

Political Anthropology as method-logic:

From Plato, through Nietzsche, Weber, and Foucault, to comparative anthropology

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The aim of my presentation is to introduce political anthropology, in the sense in which it is used by the journal *International Political Anthropology* – in my interpretation, relying on my two most recent books (*Post Truth Society: A political anthropology of trickster logic*, Routledge, 2022; and *Political Anthropology as Method*, Routledge, 2023). The journal was founded by the PhD laureates of the European University Institute, Florence, Ágnes Horváth, Harald Wydra, and Bjørn Thomassen, in 2007. According to this journal political anthropology is not a branch of anthropology as a discipline, rather a genuinely inter-disciplinary field, combining Nietzsche-Weber-Foucauldian genealogy and comparative historical sociology, classical philosophical anthropology (especially Plato and Aristotle) and aspects of social or cultural anthropology, while also incorporating comparative archaeology, mythology, art, and even theology. My presentation will focus on six terms, each introduced by maverick anthropologists, far from the mainstream: liminality (Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner), trickster (Paul Radin), imitation (René Girard, Gabriel Tarde), schismogenesis (Gregory Bateson), gift-giving (Marcel Mauss), and participation (Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Colin Turnbull) (see Árpád Szakolczai and Bjørn Thomassen, *From Anthropology to Social Theory: Rethinking the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press, 2019, for details, especially its first part, 'Maverick Anthropologists'). I will show that these terms, central for social and political understanding, correspond to central concerns of both Nietzsche-Weber-Foucauldian genealogy, and Plato-Aristotelian classical philosophy and its hermeneutical followers (Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger), while being distant both rationalistic philosophies and Marx-Freudian critical theories. The presentation will finish by offering, based on these approaches, a characterisation of contemporary global modernity.

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