



SVENSKA SÄLLSKAPET FÖR ANTHROPOLOGI OCH GEOGRAFI
invites to the 2022 VEGA SYMPOSIUM on

The future of diversity: Biology, culture and bioculture

Date: Monday 25 April 2022, 14:00–17:45

Venue: DeGeer-salen, Geovetenskapens hus, Stockholms universitet
(metro: Universitetet; bus stop: Universitetet norra)

The 2022 Vega Symposium honours Thomas Hylland Eriksen, professor at University of Oslo, who is awarded the SSAG's Medal in gold 2022, for his profound contributions to anthropology. The theme of the symposium will focus on the future of diversity: Biology, culture and bioculture.

There is currently a growing concern with the ways in which globalisation leads to a reduction in diversity. Biodiversity is declining in many areas, and the standardising forces of states and markets lead to perceptible cultural loss. This effect is evident not least in the accelerated disappearance of languages in our century. Moreover, biocultural worlds comprising people living with their environments in sustainable ways are threatened by infrastructural developments, the marginalisation of indigenous groups and other standardising processes.

At the same time, many scholars have argued that the increased mobility and communication entailed by global modernity creates a plethora of new forms of diversity in the realm of culture. Some biologists similarly argue that introduced species may lead to ecological diversification rather than simplification.

For more than a century, anthropologists have warned about the obliteration of «traditional cultures» owing to the spread of modernity, while the concern with reduced biodiversity is more recent but no less urgent.

These questions deserve to be raised in a new way. By exploring parallels and similarities, but also differences between the two forms of homogenisation, which are largely due to the same causes, new theoretical perspectives may emerge. In addition, the very assumption of reduced diversity needs to be examined critically. Perhaps the widespread belief in global homogenisation – terms such as the Homogenocene and the Plantationocene have been suggested to supplement the Anthropocene – can be misleading. It is therefore important to retain an interest in new, emerging or formerly unmarked forms of diversity as well, in the spirit of the intellectual quest which has animated anthropology for generations, that is the study of the relationship between similarity and difference.

Programme

14:00 *Opening of the Vega Symposium.*
Associate Professor Madeleine Bonow,
President SSAG and Chair of the
Symposium and Professor Bengt G
Karlsson, Moderator.

14.10 *Introduction* Professor Ulf Hannerz,
Stockholm University.

14:20 *Threats to diversity in the shadow of
Anthropocene overheating.* Professor
Thomas Hylland Eriksen, University of
Oslo, Norway.

15:00 *The Homogenization of Diversity:
Processes Selecting for
Biocultural Generalism in the
Anthropocene* Professor Alf Hornborg,
Lund University.

15.30 Coffee

16:00 *Relating to the River: new bio-
cultural diversities in human engagements
with water* Professor Veronica Strang,
Durham University UK.

16:30 *Conservation as Homogenization?
Socio-ecological futures and collaborative
relations* Professor Paige West, Columbia
University USA.

17.00 Discussion

17:30 Closing of the Symposium

Most Welcome!

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