the international **Union** of and anthropological ethnological sciences

Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb, Croatia

1977

Croatian Anthropological Society

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

KULA Slovenian Ethnological and Anthropological Association

**UAES** INTER CONGRESS World anthropologies and privatization of knowledge: engaging anthropology in public

AND AND A

4-9 May 2016 / Hotel Dubrovnik Palace / Dubrovnik, Croatia

ABSTRACT BOOK

#### Breastfeeding, shame, guilt

Brigita Miloš, Ana Gavran Miloš (Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, Croatia)

A lot of (recent) research on breastfeeding confirms the occurrence of the feeling of (maternal) guilt, as well as the feeling of shame that significantly affects the perception of this distinctively female practice. The aim of our paper is to examine various situations of shame/guilt in the context of breastfeeding from the perspectives of typology (relations, intensity and possible genesis of guilt/shame in different breastfeeding situations: guilt/shame about not breastfeeding; guilt/shame because the duration of breastfeeding was too short; guilt/shame due to the failure of breastfeeding; guilt/shame due to a prolonged period of breastfeeding; due to the unwanted leakage of milk from the breast; about breastfeeding in public), ethics and feminist theory. In the context of ethics, we will focus on an analysis of the moral sense that accompanies breast-feeding, and examine whether it is a feeling of guilt or shame, whether this originates as a result of a conflict with a sense of duty towards breastfeeding, and finally how each of these feelings influences the actual practice of breastfeeding and perceptions of motherhood. In the context of feminist theory, the focus will be on setting up an argument about 'the absence of maternal instinct' within the framework of the practice of contemporary breastfeeding.

### *Infant feeding and "livable" choices: Incorporating women's voices into "Breast is Best' discourse* Lorraine Davies, Michael Rooyakkers (Western University, London, Ontario, Canada)

We argue that it is important for public health messages in industrialized countries, around breastfeeding, to be grounded in the realities of women's lives, including knowledge about how and what mothers want to feed their babies, and why. Drawing on in-depth interviews over time, we compare women's infant feeding intentions before birth to actual infant feeding practices up to one year after birth. Specifically, we examine the role that formula plays in the lives of women who all plan to breastfeed after birth. The data capture what women feed their babies over the first year, within the context of what they had hoped would occur before giving birth. We compare women who do not meet their pre-birth breastfeeding duration expectations to those who meet, and those who exceed expectations, and examine the reasons behind these outcomes. Our findings challenge practices that limit availability of formula in hospital settings, and suggest, instead, that formula can be an effective strategy for increasing rates of breastfeeding duration.

#### Breastfeeding and adult intelligence: Facts, causes and open questions

Željka Buturović, Suzana Ignjatović (Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia)

During the past decade, breastfeeding has become an undisputed norm of infant feeding; this status was both achieved and reinforced thanks to scientific research of its positive effects. Many such effects have been postulated including lower incidence of various infections, diabetes, obesity, allergies, asthma and certain cancers among breastfed infants and children. A recurring topic of interest has been whether there exists a positive effect of early breastfeeding on adult intelligence. Compared to some other effects under consideration, a positive correlation between a baby being breastfed and its adult intelligence is one of the more consistent research results: for example it was one of the few effects in a randomized study of breastfeeding support (Kramer et al, 2008) though some notable null results (e.g Colen;Ramney, 2014) have also appeared. In addition, causal mechanism underlying the correlation between breastfeeding and intelligence remains unclear. Mothers who breasted their children tend to differ from those who don't on a variety of variables; this is especially true of the in the West wherefrom most research findings on the benefits of breastfeeding originate. Most problematically, Western mothers with higher education and income breastfeed at higher rates. A recent study by Victora et al (2015) sought to alleviate these concerns as such pattern doesn't exist in Brazil. However, until the possibility that infant's early ability to nurse

is correlated with its intelligence has been taken into account the question of breastfeeding's capacity to increase adult intelligence remains open.

#### Political, ethical and cultural aspects of breastfeeding

Suzana Ignjatović, Željka Buturović (Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia)

In recent years, breastfeeding has been promoted not only as superior, but often as the only acceptable form of infant feeding. Many different actors campaign for breastfeeding: UN agencies, governments, media, and the academia. Among activists, breastfeeding is idealized as a magical elixir that prevents all kinds of risks and maximizes child's potential; popular culture features 'brealfies' made by celebrity mothers and tales of prolonged breastfeeding. However, despite current consensus in respect to superiority of breastfeeding, there are some signs of change: the debate between present-day "lactivists" and "permissivists" is slowly coming to the fore. This includes raising ethical questions such as: is breastfeeding always the preferable option? Should we, in some cases, tolerate potential health risks of breastfeeding? What are the emotional, physical, and social costs of breastfeeding for the mother and, indirectly, for the baby? The social and cultural context of breastfeeding in the modern Western societies has changed, too. Breastfeeding debate can be placed within the context of the new parental norms: sacrifice, child-centerdness, and prevention of all possible risks. Joan Wolf's concepts of "risk culture" and "total motherhood" can be used in explanations of these social processes. Since throughout history, breastfeeding norms have often been imposed through political means it is not surprising that they are now becoming a political issue as well.

## *The use of crying over spilled milk. A storied account of a lactating body in the workplace* Noortje van Amsterdam (Ùtrecht University, Netherland)

In this paper I present a poem and an autoethnographic story about my experiences with expressing breast milk at a Dutch university department. My story illustrates how conflicting discourses about gender, motherhood, embodiment and professionalism became salient in and though my leaky maternal body. My story thus shows how my unruly, leaky, maternal body challenged the somatic norms that prevail in most academic settings. Additionally, the forms in which I present this material – poetry and narrative writing – aim to make visible and challenge dominant norms in academia concerning what we write and how we (can) write. The text in itself thus becomes an unruly body; one that is meant to radically subvert dominant ontological and epistemological positions. I address these issues from a feminist poststructuralist and postmodern perspective. My aim is twofold: Firstly, I aim to show how the experiences I describe are part of a larger cultural framework of power structures that produce the feminine body as the Other, subject to (self-)discipline and marginalization – especially in the academic context. Secondly, I aim to open up space for disrupting these normative constraints by breaking through the boundaries between self/Other, theory/narrative, inside/outside and public/private.

# Human breastfeeding and animal milking: An ethnographic consideration of the exchange of milk in Croatia

Sarah Czerny (University of Rijeka, Croatia)

I start this paper by ethnographically considering two forms of milk exchange relations in Croatia: human breastfeeding relations and animal milking relations. Here, I offer an account of the different forms these relations take, for instance between nursing women and babies, shepherds and sheep, or goat herders and goats. I point out that there are some notable points of difference in the exchange of milk in human breastfeeding and animal milking relations. For instance, in human breast feeding relations having knowledge of the individual identity of who is providing the milk is critical, whilst in animal milk relations this is not considered to be so important. Or the notion present in