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Editorial

Bracke, S.; Davidson, R.J.; Geschiere, P.; Guadeloupe, F.

DOI

[10.1177/1466138120922727](https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138120922727)

Publication date

2020

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Ethnography

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[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Bracke, S., Davidson, R. J., Geschiere, P., & Guadeloupe, F. (2020). Editorial. *Ethnography*, 21(2), 149-150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138120922727>

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Ethnography

2020, Vol. 21(2) 149–150

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DOI: 10.1177/1466138120922727

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As we are preparing this journal issue for publication, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the conditions of our daily life and work. Like so many others, we are ‘sheltering in place’ in an effort to slow down the spread of the virus. We are aware of the privileges of having a place to shelter in and of having the possibility to work from home – privileges that are distributed very unequally around the world. We are also aware that having a home can mean different things: some homes are spacious and have home offices set up with reliable Wi-Fi; other homes are small and crowded and lack essential conveniences. In some homes, ‘teleworking’ parents are struggling hard to get their own work done while taking care and ‘homeschooling’ children. In other homes, loneliness and isolation are difficult to bear. And too many homes are characterized by violence and abuse.

These are the current conditions in which we try to do our work. The conditions in which students try to keep up with their course work and worry about their financial situation and their graduation. The conditions in which academics are turning courses into remote teaching overnight and are pausing or redesigning research projects, while many also worry about temporary contracts and assessments on which contract extensions or tenure might depend. And in the midst of this, there is isolation, fear, and mourning – for loved ones who are ill and for loved ones who pass away. What these conditions make increasingly visible, is a systemic crisis of care at large, and health care in particular. The pandemic has, once again, made visible the importance of social reproductive work, i.e. all the work that is necessary to make productive work possible, and the systematic undervaluing and underfunding of such work.

In conditions like these, we do not want to take for granted that our work at *Ethnography* just continues without interruption. Researchers might encounter difficulties in pursuing research projects as intended, reviewers might need more time to review or might simply not be able to, and editors might need more time to follow up on manuscripts. We do not want to smooth over the disruptions, as if this systemic crisis of social reproduction and care didn’t exist. We are continuing our editorial work for now and are offering and requesting patience and time – time that is not the time of productivity as usual, but time more aligned with the time of social reproduction and care.

We are also aware that there’s a specific manner in which this crisis effects our academic community: ethnography has typically relied on methods that favor real life encounters and meetings. Most of these are not possible anymore in the current

conditions. As graduate students are working on master or PhD theses, as researchers had planned summer fieldwork, we are witnessing all kinds of creative rethinking of what qualitative methods in general, and ethnography in particular, might entail in times of physical distancing. We are notably seeing new and more wide-spread explorations of digital ethnography around us, and will be following closely how this might change our field. Yet, we are also confident that one way or another, the time-honored link between ethnography and direct, personal contact that was and is the strength of our profession can be continued in the new configurations once this crisis subsides.

We would also like to inform you that our publisher SAGE has signed a statement by the Wellcome Trust (<https://wellcome.ac.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/open-data>), thereby committing to the prompt dissemination of research on the COVID-19 outbreak, through making original research articles focused on COVID-19 open access via a Creative Commons license and waiving the article processes charges and making other articles (editorials, opinion pieces, reviews, etc.) free to view upon publication.

Sarah Bracke, Robert J Davidson, Peter Geschiere, Francio Guadeloupe

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam,
Amsterdam, Netherlands