

Call for abstracts for edited volume: “**Access Denied: When Anthropologists Cannot Enter the Field**”

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In order to achieve professional status anthropologists must conduct long-term fieldwork in a particular geographical and cultural setting. This means that the process of ‘entering the field’ can be fraught with anxiety because of the possibility that they might be denied access. There is considerable scholarly literature on the intricacies of entering the field with tips, hints and tricks to guide researchers, as well as discussion of the theoretical dilemmas, political considerations, dangers and potential ethical impositions during fieldwork (for instance, Kovats-Bernat 2002; Hume and Mulcock 2014; Pollard 2009). Anthropologists have looked critically at the colonial geography of their fieldwork sites (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), and have asserted their right to study at home, ‘study-up’ (Clifford 1997), and conduct research in multiple sites (Marcus 1998) and in cyberspace (Burell 2009). They have questioned the centrality of humans (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010) and debunked the “fable of rapport,” the process in which classic ethnographies “narrate the attainment of full participant observation status” (Clifford 1988: 40) and, as a consequence, assert authoritative knowledge over the culture the anthropologist is studying.

Yet we have not paid attention to situations in which, after long negotiations with gatekeepers, access is denied. One of the implications of this oversight is that the construction of knowledge that occurs during fieldwork is thought only to begin once access is ‘gained.’ However, we contend that situations in which researchers *cannot* enter and/or remain in the field are ‘good to think with.’ For instance, is it the case that discussing experiences of field-site denial is a source of shame and a taboo in anthropology because one becomes an anthropologist only after successfully conducting fieldwork? In a world in which research funding is tightening and there is a culture of accountability in academia, how should researchers and anthropology departments deal with such situations? How can they support PhD students who have not gained access to field sites?

The editors welcome contributions that consider (but are not limited to) the following:

- Case studies of and the fallout from access denial;
- The impact that rejection from a field site has on researchers;
- Reflections on the implications of access denial on doctoral students, their supervisors, anthropology departments and funding agencies;
- The ways in which researchers and participants experience denial of access;
- Explorations of how anthropologists have redirected their research after such experiences;

- Fieldwork with non-traditional access/consent negotiations such as online ethnography;
- The ‘up-side’ of access denial: How might field-site denial and/or rejection be reconfigured as valuable/usable data?

Submissions

The editors invite abstracts that consider the above themes. Abstracts should be between 300-500 words, with final chapters not exceeding 8000 words (including bibliographic material).

The deadline for abstracts: **31 March, 2017.**

Abstracts and queries should be submitted to Dr Emily Burns
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References:

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