

Cultural Heritage and Identities: Research Experience and Anthropological Critique

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Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań



AMU Facts

- The University was founded in 1919
- * It employs nearly 3,000 teaching staff including:
 - 264 tenured professors
 - 439 associate professors
 - 1617 adjunct/assistant professors with the Ph.D. title and lecturers
- 49 000 student population
 - over 1000 are international students
 - ca. 2500 PhD students
- Education
 - 180 possible professional specialisation
 - new educational projects include: integrated studies in humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and program carried out in cooperation with other institutions both in Poland and abroad
- AMU is a member of: European University Association, European University Continuing Education Network, the Compostella Group of Universities, the Santander-Group European University Network, and other University networks.

Faculty of Historical Studies

Composed of six departments of:

- 1) Prehistoric Studies (Archeology)
- 2) History
- 3) Art History
- 4) Musicology
- 5) Eastern Studies, and last but not least
- 6) **Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology**

* Academic staff: **224**

* Full professors (ordinarius): 28

* Professors and tenured doctors (doctor habilitatus): 78

* Doctors: 114

* MA lecturers: 4

* Students: 2 500

* PhD students - 200

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

- * Established: 1919
- * The oldest in Poland
- * One of the two biggest in the country
- * Probably one of the biggest in the CEE
- * Faculty: **26**
- * Young, 10 new recruitments in the last 6 years
- * New faculty recruited from various institutions in Poland and abroad: Central European University in Budapest (3), University College London (1), Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (1), the University of Warsaw (1), Stettin University (1)
- * Students: 220 (BA + MA + PhD)
- * PhD students: 25-30
- * Programs in cultural anthropology in Polish and English
- * <http://etnologia.amu.edu.pl>

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* Four sections:

* Section of Extra-European Studies

* Section of Anthropology of Contemporaneity

* Section for Polis and Regional Studies

* Section for European Studies and Cultural Critique

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Projects that one may find interesting

- Mobile modernities: an influence of highway construction on local cultural landscape
- slums in Kibera and Korogochi; and slums in Dar es Salaam
- Help programs in Africa, and in Peru
- Shale gas as a new challenge for Europe
- Towards common European energy policy (DPWS)

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Projects on migration:

- Active migrants on a local job market (Polish-German, ESF)
- Promoting work-related immigration and spreading good practices in the EU (intl., ESF)
- Barriers and facilitators of integration of migrants in the job market, education and health service
- Socio-cultural characteristic of immigrants in Poland
- Buriats diaspora in Moscow and China
- *Polish migrant women in Berlin in the perspective of health care*

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A series of projects in medical anthropology, for instance

- *Health, illness and cure in Kyrgyzstan*
- *Medical pluralism in Mexico*
- *Complementary medicine in Argentina*
- *Blood transfusion and medical care among Jehovah Witness in Eastern Germany*

View from the Department



EU Framework Projects

1) Kinship and Social Security (KASS) – 2004-2008

‘The aim of KASS is to investigate the role of family networks as sources of security and mutual assistance.... Like the state, the family provides care, education, financial support, and help in finding employment... However, the role of the family is not constant over time and space. We know... that it varies greatly between different parts of contemporary Europe. Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation and divorce, declining fertility and aging populations also have implications for the family’s role in social security.’

EU Framework Projects – on identity

2) *ACCEPT Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe*

2009-2012

‘ACCEPT is concerned with the increasing cultural diversity that characterises European societies and the ways in which it is possible to enhance societal cohesion while respecting ethnic, religious and cultural plurality. ACCEPT debates the principles, practices, and institutional arrangements that are needed to promote tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences.’

EU Framework Projects – on identity

3) Football Research in Enlarged Europe – 2012-2015

‘The study of football is very promising... avenue for meaningful research. [...] The common space it creates not only for discourse but also for action and identification, are not limited to the national realm. As Bornemann and Fowler put it, football is “like the EU itself, (...) an institutionalised system of aggressive yet cooperative competition among global, national, and local entities. As such, it is the quintessential European pursuit and is fast becoming an archetypal example of Europeanisation” (Borneman und Fowler 1997: 508).

Studies on heritage – phase 1

- Documenting vanishing forms of folk culture
- a combination of positivist, descriptive ethnography and **salvage paradigm**
- **Culture** seen as homogenised and **inert** and **fixed**
- *Kultura ludowa Wielkopolski* (Greater Poland Folk Culture), Poznań 1960-1967, (3 volumes)
- <http://cyfrowearchiwum.amu.edu.pl/>

Woodcarver



Studies on heritage - phase 2

- * Cultural change and cultural identity in particular
- * Changes in religious practices, esp. pilgrimages and sanctuaries, popular religiousness (e.g. Licheń)
- * Micro-monographs of given regions or even towns (e.g., Borne-Sulinowo)
- * identities in the north-west territories acquired after WWII; preserving cultural heritage described so far as “alien” or “German”
- * Social context of the functioning of concentration camps museums
- * Application of “folk traditions” in arts and architecture
- * Documentation of changes in customary life and emergence of new traditions.
- * Documentation of the cultural landscapes, usually in cooperation with local authorities.

Studies on heritage - phase 2: paradigm

- * **Practice oriented** (how heritage is understood by the people concerned and how do they use it)
- * Focuses **not on artefacts** the origins of which can be traced back to the imagined traditional folk culture
- * But on **living traditions**

Poznań – Żandary (Easter)



Poznań – Żandary (Easter)



Prospects

‘any study of the national needs to be transnational, but also transhistorical in order to de-naturalize the present’

(Löfgren 2000: 232)

Convention's consequences

- Introduces external to the tradition issues
- Leads to 'folklorisation' of traditions
- favours colourful traditions
- participants face state-based institutions
- heritage politics is phrased in neoliberal terms

Go to the people



Talk to the people

