



Editorial: Ethnological Knowledge

Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto

The discipline of European Ethnology has many names and appearances in different universities in Finland and across Europe. In Finnish universities, ethnology is combined with other disciplines and taught as part of multidisciplinary degree programs under different titles. This development into larger and thematic degree programs has challenged ethnologists to rethink their field and identify the skills and knowledge that students need to acquire.

In the world of interdisciplinary and applied research, scholars – including ethnologists – need to be aware of their identity and core competences. For many years, government research funding programs have urged us to collaborate across disciplines and with stakeholders outside the academia. Collaboration with the third sector has become an integral part of research projects' activities and science communication a significant skill set, forming part of research plans.

In these times of multidisciplinary and cross-institutional working environments, it is important to reflect on what kind of knowledge ethnology produces. The articles in this issue introduce perspectives into contemporary societal issues. At the heart of ethnology is an interest in everyday lives and personal experiences. Our research practices allow us to have close contact with individuals and groups who experience and interpret the world differently, often contrary to the scenarios and presumptions of those who make plans and decisions, as well as to generalizations and macro developments. Unlike many other fields of humanities and social science, ethnologists can operate on a micro scale and pay attention to details and individual experiences, theorizing upon different cultural phenomena. The competence of ethnologists thus lies in acknowledging diversity and multiple views, and in bringing together and analyzing different voices in varying cultural contexts and lived realities of a changing world. This is how we can situate ethnological research among other disciplines and find a recipe for making an impact both in the academia and beyond.

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ETNOLOGIA FENNICA Vol. 46 (2019), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.23991/ef.v%vi%i.87850>

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The texts in this issue offer insights into different processes of change at personal, local, national, and international levels. Many authors make suggestions for more humane and inclusive policy-making or practices that would decrease discrimination and improve transparency. Other texts introduce new methodological and conceptual approaches that involve subjective experience and vernacular regimes of knowledge. One of the articles examines negotiations about the ways in which different professionals and those who are unemployed think about the value of their work and skills as well as their place in the rapidly changing world. We also learn about how labeling and categorizing works in the context of normative and stigmatizing sexual identities, as well as about cultural heritage policy and processes of heritagization.

The first article of the issue by Kirsi Sonck-Rautio addresses different ways of knowing in the context of small-scale fisheries and their sustainability, which are in crisis because of growing competition over resources. She analyzes developments in the current state of fisheries and their management as well as policy-making processes, which tend to ignore the perspective of the fishers whose traditional livelihood is threatened and labeled unsustainable. Sonck-Rautio argues that the conflict that occurs is not merely an environmental one, but also a cultural and social conflict involving a clash between scientific knowledge and local ecological knowledge.

In the second article, Inkeri Hakamies scrutinizes the computerization of museums' day-to-day work as experienced by museum professionals through the lens of practice theory. This shift that happened gradually when various organizations, offices, and individuals adopted computers through different stages brought about many changes such as the new epistemological structure of digital cataloguing systems. According to Hakamies, the major change experienced by the interviewed professionals was that computerization required a new set of skills and competences. This created tensions between what was perceived as the "real museum work" done by professionals and the work carried out by computers. This connects with the common narrative related to digitalization, i.e. the fear of computers replacing humans, which has not become reality in museums where people continue to study and handle the objects.

In the third article, Tytti Steel and Jenni Rinne explore individual experiences of becoming unemployed at a later age. They analyze interview materials produced in a series of workshops offering support for 50+ jobseekers from the point of view of affects and affective patterns connected to the circulating discourses and narratives of a particular culture and society. In the context of unemployment, the negative affective patterns arise from the social ideal of a successful person being someone with a job. The pattern of failure is repeated when a person faces rejections from multiple employers. The research materi-

al contained several examples of age discrimination practices that extend to the depersonalized and digitalized employment services. The writers of the article conclude that aging jobseekers would benefit from affective support.

The discovery of peer groups and an insider's understanding of marginal sexual identity are the leading thread of Johanna Pohtinen's article on the construction of kinky identity in a society where kink is non-normative and stigmatized. Her research material consists of autobiographical writings and interviews in which kinky individuals reflect on their journey from staying in the closet and keeping secrecy to accepting their kinkiness. Pohtinen reads her material through the lens of affect theory, which enables her to discover narrative structures and affective experiences of joy and shame related to kinky identity, which she herself has experienced as a similar individual. In the text, Pohtinen brings her own experiences and embodied knowledge into the text through the use of ethnographic fiction, a methodological tool that has received attention in recent ethnological research.

In the last article, Viktorija Čeginskas focuses on a recent cultural policy action of the European Union, the European Heritage Label (EHL), scrutinizing the impact, visibility, and recognition of the label. Čeginskas has worked in the research group EUROHERIT, which conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork at EHL sites, interviewing heritage practitioners, EU policy officers, and members of the selection panel and carrying out an online visitor survey. In her article, Čeginskas analyzes the various shortcomings in creating public visibility, such as the missed opportunity of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 for creating useful synergies. According to her, the network of sites has great potential, but it lacks transparency and joint activities. Čeginskas suggests that the EHL would benefit from a joint strategy for improving the visibility of the label and developing communication between regional, national, and international authorities.

This issue includes a conference report of this year's highlight, the 14th SIEF congress in Santiago de Compostela and reports of other interesting events, and four book reviews. Next, I would like to challenge all ethnologists who work in different positions and institutions to join the discussions about the role and place of ethnological knowledge in a changing world. This will also be the topic of the XI Ethnology Days 2020, organized in March 26–27 in Jyväskylä, Finland, in collaboration with Ethnos and the new degree program of ethnology, anthropology, and cultural policy studies Cultures, Communities, and Change (KUMU). There we will have a chance to discuss together issues related to teaching, applying, using, and creating ethnological knowledge, and the ways in which we can strengthen our disciplinary identity.

In 2016–2018, Arja Turunen served as the Editor-in-Chief of *Ethnologia Fennica*, leading our journal to the digital age. We would like to thank her for all the work she did for the journal. Since the beginning of 2019, *Ethnologia Fennica* is steered by two Editors-in-Chief. This issue is edited by Co-Editor-in-Chief Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto. In 2020, *Ethnologia Fennica* will turn a new page by introducing two annual issues, which will be edited by Tytti Steel together with the guest editors of the two thematic issues. These issues will introduce a new text genre: commentaries, which are discussions on current themes in ethnological research. We would like to welcome all ethnologists, both scholars and professionals, to contribute to our future issues!

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