



## Introductory Note by the Editors-in-Chief

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This issue of *kritisk etnografi* – *Swedish Journal of Anthropology* addresses a theme connected directly to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, namely the quest for wellbeing in troubled times. An anthropology of wellbeing, by definition itself, promotes the public engagement of anthropology; apropos, the contributors address how anthropology and anthropologists can and should contribute to wellbeing.

The issue themed “*The Anthropology of Wellbeing in Troubled Times*” has been coordinated by Professor Paul Stoller, the Medallist at the 2013 Vega Day, which was based on a symposium on Anthropology of Wellbeing. David Napier, Helena Wulff, and Kirin Narayan were other scholars presenting inspiring papers at the Vega Symposium. The symposium was instrumental in developing thoughts and ideas on starting an anthropological journal that five years later, manifested as *kritisk etnografi* – *Swedish Journal of Anthropology*.

The issue includes articles by Paul Stoller, David Napier, Alisse Waterston, and Carole McGranahan. Stoller’s opening piece suggests that visual anthropology shows us a powerfully ethical way of practicing slow anthropology in a fast world. Stoller interrogates the work and practices of two visual anthropologists, Jean Rouch and Lisbet Holtedahl, arguing that their research methodologies and filmic strategies have been profoundly influenced by the slow epistemology of the Songhay (Rouch) and Fulani (Holtedahl) peoples of West Africa. As Stoller suggests, their works underscore the intellectual gifts of taking a slow path toward the production of knowledge.

David Napier scrutinises the conflict between the Enlightenment’s concept of human identity based on rationalism, science, and individual achievement, on the one hand, and the recognition of 18<sup>th</sup> century German Romanticism wherein self-awareness and self-fulfilment were the outcomes of emotion and intuition, and a relationship between personal experience and individual emotion, on the other. The conflict was epitomised in Sturm und Drang where the extreme expression of individual emotional states emerged in response to rationalism’s perceived degradation of emotional life. Yet human wellbeing lost its emotional completeness when reason emerged as the primary source of knowledge. In contrast to these, Napier argues that modern anthropology has shown how emotional rootedness, being the basis of wellbeing, can be recaptured through sustained fieldwork, and in particular, through the extroverted risk that builds emotional rootedness with others.

Alisse Waterston inquires into Eduardo Galeano’s challenge to exercise the right to dream, calling on anthropologists to couple their knowledge with fearless imagination to work on behalf of a liveable future that has yet to come. The current condition of the

world, marked by the coronavirus pandemic, worship of weapons and militarism, racialised hatred and nationalist fervour, environmental crisis and everyday structural violence, adds urgency to the task of confronting the profound challenges facing humanity, transcending seemingly impossible impasses, and building productive connections and collaborations. Waterston argues for unifying the scholar and the responsible global citizen, going beyond producing scholarship, putting knowledge to work in an effort at sustaining the earth and its living beings.

Carole McGranahan concludes the special issue with the straightforward and yet tricky question: “What are the possibilities for well-being in exile?” She draws on her own ethnographic research in Tibetan communities in Canada, France, India, Nepal, Switzerland, and the USA including research regarding activism in the coronavirus pandemic. The Tibetan community draws on resources including concepts and practices from Tibetan Buddhism and the leadership of the Dalai Lama, its political action and community care forged in the different contexts of lack of citizenship in South Asia, on the one hand, and citizenship in the diaspora outside of it, on the other. Since China’s invasion and colonisation of Tibet, the diaspora has spread around the world while many Tibetans also remain inside Tibet as part of the People’s Republic of China. Notions of care embedded in Tibetan political activism enable possibilities for well-being even in times of loss.

The Bricolage section of *kritisk etnografi* sets off with an article by Rosa de Jorio, focusing on the activities of women’s organisations, their programs and their regional initiatives during the last period of colonisation of French Sudan (present-day Mali). Women activists and their organisation worked to improve the status of women both within and outside the household. Around the time of national independence in 1960, the ruling party US-RDA was morphing into a monolithic and autocratic machinery, intolerant vis-à-vis independent organisations, such as women’s groups. Party leadership resorted to tactics and strategies that divided women’s groups. de Jorio describes women’s efforts at resisting and influencing US-RDA’s gender politics, and investigates some of the reasons behind the demise of those groups. She also reflects on some Malian women’s critical engagement with their activist past in more recent times, as a way to develop a more gender-inclusive narrative of the nation.

The subsequent text comprises a report from the digital panel discussion hosted by the [Swedish Anthropological Association \(SANT\)](#), with four Swedish medical anthropologists on the theme COVID-19: Claudia Merli from Uppsala University, who has studied gendered bodily practices related to reproductive health, ethno-religious conflict in Southern Thailand, and aftermath of the tsunami in 2004; Fredrik Nyman from Durham University, whose dissertation project investigates neoliberal reform within the British health care system, focusing on self-management practices in support groups for elderly people with chronic respiratory diseases; Syna Ouattara from University of Gothenburg, who has conducted research on culture, environment and development in West Africa, focusing on the relevance of indigenous knowledge and has also worked for the World Health Organisation during the Ebola crisis in Guinea in, and in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and Mirko Pasquini from Uppsala University, whose dissertation project departs from fieldwork at an emergency ward in Northern Italy, with a primary focus on triage, overcrowding, violence, mistrust and access to healthcare during the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020.

Last but not the least, this issue also contains a list of abstracts of PhD Dissertations in Anthropology defended at Swedish Universities during two academic years, namely 2018-19 and 2019-20.

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The inaugural issue of *kritisk etnografi* dealt with “The Public Presence of Anthropology” (Vol 1, No 1, 2018). The second issue, which was also a double issue was themed “Comparative Municipal Ethnographies” (Vol 2, No 1-2, 2019). This issue inquires into “The Anthropology of Wellbeing in Troubled Times” (Vol 3, No 1, 2020). Our forthcoming issue will be based on “Putting Swedish Anthropology to Work” (Vol 3, No 2, 2020), examining Applied Anthropology with Lisa Åkesson and Maris Boyd Gillette as guest editors. The first issue of 2021 will be a VARIA, that is, an open issue of any research paper in the research fields pertinent to our journal. We look forward to papers from colleagues at Swedish universities and beyond. Spread the word! Aux plumes! Fatta pennan!

