



# Climate Change and the Responsibility of Anthropologists for Our Shared Future

## STUDENT OPEN FORUM

January 17, 2025

13.00 – 15.30

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana



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13.00 – 13.10 Introduction

13.10 – 14.30 Part I

*Tourism and Community Strangth in Vogel and Bohinjska Bistrica*, Rahma Nurdin and Simon Debeljak

*Locals' Perceptions of the Impact of Tourism in Bohinjska Bistrica*, Katarzyna Sikorska, Sara Arancón

*Cultural Identity and Modernity: Anthropological Insights into Traditional Practices and Tourism Impacts in Bohinj, Slovenia*, Martina Paschal, Hasumi Mihara

*Changes of the Landscape Through the Eyes of Stara Fužina Locals*, Alice Guzzon, Anni Leena Kolk

*Information Structures for Tourists in Ribčev Laz*, Brice Siguier, Aleix Dilmé Riera

*Old Photos, New Identities: Perceptions of National Identity Through the Landscape of Bohinjska Bistrica*, Jana Gajić, Julia Milanowicz and Julio Morales

*Fieldwork in Ukanc: Local Resilience That Honours Traditions*, Judith Veld, Liu Yingying, Tao Lele

*Stara Fužina*, David Kropivnik

Moderators: Liling Yan and Michael Chege

14.30 – 14.45 Break

14.45 – 15.30 Part II

*Reimagining the Liesbeek River: Temporalities, Materialities, and Reworlding in Cape Town*, Liling Yan

*Sustainable Tourism as a Shared Responsibility: Cultural and Ecological Perspectives*, Martha Nek

*Climate Change and the Responsibility of Anthropologists for Our Shared Future: South African View on Climate Change*, Michael Chege

Moderator: Sandi Abram

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

### *Tourism and Community Strength in Vogel and Bohinjska Bistrica*

Rahma Nurdin, Simon Debeljak

This study explores the interplay between tourism, community dynamics and environmental priorities in Vogel and Bohinjska Bistrica in Bohinj, Slovenia. Using the qualitative interviews with tourism experts in Bohinjska Bistrica and re-photography at the Vogel ski resort, providing a nuanced perspective on how tourism shapes the region's cultural and ecological landscape.

The key themes that emerged from the findings includes, first, the delicate balance between tourism and nature conservation, as individuals generates economic opportunities by engaging in tourism activities while preserving and safeguarding their environment. This equilibrium brings both a strength and a challenge to the growth and ecological stewardship of communities in Bohinjska Bistrica and Vogel. Second, the local community is portrayed as a resilient entity, where individuals have resisted to external influences and rapid transformations to protect their cultural identity while responding to tourism trends. Third, climate change, while a global concern, it appears to be a minor issue in the priorities of the local individuals despite of the visible changes in the environment.

Hence, this research underscores the enduring strength of the communities found in Bohinjska Bistrica and Vogel and their relationship with tourism. However, it also emphasises the need for a more integrated approach to address climate change and ensure the sustainability of this unique cultural landscape. The study advances knowledge to the understanding of the complexities of tourism and the socio-environmental challenges it entails.

Keywords: Tourism, Cultural Landscape, Nature Conservation, Climate Change, Socio-Environmental Changes.

### *Locals' Perceptions of the Impact of Tourism in Bohinjska Bistrica*

Katarzyna Sikorska, Sara Arancón

Our fieldwork was conducted in Bohinjska Bistrica during the span of three days of the last week of November (in the low season) and focused on the impact of tourism on the lives of locals. Our methodology included rephotography, a tool that allows us to illustrate the transformations in the town by editing and juxtaposing historical and contemporary photographs, as well as interviews. Our main objective was to analyse how Bohinjska Bistrica has changed in the last few decades, especially considering how tourism has become a growing key part of the whole Bohinj area, as well as to understand the local perception of these changes. The main topics we explored were the state of the tourism sector in the town, the local perception of tourism and the sense of local community. From our rephotographs, we can see that the main change has been a general growth of the town and, concurrently, of the tourism sector. Our main findings show that in the last few decades tourism has progressively expanded in the town, positioning itself as one of the main sources of income. For the most part, the locals value the positive economic side of tourism, but they highlight that there should be a limit to it, and that exceeding such limit would endanger their otherwise peaceful lifestyle. Moreover, the closeness of the local community was also emphasized.

Keywords: Bohinjska Bistrica, Tourism, Local Community, Rephotography.

### ***Cultural Identity and Modernity: Anthropological Insights into Traditional Practices and Tourism Impacts in Bohinj, Slovenia***

Martina Paschal, Hasumi Mihara

The fieldwork in the Bohinj region was conducted in Srednja vas and Studor. The main objective was to explore and understand how the culture, traditions and symbols reflect and shape the identity of the individual and the community. Specific objective was to assess and explore the impact of tourism in Bohinj. Therefore, various methods were employed, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, rephotography, semi-structured interviews and systematic observations to assess the impact of tourism in Srednja vas and Studor.

The preservation of cultural heritage reflects the identity of individuals and the community. The Oplens' House Museum and tourist farm Gartner, as places where re-photography was used provide cultural education to locals and visitors about the unique culture of the Bohinj region. The social and economic impact of tourism. However, during the summer season, tourist areas in Bohinj are overcrowded, which makes locals and owners of the parks to be uncomfortable. Nevertheless, the study highlights the importance of traditional practices such as cheese and sausage making, the efforts to preserve the Oplens' House Museum and the way in which locals are adapting to modernisation while maintaining traditional practices.

Keywords: Tourism, Modernization, Rephotography, Interview

### ***Changes of the Landscape through the Eyes of Stara Fužina Locals***

Alice Guzzon, Anni Leena Kolk

Our research question focuses on how the local people of Stara Fužina perceive the changes in the landscape and what they think are the causes of these changes. We interviewed local people to find out more about their views on the issue, such as how they think the landscape has changed, what has caused the changes and how they see it changing in the future.

Two topics of interest emerged from the interviews we conducted – how tourism and different lifestyles have shaped and changed the landscape of Stara Fužina. To highlight the changes, we took rephotography to illustrate how specific locations have transformed over time. In addition to our findings, we will also discuss the challenges we encountered during our fieldwork, for example the language barrier.

Keywords: Landscape, Rephotography, Tourism, Lifestyle

### ***Information Structures for Tourists in Ribčev Laz***

Brice Siguier, Aleix Dilmé Riera

Ribčev Laz, a place where traditional rhythms intersect with modern demands. Over the course of November 2024, we explored the relationship between tourism and the diffusion of information about local activities. Our investigation was methodologically rooted both interviews conducted with different local people who work with tourists on a daily basis, and the silent witnesses to the transformation of the site has undergone: the photographs. With these two ways of exploring the dynamics of Ribčev Laz, we found that both are ethnographic documents worth studying in order to tackle the important questions that arise when facing the challenges of reconciling increasing tourism and landscape preservation, such as the following: does the information one provides

reshape what Ribčev Laz itself is, by creating a tainted bridge between people and the site? Is the Internet the best candidate to play this role? What role do we, the “observers,” have in this dynamic transformation, and how do we give voice to the local people directly concerned in the preservation of their landscape?

Keywords: Ribčev Laz, Tourism, Rephotography, Transformation, Landscape.

### ***Old Photos, New Identities: Perceptions of National Identity Through the Landscape of Bohinjska Bistrica***

Jana Gajić, Julia Milanowicz and Julio Morales

The aim of our group was to understand the perceptions of belonging and national identity among some residents of Bohinjska Bistrica and how these have evolved over time. The research focuses on asking about changes in identity perceptions over time to help participants (re)collect, (re)present, and (re)define their perceptions of national identity. We also analyze old photographs of the local landscape and compare them with new ones in order to acquire a perception of the social changes through the process of (re)photography.

Through semi-structured interviews and day-to-day observations, we aimed to explore the notions of identity among local residents. Additionally, within the context of (re)photography, we conducted a local exploration focusing on the social context and discourses surrounding certain historical photographs. This involved engaging with locals in cafés, bars, and museums to gain insights into their perspectives. Furthermore, through field notes and exercises in anthropological reflexivity, we reinterpreted the findings through our own subjectivity as foreign researchers.

Keywords: National Identity, Bohinjska Bistrica, (Re)photography, Anthropological Reflexivity, Old Photographs.

### ***Fieldwork in Ukanc: Local Resilience That Honours Traditions***

Judith Veld, Liu Yingying, Tao Lele

Our research in Ukanc examines how local communities develop adaptive land-use strategies to sustain their livelihoods amidst changing ecosystems and economic conditions, illustrating the concepts of ecological and social resilience.

Through fieldwork, we observed that Ukanc has undergone a significant transformation from a traditional pastoral area to a residential and tourist hub. This shift, marked by the conversion of farmland and pastoral housing into residential homes, dual-purpose vacation homes, and hotels, reflects an adaptive response to external stimuli such as population growth, environmental degradation, and economic pressures. As livestock farming ceased to be the main economic activity in the region, the local economy shifted towards tourism. This transformation was facilitated by Ukanc’s abundant natural resources and strong cultural identification with its landscape, making the shift towards tourism both adaptive and logical.

Internally, the agency of individuals within the community has led to different approaches to balancing tradition and transformation. For instance, while some have embraced tourism by running

guesthouses, while maintaining traditional practices by converting grazing land into small-scale dairy production businesses. Others have sought to preserve local cultural heritage by curating museum exhibits and performances that support both tourism and the continuity of local traditions.

We will present the locals perspectives about and strategies for adapting to environmental change. Our findings show the value of local solutions that both honour traditions and can provide livelihoods. At the same time, our findings highlight the potential of anthropology as a tool for finding such solutions to the environmental challenges facing the world.

Keywords: Ecological and Social Resilience, Adaptive Land-Use Strategies, Tourism, Environmental Change

### ***Stara Fužina***

David Kropivnik

The presentation focuses on the commercial part of a village named Stara Fužina (Old Ironworks), located in the municipality of Bohinj. As the name suggests, there is a history of local economic production in addition to agriculture. In the past, one of the so-called centres included the cheese dairy, the watermill, the sawmill and the inn Pr'Mihovc. Over time the economic orientation of the village changed, and the old centre transformed into a museum and a kind of memorial room, while the inn stayed in continued to operate. As the village grew, expanding outwards, a new centre was built on the other side of the bridge opposite the the old centre. It consists of a snack bar and two shops, one of which belongs to a larger company and the other is a locally owned business. This is quite surprising because in most rural areas the local shops have failed and have been bought up by larger companies, while in Stara Fužina the local shop known as Krpan seems to be the more popular one. One of the ajor main reasons for this is tourism which has indirectly influenced the way both shops operate. One is more familiar to a person coming from the city, while the other caters more to the needs of locals and is attracts tourists because of its uniqueness.

Keywords: Stara Fužina, Economy, Local Shops, Tourism

### ***Reimagining the Liesbeek River: Temporalities, Materialities, and Reworlding in Cape Town***

Liling Yan

This paper draws from a collaborative anthropological study of the Liesbeek River, conducted in February 2024 by a team of researchers from the CADES field school cohosted by the Department of Anthropology, University of Cape Town. As one of the contributing researchers, I employ walking ethnography, multisensory methodologies, and interviews to explore the intersection of temporalities, materialities of repair, and the politics of reparation. My analysis focuses on how colonial legacies and apartheid-era policies have shaped identities, spatial justice, and ecological vulnerabilities along the river.

This research highlights the Liesbeek River's ecological role in climate change, examining repair practices, such as using farmland-sourced stones and removing non-indigenous plants to restore biodiversity. These efforts underscore the challenges of balancing restoration and sustainability in an urbanized context. Through the lens of reworlding, informed by a Global South perspective, this work advocates for a reimagining of human-environment relationships that prioritize repair, repose, and equitable development. This paper contributes to sensory anthropology and environmental

humanities, emphasizing the transformative potential of multispecies engagement, community-driven restoration, and sustainable practices in addressing ecological and social challenges.

Keywords: Walking Ethnography; Multisensory Methodology; Environmental Humanities; Apartheid; Reworlding

### ***Sustainable Tourism as a Shared Responsibility: Cultural and Ecological Perspectives***

Martha Nek

Over the last few years, the issue of tourism has significantly influenced the life of local communities all over the Globe. However, it has not only intervened in the cultural aspects but also provoked several changes in the area of ecology. Tourism as a product of globalization took both a role as a cultural connector and a disruptor, which, on the one hand, can enhance cross-cultural understanding, while on the other, has a potential to destabilize local ecosystems and traditions.

The research delves into frameworks for sustainable tourism, focusing on environmental conservation and cultural preservation as main priorities. While examining collaborations between anthropologists, policymakers, and tourism industries, it emphasizes the creation of climate-conscious travel initiatives. To provide an example, the cases of deeply influenced by tourism effects on communities and nature state will be presented, alongside the depicting role of anthropologists and other scholars in the development of sustainable tourism.

As to the cultural and anthropological aspects, with establishing the terms of “the other” and being “the other” in one's reality, to provide a better anthropological understanding, this presentation will also provide an example based on the work of Ukrainian-French travel writer and photographer Sofia Yablonska. Both her visual and written works illustrate cross-cultural encounters well.

The anticipated outcomes of the presentation include establishing a comprehensive vision of tourism in the measures of Climate Changes, with the role of anthropologists in providing solutions and stability in the sphere of tourism, and proposing actionable frameworks for sustainable tourism development. This presentation aims to highlight the understanding of sustainable tourism, through analyzing ecological and cultural effects, and depict solutions to the issues, arisen as a result of previous activity.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Globalisation, Cultural Preservation, Anthropological Perspectives

### ***Climate Change and the Responsibility of Anthropologists for Our Shared Future: South African View on Climate Change***

Michael Chege

Climate change is a pressing global issue that has a direct impact on food systems and livelihoods. In South Africa, prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall and rising temperatures have disrupted agriculture, resulting in declining landscapes with staple crops such as maize and wheat, as well as water scarcity and heat stress for livestock farmers.

Anthropologists play an important role in addressing these problems by investigating how groups adapt to environmental change through methods such as ethnographic fieldwork. In remote KwaZulu-Natal, indigenous farming traditions that promote biodiversity and water conservation are reviving. In cities such as Cape Town, grassroots initiatives such as community farms and

neighbourhood markets are altering food systems to promote resilience. Data can be collected to compare its historical landscape to the current. Further, seeing if migration has played a role in affecting the environment.

By using methods such as participant observation, interviews and field notes to raise awareness, anthropologists can fight for climate policies that are inclusive. This includes bridging the gap between scientific data and local realities, ensuring that climate change mitigation policies take into account structural inequalities, and elevate the voices of most affected people.

Using South Africa as an example, this paper emphasizes the dual role of anthropologists as scholars and changemakers. By identifying adaptive solutions and confronting systems of power, we may help create a sustainable future in which food availability and cultural heritage coexist with the environment.

Keywords: South Africa, Agriculture, Climate Change, Anthropology



**Connected Learning Community Epistemology of Everyday Life**

STUDENT OPEN FORUM

University of Ljubljana, University Pompeu Fabra, Vrije University Brussels

SOF organization, book of abstract editing: Veronika Zavratnik, Sandi Abram

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