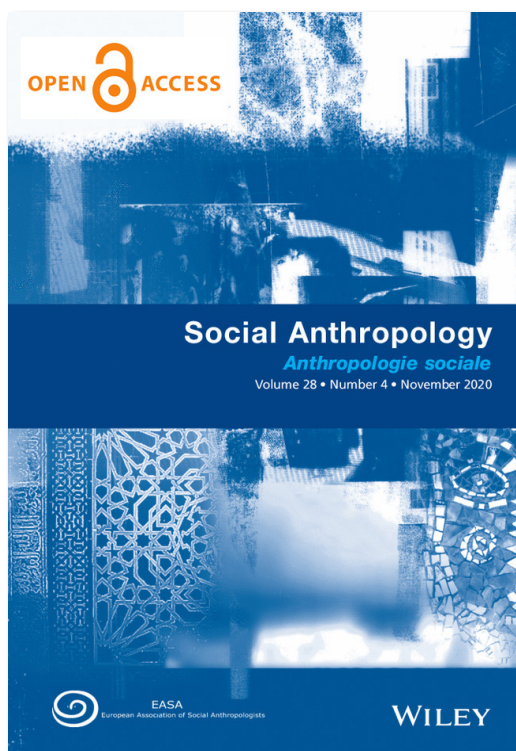


## EASA Newsletter No 78 March 2021

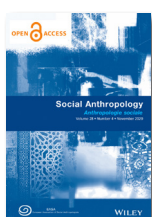


European Association of Social Anthropologists  
Association Européenne des Anthropologues



# EASA Newsletter No 78 March 2021

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*Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* goes Open Access



# 1. Letter from the President

## On the importance of learned societies

EASA was founded on January 14th 1989 with a short description of its purposes: “to promote education and research in social anthropology by improving understanding of world societies and encouraging professional communication and cooperation between anthropologists, especially in Europe” (EASA Constitution, p.2). The three core methods the association used to achieve those purposes have been its biennial conference, the publication of the association’s journal, *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, and the publication of anthropological monographs and edited collections through EASA’s book series with Berghahn. These remain the core activities of the association, the most important work that it does to fulfil its constitutional obligations.



I wanted to begin my final letter as president of the association with a reminder of EASA’s core purposes and activities because a lot has changed since 1989, and the last two years have contained some of the most momentous events in the association’s history. On the positive side, anthropology is a far larger discipline in Europe than it was in 1989; there are now more practicing anthropologists, both within anthropology departments and working in other disciplines and outside universities, than ever before; EASA’s membership has never been higher; its biennial conference is more popular than ever, and its journal attracts more readers than ever. Anthropology is now taught at more universities than ever before, and the discipline is producing more doctorates than ever before. What is more, anthropologists are increasingly being invited to contribute to non-academic discussions about issues within their expertise, whereas in the past they tended to be overlooked in favour of disciplines that were more rooted in statistical analysis, or more focused on European social and cultural issues. From that perspective, the discipline is thriving and is becoming both more relevant and more visible than it has ever been.

This is important to remember, because there have also been enormous challenges to the discipline since 1989, involving structural, political, financial, ethical and intellectual issues. I noted many of them in my [first letter](#) two years ago, and I should now add the massive challenges brought about by Covid-19,



which has hit anthropology particularly strongly because of the discipline's reliance on long-term ethnographic fieldwork. That has been added to the continuing structural changes in universities (auditing regimes, particularly assessments based on research income and peer reviewed publications, and increasing reliance on external research funding), which have altered working conditions and increased the sense of precarity for many; rapid changes in the publishing world, with ever more strong pressure to fully switch to a model in which the costs of publishing and distributing texts falls on the producers of the texts rather than on the readers (a.k.a. open access); political changes in many countries, particularly a drift towards authoritarian government, populist sentiments and a backlash against gains made in what are broadly defined as 'social issues,' such as reproductive rights, LGBTQI+ issues, gender relations, asylum and migration issues, and even freedom of expression issues. Such backlashes have often led to attacks against many social science departments, particularly gender studies and migration studies, and also anthropology; and there have been considerable developments in the ongoing debates about anthropology's history and location in the world through discussions about decolonizing anthropology, as well as the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement.

During the last two years, the EASA Executive has regularly been called upon to make statements about one or more of these issues, and it has also, along with the PrecAnthro group, carried out a survey of its membership to analyse how anthropology as a career is currently being experienced in the European region. The results of that survey have now been [published](#), and they are worth reading. Moreover, those challenges have not only demanded that we react to events going on in the world more widely, but have also demanded both proactive action within EASA and itself, as well as an ongoing reflection on social anthropology's role in the world. In line with that, the association made some radical changes to its core activities over the last two years: because of Covid-19, the biennial conference, which celebrated the 30th anniversary of the association's existence, was held as a fully online event that generated a virtual Lisbon rather than an in-person one; and, most momentously, after many years of discussion, both within EASA's Executive and with the membership, followed by discussions with Berghahn, the decision was taken to make *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* fully open access.

The conference will hopefully return to being an in-person event in 2022 in Belfast - assuming that, by then, we have found some way to live more normally



with Covid-19. Yet we learned a huge amount from making the 2020 conference an online one: people who would normally not be able to attend because of visa problems, costs or practical difficulties were able to participate fully in the conference for the first time; and it provided an opportunity to think more concretely about the implications of climate change and what might need to change in the future in order to address it. Of course, physical conferences will always be needed: a year of online communication has taught many of us about its limitations, most particularly for maintaining a vibrant research environment; at the same time, this experience opened up some food for thought about what kinds of meetings are the ones that benefit most from being in person, and what kinds might be actually better held online. Issues relating to equal access, to an ability to revisit a conversation again later, and to having a variety of ways to ask questions and engage with speakers, so that the usual biases in who speaks and who remains silent can be adjusted somewhat, are all relevant here.

The vote to make *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* fully open access was carried by a very large majority of those who participated in the referendum on the matter. The Executive went ahead with the referendum following a rigorous process of analysing the practical arrangements of making such a move, to ensure that it would be sustainable, that nothing will affect the quality of the journal, and that it will not have a negative effect on the association. This provides an opportunity for EASA to add its voice to this increasingly complex but crucial debate: it is not only a debate about costs and access to research findings; it is also a debate about content, about how researchers gain access to high quality peer reviewed journals for publishing their work; about allowing enough room for radical and risk-taking texts to be published; and ultimately, about determining the conditions in which research circulates amongst scholars and beyond. This question could not be more important, both in terms of delivering on EASA's constitutional obligations, and in terms of preserving a space for anthropological research and debate that is as open and free as possible – not only in terms of cost and access, as important as that is, but much more importantly in terms of content and quality.

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider the implications of this radical move that EASA has made. Academic journals associated with learned societies began life as a way for their members to circulate their most recent findings and ideas, so that their peers could check their arguments and results, and so that they could have debates and disagreements about them. The point of such journals



was to continue the discussion between conferences, and to keep records of new ideas and new research findings, which had, crucially, been cross-checked and critiqued before being published, as they emerged. When learned societies' journals began, there was no thought about the monetary value of these publications, nor the work that went into producing them, nor the way in which such texts might be used to judge the career of their authors – all of which is a reflection of the highly privileged and exclusive world that academia constituted at the time, even if the original motivation for the publication of academic journals remains a good one. We live in a completely different world now: while academia has become more accessible than it was at the time academic journals were first developed, the ever-rising profits made by publishers from journals has created steep pay walls preventing many from gaining access to the research results that have mostly been funded with public money; auditing regimes have increasingly required open access texts from researchers, at a steep cost to those researchers or their institutions; while at the same time, the ease of copying and distributing PDFs digitally made the idea of paying for a text increasingly a choice rather than a necessity. The European Union's Plan S, which kickstarted an insistence on open access academic publications within the EU, and the resulting complicated round of discussions with commercial publishers within European governments and universities (ironically all state-based), in attempts to renegotiate how that would work in practice, pushed the debate even harder.

It is in that context that EASA has taken the decision to make its journal open access: it has been done on the Association's terms, and working in partnership with our membership and with a publisher that has had a long-term commitment to anthropology in general and to EASA in particular: Berghahn. We look forward to demonstrating that open access can be done in a way that emphasizes the elements that are most important to scholarship and the ability to openly circulate ideas and material that has been crosschecked by our peers - a key part of our contribution "to promote education and research in social anthropology by improving understanding of world societies," to borrow from EASA's constitution; and that we can do it in a way that provides true and full access to academic knowledge and practice that was so missing when academic journals began. The debate on open access has tended to drift away from what I believe is at the heart of the matter.

There have been several other significant changes over these two years, which have included a decision to move the archives of EASA from the offices of the Royal Anthropological Institute in London to the archives of the Institute for Social Anthropology at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. EASA



would like to warmly thank the RAI for taking care of the archive until now, and the association also expresses its deep gratitude to the Institute for Social Anthropology in Vienna for taking on the archive. EASA has also gone through a long process of setting up an Integrity Committee during the last two years. This was formed following a vote at the AGM of the 2018 Stockholm conference. The vote endorsed the idea that EASA should set up a Code of Conduct working group to look into whether the association should have such a committee. The question arose from a range of problems emerging along with the changes and challenges outlined above and in previous newsletters. The world in which we currently live, combined with questions that have arisen about anthropological practice, made it seem like the right moment to take this step, to make a contribution towards gathering experience and advice on increasingly tricky issues affecting the work that anthropologists do in a range of different capacities.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind one of the core purposes of EASA: “to encourage professional cooperation and communication between anthropologists.” This is a key part of the association: cooperation and communication amongst its members and across all the myriad differences that the membership represents. Although anthropology is highly diverse and contains practitioners who are at different stages in their careers and hold widely different positions both within the academy and outside of it, EASA represents the principles of a learned society: that we are all, in our highly different ways, pursuing anthropology to the best of our ability, and in that sense, we are all collectively working together and have the same interests. In that sense, EASA’s role as a learned society, working on behalf of all its members equally, and representing social anthropology and social anthropologists based in Europe has proven to be increasingly important over the last three decades. It has been an honour and a privilege to work on behalf of its members for the last two years.

## 2. New exec committee



Five new members of the executive have been elected through an online election which took place between 19th December 2020 and 22nd January 2021, with the largest turnout to-date. The new executive (2021-2023) will thus be composed of Mariya Ivancheva (President),



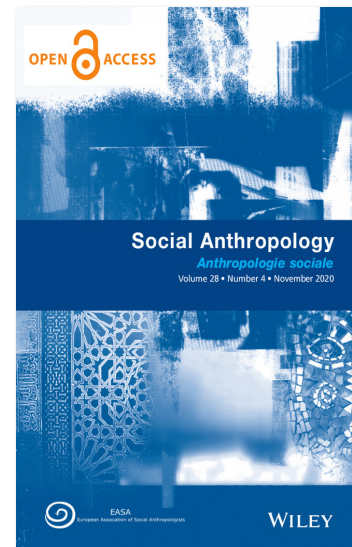
Chandana Mathur (Vice-president), Cris Shore, Sharon Macdonald, Fiona Murphy, Monica Heintz (Secretary) and David Mills (Treasurer). See <https://easaonline.org/about/>

### 3. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* goes Open Access

The EASA Executive is delighted to report that more than 90% of members voting in the referendum on whether the association's journal, *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, should become fully open access voted "Yes".

The question members were asked was:

"The EASA Exec proposes to take SA/AS Open Access in a sustainable way by moving its publisher to Berghahn from 2021. Do you support this strategy? If a majority vote YES, the EASA Exec will inform Wiley that we do not plan to renew our contract in 2021 and will enter into detailed negotiations with Berghahn to publish SA/AS Open access. If a majority vote NO, the Exec will seek to develop an alternative strategy to take SA/AS Open Access in a sustainable way."



The election was held as a result of a motion on open access introduced at the 2020 AGM. After a debate, it was agreed that EASA should only proceed if it was certain that the journal could be sustained, and if a majority of the membership supported this move.

This marks an important step, both for EASA and for publishing in anthropology, and we are particularly pleased to be working with Berghahn on this project, a publisher with a dedicated and long-term commitment to anthropology, in making this change. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* is a top tier international peer reviewed journal with Clarivate SSCI accreditation, and it will in the future be freely available to anyone. Not only does this mean that our scholarship can now reach a much wider audience; it also means that the EASA Executive, with the support of the membership, is deciding how to proceed with open access, which ensures that it will be done with both anthropological





scholarship and our members in mind. In addition, by taking this step, EASA is sending a message about its support for open access that is organized fairly, sustainably and in a way that responds to members' scientific interests.

Thanks to all EASA members for their support in taking this crucial step. The journal editors, together with David Mills (EASA Treasurer) will work together with Vivian Berghahn to find the best options for a high quality journal whose content is widely open.

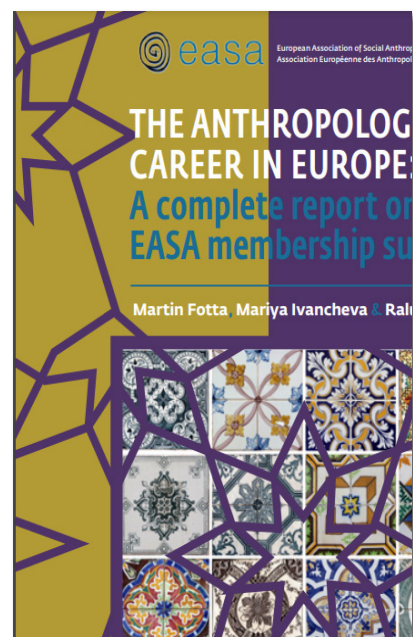
## 4. Echoes on PrecAnthro webinar and report

In late November 2020, as a result of the activities of two consequent executive committees and in collaboration with members of the PrecAnthro group, a complete survey report was published:

Fotta, M., Ivancheva, M., & Pernes, R. (2020). The anthropological career in Europe: A complete report on the EASA membership survey. NomadIT. <https://doi.org/10.22582/easaprecanthro>

The report was first launched at an EASA webinar on the 27th of November. A number of topics were discussed by report authors and EASA members, such as the rising precarity and soaring workloads that affect a growing number of anthropologists in Europe and beyond.

The report has already received attention and has been discussed by anthropologists as part of a special collection on [FocaaBlog](#) and further dissemination is in the planning, including Mariya Ivancheva's presentation at ISE's webinar, dedicated to [EU funding](#), and in relation to [ISE's position paper on precarity](#) and research careers.



## 5. Funding for networks activities in 2021

EASA has received 20 network funding applications for 2021 activities from the 42 networks active in 2020. We would like to thank networks for the innovative range of activities that have been proposed, responding to the constraints



created by the pandemic: 12 networks requested funding for online events, and 8 networks requested funding for face-to-face events to take place later this year. The executive committee has agreed to offer full grants to the online events. Given the current situation, we have chosen to support applications for funding web and social media activities, and encouraging the involvement of non-academic participants who are precarious and on low salaries.

Because of the continuing uncertainty created by Covid19, we agreed last year to retain some of the budgeted funds for a second round of applications this year, including face-to-face events if that is then possible. For this reason we have decided not to award funds to networks applying to host face-to-face events for now. We will reconsider the 8 existing face-to-face applications in June (no need to reapply), and will also advertise this opportunity to other networks to apply to run an face-to-face event at that point too. Preference at that point will be given to those networks who have not been in receipt of funding.

We will also provide a small sum for start-up meetings for four new networks approved this year. The four new networks are: EASA Contemporary Spiritual Practices Network, EASA network for multimodal ethnography, [EASA Anthropology of Crime and Criminalisation](#) and EASA Anthropology of (neo) Fascism.

## 6. Call for applications for the Integrity committee

In 2020, in the light of the challenges of carrying out a review of the Hau affair, and at the recommendation of the Code of Conduct working group, a new Integrity Committee (hereafter IC) has been adopted and approved by the EASA Executive committee. The new IC is proposed to consist of the EASA President and another member of the EASA Exec committee, a member nominated by the Exec and two EASA members elected by the membership. In order to set this afoot, we are launching our first call for application for two EASA members to join the committee for the next four years, through membership elections organised in late spring.

The terms of reference for the Integrity committee set out its remit as having an independent scrutiny and review role in relation to questions of, or complaints relating to, academic integrity brought to it by one or more members of EASA.



The committee can make reports of findings and recommendations to the EASA Executive Committee. In the event that one or more members of the Executive are the subject of the committee's scrutiny, the Executive members of the committee shall recuse themselves from the work of the IC.

Terms and references of the Integrity Committee:

- a. To offer an independent body for EASA members to which they can bring complaints and concerns about integrity and ethical issues that occur in the context of their work as anthropologists, in two circumstances: (i) where no institutional complaints procedure or other recourse to solve the issue is safely available to the members; or (ii) where a member feels that the issue concerns a wider question of ethics or integrity that the IC should be aware of.
- b. To offer members an opportunity to be heard and supported when they are confronted with problems involving integrity and ethical issues in the course of their professional practice as anthropologists, responding to requests for advice by listening, consulting and offering guidance, either from individual members of the committee as a whole.
- c. To write reports based on material submitted to the IC, on the understanding that the IC is not a legal entity and is unable to provide more than advice based on the IC's expertise where appropriate. It may be appropriate for the IC to agree that a matter goes beyond its remit and can be more safely dealt with by other institutional bodies.
- d. To develop a 'living' and accessible web-based repository of published information [M1] relating to integrity and ethical issues for members, including IC reports on anonymised analysis of 'cases.'
- e. To provide members with information on other possible sources of institutional support (e.g. within universities, unions, and arbitration and mediation services), particularly where the IC concludes that the case might merit something more than advice or review. The committee's aim should be to highlight relevant support and refer complainants to support elsewhere when possible.
- f. To be a point of reference for good conduct: to prepare briefings and guidelines for good practice professional standards that we hope will be of use to other researchers and institutions.



- g. To ensure full anonymity and confidentiality for members who come to the IC
- h. To anticipate emerging issues and future challenges in relation to academic integrity

If you are considering being a candidate for joining the Integrity Committee, please send a CV and letter of intention to the Secretary by the 15th of April ([monica.heintz\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:monica.heintz@gmail.com))