

In Vered Amit (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Routledge, pp.213-5.

Gulliver, P.H. (Philip H.)

b. 2 September 1921, Maldon, UK

The authorial, theoretical, and methodological contours of ethnography are often contested. Yet Gulliver's work over more than fifty years, among East African pastoralists, horticulturalists, and labourers, with Western-style labour relations, and in an Irish town and hinterland, are exemplars of how an anthropologist can fuse personal fieldwork, ethnographic writing, and theoretical development. His earliest concerns, with localised social relations and material interests, and with diachronic analysis, were later augmented by work in historical anthropology. Throughout, Gulliver has focused on the dialectic between conflict and co-operation, the nature of disputing processes, and the connection between individual action and the formation of collectivities. Gulliver interrupted his university education in 1941 to join the RAF and spent part of the Second World War stationed in Egypt. His curiosity was piqued by nearby fellahin and, also, by Sanusi in whose company he searched for downed aeroplanes. After the war, he decided to read anthropology. Although informed by Raymond Firth in 1947 that there would be no jobs, he went off to northern Kenya (Turkana) for his Ph.D. research. It was an area that had seen few Europeans and which, for Gulliver, was well away from English authority. The resulting book (1955), which compared the Turkana with Jie pastoralists, is considered a classic. Because of these positive experiences, and because post-war England was so dreary, Gulliver signed on as a sociologist for the government of Tanganyika. Although working on topics that were designed to meet government interests, he was in fact able to pursue his own research interests. He did so among several groups in the following six years; and he developed an abiding fascination with non-judicial processes, dispute management, and mediation. His 1979 volume, which compared East African and industrial models of negotiation, is now a required text in the field of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Meanwhile, his research among East African horticulturalists, who had neither lineages nor kinship groups, propelled him to become a leader in the analysis of cognatic kinship and social networks (action-sets, quasi-groups) (e.g. 1971). This period of intense research in East Africa and the resulting publications (1948– 58) brought him the Wellcome Medal for Anthropology (1957) and the Rivers Memorial Medal for Anthropological Research (1967). In 1958, Gulliver left Africa for the USA, taking positions at Harvard (1958– 9) and Boston University (1959– 62). In 1962, he returned to England— to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. In 1967, he became professor of African anthropology. Three years later, largely for personal reasons, Gulliver emigrated to Canada, spending a year at the University of Calgary and, then, until his retirement in 1992, at York University, Toronto. In this new context came a new research focus. In association with Marilyn Silverman, an anthropologist at York, he began a project in a small town and rural hinterland in the Republic of Ireland. Here, as compared with East Africa, he found extensive archives and an established historiographic tradition. He also encountered important material differences. Instead of 'simple milieu'— with a small number of undifferentiated households per village and activities actualised through 'the idiom of kinship'—Gulliver encountered differences of status (lifestyle) and class (access to the means of production). Yet, in both places, political-economic and collective action were diffuse, moulded out of situational events and the intersection of, on the one hand, individual and collective lived experiences and, on the other, material interests. Both places, too, had kinship and disputes. Gulliver dived into the archives (Dublin, Kilkenny city), spoke at length with elderly residents

using archival materials to stimulate memories and explore links between the past and present, and interviewed farmers, shopkeepers, labourers, and gentry. The intensity of this research fitted well with Gulliver's relaxed and thorough fieldwork style. In 1982, Gulliver was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (FRSC) and, in 1984, he was named a distinguished research professor at York University.

Education

B.Sc. University of London, 1947

Ph.D. London School of Economics, 1952

Fieldwork

Kenya, 1948– 50 (Turkana nomads)

Uganda, 1950– 1 (Jie pastoralists)

Tanzania, 1952– 4 (Ndendeuli and Ngoni), 1954-5 (Nyakusa), 1955-6 (plantation workers)

Arusha, 1956– 8

Shona, Rhodesia, 1961

County Kilkenny, Eire, 1980– 1, 1998– 9, summers 1983– 4, 1987, 1989, 1992, 2000

Key Publications

(1955) *The Family Herds: A Study of Two Pastoral Tribes in East Africa*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

(1971) *Neighbours and Networks: The Idiom of Kinship among the Ndendeuli*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

(1979) *Disputes and Negotiations: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, New York: Academic Press.

With Silverman, Marilyn (1995) *Merchants and Shopkeepers: A Historical Anthropology of an Irish Market Town*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.