

EDITORIAL NOTE

It gives me great pleasure to present a new issue of *Suomen antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*. This issue contains four peer-reviewed articles, an essay, and four research reports.

The first peer-reviewed article in this issue is written by Darmanto Darmanto and Koen Meyers: ‘Producing Human Life or Protecting Wildlife? People, Park, and Space on Siberut Island, Indonesia’. In their article, Darmanto and Meyers consider the dialectical processes of the production of space through the establishment of the Siberut National Park on Siberut Island, Indonesia. Using deeply researched ethnographic material, the authors illustrate how diverse and prosaic forms of Indigenous politics play out in a protected wildlife area, a negotiated space in its own right.

Dayabati Roy’s article, ‘Promises of Development, Land Acquisition, and Dispossession: A Car Factory Project and Peasants in West Bengal, India’, continues this production of space theme by focusing on a car factory project launched in 2006 by the government of the West Bengal Indian state. Roy’s ethnography takes us to Singur, a village in West Bengal, outlining the intense struggles marginalised and low-caste local inhabitants faced in response to intense land acquisition projects and India’s project forms, which are laden with spatiotemporal inequalities. These inequalities, as Roy’s article outlines, reveal the disjunctions and disorderliness of planned project actions.

Juhanna Sankelo and Paulino Jijiyo’s cowritten article, ‘Rural Murle Age-Set Men Tackling Elites in South Sudan’, considers the role age-sets play amongst the Murle ethnic group in South Sudan. In a war-torn region faced with continuous violent conflicts, marginalisation, and displacement, the traditional pathways of young Murle men from boyhood to adulthood through to warriorhood are continuously transformed. Yet, as Sankelo and Jijiyo show, age-set networks amongst Murle men continue to play a fundamental role amongst the youth who join armed groups affiliated with South Sudan’s political opposition. Age-sets, as portrayed here, help local young men navigate conflicts and ethical codes.

The final peer-reviewed article in this issue, written by Edwin Jiang, is ‘Justifying Meritocracy: Criteria of Fairness in China’s National College Entrance Examinations (*gaokao*)’. Jiang offers a compelling and novel approach to make sense of people’s conflicting claims about the reality of meritocracy in urban China today. Drawing on ethnographic material conducted in a Chinese high school, Jiang disentangles the demanding high stakes of the country’s national university entrance exam, the *gaokao*. Weaving together rich ethnography with the theory on ethics reveals how

people's beliefs in structural systems like meritocracy can be understood and made sense of in cognitive attempts people put forth as they strive to live an ethical life.

In the previous issue of *Suomen antropologi* released in the spring of this year, I introduced a new essay series, 'The Anthropologist's Toolkit: Reflections on Ethnographic Methodology'. With a deep sense of pride, we now publish the second essay in this series. In Laur Kiik's short, but thought-provoking essay, 'Encounter: A Basic Concept of Anthropology', Kiik contemplates the meaning of 'encounter', a widely used term by anthropologists that is not always defined or given the theoretical attention it deserves. Kiik considers the open-endedness of 'encounter' as a concept that can help us expand our attention and care in our fieldwork and our analyses.

Alongside the four peer-reviewed articles and methodological essay, this issue also contains four research reports in the form of written *lectio praeursoria*. For readers unfamiliar with public doctoral defences in Finnish academia, *lectio praeursoria* are short 20-minute lectures intended for the general public given by doctoral candidates at the beginning of their defence. *Suomen antropologi* publishes these public lectures from the fields of anthropology and related disciplines to celebrate the work of doctoral researchers who have recently successfully defended their dissertations.

The first two *lectio praeursoria* feature anthropologist graduates from the University of Helsinki's Faculty of Social Sciences. The first *lectio* is by Samuli Lähteenaho, who defended his PhD dissertation, 'A Beach Multiple: An Ethnography of Environmentalism on the Lebanese Coastline', in May 2024. In reading his *lectio praeursoria*, we learn about the sociopolitical processes involved in Beirut's public beach, Ramlet al-Bayda, and how these processes reflect struggles over the significance, value, and use of the Lebanese coastline since the late 2010s.

Following Lähteenaho's piece, we move on to Sanna Vellava's *lectio praeursoria*. Vellava defended her anthropology PhD dissertation, 'On the Trail with a Disease Detection Dog: Collaborations at the Edges of Medical Research', in February 2024. In her *lectio*, Vellava summarises her project, which explores the emerging medical research field of disease detection dogs, considering how dogs are made into medical devices and what kinds of knowledge production processes and practices are assembled around, through, and with dogs.

The third *lectio praeursoria*, by Kristina Leppälä, summarises a thesis from the University of Eastern Finland in the Faculty of Social Science and Business, defended in June 2022. Leppälä's thesis, 'Practices in Medical

Device Innovation: Navigation and Enactment as Social Practice Trades’, focuses on the practices of highly educated, cross-functional, innovation workers in a medical device company as they mediate and interact in the office setting.

The final *lectio* in this issue is by Ioana Țișteea, who defended her thesis, ‘Creolising Nordic Migration Research: Entangled Knowledges, Migrations, and Reflexivities’, in April 2024 at Tampere University’s Faculty of Education and Culture. In this *lectio*, Țișteea summarises her research on the new ways in which minor-to-minor knowledges from BIPOC, Romani, and EE perspectives in a Nordic context inter-relate, whilst simultaneously addressing the tensions, social inequalities, and colonial legacies shaping such dialogues.

Once again, I want to thank all of the remarkable individuals who have made this issue possible: the writers, the reviewers, and the editorial team. This journal is produced by the investment of time and generosity of an amazing collective of people: many thanks to each of you!

Before closing this note, I want to also mention a few changes to our editorial team. First, Anna Pivovarova, serving as one of our editorial secretaries for many years, has stepped down from her role. We extend our immense gratitude to Anna for her commitment to the journal over the years. Anna has been replaced by Pablo Perez: Welcome to the team, Pablo! In addition, Saara Toukolehto, our second editorial secretary, is on maternity leave. Thus, for this issue, I have paired up with Pablo to ensure the final copyediting stages of this issue run as smoothly as possible.

And finally, I want to remind our readers, as always, this issue of *Suomen antropologi* is published as a fully open access journal with no APCs or embargoes.

Suvi Rautio
Editor-in-Chief