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The Editor's Note

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Aging as an anthropological field is evolving and it is critical that it continues to do so. As the way the life course changes—along the way it is perceived—so too must the anthropology of aging continue to morph into new areas. And it is an intriguing time for aging research, which is reflected in the manuscripts that we receive at *Anthropology & Aging*. These manuscripts apply aging as an ethnographic lens that shed light on often overlooked domains of societies and provide new entry points into current political debates. This is imperative for multiple reasons. Most notably, it is vital that anthropologists continue to provide nuanced perspectives at times where gaps are formed—often enthused by media reports that boil down complex issues to simple antagonisms.

Think for instance of the internet meme *okay boomers,* which has attracted an excessive amount of media attention during the last six months. *Okay boomers* has become a catchphrase that signifies the defiance of a young generation who have had enough. It thereby suggests a reversal of the power dynamics between the older *boomer* generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) and the younger generation of *millennials* (those born between 1981 and 1996), where the latter is sick and tired of being referred to condescendingly as overprivileged and lazy. *Okay boomer* is the reply to the, supposedly, moralizing elderly when they criticize the youth while the elderly themselves have proved unable to offer viable solutions to the mounting ecological and economic challenges of our times. Rather, what they *have* done, according the millennials' criticism, is that they have undermined national economies by, for instance, inflating the housing market and thereby making it difficult for future generations to buy a home; as the journalist Joseph C. Sternberg (2019) recently phrased it, the *boomers* "stole the Millennials' Economic Future." The question here is not only whether this economic analysis is correct, though this is indeed an important question. We need also to explore what historical circumstances have made it possible to conceptualize the *boomers* as a social whole. If, as it has sometimes been argued, we live in times of monster-making, where gaps can rapidly be formed between groups in society, anthropology should *de-monstrate*—i.e., insistently inquire into the gaps that are constructed by media and political rhetoric. Anthropologists will always need to provide research that show that the world is more complex and while this is, at times, tedious compared to the daily flow of spectacular media-events to which we have grown accustomed, the need to dissolve gaps, to understand other people's perspectives continues to be crucial. Thereby, using John Borneman's term, anthropology could be seen as an academic endeavor aiming to generate not only knowledge of the outer world, but *knowledgeability*. This term implies a "cultivation of curiosity beyond the usual investments of interest, a critical thinking that is thoroughly mediated by introspection and empathetic communication" (Borneman 2015, 74).

This effort is also important at a time where the funding agencies who support our research are more often than not interested in topics related to health and care. While these are indeed important areas, we must remain intensely aware of how we as anthropologists decide what accounts for relevant research topics. In my opinion we must think about the extent to which anthropology may come to add to the notion that old age is first and foremost a phenomenon that needs to be understood in relation to physical and mental health. *Anthropology & Aging* has for years published research that moves beyond this narrow depiction of what senior life entails. We will continue to publish article that explore the lush and intricate worlds that people inhabit—and that use such insights to enrich the tapestry of the anthropology as a field. We need to explore aging with the same curiosity and theoretical innovation that anthropologists have engaged with

cultures across the globe. It is a great honor for me, as the new editor of *Anthropology and Aging*, to be given the opportunity to support this project in the coming years.

I hope you will enjoy the current issue of *Anthropology & Aging*, 41(1). We are excited to be able to publish the winners of 2018 Margaret Clark Award from the Association for Anthropology, Gerontology, and the Life Course (AAGE) in this issue: Rose Keimig won the graduate award for "Chronic Living and Deleyed Death in Chinese Eldercare Institutions" and Oliva Silva (with Ariel Cascio and Eric Racine) won the undergraduate award for "Person-oriented Research Ethics for Studies Involving Elderly Participants with Dementia."

Also, on behalf of the editorial board, I would very much like to thank Cortney Hughes Rinker for her dedication to the journal in the previous years. As she steps down as Editor, she will remain part of the editorial board and I am looking very much forward to work with her to develop *Anthropology & Aging* in the future.

Thank you for your continued support of the journal.

References

Borneman, John. 2015. *Cruel Attachments: The Ritual Rehab of Child Molesters in Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sternberg, Joseph C. 2019. *The Theft of a Decade: How the Baby Boomers Stole the Millennials' Economic Future*. New York: Public Affairs.