EASA Environment and anthropology network (Enviroant)

The network was founded in 2018, to provide a platform for exchange among EASA members involved in teaching and research in environmental and ecological anthropology and to function as an outreach tool to policy makers, practitioners, other disciplines and the wider society to contribute to the understanding and solving of environmental problems across the world. The network hopes to explore original and creative ways of collaborating outside academia and disciplinary boundaries, to offer anthropological know-how for dealing with current environmental problems.

Focus

Environment is a key topic with a long history in anthropology. For example, classic cultural ecology focused on the relationship between nature and culture, nurture and nature, and human adaptation to the environment. More recently, political ecology has brought to the forefront topics such as the interconnectedness of political, economic and social factors with environmental issues. Studies on nature symbolism, human-animal relationships, more-than-human-sociality, and the role of science and technology in the production of environmental knowledge and practices are among the most innovative developments in anthropology. Based on this long tradition, environmental anthropology plays an increasing role in research on climate change and in debates on the Anthropocene, contributing new epistemological and ontological foundations for coping with present and future challenges, and tools for bridging theory and practice, local and global, expert and other forms of knowledge.

Environmental anthropology is a key resource in current efforts to grapple with climate change, environmental problems and ecological crises at various scales and in many places. Based on extensive fieldwork, anthropology contributes to understanding environmental conflicts, including the use of 'environment' as a new form of governance, pointing to frequently ignored phenomena like green colonialism, environmental determinism including sexism and racism, or fortress conservation. Furthermore, environmental issues are often articulated from below, symmetrically and sometimes in terms of environmental justice, or what are recognised as moral ecologies. Anthropological research and outreach reminds policy makers and practitioners that environments are dynamic, in process, and always more than only 'ecological' in the strict sense.

The EASA Environment and Anthropology Network provides a space for current discussions in environmental and ecological anthropology in Europe, as well as a body to inform public environmental debates from an anthropological perspective.

Principles

The network

1. Environmental anthropology is a broad subfield with a long history within the discipline of anthropology. At the current conjuncture, environmental anthropology provides key questions, concepts and methodologies to grapple with processes of environmental degradation, climate change and landscape transformation.

2. Enviroanth is a platform for discussing environmental and ecological anthropology and it subject fields in Europe. It supports disciplinary arguments as well as public debates and anthropological contributions to policy-making.

Membership

3. Enviroanth is a network of anthropologists from universities, research institutions, public institutions, think tanks as well as independent researchers.
4. Membership of Enviroanth is free of charge. While not a formal requirement, membership of the main organization, EASA, is encouraged. Network enrolment is effective by subscription to the listserver.
5. Members are encouraged to use the listserv as central means of communication with the network.
6. The governance, of Enviroanth is horizontal to the extent possible, and initiatives such as workshops, public statements and commentaries from network members are welcome. Alternative forms of knowledge exchange using media, virtual meeting rooms and other-than-brief-paper-presentations are encouraged. Coordination of these initiatives with the network secretariat is encouraged.

Secretariat

7. Enviroanth is coordinated by a secretariat consisting of two or more persons based in at least two different institutions and countries. The network coordinators are responsible for maintaining the listserver and homepage, communicating with EASA (e.g. by writing annual reports, due each November), and organizing the network meeting at the biannual EASA conference. Network coordinators must be EASA members
8. Network coordination is ad honorem and lasts in principle for a two-year period, but may also be renewed once. New coordinators are elected by simple majority at the EASA meetings. Outgoing network coordinators are responsible for transferring knowledge to incoming.

Meetings, workshops and conference panels

9. Enviroanth will hold biennial network workshops independent of the biennial EASA conference during non-conference (odd) years. Network workshops and their topic are organized by the host institution and can be convened in collaboration with other networks. The workshop hosts are responsible for securing workshop funding from EASA (around 1000€) and other sources.
10. The next Enviroanth workshop's host will be decided upon at the end of the preceding workshop, or – should there be no viable proposition – during the business meeting the next year.
11. Enviroanth will have a network business meeting at the biennial EASA conference were network activities, finances, and leadership will be discussed. The secretariat is responsible for convening and moderating the meeting.
12. Conference panels at the EASA conference that are convened by Enviroant members or pertain to environmental anthropology can be labelled network panels in coordination with the Enviroant secretariat. When EASA conferences guarantee one panel for each network, the secretariat will coordinate an online vote among the network membership for nominating one of the network's panels as guaranteed panel.

Working groups

13. Within the network, working groups are formed to develop particular issues, such as teaching, outreach, coordination with other networks.
14. Working groups operate independently but communicate with the rest of the membership via the listserv and by reporting at business meetings and workshops.