World Anthropologies Past and Future

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Committee on World Anthropologies

The internalization of the discussion on world anthropologies in the AAA started with the 2007 creation of a commission that became the Committee on World Anthropologies (CWA) in 2010. Both of us were involved from the beginning with the implementation and development of these advances. At the end of our term as co-chairs, it is time to acknowledge all those who have helped us consolidate the committee. Many thanks to CWA members Leslie Aiello, Niko Besnier, Dominic Boyer, Don Brennes, Bill Davis, Virginia Dominguez, Didier Fassin, Carla Guerón Montero, Ulf Hannerz, Faye Harrison, Monica Heller, Laurie Krieger, Lisa Myers, Leith Mullings, Claire Smith and Nandini Sundar. A lot was accomplished by this group of generous, productive and brilliant people whose efforts are central for the dissemination of diversified anthropological perspectives on the global level.

The task, though, is rather big and there is always much to be done. We will give just a few examples. Regarding publishing, the CWA sessions of debates among editors of many of the most important journals represent a vital and strategic arena. But there is a long way to go to implement heteroglossic, multi-style and multilingual exchanges among anthropologists. “International style” still means Anglo American style. Let’s see another angle. In spite of the large number of attendants from different countries, no major lecture is given by representatives of other academic traditions, a rather common initiative in other national congresses. Regarding education, we still need to give adequate visibility to material already published in English by anthropologists based outside of the US so that their texts become part of the syllabi of undergraduate and graduate courses. However, a most promising result in the dissemination of CWA goals and perspectives was the inclusion of world anthropologies as a subject in the Emerging Leaders in Anthropology Program of the National Association of Student Anthropologists.

The new CWA co-chairs will face these and other challenges in order to draw “US and international anthropologists together in ways that benefit anthropology globally”—one of the committee’s goals. We are pleased that our successors, Bela Feldman-Bianco and Carla Guerón Montero, are two highly capable and experienced colleagues in transnational studies.

Bela Feldman-Bianco has been involved in long term comparative research on Portuguese and Brazilian transnational migrants in New Bedford (US), São Paulo (Brazil) and Lisbon (Portugal). She recently started a comparative research project on Colombian refugees in Latin America in collaboration with colleagues from Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Mexico. Feldman-Bianco did her undergraduate work in social sciences at the Universidade de São Paulo and her PhD in anthropology at Columbia University. She has taught in the US and in Brazil. She was a research associate at the Center for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra (Portugal). She is the president of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology and a co-chair of the Research Discussion Group on Migration, Culture and Politics at the Council of Latin American Studies in the Social Sciences (CLACSO-Buenos Aires). She has published in English, Portuguese and Spanish.

Carla Guerón Montero’s research has centered on the study of globalization. Her areas of expertise include tourism, national identity, gender and race in the Afro-Latin American diaspora (particularly Ecuador, Panama, Grenada and Brazil). She received a Licenciatura in socio-cultural anthropology from the Pontifícia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, and a PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of Oregon (Eugene). She conducted postdoctoral studies and research at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (New York), the Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (Amsterdam, Netherlands), and the Catalan Institute of Research in Cultural Patrimony (Girona, Spain). Guerón Montero is associate professor of anthropology at the University of Delaware. She has joint appointments with the Women’s Studies and Black American Studies Department, and is currently the director of the Latin American and Iberian Studies Program at UD. She has published in English and Spanish.

Feldman-Bianco and Guerón Montero will work closely with the members of the Publications, Teaching, and Collaborations CWA subcommittees in their efforts to further internationalize the AAA and continue to develop lasting connections with other national and international professional anthropology associations and communities.

Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and Setha Low are outgoing contributing editors of World Anthropologies, the AN column of the AAA Committee on World Anthropologies.