Anthropological Research and COVID-19: 
A Bibliography

Prepared by Brooke Jespersen, April 5, 2021

This bibliography accompanies the roundtable, “The Best-Laid Plans: Adapting Research to COVID-19,” organized by Brooke Jespersen for the 2021 SPA meeting. During the roundtable, the contributors—Eileen Anderson-Fye, Ramsey Ismail, Brooke Jespersen, Sonya Pritzker, Julia Sloane, and Jordan Wondrack Zaidi—explored what it means to conduct research anthropologically during COVID-19, with an emphasis on graduate student dissertation research. They also considered the potentially enduring implications of COVID-19 for a post-pandemic anthropology. This bibliography provides additional sources on anthropological research and COVID-19, including: reflections on relationships between COVID-19, anthropological research, and the future; alternative methods to in-person field work; digital ethnography; and teaching anthropology during a pandemic.


In this section, the authors grapple with ethics, methods, and the types of questions anthropologists should ask during the current pandemic and beyond. Should anthropologists conduct research during the pandemic? How might anthropologists conduct research anthropologically yet remotely? How does the pandemic influence the types of questions anthropologists can and should ask? How can anthropologists engage their research ethically? As the pandemic highlights inequalities within academia and among the people we study, how should anthropologists respond? These readings wrestle with these questions and consider the potentially lasting impact of the pandemic on anthropology.


**Part 2: Methods—Alternatives to In-Person Fieldwork**

For most anthropologists, the pandemic has rendered the “field,” at least in the traditional sense, off-limits. The readings in this section offer alternatives to in-person fieldwork, such as photo voice elicitation, phone and zoom interviews, archival research, and journaling. These readings should be considered alongside Lupton’s (2020) extensive, crowd-sourced bibliography, “Doing
Fieldwork in a Pandemic.” Rather than duplicate those sources here, this section focuses on sources not included in Lupton’s bibliography.


Part 3: Methods—Digital Ethnography/Ethnography of Virtual Worlds

The readings in this section take the internet as fieldsite or field focus. Challenging distinctions between virtual and “real,” these readings develop methodologies and theories for investigating the social, political, spiritual, etc. activities that are carried out online. For overview, see Pritzker 2020.


**Part 4: Teaching Anthropology During a Pandemic**

In this section, anthropologists consider the challenges and opportunities of online learning, suggest tips for teaching anthropology during the pandemic, and provide examples of classroom activities.


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