

Хроника Currents Actualités

Three Meetings in One Event: 2012 World Council of Anthropological Associations Bi-Annual Meeting, Anthropology of Global Issues International Symposium, and Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth Annual Conference. March 31-April 6, 2012, New Delhi, India.

The bi-annual meetings of the World Council of Anthropological Associations (WCAA), since its founding in 2004, are organized in conjunction with a major international conference (see the WCAA website at www.wcaanet.org). The venue of the WCAA 2012 Bi-Annual Meeting had been proposed at the previous meeting in Maynooth, Ireland, during the 2010 Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA). It had been decided that the 2012 meeting would be a part of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (ASA) Annual Conference in New Delhi, India.

In order to accommodate India's large and diversified anthropological community with two anthropological associations, and the fact that New Delhi has two major state universities, the announced event in the end comprised three meetings, namely the 2012 WCAA Bi-Annual Meeting, the International Symposium on "Anthropology of Global Issues," and the 2012 Annual ASA Conference on "Arts and Aesthetics in a Globalizing World". The first two meetings took place

at the University of Delhi, while the third one was organized at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The 2012 WCAA Bi-Annual Meeting took place on March 31st and April 1st, and was hosted by the University of Delhi Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dinesh Singh. The principal organizer of the meeting was Prof. Soumendra Patnaik, the President of the Indian Anthropological Association, and the delegate of this association in WCAA. The meeting was prepared by the WCAA Organizing Committee, headed by Prof. Thomas Rutter (Australia), the Chair of WCAA, and attended by 34 international delegates of the member associations. Session One was devoted to introductions and reporting. After the Chair's announcement of the schedule, the reports were given by the treasurer (Prof. Gregory Acciaioli, Australia), the webmaster (Rohan Jackson, UK), and the task force representatives.

In the absence of Prof. Virginia Domingues (USA), the Chair of the Advocacy and Outreach Task Force, Prof. Carlos Caroso (Brazil) informed on the state of affairs with Antropologos Sem Fronteras (ASF, or Anthropologists without Borders) initiative, which reached the state of being established in Brazil as the first pilot project of WCAA. It was concluded that ASF has already been one and a half years in the making, and will continue to be a major initiative and priority of the WCAA.

In the absence of Dr. Leslie Aiello (Wenner-Gren Foundation), the Chair of the Ethics Task Force, Prof. Thomas Ruter reported briefly that Dr. Aiello collected ethics codes from all member associations. There was some discussion about what should be done with this compilation, and the question was raised about whether or not WCAA should frame its own ethics statement. It was agreed that rather than WCAA formulating and imposing its own code, it should only issue guidelines based on an analysis of the compiled codes.

Prof. Gordon Mathews (Hong Kong) provided a report for the Publications Task Force. With the volunteer work contributed by his graduate students, he was able to place on the WCAA website around 500 international journals, many of them open access, including the journals from WCAA member associations. Mathews also reported that the WCAA blog has been set up, but that there has been little traffic. In order for it to be used, it must be publicised actively by WCAA delegates to the membership of their respective associations. With Prof. Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (Brazil), the first chair of WCAA, Mathews is attempting to launch a world anthropologies journal online, which will appear annually and present one article from each member association's flagship journal. Delegates were thus asked to encourage use of the blog by the membership of their associations, as well as to establish links between the Publications Task Force and their journals to enable the incipient on-line world anthropologies journal.

In the end of this session, the Chair brought up the issue of whether the WCAA should join the International Social Science Council (ISSC), which was established in 1952 by UNESCO. It was concluded that membership in the ISSC might contribute to keeping anthropo-

logy in view as a separate discipline rather than being lumped in with sociology or general social sciences. Thus, the Chair of WCAA was given a mandate to negotiate a one year try-out period for the WCAA membership in ISSC.

Session Two, which followed during the same afternoon, was devoted to Strategic Planning, and was chaired by Prof. Michal Buchowski, the Deputy Chair of WCAA. The introduction into this problematic was given by Prof. Thomas Ruter, who spoke of the need for volunteers in the Task Forces, for the activation of the WCAA Advisory Council (comprising the past delegates) and for the pursuing of a more active political role for the WCAA, "which allows tens of thousands of anthropologists to speak with one voice."

The delegates were then asked to form small groups within which they would discuss the most important strategic questions, and come back to report. Those questions were: funding for WCAA, human resources, political role of and practical action by the WCAA, engagement with public policy, and intellectual challenges, and member associations' expectations from the WCAA. The reports compiled by four such groups were presented by Gordon Mathews (Hong Kong), Jeanette Edwards (UK), Clara Saraiva (Portugal), and Vesna Vucinic-Neskovic (Serbia). Following this session, the delegates were taken on a Heritage Walk to Viceroy Lodge, the former residence of the ruler of India during the colonial times (presently the University Vice Chancellor's Office building), and later on to a dinner on a roof terrace of the India Habitat Centre.

Session Three, organized on April 1st, and chaired by Prof. Setha Low (USA), a member of the Organizing Committee, aimed at discussing further the priorities

identified in Session Two. The Mission Statement Group worked on the slight amendments of the WCAA major document and reported back with the changes proposed by Robert Rowland (Portugal) and Michal Buchowski (Poland). The revised Mission Statement aimed at more strongly stressing that the WCAA's primary objective is to promote the "discipline of anthropology in an international context, with full recognition of the inherent plurality of its constituent national, linguistic and regional traditions." The Intellectual Engagement Group, as reported by Rosita Henry (Australia), selected three research questions that would be taken up by WCAA as panel themes at international and national conferences that would be organized in the next four years. These themes were: "Displacement and Immobility: International Perspectives on Global Capitalism," "Environmental Challenges and Local Knowledge," and "War, Securitisation and Financialisation of Social Life."

Strengthening the Position of Anthropology Group, headed by James Fairhead (UK) reported that: it is necessary to maintain anthropology's visibility within the social sciences, while still collaborating with, and not battling, the other social sciences; it is important to maintain the autonomy of anthropology and resist co-option into the agendas of national states (e.g. Human Terrain initiative); and that WCAA should help enable the move to non-traditional centers of theoretical anthropology. The Advocacy and Outreach Group stressed the importance of the efforts to introduce anthropology into secondary schools, as is being tried out in the UK, Portugal and Brazil, as well as the importance of communicating appropriately with the media, suggesting that WCAA as well as every member association should have a media spokesperson.

Gordon Mathews reported for the Publications Group that so far WCAA's emphasis has tended to be organizational, with no clear-cut intellectual commonality. He described the proposal to establish *Deja Lu*, a WCAA e-journal that would republish the best articles from member association journals every year, as well as the possibility of themed special issues. Edited books as outcomes of WCAA organized panels are desirable, but subject to the difficulty of raising the interest of established publishing houses.

The major proposals of the Funding Group, reported by Graeme MacRae (New Zealand) were: the introduction of dues to be paid by the member associations on a sliding scale based on membership size and national economic standing, the dues which won't be sufficient to fund all the agendas of the WCAA wishes to fulfill, but could contribute to the already established Wenner-Gren annual funding. Also, associations should try to build into their cost structures the funding of their delegates to attend the WCAA meetings, and host organizations for the meetings and symposia should fund room and board for the delegates, with the WCAA restricted to paying airfares. Finally, WCAA should not primarily be a research organization, but it could be a vehicle for applying for research funds at national and international levels.

According to the Ethics Group, as Clara Saraiva reported, WCAA should produce a set of suggestions, rather than ethics guidelines that are an amalgamation of member associations' guidelines. All member associations' guidelines should appear on WCAA website, and they should be analysed. This analysis should be written up and incorporated into the strategic plan. WCAA should promote representation of anthropologists on ethics committees and boards. It would be best if

there could be ethics clearance meetings specifically for anthropologists in order to counter medical hegemony in setting guidelines for ethics in research, but in the absence of separate ethics boards for anthropological research, anthropologists need to sit on larger ethics committees.

Session Four, chaired by Prof. Michal Buchowski, focused on structural reform, the constitutional changes as a result of the reform, and election of the new WCAA Organizing Committee members. The discussion was focused on the need to restructure the Executive in order to distribute work among members, allowing the Chair primarily a coordinating role.

The WCAA Organizing Committee so far consisted of eight members, namely: Thomas Reuter as the Chair, Michal Buchowski as Deputy Chair, Greg Acciaioli as Treasurer (appointed position), Leslie Aiello as a Wenner-Gren Liaison (non-elected), and Mugsy Spiegel, Carlos Caroso, Setha Low and Shalini Randeria as Committee members.

The changes in the membership of the Organizing Committee comprised the need to elect three new members, including one for a new position of Secretary, as well as the election of a new Deputy Chair. The three Committee members were to step out after four years of serving, namely Thomas Reuter, Setha Low and Shalini Randeria. It was also proposed that the Chairs of the three Task Forces should be elected rather than designated by the Organizing Committee, as had been our practice in the past.

A call for nominations and self-nominations had been circulated in advance to all WCAA delegates. From the nominees who stepped forward, a slate (list of candidates) was being offered at the meeting, rather than a competitive election, since the goal was to involve all those willing to volunteer their time and work. During the

elections at which all the delegates voted publicly, the following candidates were elected: Setha Low as Deputy Chair, Chandana Mathur as Secretary, Vesna Vucinic-Neskovic as a Member in charge of organization of WCAA meetings, and Gordon Mathews as a Member in charge of the WCAA website. Also, Virginia Dominguez was elected as the Advocacy and Outreach Task Force Chair, Raminder Kaur as the Ethics Task Force Chair, while the Chair for the Publications Task Force would need to be elected later on by on-line voting.

Session Five, Chaired by Prof. Michal Buchowski dealt with the remaining issues, including the decision that the constitutional changes and the Mission Statement still need to be worked on towards their final forms. The proposal was made by Setha Low that the Wenner-Gren Foundation be approached for additional secretarial support of the WCAA in the next five years. It was also decided that the WCAA will send out a letter listing the benefits it offers to member associations and seeking contributions.

The final discussion turned to possible venues for the 2014 WCAA bi-annual meeting, with preliminary proposals from Brazil, Taiwan, New Zealand and Japan. The most urgent need was to set up panels for the 2013 IUAES World Congress in Manchester according to themes identified by the Intellectual Engagements Group.

The World Council of Anthropological Associations was also intensely engaged in the organizing of the International Symposium "Anthropology of Global Issues", which lasted from the evening of April 1st till noon of April 3rd in the Conference Hall of the University of Delhi. The organizers of the Symposium were Prof. Thomas Reuter (Chair, WCAA), Prof. James Fairhead (Chair, Association of So-

cial Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth, ASA), Prof. Ajit Kumar Danda (President, Indian Anthropological Society IAS), Prof. S. L. Malik (Chair, Dept. of Anthropology, U. of Delhi), and Prof. Soumendra Patnaik (President, Indian Anthropological Association (IAA).

The Symposium opened with plenary speeches of the principal organizers and a special lecture by Prof. Michal Buchowski, the newly elected WCAA Chair, entitled "Complex Power Relations in World Anthropologies: An Example of 'West' and 'East'." Out of altogether twenty panels comprising the Symposium program, five were organized and chaired by the WCAA Organizing Committee members. They were: "Engaged Anthropology from a Global Perspective: Promise and Problems" (Setha Low), "Anthropology and Public Policy: Critical Perspectives and Productive Interventions" (Greg Acciaioli), "Anthropology, Development and the Shaping of Globalization" (Thomas Reuter), "Building a Network of Anthropologists without Borders – ASF" (Carlos Caroso), and "The Growing Power of IRBs and the Issue of Ethics for Anthropology Worldwide" (Mugsy Spiegel). The Symposium was finalized with valedictory panel where the most notable participants gave their critical review of the Symposium themes. The scholarly program was attended by a large number of Indian scholars and students, who also organized a Cultural Evening with classical and folk dances for the Symposium participants.

The Conference "Arts and Aesthetics in Globalizing World" was an event organized by the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (ASA) and the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), with technical support given by NomadIT. The principal hosts were Prof. Susan Visvanathan and Prof.

Parul Dave Mukherji of the School of Arts and Aesthetics and Centre for the Study of Social Systems at JNU. The Conference lasted from April 3rd to 6th, and comprised 52 panels. It started with the inauguration speeches of the principal organizers and the ASA's 2012 Firth Lecture, given by Prof. Ghassan Hage, and entitled "The Transnational Family as an Aesthetic Field". Conference featured three plenary sessions, with three to four papers in each. The WCAA took part in this conference by organizing a panel on "Publishing, Prestige and Money in Global Economy," chaired by Thomas Reuter (U. of Melbourne) and Gordon Mathews (Chinese University of Hong Kong). The panel included papers by the conveners, as well as by Vesna Vucinic-Neskovic (U. of Belgrade), and Ravindra Jain (Jawaharlal Nehru University).

It may be concluded that all three meetings in New Delhi that the WCAA delegates participated in were very well organized, and will remain as pleasant memories for all the participants. The well-rounded program and the accompanying social events, the comfortable accommodation at the University of Delhi guesthouses, as well as the positive academic and social atmosphere at the picturesque grounds of the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University, all made the three international meetings of social anthropologists a very successful event.

All delegates agreed about the need for the WCAA to flourish as a representative body for anthropology in the global context, as well as an experiment towards a best practice model of global intercultural relations.

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