to be underdeveloped, though we have to stress that our search has been somewhat limited due to language barriers. Drawing on English secondary sources, we are only able to offer an assessment of the situation in Russia. Since the end of the communist era, the applications in an institutional or formally named sense have stalled (Yamskov 2006). One of the reasons is resource scarcity in academic and research institutions. As a result, many academic anthropologists and ethnologists have involved themselves in non-academic projects. The current situation is very interesting because '[s]ince project work usually has an "applied" character, there has been a further blurring of demarcations between academic and "applied" anthropology' (Baba and Hill 2006: 184).

### **Future Challenges**

In his overview of applied anthropology in the U.K., Paul Sillitoe (2006: 15) remarks: '[T]here is apparently something about the state of the discipline that inhibits engagement'. To encourage applied anthropological activities, we should identify and deal with the inhibiting factors such as the enduring and unhelpful split between applied and academic anthropology, disagreements over the definition of anthropology and problems with the public appearance of the discipline (ibid.: 15–16). After carrying out an overview of the current situation in Europe, we identified similar challenges and asked ourselves about the crucial steps to be taken to consolidate European applied anthropology in the fields that lack anthropological engagement.

First, we need a clear and inclusive definition of applied anthropology. Not surprisingly, current definitions are very vague. Anthropology has lost the subject of its research due to particularisation and lack of any general theoretical framework many times in history, leaving us empty-handed and asking the question, 'Where did anthropology go?' (see Bloch 2005). Applied anthropology similarly appears to be repeatedly losing its subject and consequently potential customers, users and recipients, since it deals with virtually everything connected to humans – 'from A for "aging" to Z for "zoos"' (Singer cited in Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006: 186). Once a straightforward definition is established, applied anthropology will be able to con-

solidate itself as a strong brand to be grasped quickly and understood easily (see Hannerz 2011).

Second, applied anthropology has to adapt and improve its research approaches to 'transform knowledge gained in more pragmatic contexts into theoretical intelligence and not become disillusioned that such engagement is automatically "impure" or represents a "sellout" to the system' (Baba and Hill 2006: 197). Dynamic careers of applied anthropologists presented here already point to the necessity to adjust 'traditional' research approaches to contemporary time and expectations. We are aware that ethnography is the foundation of our discipline, but we also believe it should be pragmatically adapted to different environments and requirements. Further, new research approaches specifically adjusted to applied studies should be implemented. Van Marrewijk, Veenswijk and Clegg (2010), for example, propose an 'ethno-venturist' approach for intervention-oriented organisation researchers. Sillitoe (2012: 192) emphasises a necessary move from participatory observation to more collaborative approaches, which 'engage people meaningfully in the research process as partners rather than informants' and take into account the so-called 'indigenous knowledge' and 'citizen science', which assure a place for local perspectives (see also Sillitoe and Marzano 2009; Sillitoe 2015).

Third, applied anthropology has been historically a target for accusations of ethical misconduct, sometimes based barely on the basis of its involvement with 'the system'. Because of applied anthropology's intervention in the researched societies and potential emerging collaborative approaches – and this mediation occasionally being related to corporate environments – ethical considerations are of even higher importance than in the purely 'academic' anthropology. Nevertheless, we argue that this should not stop anthropologists from applying their knowledge and approaches outside academia. We stress the significance of attending to ethical concerns when deciding on the research, practices or recommendations to be undertaken. 'One size fits all' rules are problematic (cf. Bainton 2012) and we call for individual assessments to be made. Applied anthropologists should share their experiences, allowing them to learn from each other's good practices and bad examples. This could greatly contribute to lowering the ethical unease among both applied anthropologists and their audiences or customers.

Fourth, crossing disciplinary boundaries and interdisciplinarity become inevitable. As Thomas Hylland

Eriksen put it, 'the bad news is that anthropology is never going to solve the global crisis but the good news is that without us, *nobody* is going to because our knowledge is a crucial piece of the jigsaw puzzle' (cited in Gorup and Podjed 2016; emphasis in the original). Several applied anthropologists have already accepted the need to work and live as 'intellectual hybrids coexisting simultaneously in anthropology and in other professional realms' (Baba and Hill 2006: 197). In doing so, it is crucial for applied anthropologists to participate in interdisciplinary projects not only as 'marginal observers' but also to take leadership roles that would enhance anthropology's contributions beyond the discipline and academia (Peacock 1997: 13–14). Consequently, anthropology will not be considered an 'appendix' of applied projects but rather its driving force. Similarly important is the creation of new opportunities for the work done by anthropologists in private, public and non-governmental organisations. The 'usefulness' of a discipline is decided and propagated by employers, by those who commission scientific work and by those whom anthropologists assist in developing and improving products and services, in establishing intercultural connections within private organisations and in contributing to development projects of government institutions and NGOs.

Fifth, we need more awareness-raising and promotion activities to improve the public image of anthropology, and show its potential benefits for society, economy and environment. Only in doing so can we change the still too common opinion in some parts of Europe that anthropology is a useless discipline dealing with 'exotic peoples' or 'ethnographic remnants'. One such event is the Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Community (EPIC) annual conference, which has taken place at several locations worldwide. Another event promoting applied anthropology in Europe is called Why the World Needs Anthropologists, and has been organised annually by the EASA Applied Anthropology Network.

Finally, we need a Europe-wide hub of applied anthropology, which will enable the transfer of information and research approaches between East and West, North and South. We hope and believe that the EASA Applied Anthropology Network will operate as the main platform for European applied anthropologists as well as work towards establishing solid links with other national or continental networks outside Europe in the near future (Gorup and Podjed 2015, 2016; Podjed and Gorup 2014a, 2014b).



## Conclusion ... and a New Beginning

This article analysed the current state of European applied anthropology, with a focus on the private and for-profit endeavours. We tried to pinpoint some of the main trends and activities of applied anthropology and anthropologists in Europe. However, identifying individual applied anthropologists as well as organisations which – very sporadically – employ anthropologists was particularly demanding. In the latter case, anthropologists would often not ‘label’ or ‘brand’ themselves as anthropologists and use titles like ‘project manager’ or similar ones instead. We are aware that our overview is far from being complete. It has not, for example, specifically mentioned situations in several countries (e.g. Hungary, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and others), mainly due to linguistic barriers. Nevertheless, we hope that it will raise awareness and attract anthropologists to help us get connected and learn about each other’s experiences – and thus contribute to developing the discipline.

We started this text with Marx’s quotation about a necessary move from interpretation to creating real change. Anthropologists, with their unusual training, undoubtedly carry the potential to do so. Joana Breidenbach (2015), an anthropologist and social entrepreneur, has argued that anthropologists are producers of original knowledge, they are good storytellers who can offer orientation in complex times – without eliminating any shades of grey, they can potentially build bridges between academic knowledge and the general public, and they focus on the broader contexts as well as observe the local behaviours. In short, anthropologists could be excellent trend setters because they are guided by multiperspectivity, which allows them to make sense of the world from the point of view of various different actors – and that is an asset that very few, if any, other disciplines have.

However, if European applied anthropology wants to change and improve social realms, it first has to reinvent itself. We have to reinterpret our past and strengthen our present position through national and international networking, global promotion and exchange of ideas with other disciplines. Only in that way will the applied branch of anthropology become – and remain – an indispensable part of anthropology.

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**DAN PODJED** is the convenor of the EASA Applied Anthropology Network, a Research Fellow at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and an Assistant Professor for anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. He leads the DriveGreen project, the main goal of which is to develop a culture-sensitive and user-friendly smartphone application for promotion of sustainable mobility. E-mail: dan.podjed@zrc-sazu.si

**META GORUP** is the co-convenor of the EASA Applied Anthropology Network and PhD candidate at CHEGG – Centre for Higher Education Governance Ghent at the Department of Sociology, Ghent University, Belgium. Her PhD project focuses on university management and explores the intersection between anthropology, organisation sciences, and higher education research. E-mail: meta.gorup@ugent.be

**ALENKA BEZJAK MLAKAR** is the Director of Ergo Institute, which integrates anthropological and business approaches to design and improvement of products and services, and carries out research of organisational cultures. Alenka received her PhD at the University of Ljubljana, in the framework of which she carried out an ethnographic study of information and communication technologies in a telematics company. As a member of the DriveGreen research team, she is interested in anthropological approaches to the development of technologies for promotion of sustainable mobility. E-mail: alenka.bezjak@ergo-institut.com

## Notes

1. Both ethnology and anthropology are mentioned here since ethnology (or sometimes ethnography) remains a commonly used designation in several European countries. Though ethnology usually refers to the study of one’s national culture, university departments often combine the study of ethnology and anthropology, thus blurring the lines between the two.

2. In continental Europe, 'conventional' applications of ethnology and anthropology include practices in museums, folkloristic institutes or associations, and cultural heritage institutions. Therefore, a broader definition of applied anthropology could include practitioners in these fields.

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