

Annual report for the DICAN network 2016

By Kristoffer Albris, Seumas Bates, and Mara Benadusi, on behalf of the DICAN network.

This brief annual report gives an outline of the activities of DICAN in 2016, and highlights some ambitions for the year 2017. In 2016, DICAN has continued to expand its membership base, both on the network mail list and on social media. At the EASA conference in Milan, DICAN sponsored and convened two panels, and held its second network meeting in which aspirations for the future of DICAN were discussed.

Network expansion

DICAN is still a relatively new network, founded at the EASA conference in August 2014 in Tallinn, Estonia. The aim of the network is to facilitate discussions and information between anthropologists working on disasters and related topics. In the course of 2016, more and more anthropologists based in Europe and beyond have signed on to DICAN in one way or another. Anyone who has signed up to the DICAN mailing list is automatically and official network member. As of 19 December, 2016, this number is 85 people. The Facebook group has as of 19 December 2016 a total number of 457 followers (although many of these are non-anthropologists, it must be assumed). Group membership on Facebook is open to everyone appearing to have a scholarly interest in the field, but requires acceptance from one of the administrators (i.e. the DICAN convenors). In 2017, more presence on social media will be prioritized through the creation of a Twitter profile for the network in addition to the well-established Facebook network.

Panels at EASA Milan conference

DICAN hosted two official panels at the bi-annual EASA conference in July 2016 in Milan.

The panel DISASTER CAPITALISM AND CREATIVE DESTRUCTION was convened by Mara Benadusi and Aj Faas. The presentations explored issues related to the theme of disaster capitalism and critically engaged with how to bring research on this topic forward in the future. The panel was closed by Kate Browne, who acted as a discussant.

The panel RESILIENCE, DISASTER AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE was convened by Seumas Bates, Kristoffer Albris and Susann Baez Ullberg, and explored the concept of resilience. Paper presentations from leading disaster anthropologists, such as Kate Browne and Susanna Hoffmann engaged critically with resilience, while the other presentations presented though provoking case studies. The discussants, Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, closed the panel by discussing the possibilities for the place of resilience in disaster anthropology in the future.

Second network meeting EASA Milan conference

Several different topics were discussed at the network meeting, the second of its kind for DICAN at the EASA conference in Milan. Approximately 15 people participated in the meeting.

First of all, DICAN elected a new group of co-conveners. Susann Ullberg, one of the three co-conveners, had nominated Seumas Bates and Kristoffer Albris for re-election, and Mara Benadusi for election. As no other candidates had been nominated, these three were elected as co-conveners of DICAN for the next two years without objections from the participants present at the meeting. The next DICAN meeting will be held at the 2018 EASA conference which will be in Stockholm.

The co-conveners of DICAN for the term 2016-2018 are thus
Mara Benadusi (University of Catania) - mara.benadusi@unict.it
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At the meeting, aspirations for 2017 and the coming years were also discussed. Most of these are still on the drawing board. Among these were:

- A DICAN conference event, focused on disaster anthropology, to be held at a university in Europe in 2017, which could be organized in combination with another conference event in anthropology and/or disaster studies.
- A continuously updated bibliography on disaster anthropology and related topics, as a service to the DICAN membership.
- Publications sponsored, hosted and/or edited by DICAN members. This could either be special issues of journals, or edited books in book series related to disaster studies.
- Finally, the aim for 2017 and beyond is of course also to expand the network membership base, and to have more interaction with other networks in disaster anthropology, disaster sociology and disaster studies more broadly.

There were also a long and fruitful discussion at the meeting regarding the role and function of the network in the future, and how it might possibly cooperate with other EASA networks, both at the bi-annual EASA conference, for other conference/seminar events, and for publications.