

FINAL REPORT (INIT 60 grant)

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The workshop financed with the Wenner-Gren Foundation *INIT 60 grant* was held in Paris, at the University of Paris X Nanterre, from the 25th to the 27th October 2007. The meeting was attended upon invitation by twenty professional anthropologists from different countries in Europe. Of these, seven in all came from France, and five of them are affiliated with universities and research institutions in the city of Paris and its metropolitan area. Everybody of the twenty invited scholars presented papers or short communications, and took on roles such as session chair or discussant in the course of the meeting. Five of the papers are to be published in a special issue of the journal *Ethnologie Française*, Tome XXXVIII, 2008-4, titled “L’Europe et ses ethnologies”, with a foreword by the co-convenors of the workshop, Martine Segalen and Andrés Barrera-González. These five papers, as well as the rest which were written for the Paris workshop, will be taken into consideration for publication in any of the two volumes scheduled to appear in 2009 as part of a new book series: “Europeanist Anthropology and Ethnology”, which is to be launched by LIT Verlag, Berlin publishers. Papers (*key lectures* and *country preliminary reports*) that are being prepared for the forthcoming Madrid conference-symposium, 2-6 September 2008, will also be considered for publication as part of the volumes referred to above (see: programme of the Madrid conference attached).

The Wenner-Gren workshop was conceived as the preparatory or start up meeting of the project titled: *Anthropology in Europe. Facing the Challenges of European Convergence in Higher Education and in Research. A Review of the Fields of Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology*, which is planned to unfold over three years, from 2007 to 2009. The overall aim of this scholarly endeavour is to map the broad discipline of anthropology as it is practiced in Europe. However, at a first stage we have chosen to restrict the review or account of the ‘state of the art’ to the fields of Socio-

Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology. The project's ultimate aim is to draw a full picture of what anthropology is and where it stands today, as well as to assess its potential for the future. Besides such general and broad aims, this scholarly exercise obtains a more immediate and concrete justification in the need to confront the challenges that the constitution of a common space for research and higher education raises for Europe's anthropologists.

The discipline labelled as General Anthropology is an ample academic field, given that it embraces sub-disciplines which belong to branches of the Humanities, the Social Sciences and even the Natural Sciences. Such a circumstance is reflected, for example, in the listing of anthropology under the Humanities and the Social Sciences in the catalogue of the European Science Foundation. In such a manner that the anthropologists' work tends to overlap or imbricate with that of related disciplines located within a diversity of scientific and scholarly areas. For this same reason, anthropology benefits from an interesting potential as a catalyst in interdisciplinary research, by emphasizing the existing interrelation between the diverse disciplines and scientific practices.

The *Anthropology in Europe* project aims to re-think the current scholarly and scientific state of "Anthropology" understood in its broader sense. Although in this first stage the goal of "mapping" the discipline is restricted to specific sub-fields; and from the territorial perspective is limited to Europe. The purpose in researching the legacy of anthropology is not conceived as a purely historiographical task (to rewrite a special chapter in the history and sociology of science), but in ultimately identifying the most significant contributions of the discipline to science in general, underlining the strong points in its theory, as well as in its epistemology and methodology.

What we are advocating is to somehow mobilising the profession into conducting an exercise of scholarly reflection on the present state of things as regards the discipline of anthropology. More concretely, we are issuing a call to debate and define what would be the specific tasks to carry out, in wide coordination and collaboration, for obtaining a systematic mapping of Europe's *anthropologies* and *ethnologies*¹. In the understanding

¹ In the paper presented at the Paris workshop Charles Macdonald provides a subtle and thoughtful account of the contrasted meanings the words "anthropologie" and "ethnologie" carry in the French

that the drawing of these (static) maps is not an end in itself, but the platform from where to debate on the present status of the discipline, and to weigh up its potential for the future, in an informed way.

The *Anthropology in Europe* project thus aims at mapping and surveying the fields of social and cultural anthropology (including national traditions alternatively labelled as ethnology, ethnography, or folklore studies) as they exist and have been enacted in the different countries and regions of Europe. Yet, this is not meant to be an external assessment or benchmarking exercise to be conducted by some specialised agency, but an intramural exercise of collective self-reflection performed by anthropologists and ethnologists themselves². Moreover, it should be stressed that we are not proposing to undertake a conventional audit or external evaluation of the teaching and research output of individual anthropologists, nor of the departments and institutes where they are set to work. Instead, this is a self-appraisal to be done from inside the profession, as the outcome of concerted action by a number of scholars, in conversation and consultation with the widest spectrum of their peers. Such an exercise may be conceived of as an ethnographic account of the current teaching-training and research practices within anthropology in the European context. Yet, it ultimately aims to contribute at setting the ground for an in-depth intellectual debate across the diverse traditions and fields of General Anthropology.

Taking into consideration the plurality of ‘anthropologies’ and ‘ethnologies’ historically present in Europe, we ought to stress the need to pay attention not just to the four ‘great’ and established traditions (Barth et al, 2005); but to the ‘little’ and emerging ones as well; as much to the ‘hegemonic’ as to the ‘subaltern’ strands of the discipline (Ribeiro and Escobar, eds. 2005). Neither one can avoid critically re-visiting the old controversies on the associations of specific anthropologies with the colonial enterprise; nor the recurring debates on the role of national ethnologies in the processes of nation and state building, and on the legitimising of totalitarian regimes in Europe and

academic context. Moreover, he engages in a critical assessment of the state of affairs in France, which he characterises as being at a crossroads, in a state of confusion, of creative turmoil somehow, as when: “We have a huge capital in the bank but we do not quite know what to do with it”.

² Effectively, the proposed mapping and reviewing of anthropology may be more properly viewed as a gathering of: “comparative and ethnographic accounts of different university systems, and how they are changing the conditions of intellectual practice”. A ‘calling to account’ issued by anthropologists, carried out by anthropologists themselves, by making use of anthropological tools and methods (quoting David Mills, in his presentation at the Paris workshop).

elsewhere (Bausinger, 1993; Ntarangwi et al. eds. 2006). However, the project more specifically aims at triggering and animating a debate, within the bounds of the discipline, on the challenges and opportunities anthropology is to face in the context of ‘academic convergence’ in Europe, as well as in a rapidly globalising world. We hope to contribute in this way to a more integrated and vibrant discipline.

As it was passionately debated during the closing session of the Paris meeting, the likely success of the *Anthropology in Europe* endeavour relies on a number of key conditions:

- a) That we reach as wide as possible a consensus as regards the objectives to pursue with the proposed mapping and reviewing exercise; and that these are clearly defined.
- b) That we can benefit from a substantial measure of intellectual and scholarly leadership; a role that pertains to the more senior members of the profession, some of whom are part of the advisory board to the project.
- c) That we are able to engage the cooperation of the largest number of professional anthropologists; and the departments, research institutes, professional associations, and academic institutions they are affiliated with.
- d) And finally, at a more pragmatic level, on the setting up of common criteria and rules of procedure, so that the same methodologies are applied in conducting the review at the country and regional level (thus assuring the comparability of results). The upholding of these common criteria and methodologies is a task for the chairs of country teams, and members of the steering and coordination committee, to perform. Moreover, as it has been more explicitly the case with *Les Assises de l’Ethnologie et de l’Anthropologie en France*, 2007 (precisely, three prominent members and leaders of this French academic enterprise took part in the Paris meeting) the whole endeavour as we foresee it ought to become a closely collaborative and cooperative undertaking all the way through.

The Paris workshop, financed under Wenner-Gren Foundation’s INIT 60 grant, was the inaugural meeting of the *Anthropology in Europe* project; and it was primarily dedicated to furnishing the scholarly rationale, the theoretical and methodological underpinning for the planned assessment. The forthcoming Madrid conference-symposium, 2-6 September 2008, has as its more specific goal designing and organising the performance of the mapping and review referred to above. Therefore, this sequel to the Paris meeting will be attended mostly by the chairs or leaders and members of the national and regional teams who will take responsibility for carrying out the fieldwork

research (in each of Europe's countries and regions) on which the mapping and review of European socio-cultural anthropology and ethnology is to be based.

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