



Introductory Note by the Editors-in-Chief

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This issue of *kritisk etnografi* – Swedish Journal of Anthropology, is a *Varia*, that is, an open issue without any specific theme. This *Varia* is a collection of four articles, and one report.

Alisse Waterston invokes her own research, and work done by other scholars, to develop an anthropological perspective on a process captured by the action word “improvising.” The article is based on her keynote address at the Swedish Anthropological Association’s 2024 conference at Uppsala University, and is a timely reflection of anthropology’s role in today’s world. Waterston argues that anthropologists rarely acknowledge the significance of their contributions because, too often, they do not see how their work combines as a larger effort to effect positive social change. She concludes, “The works of anthropologists who are participant-observers of the ways people all over the world improvise for life, those who push against convention, liberating themselves to innovate and improvise, and those who put hope to work in the pursuit of social justice towards ‘happiness’ by means of local and global activist collaboration – taken together, this work and these anthropologists reflect participation in collective struggle.”

Alf Hornborg discusses the concept of “indigeneity” and the pervasive attribution of ecological wisdom to Indigenous peoples. To do so, he reflects on the pervasive category of ‘the ecological Indian,’ its emergence, as well as its contestations and transformations over time. More specifically, Hornborg explores modern connotations of indigeneity as a precondition to Mi’kmaq engagement in environmental issues, and investigates the image of Indigenous ecological wisdom that is rooted in the historical encounter between European and Native American societies, and today is casting doubts about the sustainability of capitalist civilization.

Adelaida Caballero investigates the notion of “the African family” and the way it is articulated in regional policy and nationalistic discourse in Malabo, the Equatoguinean capital. On the basis of a dense ethnographic narrative, she looks at the quality of intergenerational relationships from the point of view of older women who live in multi-generational homes. Caballero particularly focuses on the family life of Mamá Angie, a sixty-three year-old woman of *krío* ethnicity. By means of a gender-oriented ethnographic account of the experiences, intentions, and motives of different family-members, she analyses how these members fulfilled or disavowed normative expectations of intergenerational solidarity. Caballero looks at how the position of older women in the local moral economy is shaped by the kinds of support that they were obliged to give and to receive.

Arvid Lundberg brings the reader to Jordanian politics, and intelligence services, in

order to reflect upon how and when the ethnographer might be less of an observer and more of a participant in the field. He writes about how he unwillingly got involved in the political system, which in turn put features of that system into sharper relief. In such situations, difficulties and mistrust, Lundberg argues, serve not merely as obstacles, but compel the researcher to sort out similar problems as our informants sort out, and to learn about the most effective ways to do so.

In the section entitled Perspectives, we have compiled a report with some 30 PhD theses in Social and Cultural Anthropology defended at Swedish universities between 2020 and 2024, also including abstracts of ethnographically oriented theses of neighbouring disciplines. We hope that this report may give some orientation of the present-day anthropological research landscape, and thematic interests at Swedish universities.

Since the journal was launched in August 2018 with the inaugural issue that dealt with *The Public Presence of Anthropology* (Vol 1, No 1, 2018) developed around Didier Fassin's Vega Symposium in 2016, we have worked hard to consolidate the journal's publication and dissemination. The second issue, which was a double issue, was themed *Comparative Municipal Ethnographies* (Vol 2, No 1-2, 2019), edited by Sten Hagberg, and focused on the anthropology of local politics across the world. The first issue of 2020 inquired into *The Anthropology of Wellbeing in Troubled Times* (Vol 3, No 1, 2020), and was developed around Paul Stoller's 2013 Vega Symposium. The second issue of 2020 focused on ethnographic practices in applied contexts, *Putting Swedish Anthropology to Work* (Vol 3, No 2, 2020), edited by Lisa Åkesson and Maris Boyd Gillette. Two issues were published in 2021. The first one was a *Varia* issue, and the second explored *The Social Life of Water* with Karsten Pearregaard and Paula Uimonen as guest editors. In 2022, *kritisk etnografi* was published as a double issue addressing the question, *Is Europe skilling for sustainable food?* developed by guest editors Maris Boyd Gillette and Cristina Grasseni. The first issue of 2023 was themed *The Future of Diversity*, focused on Thomas Hylland Eriksen's Vega Symposium in 2022. The second issue in 2023 was also a theme issue on *The Fear Among Us*, under the leadership of the guest editors, Anna Gustafsson and Eva-Maria Hardtmann, both anthropologists from Stockholm University. The first issue of 2024 focused on *Infrastructure and environments in late industrialism* with guest editors Chakad Ojani, Susann B. Ullberg, and Asta Vonderau.

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As Editors-in-Chief of *kritisk etnografi* – Swedish Journal of Anthropology we welcome proposals for thematic issues, individual papers, and shorter pieces from colleagues at Swedish universities and beyond. To recall, *kritisk etnografi* is a scientific, peer-reviewed, truly open access journal, free of any charges, published by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography (SSAG).

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