

Visiting Scholar: Magda Craciun

National School of Political Studies and Public Administration

Host: Kinga Sekerdej

Institute of Sociology, Centre for Comparative Study of Civilizations, Jagiellonian Univ.,
Krakow

Report on the Visiting Lecture

The main objective of my lecture was to present an example of how an anthropological object of study can be constructed and, then, starting from this example, to draw a few general ideas. However, as the students invited to this lecture were rather “beginners”, enrolled on an optional course on the early history of anthropology (Malinowski and his contemporaries), I gave up to the last part and I focused only on the example.

I presented my previous research in the Jiu Valley, about the local peasants called Momarlani and their reaction to the industrialization and colonization processes. The lecture had the following structure: encountering the Momarlani (a detailed description of a “unusual”, for me, presence of a rural population into an industrialized region); my initial question; the research methods; the data gathered, structured in several categories; the “nuances” that influenced my research; the main concepts and their authors; my first interpretation; the interpretative mistakes; the final interpretation and the research conclusions. The presentation was accompanied by photos, aiming thus to make more clear the ethnographic details I was talking about.

The students’ questions were related not to the theory and methodology I used (although I noticed a few smiles when I mentioned “participant observation” and their attention to my list of methods), but rather to the everyday life of this population and of the Jiu Valley inhabitants. One student asked if I presented my research conclusions to some of the Momarlani I had interviewed and which were their reactions.

On the whole, judging also by my partner's reaction, I believe I accomplished the main objective of this lecture, namely that of presenting how an anthropological object of study can be constructed, even by an (apprentice-anthropologist) working at home.