

## EDITORS' NOTE

We are, once again, delighted to bring you the new issue of *Suomen antropologi: The Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*. This is a special issue guest-edited by Henni Alava (Tampere University), Morgan Clarke (University of Oxford), and Alessandro Gusman (University of Turin), entitled 'Beyond self-fashioning and freedom: bending, breaking, and adhering to rules in religious contexts'. The guest editors note that while religious rules are an integral part of the everyday life of millions of people, they have received surprisingly little attention in the recent anthropological studies of religion. Anthropologists of religion have tended to look beyond rules and examined, for example, 'ordinary ethics' that are not grounded in rules as such, as Michael Lambek has done. When scholars have paid more attention to rules, they have often been seen as means of oppression, which individuals then resist by breaking the rules, or, following Saba Mahmood, as Foucauldian techniques of the self and means of virtuous self-cultivation.

In their introduction to the special issue, Alava, Clarke, and Gusman call for a non-reductionist study of religious rules (and by extension, also of rules in general). Approaching the question as ethnographers, the guest-editors focus on what the 'aims, stakes, and processes of rule-following are' in a given context. Alava, Clarke, and Gusman ask what religious rules actually do, and, moreover, what do people do with the rules. To delve deeper into these questions, the guest-editors of this special issue focus on three aspects of rules. First, the affordances of rules, namely, what follows from adopting particular rules and what kind of behavior, including transgression, do the rules allow or afford. Second, the relational quality of rules, as rules concerns individuals, communities, orders, and —crucially— the relations between them. This also raises the question of the scalability of rules and how people work on rules across different scales. Finally, the guest-editors call for comparison in the study of rules. As religious rules are a prevalent feature of life, on the one hand, and highly contextual, on the other, they 'afford' particularly well comparative studies that ask, for example, how the same rules function in different settings, for example in highly religious and secular societies.

The editors and authors of this special issue examine these questions and theoretical aspects of rules in four case studies based on careful ethnographic research in Europe and Africa. In his article Morgan Clarke provides a 'thick description' of the practices of rule following among British Muslims. While important to many, Clarke shows that rule-following is in fact a multi-faceted and complex practice that affords different things ranging from justifying one's actions to interpreting their underlying rationales. In all cases, the following, not following, or circumventing

the rules create dilemmas and affect. In the second article Mercédesz Czibalmos (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare), Ruth Illman (Åbo Akademi), and Dóra Pataricza (Åbo Akademi) examine how the Jewish minority negotiates its place on both personal and institutional levels in contemporary Finland. The authors focus especially on Jewish food and family rules, and how their interlocutors follow, bend, and break, as well as reflect upon, the rules in their everyday. In the third article Henni Alava and Alessandro Gusman examine rules concerning romantic relations and sex in Ugandan Pentecostalism. The authors describe how, on the one hand, rules work on people, and, on the other, how people work on the officially strict rules through interpretation and deliberation. Alava and Gusman introduce the concept of 'relational rulework' and examine the process of 'rulework' where it is most manifest, namely, in the instances when rules are transgressed or when the nature of rules is questioned. Finally, Timo Kallinen (University of Eastern Finland) examines how religious rules and rules related to chieftancy are interpreted by Ghanaian Christians and chiefs, especially when debating the compatibility of Christianity and chieftancy. In his article, Kallinen describes the mediation work that is needed to make ostensibly universalist and abstract rules transportable to a specific context.

The special issue on religious rules guest edited by Alava, Clarke, and Gusman is complemented by a separate, but thematically related, book forum on Joel Robbins' (2020) recent book *Theology and the Anthropology of Christian Life*. The forum, curated by our editor Anna-Riikka Kauppinen, consists of two essays by anthropologist Minna Opas (University of Turku) and theologian Mika Vähäkangas (Åbo Akademi) as well as a response by Joel Robbins (University of Cambridge). In her essay Opas welcomes Robbins' cross-fertilization of anthropology and theology, but asks what in fact is being brought into dialogue. Opas is especially interested in what encompasses 'theology' in Robbins' account, given the multiplicity of theologies. Vähäkangas, thinking with Robbins' book, asks what the two disciplines can learn from each other, given that theology is openly normative, while anthropology is very often based on methodological relativism. In his essay Robbins responds to Opas and Vähäkangas by noting, for example, that examining ethnographically what constitutes theology in a given context is of central importance.

## GOINGS-ON OF THE JOURNAL

This is the second issue we have overseen as editors-in-chief. In the last issue, we introduced our editorial team, the new editorial board, and our 'vision', namely, to maintain and develop the journal's open access spirit

started by the previous editors-in-chiefs. Here, we want to shortly explain how the journal is run and editorial processes work.

When we receive a new manuscript submission, we editors-in-chiefs read it through and introduce it to the editorial team. If the manuscript matches the interests and expertise of one of our team members, and that member can allocate the time, they volunteer to oversee the text. If no volunteer steps forward, the editors-in-chiefs take responsibility for the manuscript. After this, the responsible editor reads through the text carefully and evaluates if the text can be submitted to review. Here, we consider first if the text is in line with the journal policy of publishing research in anthropology and related disciplines. Our rule of thumb is that if the text deals with questions that are of interest to anthropologists and passes peer-review by anthropologists, it is in 'line' with our journal. Secondly, we assess if there are obvious corrections that could be made before the review process to make sure the review goes as smoothly as possible. When considering manuscripts, we seek to be open and refrain from acting as gatekeepers of anthropology, if possible. We try our best to inform the authors about our decision within two weeks of the submission.

After accepting the manuscript for review, the responsible editor starts looking for reviewers. Our policy is that the text manuscript needs to be reviewed by at least two independent reviewers in a double blind review. We ask our reviewers to submit their reviews within approximately four weeks. When we receive the reviews, the responsible editor writes an editorial commentary based on the reviews and drafts an editorial decision, which is then approved by the editorial team. Then the author is informed about the decision. In our estimate, about a third of submitted manuscripts are rejected. The rest are resubmitted for review or accepted with varying amounts of revisions. This process is constantly underway as we regularly receive submissions. We editors-in-chief keep track of the progress of texts and list them a wiki, which is the joint digital workspace of the editorial team. There we compile new issues and draft a publication schedule based on what texts are ready for publishing. When we have enough material for an issue, or a special issue is ready, our language editor and editorial secretaries work through the texts. When this is done and corrections have been made, our typesetter finalizes the texts for publishing.

Presently, in our publication timeline we have two normal issues and one special issue that has passed review. In addition to these, we have several manuscripts in various stages of the process. Publishing the journal is then first and foremost a team effort and very much based on the voluntary work by the editors and reviewers.

There are also changes in our editorial team. Our long-time language editor Marianna Keisalo (University of Helsinki) has received a teaching

position and is leaving the journal. We thank Marianna for all the work she has done over the past years. Our editorial secretary Ville Laakkonen (Tampere University) has taken up the position of an assistant editor at *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie sociale*. Ville is succeeded by doctoral researcher Anna Pivovarova (University of Helsinki). We welcome Anna and thank Ville, who has tirelessly worked for several years to keep the journal running.

## OPEN ACCESS AND OPEN SCIENCE DEVELOPMENTS

Our journal was invited by the Libraria collective to join their mutual aid network for open access journals titled *Cooperate for Open (C4O)* (Libraria 2019). The C4O is a group of about 30 small, scholar-led, and open access journals in anthropology and related fields. As we were told by the representatives of Libraria, what the member journals have in common is the desire to maintain and develop further publishing controlled by scholarly communities and the scholars themselves. The C4O group is designed as a network in which the different collectives support and offer advice to each other. As we are an independent journal of a scholarly society dedicated to full open access and non-profit publishing controlled by the scholars themselves, we fully agree with aim and mission of C4O and gladly joined the group. We think the mutual aid initiative is excellent and we thank the Libraria representatives for inviting us.

In our vision of real, or full, open access, we maintain that all published material must be available to readers without restrictions, such as embargoes. However, 'accessibility' must include also authors and hence we insist that authors are not charged APCs (article processing charges) or any other fees. Institutions in affluent countries and large funders are able to make the open access payments for their researchers, but APCs may prevent independent scholars and scholars based in institutions with limited funding from publishing in open access. Hence APCs are incompatible with our vision of what open access is. Finally, 'open access' for us means that we have to be 'open' and make our publication policies and processes as transparent as possible. As a journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society, we are responsible to its board and members of the society, which in practice means we keep them up-to-date about our doings and policies. As we receive a small annual public grant, paid by the Ministry of Education and Culture and administered by the Finnish Federation of Learned Societies (*Tieteellisten Seurain Valtuuskunta*; TSV), we annually report the finances of the journal to the society and TSV. Finally, in order to

be open to the readers, we use this editorial space to open up our practices and processes to our readers.

The questions of who controls publication platforms and data are also important in relation to social media, which we use in order to find new readers and authors, in other words, advertise our journal. Because of our commitment to open access and community ownership, we created a social media account on a server using the open source social media software Mastodon. Mastodon is a decentralized social media which is composed of thousands of servers, often voluntarily run, that are connected to one another via a social network protocol called ActivityPub. The servers come in all shapes and sizes: some are run by private individuals, some by communities or associations, and some even by large institutions, such as the EU, for example. Obviously, Mastodon does not solve all the problems of social media. For example, before creating an account, users should vet the server they plan to use, and assess its trustworthiness. A clear advantage of Mastodon is that it is both distributed and open source, which means it is very resilient against a takeover by a malicious actor: the system is not owned or controlled by a single entity, such as a for-profit company—which in the worst case can be acquired by an erratic oligarch. Moreover, users can set up their own servers to ensure maximal control over their data. Currently, the account of *Suomen antropologi* is hosted on a server run by and intended for scholars. As more and more people are moving away from for-profit social media to Mastodon, we think scholarly societies would do well in setting up their own servers for their members. Scholarly societies, such as the Finnish Anthropological Society, are large enough to have the means to host a server, but small enough for users to know who is running—and on what basis—the social media server on which they have an account.

You can follow *Suomen antropologi* on Mastodon simply by visiting this address (<https://fediscience.org/web/@suomenantropologi>) or by creating an account on one of the numerous Mastodon servers and by looking up our account with the username [@suomenantropologi@fediscience.org](mailto:@suomenantropologi@fediscience.org).

## REFERENCES

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