Committee on World Anthropologies Highlights International Collaborations and Global Critical Dialogues

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The AAA has been an active actor in the formation, recognition and consolidation of Global Anthropologies collaborations and networking since the creation of the World Council of Anthropological Associations (WCAA) in 2004. Efforts to broaden US-based anthropology to include diverse international voices and perspectives fostered the constitution of a Commission on World Anthropologies (CWA), chaired by Fran Rothstein and Ida Susser (2007-2010). The Commission gained Committee status in late 2010, and sustained its relevant activities in regard to policy recommendations on internationalization, the building of relations with other national and supranational scientific societies, the distribution of information on international meetings as well as on research and publications from anthropologists around the world. First led by Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and Setha Low (2011-2012), the Committee has advanced the promotion of global anthropologies programmatic tasks (international collaboration and networking, teaching and research and publishing), thus setting the groundwork for the refinement and expansion of its horizons.

As incoming co-chairs of CWA, we plan to continue the work of our predecessors and further seek to activate critical dialogues among anthropologists worldwide by advancing collaboration in research, teaching, and publications. In so doing, we aim to stimulate greater awareness of and engagement with the diversity of international protagonists, traditions, and paradigms of anthropology while involving the AAA community in these endeavors.

Collaboration, Joint Partnerships, and Critical Dialogues

With the intent of fomenting global critical dialogues and embracing whenever possible the four fields, we will organize joint panels, seminars and publications on significant issues shared among anthropologists worldwide, in collaboration with other AAA sections and national and supranational associations. This collaborative approach has already started with the Displacement and Inequalities project. This project first produced the International Symposium Displacements, Inequalities, and Human Rights organized by Bela Feldman-Bianco within the realm of the 2012 Brazilian Anthropological Association (ABA) Meetings; it evolved then into the panel Displacements and Inequalities: Case Studies in Global Capitalism, co-organized by ABA, AAA, and the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) and held at the 2012 AAA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, and further developed into the WCAA panel Displacements and Immobility: International Perspectives on Global Capitalism, which will take place at the International Union of Anthropolohical and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) conference in Manchester in August 2013. Another important initiative is the experimental implementation of virtual seminars organized jointly between AAA and international...
organizations. The first of these seminars, The Politics of Language, will take place in October 2013 and is organized by AAA, ABA and EASA. Suggested themes for future panels and seminars include “Race and Racism in Comparative Perspective,” “Indigenous Peoples between Neo-liberalism and Development Projects,” and “Public/Applied/Practicing Anthropology in Comparative Perspective.” Whenever possible, we will videotape these activities for teaching and research purposes.

Fostering global critical dialogues, both among academic and practicing anthropologists, necessarily involves the active participation of US-based anthropologists in meetings of other anthropological associations across the globe and, at the same time, streamlining the ability of anthropologists from other countries to attend the AAA annual meetings through scholarships and fee/membership waivers. It also demands strengthening even more the current relationships between CWA and WCAA, IUAES, and national and supranational associations by fostering organization of panels and publications, sharing of bibliographies, research sources and information, among others. US-based anthropologists would additionally benefit from inviting at least one distinguished anthropologist of another anthropological tradition to give a major lecture at every AAA annual meeting with the use of simultaneous translation when necessary.

Publishing

We will also promote the dissemination of diverse bodies of anthropological literature with a focus on contemporary issues to bring greater awareness of the benefits of engaging with world anthropologies perspectives. Towards these aims, we will (a) continue to invite anthropologists from abroad to submit articles to our AN column; (b) work with editors and publishers to achieve greater access to scholarly work from non-US anthropologies; (c) invite the organizers of joint international seminars and panels to submit dossiers to journals in the US and abroad in English as well as in other languages; (d) publish reviews of collaborative and comparative endeavors about relevant contemporary issues; (e) foster the advancement of world anthropology within the realm of AAA by proposing a World Anthropologies section in one of its major journals; and (f) strengthen connections with AAA sections whose journals already publish texts in other languages. In all these cases, attempts will be directed at publishing both in print and online.

Teaching and Research

Collaboration and joint partnership are also strategic means to develop a more comprehensive coverage of anthropologies around the globe concerning teaching and research. In this regard, our main objective is to encourage professors and graduate and undergraduate students to make use of a more diverse literature and to promote reciprocal exchanges among researchers and local communities of scholars. In order to do so, we plan to (a) start partnerships between CWA and WCAA and its national and supranational affiliated associations to exchange bibliographies, guidance, and information for research purposes through blogs and links; (b) work with AAA sections to identify books in English published by anthropologists from abroad for teaching purposes in the United States; (c) begin a global archive of anthropological research,
preferably by open access, searchable and multilingual; and (d) develop an open access publications project.

The members of CWA include Leslie Aiello (Wenner Gren), Niko Besnier (U Amsterdam), Dominic Boyer (Rice U), Pamela Calla (NYU), Didier Fassin (Princeton U), Bela Feldman-Bianco (cochair, UNICAMP/Brazil), Carla Guerrón Montero (cochair, Univ. Delaware), Ulf Hannerz (Stockholm U), Laurie Krieger (The Mannoff Group), and Nandine Sundar (Delhi U), with AAA President Leith Mullings ex-officio, Graduate Center, CUNY), and Lisa Myers (AAA) as staff liaison. We all look forward to working with the AAA membership to strengthen international collaborations and global critical dialogues in years to come.