

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## UPDATE FROM FINNISH UNIVERSITIES

Forgive me a slight digression before getting into the subject matter of this issue. I want to briefly address the transfer of research data rights that is currently underway at Finnish universities and, as I have been led to believe, numerous overseas institutions as well. I have written about this elsewhere together with Heidi Härkönen (Härkönen and Eräsaari 2021), so I will keep this short. But this is a development that, I feel, concerns anthropology in a particular way.

As I write this, my home institution, the University of Helsinki, is planning to insert an addendum to all new contracts for research project employees. This would give the university parallel rights to all research materials collected during the project. Researchers will maintain all rights to their own research data in the future, too, but the university claims the right to copy, archive, reuse, and redistribute the materials so long as it does not break previous contracts in so doing.

The proposition is promoted in the name of Open Science. The idea being that no one in their right mind would want to oppose Openness, the university argues it has a mission to teach researchers how to get over their sentimental attachments to materials which ought to benefit everyone. Now, since it may be difficult to speak up after being pre-emptively designated as selfish, please let me put my hand up. I am deeply committed to open-access publishing, as is the journal I edit (see Graan et al. 2018) as well as the Finnish Anthropological Society that publishes the journal. Indeed, anthropology as an academic discipline appears quite favourably disposed towards open access. So I am not particularly scared of the stigma of conservative data hoarder if I say that anthropology also has particularly a lot to lose in this issue; that in my view, it is a bad idea.

As a fieldworker, I have always been free to tell the people I work with that the interviews or notes I make are for my eyes and ears only (embargoed archives and requested sharing aside). It has made it possible for me to participate in meetings where sensitive topics are discussed, and for interlocutors to express ideas they would not express 'on record'. Indeed, my PhD fieldwork in Fiji under the highly charged atmosphere following a series of military coups might not have been possible if I had been obliged to say that my fieldnotes are for me only ...unless my university decides to share them with someone.

I claim no expert knowledge of this issue beyond the Finnish context, but it hardly takes an expert to point out that the move coincides with an accelerated commodification of all sorts of data. Finland tends to be

a latecomer in managerial fashions, so I assume parallel plans have been initiated elsewhere, too. Perhaps there is a discourse on these issues under some heading I have not been aware of? If so, I would be happy to read about others' experiences and of different ways in which these plans are being instituted. If no such discussions exist, and barring the unlikely idea that this would actually be an original Finnish invention: *should we be talking about this?*

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Now onto the issue at hand. It gives me great pleasure to introduce another issue of *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*. This issue opens with 'History, Place and Belonging on a Swedish-speaking Island in Finland' by Anna Terje (University of the Highlands and Islands). In it, Terje explores a small Swedish-speaking community in Finland, a group she had assumed would be defined by linguistic identity but which she found to place a strong emphasis on 'belonging' instead. Terje employs a definition of belonging that allows her to focus on 'a sense of ease with oneself and one's surroundings', consequently calling attention to notions of conformity and acceptance played out in local associations and cultural activities. This makes it possible for the article to call attention, among other things, to the different senses of 'community'—as a 'value' and as a descriptive category.

The second article in this issue is 'The Word as an Icon: The Embodied Spirituality of Church Slavonic' by Stephen Pax Leonard's (Moscow State Linguistic University). The article takes Webb Keane's work on semiotic ideologies in a phenomenological direction. In it, Leonard highlights the 'experiential' aspects of Church Slavonic in order to argue that there are other ways to approach 'sacred' languages like Church Slavonic besides an emphasis on their obscurity. He builds upon the analogy between religious artwork and liturgical language that many of his interlocutors make. The sensorial qualities of Church Slavonic make it more than a sign or representation: just as an icon '*reveals* something rather than represents something' so, Leonard argues, liturgical words 'do not just represent objects but *are* objects'.

In the Research Reports section we have the Lectio Præcursoria—a short public introduction to a PhD thesis—by Jenni Mölkänen (University of Helsinki). Mölkänen defended her thesis, titled '*This is a good place: Tsimihety Place Making, Knowledge Hierarchies and Intensifying Conservation Efforts in Rural Northeastern Madagascar*', in a public examination on April 8<sup>th</sup> 2021. The thesis discusses the politics of natural resource use

as a complex issue that involves not just indigenous place-making and conservation endeavours, but also various different systems of knowledge applied to Madagascar since Linnaeus.

This issue ends with three book reviews: Aili Mustamo reviews the edited volume *Anthropology Inside Out: Fieldworkers Taking Notes* (eds Andersen et al.), Anna Matyska (KU Leuven and Tampere University) reviews *Twilight Zone Anthropology: Voices from Poland* (ed. Michał Buchowski), and Pekka Tuominen (University of Helsinki) reviews Samuli Schielke's *Migrant Dreams: Egyptian Workers in the Gulf State*.

Finally, I would like to announce some changes in the Editorial Team of *Suomen Antropologi*: we welcome Laura Huttunen (University of Tampere), who recently joined our ranks, and say goodbye to Andy Graan. I thank Andy for all the work he has done for the journal. I would also like to express my thanks to the other editors, the authors, and to the peer reviewers, whose contributions have made it possible for us to publish another issue of *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*.

Thank you.

## REFERENCES

**Graan, Andrew, Elina I. Hartikainen, Timo Kallinen, Ville Laakkonen, Tuomas Tammisto, Pekka Tuominen and Matti Eräsaari** 2018. Editorial: On Open Access Publishing. *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 43 (1): 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.30676/jfas.v43i1.74083>.

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