

See below.

of ethics states: 'Anthropological researchers must do everything in their power to ensure that their research does not harm the safety of the people with whom they work'.

This introduces an ethical conundrum, which may not have been considered by the drafters of the original code. Baer notes that anthropologists tend to have exceptionally high carbon emissions, given frequent flights for fieldwork and regular trips to big professional conventions. This is a clear vector of harm. We know that emissions have a disproportionately severe impact on poor communities and regions of the Global South – where most anthropologists work. If we take the carbon budget seriously, it forces us to confront difficult trade-offs. Every unnecessary tonne of CO₂ that we emit (gobbling up an unfair share of the remaining carbon budget) is a tonne that people in the Global South cannot emit in order to meet their basic needs. And if we exceed the carbon budget, every excess tonne of emissions causes disproportionate harm to vulnerable communities.

We anthropologists are therefore under an ethical obligation to reconsider how we approach our work. Perhaps this means shifting from the present culture of hit-and-run research (frequent trips for short stays) to 'slow fieldwork': reducing the frequency of visits, extending their duration, travelling overland wherever possible and developing research partnerships with anthropologists who live closer to our field. In addition to reducing emissions, these changes may well improve the quality of our research, making it more thoughtful, more robust and more inclusive.

However, our ethical obligations extend beyond individual behaviour change. They also require institutional change. For anthropology departments, this might mean keeping track of annual emissions and setting targets for reduction. Reductions can be achieved by switching to renewable energy providers, improving building insulation and cutting down on department-funded flights. Of course, when it comes to the latter, we have to pay attention to questions of fairness and equity – in terms of generation, race, gender and power – to ensure that no one gets short shrift.

But the real elephant in the room is the big meetings hosted by our professional associations – the AAA, the European Association of Social Anthropologists, etc. – an issue that Baer does not quite get around to addressing. As thousands of anthropologists touched down for the 2018 AAA meeting in San Jose, California, the region was being torched by some of the most destructive wildfires in its history. Photographs emerged of smoke seeping into conference rooms, and of participants walking around in masks – poignant images of a climate dystopia that is already unfolding. Anthropologists are not ignorant of the contradictions at play here. We know that they cannot be sustained.

If our professional associations are to align with the IPCC trajectory for 1.5°C, we are going to have to fundamentally reimagine the structure of our conventions. This means reducing the frequency of the big in-person

meetings – for instance, holding them every other year, or every third year. In the off years, we can either devolve the meetings to regional centres that can be reached by overland routes, host the meetings on a virtual platform, or both.

I made this argument in an article for *Anthrodendum* last year. In the heated discussion that followed, the objection most commonly voiced was that such changes might be fine for people who live in London or New York, but it will disadvantage scholars at more peripheral universities. The fear is that they would have less access to the ideas coming out of the major intellectual centres, and less opportunity to network their way into those communities.

These are valid concerns, but we can just as easily turn that argument around. The big meetings are already inequitable and discriminatory, and the changes I suggest could go a long way towards fixing this.

For one thing, many scholars at poorer universities, and particularly scholars in the Global South, cannot afford to attend the big meetings each year, which require expensive flights and exorbitant fees. An online platform and a more localized structure would help remove these barriers to participation.

Second, the big meetings tend to reinforce a centralized hierarchy of anthropological thought that revolves almost cultishly around famous figures (mostly white men) who exercise undue power over the direction of the discipline. This has the effect of colonizing intellectual space and marginalizing alternative ideas. A more localized structure might facilitate greater intellectual diversity.

Third, networking during big meetings can be intensely competitive. As success often hinges on who you already know, this can reinforce existing patterns of marginalization. The smaller scale and slower pace of devolved meetings might make connections more egalitarian, more humane and more fruitful.

There are many other benefits that such a shift might deliver. Devolved meetings would be more intimate, engaging and intellectually rich than the big meetings, which are increasingly alienating and shallow. When the big meetings do happen, they could be fresh and exciting, delivering more bang for our carbon buck. Meanwhile, online platforms – where participants can post videos of their talks, along with slides and notes – could facilitate deeper, longer-term scholarly engagement than is possible in rapid-fire panels.

This is not to say there will not be downsides to bringing anthropology in line with the principles of climate justice – of course there will be. But there is no argument for carrying on with the status quo that stands up against the ethical imperative for urgent action. ●

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In October last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published their most recent report on what it will take to prevent global warming from exceeding 1.5°C or 2°C. The report concludes that to have a decent shot at averting climate catastrophe, global emissions need to be halved by 2030, and reach zero before the middle of the century. It would be difficult to overstate how dramatic this trajectory is. It requires nothing less than the complete reversal of our present direction as a civilization.

This is particularly urgent for high-income nations. Given their disproportionate contribution to climate breakdown, high-income nations must cut emissions by 12 per cent per year. In the absence of effective government action at national and international levels, it becomes incumbent upon institutions themselves to fall in line with this trajectory.

As Baer notes, anthropology is not exempt from this responsibility. If anything, our obligations in this respect are particularly stringent. For instance, the American Anthropological Association's (AAA) code