Using key themes from at least 3 GDAT debates critically consider the value of Anthropological knowledge in today's rapidly changing world.

## Introduction

Anthropology, as discipline can be defined by its processes and theoretical concerns that are implemented to creating a holistic understanding of what it means to be human. Along with the social, historical, political and environmental factors that shape this experience. There has been much debate since the discipline of anthropology emerged in the late 19th century, surrounding the value of anthropological knowledge and theoretical thinking. The uncertainty has stemmed from what may be considered as anthropology's murky past. This is due to the early involvement anthropologists such as Malinowski, had in using their anthropological knowledge to aid colonialists devours in their quest to colonies populations of people. There is also tension towards the discipline when It comes to the involvement of anthropologists during the Second World War, when many well renowned anthropologists such as Margaret Mead lent their hand to their countries by using their ethnographic skills to implement counter-insurgency. This topic has been hotly debated and has had tremendous effects on the public opinion of the discipline of anthropology.

However, it has become evident that in todays ever rapidly changing world, which Is becoming increasingly globalized following the spread of mass communications and technologies, anthropologists today are investigating issues of great soci-political concern. They are increasingly focusing on and dedicating research towards matters of immediate relevance through; exposing the weaknesses in grand policies, acting as advocates for the 'unvoiced' and championing the marginalized (MacClancey,). In turn these anthropologists are contributing to the understanding of a wide range of practical social issues. As anthropology is concerned with how people interpret and act in the world today, within this rapidly changing world, anthropological knowledge can be of great value. As well as understanding others more deeply, through a reflexive mode, anthropology can also be used as a mechanism for understanding our own position in the world.

It is more and more evident that people are affected by the global forces as well as by local ones (MaCclancey, ). It is hard to understand a societies present situation today, without considering the social, political, environmental contexts that have shaped and or constructed the present condition. What is advantageous of anthropological knowledge is it ability, unlike most disciplines to humanize and deconstruct processes and the effects of nations and politics. According to the Association of American Anthropology (AAA) what makes anthropological knowledge relevant and of great value in this changing world, is its continuing commitment towards debating key theoretical issues, engaging in public outreach and advocating for those who do not have the means to 'speak' for themselves.

Anthropological knowledge and theoretical debates; as a tool for confronting problems of the changing world.

As change is one of the most common aspects of the human experience, is it not surprising that anthropological knowledge can aid us in the pursuit of understanding the conditions and implications of todays rapidly changing world. When looking at the many debates that have emerged through anthropological theoretical thinking, what has become apparent is the need to re-conceptualize and re-negotiate some of the lasting terminologies used within the discipline. As the world becomes ever globalized, more and more cultures will come into contact with one another, through these interactions ideological beliefs may guide individual's understandings of one another. This is where anthropological knowledge can be of great value, through its ability to de-construct ideological understandings that may be based upon cultural stereotypes. Along with highlighting many of the similarities that cultures share with one another, rather than simply focusing on the differences. This multifaceted approach also helps to create a greater understanding of others and ourselves.

Bruce Kapferer, has pointed out 'the major problem with some views concerning new developments in anthropology and cognate disciplines is a failure to examine them against processes occurring in the wider global political scene' (2000:175). What is evident when reviewing past theoretical debates and anthropological enquiry, is how under the veil of objectivity and ethics past anthropologists often failed to engage with or in some cases unknowledge structural violence, unequal power relations and socioeconomic mechanisms that have haunted their subjects of their inquirers (Kunnath,2013). Starn (1992) looks at this issue directly in the context of Peru, were anthropologists in the country were too focused on kinship and ritual structures, that they did not pay attention to the suffering of the Andean people who were massacres and suffered great social marginalization. To avoid dealing with such pressing and implicating issues, anthropology is at risk according to Eric Wolf of 'descending into irrelevance and triviality' (1969:261).

Many anthropologists such as Sherry Ortner, have confronted the theoretical debates within anthropology, emphasizing the need for anthropological research to focus on immediately occurring conflicts or injustices to bring them to urgent attention (Ortner, 2000). Through this means anthropologists have engaged, through the revelation of their research, in policy making, development projects, indigenous rights and so on. These engagements have not only allowed anthropologists to put theories to practice, but have also helped to establish new theories through practice. In turn these forms of engagement have made anthropological knowledge more relevant and of higher value in today's rapidly changing and ever globalized world.

From the turn of the century, anthropologists have been rethinking and re-negotiating their approaches and positions within ethnographic enquiry. As it becomes more and more apparent, that cultures are not static, and change is inevitable, anthropologists in turn have adopted a reflexive mode (Robben and Sluka, 2009), one which recognizes the anthropologists own social and political positionality. This is due to the multiple and overlapping identities that the researcher possess, which Renato Rosaldo termed 'multiplex personal identities' (1989:179).

There is a myriad, of processes, agent and actors at play which are contributing to rapidly changing the world around us. These include, globalisation processes, neoliberal economic policies, the spread of information and communication technologies, consumer cultures, rapid urbanization and transnational migrants (Ortner, 1999). All of which have reshaped the pattern of human lifecycles and relationships around the globe. Anthropology's unique ability to demonstrate and record the interconnectedness of various facets of social lives and the complexity of relationships which is apparent between people under conditions of change, is what makes anthropological knowledge of value in deconstructing these processes.

Through this process of deconstruction and interpretation the everyday macroscopic processes are revealed. Rylko-Bauer et al (2006) argue for 'a systematic joining of critical social application and pragmatic engagement with contemporary problems', in order to increase the value and relevance of anthropological knowledge in today's rapidly changing world. James Peacock (1997) observes 'if the discipline is to gain recognition and a valuable identity, it must accomplish things; it must be active beyond its analytical strategy. Pragmatism and searching critique need not be mutually exclusive' (Peacock, 1997;12).

Through the series of GDAT debates, many of these theoretical debates and the uses of anthropology, and its relevance within ever globalised world have been argued and contested. This in effect, reflects the nature of anthropology, as it is a discipline which sets out to contest the dominant modes of thinking, by demonstrating through the manifestation of ethnographic fieldwork that social worlds are a structured discourse without being socially constructed.

Anthropological dichotomies and debates surrounding them

Academic discourse in general, and certainly anthropology fall into the tendency when defining certain cultural characterises to operate in terms of conceptual dichotomies, so often anthropologists, like many other academics, through their published work reproduce the 'master dichotomy' (Ingold, 1996) that so many anthropological debates and works have contested if not condemned. Such as the work of Moore who sets out to dissect the use of 'gender' dichotomies in anthropological writing. And very often this view is transcendent from Western based ideological assumptions that, gender is a fixed, determinate category assigned through biological attributes. However many anthropologists now recognise the argument set out by anthropologists such as Moore (1999) and Ortner (1999), that is, gender is shaped and thus constructed through historical, cultural and political contextualisation's . it is a social construct, this has been highlighted as many non-western societies idenfitfy themselves through several or multiple but distinct dichotomies.

Anthropology and anthropological methods of enquiry, allow us to go beyond out assumptions, go beyond the social norms that are too often taken for granted, and dig deeply to reveal the complexities of the human experience and condition (Gardner & Lewis, 1996). In todays rapidly changing world, which is characterised by many different and opposing belief systems. The work of anthropologists can help to create a greater and deeper understandings of all ways of experiencing the social world. This in turn can help to

deconstruct dominant narratives of oppression, marginalisation and stigmatisation. This may be considered a 'naturalising strategy' as Gottlieb shows, through revealing gender to be a cultural construct and not a naturally determined fact. This then does away with its normative consequence (Gottlieb,  ).

We cannot as anthropologists understand individuals and communities, present predicaments and problems without considering the broader and often complex frameworks, from which these issues may be rooted. The work of anthropologists in conceptualising these dichotomies, terminologies and social issues, humanizes the institutional processes, helping to make visible the often concealed effects of politics and nationalist agendas.

Another, growing area of interest for anthropologists that has served in producing anthropological knowledge of this rapidly changing world, comes from discourses sounded the 'self' and 'identity'. As Moore puts it the 'representational economy' (1999; 292) highlighting how a vast majority of anthropological works include a reflection and analysis on the self, that has been moulded by negotiation of historical and cultural relations of power. For Nicholas Thomas (1989) what is important when considering these negotiations through anthropological enquiry, is the investigation into the formation of these representations, looking directly for answering surrounding who created them? and whom do they serve? One of his most significant assertions is too the need for anthropology and anthropologists alike to recognise the role they too play in constructing and representing these identities, as he argues 'science is as much a production as an analysis'.

## Understanding the dialectic of perception and representation

One of the most important theoretical debates within the subject has stemmed from our understanding and analysis of history. The past form an anthropological perspective is socio-politically structured, shaped and woven into a narrative we call history. This meaning that anthropology is shaping and is shaped by its past and present representations. Along with many different cultural representations of history. We cannot hope to understand the present, unless we understand the past and the actors involved in constructing it. That is not to say that history is a fictional narrative, it is arguing that it is just one representation of that live past. Through the investigations by made anthropologists, issues such as this can come to light. Along with revealing the conditions and implications of the structured historic narrative that are alive today. This can be seen within many post-industrial landscapes that are now derelict, with a community that is economically and socially degrading due to decline of industry. With anthropological knowledge of the past conditions and the future prospects of these communities, anthropologists can thus influence policy makers to represent their past in the present, through heritage management as a means of economic and social development in the area. Thus, tackling social and economic issues within today's rapidly changing world, through putting to use the practices anthropology and the knowledge generated.

Advocating against violations against the human experience.

Through the production of anthropological knowledge, the dispositioned and the marginal, may find a vehicle for which their claims to rights and recognition can be explored. As Hale (2006) points out anthropology is now providing colonised peoples with the data and interpretations, regarding themselves and those who have colonised them, which is of value in their fight for autonomy. Through the use of advocacy anthropologists may align themselves with their research subjects struggles and political interests, making clear their own personal affiliations and commitments. Thus, creating a more transparent and equal weighted relationship between the researcher and research subject. The call for anthropologist to advocate behalf od the people they study has faced much theoretical and methodological contestation. However, there are many anthropologists who argue that this type of engagement will benefit both the lives of the individuals and communities they study, as well as the overall image of anthropology. Layton (1996) goes one step further and argues that advocacy derives naturally form anthropology, and is thus an integral part of representing and producing forms of knowledge (40).

On the contrary there are others, such as Hastrup and Elsass (1990) who assert anthropological advocacy is a contradiction in terms, under the primes that advocacy involves defending only one viewpoint, whereas anthropology is traditionally centered upon revealing diverse viewpoints. However there is today more, anthropologists concerning themselves with the struggles of marginalised and dispositioned peoples, dedicating their work to investigating contemporary social problems (MacClancey, ). Through their research they are dealing with global concerns and questions, through situating themselves in the field with those who are directly affected by global issues such as; poverty, war, colonialism, marginalisation and discrimination. By spending log periods of time not only observing but participating to a certain extent in the lives and challenges that their research subjects lives bring, anthropologists thus gain a stronger and more holistic understanding of the 'on the ground' effects certain globally and theoriacally debated issues are having within this ever changing world.

The research and publications from anthropologists concerning themselves with such issues, are then able to unite goals and practice of applying theory, concepts and methods to confront human problems (Ortner, 1999). This is achieved through the use of anthropological knowledge in affecting change in policy, socio-economic reforms and health reforms. Along with helping to lobby against governments in the process of trying to gain legal and land rights of indigenous groups.

Through the process of advocating, anthropologists often collaborate with their research subjects in framing the research question and methodological approaches. Thus, creating a more trust between the researcher and research subjects, which may in turn, yield privileged insights that would otherwise not be realised. In environments of social unrest, not taking a side and advocating for a group is not an option. If groups in engaged in struggles for social and economic justice do not perceive you to be on their side, then access is nearly impossible. By engaging in these collaborative approaches, anthropologists can

help indigenous groups to be trained in the areas needed for them to aid the struggle for achieving their rights.

## Conclusion

Through these contributions anthropologists are addressing contemporary problems that are emerging as a result of the world rapidly changing. The GDAT debates have covered a whole range of overlapping topics, which are of relevance to anthropology's current predicament, of facing an ever growing, rapidly changing, globalised world. The myriad of theoretical issues and process by which anthropologist and their research are entangled are of great importance today, as we face increasing social stratification, health issues, global environmental issues and economic degradation. Anthropology like many other academic disciplines, are increasingly called to prove their relevance and worth in the contemporary world. Although anthropology's murky past, has somewhat tainted the public image of anthropology, the achievements that have been made through the use of anthropological enquiry in both policy making, theoretical thinking and social change have proven to be of great value and increasing importance in demonstrating the usefulness and value of anthropological knowledge in this rapidly changing, ever globalised world.

The debate now shifts towards whether engagement in these issues should take precedence over theoretical approaches. William Partridge (1987) address this issue, calling for a 'theory of practice that demands engagement of anthropologists in the world of pragmatic practical human activity' which is characterised by 'mutually instrumental goals of advancing anthropological knowledge and of being politically and ethically effective' (Partridge, 1987;229) in the rapidly changing 'real' world. In order to achieve both these 'mutually instrumental goals' (1987;229) a certain degree of commitment is acquired, one which is centred upon action. All of this comes down to the question of whether anthropologists should engage as active agents of change? When it comes to placing the highest value on anthropological knowledge within this rapidly changing world, the most affective course of action to take for anthropologist in this papers summary would be to realise our advantageous position of a social anthropologist, that has the ability and methodological capacity to bring about social change through conceptualising our own selves as 'agents' or 'vehicles' of this change. This is due to our ability to bring about change through producing anthropological knowledge and or juxtaposing position of being the cause of certain changes within our research area. As every social component is entangled in a cause and effect process.

Anthropology is thus an important theoretical and methodological tool, in the pursuit of understanding the terms and conditions of globalisation, demonstrating the unique and similar characteristics that are intrinsic of cultures to help create a sense of mutual respect and admiration across cultural divides. Through its sharing of knowledge in social, political and economic fields, corporate organisations, governments and medicine (Nada, 1972;10-14).

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