



## EASA Newsletter No 66 May 2016



European Association of Social Anthropologists  
Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux



## EASA Newsletter 67 May 2016

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Cover illustration: Huron 'Beltane' Fire Dance - Loreena McKennitt



# 1. Letter from the President

Dear EASA members,

In the last Newsletter, we reported from the Annual General Meeting entitled 'Making Anthropology Matter' in Prague. Several publications based on the proceedings at this meeting are forthcoming, and the policy paper 'Why anthropology matters', authored by the EASA Executive, is [now available online at the EASA website](#). For the time being, it exists in English, French, Spanish, German, Norwegian, Czech, Hungarian and Polish versions. We are hoping to make it available in more European languages soon, and meanwhile, we would like to encourage you to spread the policy paper in your networks.

Making anthropology more visible and showing its intellectual and practical relevance is a priority of the present Executive, and for this reason, we welcomed the idea of a World Anthropology Day initiated by the AAA. In the US, it was celebrated on 18 February, aiming to showcase 'what anthropology can achieve' through various public events at schools, museums, campuses and elsewhere. EASA and European anthropology did not take part. The issue has been discussed in the WCAA (World Council of Anthropological Associations), and the date in February is not suitable for every country. We are currently looking into the possibilities of creating a European anthropology day (or week), an alternative being to leave the initiative to the national associations.

A different form of outreach concerns collaboration with kindred organisations, and we have now formally established sisterhood with SIEF, the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore. Our two associations are complementary in their thematic focus and on a practical level as well - we organise our main conferences in alternating years, and we already have considerable overlap in our memberships. There will be possible benefits for members of both organisations.

A matter of great concern to the academic community has been the recent developments in Turkey. In effect, the Turkish authorities have made the practicing of academic freedom a criminal offence through their harsh verbal attacks and threats against supporters of 'Academics for peace', and who were signatories of the petition 'We will not be a party to this crime'. Some of the signatories have lost their jobs, and many were detained by the police following the call for an end to state violence in south-eastern Turkey. The EASA Executive has expressed its concern in a [letter to the Turkish government](#).

One of the most important initiatives in which EASA is currently involved, is LIBRARIA. Our secretary, Alberto Corsín Jiménez, was instrumental in setting up this network, which was launched in February 2015. LIBRARIA is a collective of journals, learned societies and research libraries in Europe and North America, aiming to facilitate and develop scenarios for open access publishing in the social sciences and humanities. Having grown quickly since its inception, LIBRARIA is now moving to the next step, formalising its organisational structure and exploring funding opportunities. It is a source of great pride to me that EASA is at the forefront of the open access transition in academic publishing, which is at the same time intellectually necessary, ethically commendable, technologically possible and very challenging to accomplish in practice.

As I wrote in the last Newsletter, anthropology in Europe is faced with important challenges in the coming years. Paradoxically, while our discipline has been losing ground at universities in many countries, anthropological perspectives and analyses are more important than ever. This is nowhere more evident than in contemporary Europe, where controversies and conflicts with a strong identity component are mounting at different levels and in many areas, from the 'Brexit' referendum to the rise of xenophobic movements, from the ongoing refugee crisis to growing uncertainty around the future of European cooperation.



These and other European issues will doubtless be discussed in and outside of the seminar rooms at Bicocca (Milan) in July. However, although EASA is a European association, it is not a Europeanist one, and the plenaries and panels at EASA16 display an impressive breadth in thematic and geographic scope. Hopefully, there is something of interest there for everyone.

Having said this, I have to confess that the selection process in the Scientific Committee was a very difficult one. We received 330 panel proposals, but were only able to accept 140. As a result, a great number of excellent panels had to be rejected. The mismatch between interest and scaling has prompted a discussion about the size of future conferences. It may be practically possible to accept a far greater number of panels, but this would affect the atmosphere and structure of the conference, and would, in the view of some, be detrimental to the EASA spirit of intimacy and familiarity. As every social anthropologist knows, a social system cannot grow indefinitely without changing its character. So there is a real predicament here and an issue for the Executive Committee to discuss in view of the of the next conference, whose organisers we will interview in Milan. At the same time, let us not forget that the huge interest in the conference is both exhilarating and encouraging. So in spite of intimations of dark clouds over European anthropology (and even darker clouds over Europe), what we do matters, and we can make a real difference for the better, simply by doing anthropology and making it known.

Warm regards,  
Thomas Hylland Eriksen  
President

## 2. Letter from the Book Series Editor

The EASA book series is above all about showcasing the exciting work of the Association's members, so please don't hesitate to contact us with your proposal ideas. Whether you are just beginning to think about publishing your work, or have already started to compile a book proposal, the series would be happy to hear from you. There is information about the series and how to prepare a book proposal [here](#). For more information, and to help you polish up your proposal materials please email me.

The series is published by Berghahn Books and consists of monographs and edited volumes. Books can be concerned with any part of the world and deal with any worthwhile issue of anthropological concern.

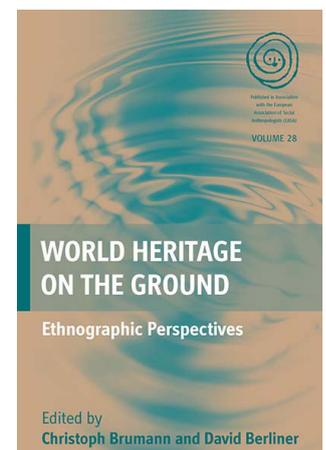
A list of acknowledgements of the many people whose work has helped produced the series so far will be published in the next newsletter, the series is fundamentally indebted to them. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have submitted and worked on proposals and manuscripts during my time as series editor, and of course the excellent staff at Berghahn Books.

Eeva Berglund  
Current series editor, [eeva.berglund\(at\)helsinki.fi](mailto:eeva.berglund(at)helsinki.fi)

## Volume 28 in the EASA Series is now out

[World Heritage on the Ground](#), edited by Christoph Brumann and David Berliner

EASA members can benefit from a time-limited promotional discount of 50% for the next month by entering the promo code BRU919 in the field provided in the Berghahn website.





### 3. Call for proposals for Biennial Conference 2018

The EASA Executive Committee welcomes and encourages institutions wishing to host the next EASA Conference (2018) to submit their interest as early as possible and before 1 June 2016. A shortlist will be announced on 15 June and hearings will be held during the EASA Conference in Milan.

For organisational matters and questions about budgets, rates, etc, please consult the EASA website and/or contact `easa-admin: easa(AT)nomadit.co.uk`.

Application procedure:

- (a) The host institution has to be a Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, connected to a University;
- (b) The person submitting the application must be a member of EASA;
- (c) The application consists of:
  - Letter of approval of the President | Rector of the University acknowledging institutional support;
  - Letter of approval of the Head of Department acknowledging support of the unit;
  - Short description of the premises: size of the largest hall (for Opening Ceremony, Keynote, Plenary Sessions, Round Tables, Members' Forum and Closing Ceremony), number of lecture and seminar rooms for workshops and various meetings; accommodation facilities;
  - Charges the institution will levy on the use of the venue;
  - Best time(s) for the conference given the local situation (between early July and mid-September);
- (d) Applications can be submitted any time – please provide information for which year you are applying: the earlier the better, preferably three years ahead of the next Biennial Conference.
- (e) Applications should be sent to the Secretary of the Association, `alberto.corsin-jimenez(at)cchs.csic.es`
- (f) The Executive Committee, however, is free to approach a candidate of its choice.
- (g) The Executive Committee decides after hearings with possible candidates.
- (i) Recent years have seen a growth in the demand for this conference, such that delegate numbers could rise towards 1800 or 2000. Bids should indicate their capacity to accommodate up to this number of delegates.

### 4. Call for new Book Series Editor

EASA seeks a new Book Series Editor to take over from Eeva Berglund, whose term of office has now come to an end.

The expectation is that the EASA Book Series will be in the vanguard of ethnographic or theoretical developments in specific areas of anthropological inquiry. It is expected that the Editor will identify and develop new and innovative directions together with a small editorial board and the publisher.

The new Book Series Editor will be granted a stipend of EUR 2000 a year to support their editorial work, and an allowance to attend up to two European conferences a year. It is expected that this financial support will allow the Editor to enrich the Series' catalogue.



The editor role involves:

- Communication with Berghahn Books
- Identifying, in consultation with the editorial board and the publisher, the direction and upcoming theme of the book series
- Communication with the membership re the book series: including providing information for the EASA-website, and presenting the Book series at EASA Biennial Conferences (e.g. with book launches)
- Contacting possible authors and editors, and networking with EASA members to solicit strong and relevant manuscripts
- Contacting EASA-Network coordinators for possible publications
- Advising authors and editors on manuscripts (e.g. on proposals, submission, revision, language issues, and on-going production until final book)
- Finding the right reviewers for manuscripts and getting the reviews in an acceptable time frame
- Communication with the Treasurer regarding financial matters
- Coordinating the EASA book prize competition (providing evaluations, and advising the Executive)
- Providing reports to the EASA-Executive Committee (c. 2 per year), including a yearly report for the AGM or the Members' Forum, and for publication in the EASA-Newsletter

The position of Book Series Editor is for two years in the first instance (2016-2018), and can be renewed up to four years.

Applications consisting of a short covering letter and a CV, should be sent by June 1 to the Secretary, Alberto Corsín Jiménez, on [alberto.corsin-jimenez\(at\)cchs.csic.es](mailto:alberto.corsin-jimenez(at)cchs.csic.es)

A shortlist will be announced by June 15 and it is expected that candidates will be interviewed during the EASA Conference in Milan.

## 5. News from the Networks

### [Medical Anthropology Network](#)

The network held a conference last year: *Anthropology and Global Health: interrogating theory, policy and practice*, University of Sussex, UK, 9-11th September 2015. It was jointly organised by the EASA Medical Anthropology Network and the RAI Medical Anthropology Committee at University of Sussex. The conference attracted 418 delegates, 45 panels and 288 papers.

The Medical Anthropology Network's mailing list has more than 400 subscribers, advertising conferences, job vacancies, calls for papers, symposia etc. The next network meeting will be held in Milan during EASA2016.



## Medical Anthropology Young Scholars (MAYS)

### **Intergenerations, temporalities and medical anthropology**

On the 23th and 24th of June 2016, the 7th edition of the Medical Anthropology Young Scholars (MAYS) will take place in Lisbon. This year's conference will explore the temporal and intergenerational dynamics of health, illness, and medicine. Illness, health diagnostics, aging, and politics of prevention require us to reinterpret our past and to negotiate with medical professionals and healthcare systems how to intervene in the present as well as to plan or "design" a hypothetical future. Health conditions and healing processes force us to reflect on our life course in profoundly new ways.

Understanding temporalities as an inherent and intimate part of all lived experience, calls into question how health plays a role in the ways we practice and understand the temporal flow of past, present and future, and how time is embedded in relationalities, decision-making and diagnosis. The MAYS 2016 conference invites anthropologists to focus on the different ways we can understand and undergo temporalities of health and illness. We believe the discipline of medical anthropology has much to offer to these debates.

The call for papers has already been closed, but we do still have places for people to attend as active listeners. Please email [Mays.easa@gmail.com](mailto:Mays.easa@gmail.com) to register.

## Applied Anthropology Network

### **Why the World Needs Anthropologists 2016 – Humanise IT!, 4th—5th November 2016, Tartu, Estonia.**

Information and communication technologies are integral to our world. Digital engineers, designers, and computer programmers are the inventors and innovators of our time who greatly affect people's everyday lives — and they need the assistance of anthropology in making human-friendly solutions. The symposium explores how digital designers and anthropologists benefit from each other's knowledge and approaches. What is the role of culture in technology? How can technology-based thinking be humanised? And how can we get the most out of new technologies for those that use them?

## Network of Ethnographic Theory (NET)

Workshop in Stromboli (Italy), on Vitalism, Sacrifice, and Utopia. A Workshop on the Human Impetus, organised by Ruy Blanes, Bjorn Bertelsen and Giovanni da Col. The event will take place in 18-19 June, and is sponsored by EASA Networks. With the participation of the convenors, Magnus Course, Adam Chau, Neena Mahadev, Michael Puett, Webb Keane, Roger Sansi, Dominic Boyer, Alpa Shah, Toby Kelly.

NET sponsored panel at the upcoming EASA conference, on [Tactics as ethnographic and conceptual objects](#), organized by NET members Theodoros Kyriakides (Manchester) and Patrick Laviolette (Tallinn).

## DICAN – Disaster and Crisis Anthropology Network

### **DICAN sponsors disaster anthropology session at the IUAES Inter-Congress held in Dubrovnik, 4-9 May 2016**

The Disaster and Crisis Anthropology Network together with the Risk and Disaster Topical Interest Group of the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) sponsor the panel "*The increasing importance of anthropology in understanding risk and disaster review of the current state of the field*" convened by Susanna Hoffman at the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences's (IUAES) Inter-Congress held in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Six papers are accepted for the session. Read more about the session [here](#).



DICAN is organising two panels at the forthcoming EASA meeting in Milan. Seumas Bates, Kristoffer Albris & Susann Baez Ullberg convene the panel [Resilience, disaster and anthropological knowledge](#) and Mara Benadusi & Aj Faas convene the panel [Disaster capitalism and creative destruction](#).

## [The Anthropology of Children and Youth Network](#)

The Anthropology of Children and Youth Seminar is a monthly meeting at Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at VU University Amsterdam. Recent speakers were:

*The Value of Transcultural Family/System Therapy in Child and Youth Care*, with Dirck van Bekkum & Judith Limahelu, (January)

*Cartographies of Child Poverty in Policies and Programmes in Kenya: Locating Children's Voice at the Interstices of Competing Representations*, with Elizabeth Ngutuku (Eliza) (International Institute of Social Studies), (February)

*Hearing and Seeing: Xikrin (Brazil) ways of knowing and the schooling system*, with Clarice Cohn (Universidade Federal de São Carlos, Brazil and University of Nanterre, Paris) (March)

*Observing early childhood parenting across the globe*, with Judi Mesman (Centre for Child and Family Studies, Leiden University) (April)

If you are interested in presenting at one of our seminars yourself, please contact the Network chair: Dr Sandra J.T.M. Evers, s.j.t.m.evers(at)vu.nl, Chair of the Anthropology of Children and Youth Network (EASA). [Website](#).

## [Anthropology of international governance](#)

### **Collaborative Dilemmas**

Workshop of the ANR Research Project UNESCO Frictions and the EASA Network for the Anthropology of International Governance, 12-13 April 2016, Paris

Policymaking and implementation across state institutions, international organisations and transnational networks of civil society organisations are expanding fields of anthropological research. The complex positionalities that anthropologists adopt in these ethnographic contexts and their implications in epistemological, methodological and ethical terms are emerging as central issues in these fields. This workshop explores different and often controversial forms of anthropological engagement with global policy worlds and the dilemmas that collaboration entails against the background of a dominant neoliberal research agenda. Whether emerging from intention, serendipity or necessity, researchers' commitment to the explored policy fields and their complicity with research subjects are recurrent patterns in these ethnographic situations. As interns, consultants, advocates, representatives of governmental or non-governmental organisations, experts or temporary employees, researchers become actors in the processes that they are observing. This insider status affords key opportunities for exploring the creative friction that different policy regimes bring to global governance. Inside-track and first-hand experience also prevents simplistic essentialisation of "institutional cultures". Yet taking on a position outside the comfort zone of the "hands-off" approach exhumes anthropology's skeletons in the closet and generates pressing methodological anxieties, evidence of the difficult relation between action and knowledge production that characterises social sciences' worldly interventions.

Belonging to the "epistemic community" that contributes to shaping the explored policy programmes provides scholars with the opportunity to impact social and political debate, yet it also radically challenges the founding anthropological assumption of a distinction between self and other and is therefore regarded as an obstacle to genuine critique.



Furthermore, while collaborative anthropology in the exploration of the worlds of the marginal, dispossessed or dominated is appreciated as a form of social responsibility, working with powerful organisations is suspected for its multiple responsibilities to institutional or political interlocutors and to the groups that are affected by their intervention. Within this context ethnographic research raises numerous methodological, political and ethical dilemmas, especially when it is directly or indirectly supported by standard-setting organisations and policymaking institutions.

As social sciences come to grips with neoliberal research models, academics increasingly live with this uneasiness. Trained to formulate questions aimed at unpacking policy apparatuses, they are expected to provide answers to policy issues and contribute to governance objectives following managerial, rather than speculative, logics. In these contexts, scholars face the challenge of disseminating their research while being aware of their interlocutors' negative perception of the analytical language they use to describe policy interventions. There are clearly no easy solutions to these conundrums. This workshop sets out to interrogate collaborative dilemmas by exploring the epistemological, ethical and methodological consequences of engagement, as well as of disengagement, with governmental agendas, international organisations, and other superseding institutions.

Organizer and Contact: Chiara Bortolotto chiara.bortolotto(at)ehess.fr.

Please find the full programme on the webpages of the EASA Network for the Anthropology of international governance.

## 6. Fredrik Barth (1928–2016)

On 24 January, Fredrik Barth passed away at the age of 87. Barth was an honorary member of EASA, and gave a plenary presentation to the very first EASA conference in Coimbra in 1990, entitled 'Towards greater naturalism in conceptualizing societies'. The lecture was subsequently published in Adam Kuper, ed.: *Conceptualizing Society* (Routledge 1992).

Barth had an exceptionally long and rich career in anthropology, spanning six decades and more than a dozen field sites. His most influential contributions may have been his analysis of political strategy in Swat, his study of pastoral economy and ecology in Iran, and not least, his pathbreaking perspectives on ethnicity in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). However, Barth's early theoretical work, sometimes spoken of as 'transactionalism' (he preferred 'generative process analysis'), led to lively debates in the 1960s and 1970s, and his later work on knowledge and cosmologies has an enduring value in anthropology.

As founder of the Department of Social Anthropology in Bergen (1961–72) and Professor at the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo (1972–85), Barth was pivotal in developing Norwegian social anthropology. However, his MA was from the University of Chicago, and he held chairs at Emory and Boston Universities after his retirement from the Museum. Barth was one of the most influential European anthropologists of the latter half of the 20th century, while also contributing to trans-Atlantic dialogue throughout his long life in anthropology.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen  
President