



CALL FOR SESSION ORGANIZERS AND SAVE THE DATE

[Note: a complete version of this Call is available at
<http://www.aaanet.org/sections/ngo/2015-conference/>]

As non-governmental organizations (NGOs) take on roles and responsibilities that were traditionally in the hands of national governments, power has become increasingly denationalized and embedded in new configurations. While the scales of these mediations, service provisions, and representations have typically been categorized as local-regional-national-international, networks of NGOs now connect organizations at the grassroots directly to large-scale, transnational systems. Yet as Bebbington (2004) notes, the conditions of poverty that development NGOs seek to address have been created through preexisting structures of colonial extraction, capitalist expansion, and consumption and production; a legacy that leaves these NGO networks unevenly dispersed, clustering in areas of perceived need and becoming sparse in regions without the infrastructure required to support them. The term “NGO-graphy” (Sampson and Hemment 2001) calls for a critical ethnographic approach to understanding non-governmental organizations and nonprofits. It also suggests a topographic image of NGO networks that both interact with and create human landscapes.

The purpose of this second NGOs and Nonprofits conference is to engage one another in thinking broadly about the patterns of NGO practices as they point to the role of coordination within networks and the factors that direct global flows of resources and knowledge. Together, we will examine how these networks are constituted through the personal interactions, cultural practices, and shifting discourses that give them meaning. Considering the power relations that shape and create NGO-graphies also allows us to problematize the ever-present methodological question of how researchers and practitioners can and should interact with NGOs, which become sources of information about local communities, points of entry, sources of income, and fieldsites themselves. We invite **proposals for sessions** from anthropologists, related interdisciplinary scholars, and practitioners on topics including but not limited to the following questions.

Bebbington, Anthony (2004) "NGOs and uneven development: geographies of development intervention." Progress in Human Geography 28(6):725-745.

Sampson, Steven and Julie Hemment (2001) "NGO-graphy: the critical anthropology of NGOs and civil society." Double panel, organized for the 100th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington DC, November 2001.

- How do we think beyond a “case-based” approach to conceive of broader geographies of NGO intervention?
- How do NGOs’ particular requirements in providing services create landscapes of need?
- Where do resources and knowledge originate geographically and how do they travel?
- Where are the “centers” of international NGOs and how do they interact with the “peripheries”?
- In what ways does examining how NGO work unfolds geographically contribute to shifting our perspective from viewing NGOs as entities (“nouns”) to viewing NGOs as processes (“verbs”)?
- How do “NGO cultures” draw from or feed back into the ethnic, national, and social mechanisms traditionally observed in anthropological research?
- How are the forms of knowledge valued by NGOs (technical knowledge, local knowledge, cultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge) linked to or detached from geographic contexts?
- How do indicators produced by distinct aid organizations in disparate locations create and reinforce overlapping notions of sociopolitical need, human rights, and value?
- How do NGO practitioners position themselves as experts with useful knowledge and relationships within organizations?
- What perspectives can practitioners and activists bring to academic theorizing regarding how NGO networks operate?
- How can deeper understandings of non-governmental organizational structures aid in developing effective NGO practice?

LOCATION & COST

The conference will take place in Denver on the day before and the first day of the 2015 AAA meeting: from 8am on Tuesday, November 17th until 4pm on Wednesday, November 18th. We will primarily be located across the road from the AAA convention center on the campus of Metropolitan State University. We aim to make “NGO-graphies” as accessible and affordable as possible and are pursuing sponsorship and in-kind support to keep costs low. We will finalize our fee structure within the coming months, but right now we can guarantee that registration costs will not exceed \$75. Accommodation is available at the Springhill Suites Marriott, an affordable option that is part of the MSU campus.

SESSION PROPOSALS

At this time, we are soliciting *session proposals* that speak to the above outlined themes and questions directly or indirectly. Both traditional paper sessions and alternative format sessions are welcome.

The deadline to submit session proposals is **May 15th**. Please note that sessions do not need to be completely filled with participants by this date. After the session review process (as outlined below), sessions with open slots will be asked to recruit further participants from our wider membership.

Anyone with an interest in the ethnographic study of NGOs (broadly including nonprofits, third sectors, voluntary organizations, etc.) may submit a session proposal. Session organizers will work with the conference planning committee to develop lines of discussion connected to our NGO-graphies theme. Session activities should offer a variety of forums that stimulate discussion, including but not limited to panel sessions, workshops, and roundtables. Each organizer will design a 1.75 hour session with themes broad enough to intrigue a diversity of people working in NGO studies or the NGO sector, yet specific enough for both scholars and practitioners to engage one another concerning their specializations.

Proposals should include:

Theme Definition (200 words): The proposal should explain why the chosen theme is timely and relevant to NGO-graphies and NGO studies. This information will appear in the general CFP and should describe the issues that will focus presentations and discussions in the session.

Structure / Format (100 words): We aim to facilitate conversations and collaborative analyses, so we strongly encourage proposals that employ innovative presentation formats, such as roundtables, break-out sessions and informal lunchtime conversations, in addition to traditional panels and paper presentations. See <http://www.aaanet.org/sections/ngo/2015-conference/session-formats/> for ideas on how you can structure your session, or work with the planning committee to design an effective format.

Prospective Participants (150 words): Session organizers may recruit participants from their own networks and/or fill slots with submissions solicited through our forthcoming Call for Papers. Please provide names and planned contributions of potential/confirmed participants (be as specific as possible).

Proposals should be submitted as .doc attachments to ngoanthro@gmail.com. Questions may also be directed to this email address.

GENERAL PARTICIPATION

Session organizers will be notified of requested revisions and acceptance by **May 22nd**. At this time we will also send out a Call for Papers for sessions with space open for additional papers. All sessions must be finalized by **July 10th**. We anticipate notifying all participants and opening up conference registration by August, shortly after AAA submission notifications. A brief survey requesting participants' availability, AV needs, and confirmation of participation will be distributed at this time. The final deadline for registration will be in October.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For a full version of this announcement—including further details of our theoretical approach, aims, and innovative format ideas—please visit: <http://www.aaanet.org/sections/ngo/2015-conference/>

For information regarding conference registration, facilities, scheduling, and other matters please contact ngoanthro@gmail.com.

Sponsored by Metropolitan State University of Denver, the Association for Political and Legal Anthropology, and Northern Illinois University

Conference Coordinating Committee: Amanda Lashaw, Rebecca Mantel, Siobhan McGuirk, Rebecca Nelson, Misha Quill, Mark Schuller, Aviva Sinervo, Christian Vannier, Kim Walters

