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wcaa
World Council
of Anthropological
Associations

Minutes

WCAA Interim Meeting

Tuesday 15 November 2011, 3-6 PM, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Montreal

Attending: Michal Buchowski, Ellen Judd, Mugsy Spiegel, Virginia Domingues, Marie Nathalie LeBlanc, Carlos Caroso, Susana Narotzky, Leith Mullings, Shalini Randeria, Bela Feldman-Bianco, Monica Heller, Nurit Bird-David, Karl-Heinz Kohl, Bill Davis, Gordon Mathews, Leslie Aiello, Ullrich Kockel, Vesna Vucinic-Neskovic, Chandana Mathur, Junji Koizumi. Not attending this meeting, but at subsequent events in Montreal: David Shankland, Hassen Chaabani and, from our Advisory Board, Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and John Gledhill.

1. General Activity Report

The chair, Thomas Reuter, and individual contributors provided an overview of activities since our last interim meeting in Perth this July:

Website:

The upgrading of the website is complete, and a final report has been submitted to the Wenner-Gren Foundation, which had provided a \$8200 grant for this initiative. Our webmaster, Rohan, and his company, NomadIT, have been very helpful indeed in facilitating the day-to-day management of WCAA affairs.

The one project yet to be completed is the chair's idea to develop a WIKI database for global research networking. This idea will now be pursued in collaboration with CWA (the Committee for World Anthropology within AAA), who have resources but would like WCAA to host this international facility for researchers on our website.

Action: *Chair to meet with CWA in Montreal and develop a joint plan*

Gordon Mathews has helped to establish a blog and discussion forum on the WCAA website, as a site for discussion of global issues in anthropology. However, there is as yet no audience.

Action: *Gordon to ask delegates and their webmasters / newsletter to promote the blog and forum among the members of their association, by explaining to them its purpose and scope*

Finances:

The finances of the WCAA are in good shape (see Perth minutes). There have been very few expenses, and no recent transactions. An annual report of expenditure has been submitted to Wenner-Gren by the chair. Some long lingering financial reporting issues with CNRS, about Wenner-Gren travel funding for delegates attending the Maynooth meeting, have now been resolved. Once next year's Wenner-Gren funds have been received, there should be \$35000 available in total, most of which will be used in travel support for delegates to attend the New Delhi biennial meeting and symposium (31 March - 4 April 2012). We cannot fund all delegates but we can support all those who really need it.

Action: *Leslie and Thomas to process funding applications by mid-January*

The chair asked whether we should make another call for contributions? Leslie reminded us that WG funding cannot be assumed to be in perpetuity. Virginia noted that contributions must be referred to as 'dues' rather than 'a donation' under the AAA's policy, and asked whether we should not make dues compulsory. Chandana and Thomas noted that special provisions need to be made for those associations that are unable to contribute fully or unable to contribute at all. Delegates agreed that WCAA needs to have more to offer in return, but that contributions are also an investment for future return, most notably, an investment in an internationalisation of the discipline that is egalitarian and inclusive.

Action: *Issue of dues to be considered by the full meeting in Delhi; delegates should consult in advance with their executives so they can make a statement of their association's ability and willingness to invest in WCAA*

Other activities:

1) The centuries-old Royal Dutch Institute for Anthropology and Linguistics (KITLV) has been under threat of closure, and we have offered our support to its director. No public statement has been made until now because negotiations are under way behind the scenes. Our offer of support was very much appreciated.

2) The Indian Sociological Society has gracefully accepted the decision by the WCAA to turn down its application for membership. The case had been difficult; see Perth minutes. There have been no new applications since, but several associations are in the process of applying, including Indonesia, Finland, Sweden, Holland and Switzerland. Delegates noted a need for our 'new members officer', Setha Low, and for all of us, to continue seeking actively for more members from the global south and east.

3) In conjunction with the AAA conference in Montreal, a roundtable discussion on world anthropologies was organized, and also a number social events, including a dinner, two receptions and the AAA president's breakfast. Independently, there was also a panel sponsored by ABA on Brazilian anthropology, a panel on the relationship between US and Canadian anthropology ('Sleeping with the elephant'), and an important 'innovent' by an international group of French-speaking colleagues, on the Lausanne Manifesto for creating a

non-hegemonic world anthropology. Numerous events were organized by our Canadian colleagues to showcase anthropology in their country.

2. Forthcoming Events

New Delhi Biennial meeting

Issues between IAA / IAS and ASA over the Delhi conference were reported to have been resolved in the wake of some fairly intense diplomacy, followed up with concrete steps to improve accessibility for Indian colleagues. This illustrates how the WCAA is steadily raising expectations about international collaboration between associations. While this created some initial tension, subsequent communication and discussion has led to a positive outcome in this case, similar to the case of the AAA offshore conference in Montreal. It is becoming unthinkable now to hold an offshore conference without the collaboration of the host country association and, at the same time, it has become much easier also to initiate such collaborations now that nearly every national association president is a member of an international community, the WCAA.

We will have three business meeting sessions in Delhi, over 1 ½ days, and need to begin developing an agenda for this all important gathering. This historic meeting represents an unprecedented opportunity, with some 40 presidents together in one room.

Action: Chair to coordinate the setting of an agenda in consultation with delegates

Preparation of an academic program for New Delhi has been a complex task, in liaison with ASA and symposium organizer Soumendra Patnaik (President, IAA). We will hold a 1½ day symposium immediately after our business meeting. The symposium will have considerably more scope than previous ones, because of its multiple-panel structure and the involvement of Indian colleagues. We do not yet know whether all panels will go ahead, depending on demand. There is also a WCAA-sponsored panel within the ASA conference. An information letter, invitation and funding application form have been circulated.

Action: All delegates to submit a paper to the symposium or to the ASA conference by 20/12/11

Elections for a new deputy chair and two other ‘Organizing Committee’ members will be held at the Delhi meeting. Candidates need to provide a statement detailing their experience and proposals for WCAA.

Action: Chair to issue an open call for nominations / self-nominations to these offices in early 2012.

A number of problems were discovered in the wording of the WCAA constitution, which will need to be resolved in Delhi before we vote. One issue is that candidates require a two-thirds majority even when there are multiple candidates, which is contradictory. Other ambiguities relate to terms of office. In addition, as we consider the need for some organizational restructuring (see below) further amendments may be required.

Action: Chair to create a committee to draft amendments for the consideration of delegates in New Delhi.

Potential interim meetings in 2012/13

The chair recommended we refrain from scheduling another interim meeting to take place before the Delhi Meeting or to follow immediately thereafter. Rather, we need to consider our options for the second half of the year 2012. Interim meetings involve finding a location and conference that naturally attracts a large number of delegates, given that we cannot provide funding. The conference needs to permit international delegates to give papers in English. The IUAES world congress in Manchester in 2013 is an important event and we should support it by proposing various sessions there as well as possibly holding an interim meeting during the congress. The call for papers for the EASA conference in Paris (9-13 July 2012) is already closed. AAA is always a good option, because it attracts an international audience, as does the ASA, but we should try our best to explore new, additional options outside English-speaking countries. ABA meets in Sao Paulo, 2-5 July 2012; PAAA meets in Nairobi in August 2012, SIEF meets in Tartu, Estonia, July 2013. Delegates thought ABA was a good option.

Action: All delegates to consider the feasibility of hosting an interim gathering at their national conference; decisions to be made before the Delhi meeting; chair to inquire about ABA and PAAA deadlines

3. Report on Task Force Activities

a) Public Outreach / ASF (Chair: Carlos Caroso)

The task team's main initiative has been the ASF, Anthropology Without Borders, and a task force meeting was held earlier the same day as the WCAA meeting to discuss it. A brief report was tabled at the general WCAA meeting.

Major initiatives such as ASF highlight WCAA's need for volunteers. The potential for recruiting volunteers is enormous because our member associations have a joint membership of at least 100,000 individual anthropologists. However, we need a procedure for recruiting and organizing volunteers. Virginia has initiated some legal inquiries about the conditions of establishing such an organization in different countries, and it was decided to incorporate ASF in Brazil as a 'civil society organization in the public interest'. The ASF will be independently run but linked to WCAA, in such a way as to protect WCAA from liability while retaining oversight and providing support to ASF. The details of the legal definition of the relationship still need to be sorted out. The possibilities of ASF are vast, but the task team is still at a pilot project stage with developing ASF. A panel is planned for March 2012 at the WCAA's Delhi symposium, to gather ideas about the concrete activities ASF might undertake. ASF and, more generally, the WCAA's role in providing practical assistance to people worldwide will be a major point of discussion at the Delhi meeting.

Action: Carlos and Virginia to prepare an update on the ASF's relationship to WCAA, governance structure, legal setup, liability issues and procedures - for the consideration of delegates in Delhi

b) Ethics (Chair: Leslie Aiello)

IUAES had asked WCAA to distribute its statement on race, which constitutes an act of approval, and hence we needed to discuss whether delegates were happy with the content. Generally decided we could distribute the statement but should not formally adopt it as our part of our own policy without a proper discussion.

Action: Chair to circulate the IUAES statement to delegates recommending that it be circulated to all members as an IUAES statement

Leslie said she was going to see whether we could not draft a basic ethics code for WCAA, based on the comparison of ethics codes worldwide carried out by Wenner-Gren and based also on some of the discussion we have had at a WCAA-sponsored, ethics-focused panel in Perth. However, Leslie will not be in Delhi.

Action: Ethics Task Force to consider whether we can make progress on a common ethics statement in Delhi or whether this should be taken up in a later meeting

c) Publications (Chair: Gordon Matthews)

Gordon reported that he and his team have listed some 500 online journals in anthropology, many of which are partially or wholly open access. This list is being constantly updated, and constitutes an important resource especially for disadvantaged scholars in our discipline.

The idea of a WCAA journal, with republications of outstanding non-English language papers, is still being considered. David Shankland offered to look for a publishing deal through RAI, or otherwise we may prefer to host an online journal with a volunteer editorial team. Questions that were raised included whether the journal would be only in English, or whether in other major languages too, or perhaps with abstracts in other major languages. The format still needs to be discussed further.

Action: Publications Task Force to come up with a format for a journal to put to the Delhi meeting

Karl-Heinz Kohl suggested we produce a handbook of world anthropologies by soliciting a contribution from every national anthropological community. He has some money for this project and a publisher.

Action: Karl-Heinz to write a call to presidents for nominating contributors or, failing that, to consider holding a conference or to republish some articles on this topic previously published elsewhere

4. Discussion on Future Directions of the WCAA

The chair noted that WCAA is now facing a number of structural issues that are arising as a natural consequence of the continuing growth of WCAA, both in terms of its size and scope.

One problem is the lack of an income stream other than Wenner-Gren funding and sporadic voluntary contributions, already mentioned above. This limits our ability to provide new services, or to continue services that are subject to an escalation of costs as WCAA grows, such as providing travel funding to maintain equity in delegates' ability to participate.

Action: Carlos and Shalini, with treasurer Greg Acciaioli and advised by Mugsy, to explore and report on alternative sources of funding to the Delhi meeting

The other major issue is one of human resources or (wo-)manpower. We have only 38 individuals available to volunteer time, and most of them are in fact unavailable because they are already over-committed as current presidents of their associations. Delegates discussed a range of possibilities: we could request a second delegate from each member association, or explore other options for seeking volunteers from among the individual membership of member associations. Such volunteers could be included within the task forces, but then task forces should be acknowledged in our constitution. We could also explore a way of including former delegates other than or in addition to the Advisory Council, because the Advisory Council presently serves no real function at present and it is not even clear what kinds of events its members should be invited to or what kind of information they should receive. We could also add a non-voting office of Past-Chair to ensure more continuity. While the system of delegation of duties within the Organizing Committee that we introduced in Maynooth has been helpful, the chairperson is still overworked and hence finds it difficult to drive the agenda of the WCAA forward toward new horizons, and one way to remedy this would be to expand the responsibilities of the task forces. Another would be to appoint a secretary to handle the bulk of communication work. Whatever pathway we take, increasing the number of individuals contributing time and energy to the WCAA will mean structural reform because these individuals will need to be assigned roles.

There are also questions to be addressed about the political role of the WCAA in future. We have built a strong system of democratic representation that gives the council the legitimate ability, upon consultation on a case-by-case basis, to allow some 100000 anthropologists in nearly 40 countries to speak with one voice. This ability for world anthropology to speak out with one voice is an unprecedented opportunity because such a strong democratic representational structure has never before existed. The question is now, what do we have to say? What can we contribute to global debates about global issues, or about recurrent issues at the local-global interface? Do we want to be mere bystanders in globalisation or do we have an opinion worth articulating? And finally, what kind of action can anthropologists take on a more practical level, within ASF or through other outreach activities?

Action: Deputy Chair to head a committee to develop ideas for future directions and structural reforms within WCAA for the consideration of delegates at the Delhi meeting; Committee members include Michal, Seta, Chandana, Gordon and Vesna, but all delegates are welcome to contribute ideas to Michal in writing

5. WCAA's relationship with CWA and IUAES

Thomas, Mugsy and Junji Koizumi reported on the progress of the IUAES since the world congress in Kunming. This is important because apart from WCAA, IUAES is the only other fully international organization in anthropology, and the two organizations should collaborate closely in the service of the discipline. The IUAES has drafted a new set of statutes (constitution) that, if approved, will see the organization restructured, shifting the power of decision-making from what is presently called the Permanent Council to the General Assembly and Scientific Commissions. The IUAES will then be an organization

based on a global community of individual members, and will no longer be built on a nation state model. Until now, the IUAES was controlled by the Permanent Council, which aimed to operate on a UN model of national representation, something that has proved difficult to put into practice. As the WCAA has grown to include ever more national (and regional) associations, represented on the council by their elected presidents, from the perspective of the global anthropology community that aspect of the IUAES's Permanent Council is increasingly being fulfilled by the WCAA. Already now and particularly once restructured, however, the IUAES will offer services to anthropologists that the WCAA does not, and this will make the two organizations complementary, and natural partners. Delegates noted that a merger or close alliance should be considered when the time is right. Michal did some analysis of the relationship based on comparison of the two organizations' constitutions. IUAES also is getting its membership processes in order and is asking us to promote its new membership drive.

Action: WCAA will strongly promote the IUAES membership drive through its networks

The chair reported that he would be meeting with the AAA's CWA leadership, notably Setha Low and Gustavo Lins Ribeiro whilst in Montreal. One item that we have been in discussion about is the possibility of collaboration in the development of web-based resources such as a wiki for research collaboration, and resources for post-graduate students.

6. Any Other Business

Should we join ISSC?

The chair has discussed the benefits and cost of joining The International Social Science Council with Mike Murphy, Senior Executive Officer of ISSC, and circulated an information brochure (appended). A representative of ISSC was planning to attend the WCAA's meeting but the schedule proved to be impossible. The main issue for us is the cost-benefit balance. The matter could not be decided because few had had an opportunity to read the information, and the meeting had run out of time to explain adequately the complex activities of ISSC.

Action: Delegates please to read the brochure and form an opinion so we can make a decision, by the latest in Delhi

Appended:

- ASF report
- ISSC brochure

NB: These minutes were first circulated and then adopted, on 20 December 2011.

Draft of Mission Statement of ASF

(Antropologos sem fronteras/ Antropólogos sin fronteras/ Anthropologues sans frontières/ Anthropologists without Borders)

Description

ASF is a non-profit organisation and global network of anthropologists established in 2011 following deliberations by a task force of the World Council of Anthropological Associations (WCAA). It draws on knowledge and experience acquired by anthropologists around the world and connects groups seeking their expertise with specialist anthropologists able to serve as critical readers, examiners, and reviewers of reports and documents about which they may have substantial doubt.

Background

ASF is founded on the belief that the basic methods and field study strategies of anthropology -- extended fieldwork, participant observation, and collaborative research -- foster deep-seated connections between practising anthropologists and those amongst and alongside whom they conduct research. Drawing on these connections, and on disciplinary traditions ranging from the advocacy anthropology of a previous generation to the concerns of present-day engaged anthropological approaches, ASF brings the expertise of a worldwide network of anthropologists to bear on situations in which groups of people or self-identified communities may be facing legal, political, economic, or indeed survival challenges. The cultural familiarity and insight that anthropologists might bring to such situations is of interest to those social groups, as well as to NGOs that support them, to governments, and to international organisations, and is potentially pivotal to the peaceful and just resolution of these conflicts.

Access/location

ASF can be accessed via the Internet through its central office, based in Brazil. Although it is a global network of anthropologists concerned to provide such insight, it maintains a central office in Brazil capable of reading mail and responding in Portuguese, English, Spanish, and French. Language competence in other languages may well be possible in the future. To access ASF, a group of people or a self-identified community (or an NGO allied to such a group) anywhere in the world with doubts about a report issued by any agency should contact ASF via its Internet website.

Scope

ASF will make itself available for help within the limits specified below. ASF will connect groups approaching ASF (with manageable projects within our Mission) with specialist anthropologists who will serve as critical readers. These specialist anthropologists will read, examine, review, and, where needed, critique official reports and documents brought to the attention of ASF. They will do so at no cost to the group that approaches ASF for help, and they will do so within a reasonable period of time, dependent in part on the length of the report or document in question. The “without borders” appellation in ASF emphasizes our openness to people worldwide, whether they are located in the Global South or in the Global North, or living between both. It also indicates the extent to which the expertise on which we draw is global and prefers not to be limited by the borders that politicians and others create to separate and indeed segregate portions of humanity from one another.

At the present time, ASF is a network of critical readers and not an advocacy group, a funding source, or a network of field-based research teams.

Should ASF succeed on this scale, among the activities ASF considers doing in the future are: (1) working on developing an Internet forum to enable collaboration between anthropologists from different parts of the world and/or different subfields, (2) creating a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities for anthropologists (student, active, retired), and (3) establishing a database of “expert witnesses” who could be called upon to testify in a trial or assist with legal matters.

ISSC

Energizing action within and beyond the social sciences

The human and social dimension of the global problems of today, from climate change and poverty to ethnic conflict and epidemics, is undeniable and key. To unravel the complexity behind these challenges and to help design holistic, evidence-based policy solutions, the need for social sciences is therefore evident. In a world where globalisation is eroding national boundaries, research must also bridge its disciplinary and regional divides and incorporate a diversity of voices and methodologies. Developing such integrated research demands the input of the social sciences.

For this reason, the ISSC works to energize dialogue across disciplines and fields, to connect research and practice and to provide a basis for the exchange of knowledge and a change of course.

The ISSC in a snapshot

The International Social Science Council (ISSC) is the **primary international body which represents the social, economic and behavioural sciences**. Its mission is to promote their presence, authority, capacities and connectivity by bringing together and fostering exchange between social science researchers, funders and policy makers from across the globe.

Established in 1952 by UNESCO, the ISSC is an independent non-governmental organization. It is made up of a **wide and growing global membership** of international professional associations and unions, regional and national social science academies and research councils, and other organizations with major interests in the social sciences.

The council is governed by a General Assembly and an elected Executive Committee, and co-ordinated by a Paris-based secretariat.

The ISSC draws its strengths from:

- **its global membership**
- a **comprehensive disciplinary spread** across the social science spectrum
- its **strategic partnerships**, e.g. with UNESCO and the international councils representing the natural and human sciences ICSU and CIPHS
- **proven experience in convening global joint ventures**, such as the World Social Science Fora and World Social Science Reports
- the **efforts and dedication of its elected officers**

Activities

The ISSC's main objective is to increase the demand for, the production and the use of interdisciplinary, comparative social science knowledge in order to help solve global priority problems. This involves the Council in:

- **Scoping and agenda-setting:** identifying social science priorities and bringing social science framings into international, integrated science visioning processes
- **Advocacy and promotion:** securing the voice and visibility of the social sciences in other fields of science, amongst policy makers and in society
- **Networking:** connecting a global membership base and fostering communities of practice comprising researchers, funders, policy makers, practitioners, and civil society actors
- **Capacity development:** building capacity for international collaboration on the basis of equality, inclusiveness and mutual respect, and promoting a new generation of globally connected world social science leaders
- **Fundraising:** securing resources for international, comparative social science research on global priority problems
- **Science policy advice:** feeding social science visions and needs into national, regional and international science policy making and funding for a
- **Communications and dissemination:** drawing attention to the state of social science knowledge production around the world and spotlighting social science results and contributions to global priority problems

These diverse roles translate into a portfolio of international scientific programmes, events, publications and partnerships, which include:

- A **World Social Science Forum** series
- Regular **World Social Science Reports**
- A **World Social Science Fellows Programme**
- Membership of **international scientific alliances** (e.g. around the establishment of a new Earth System Sustainability Initiative) and **funding fora** (such as the Belmont Forum)
- **Sponsorship of international programmes, including:**
 - **International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change** – www.ihdp.org (co-sponsored by the International Council for Science and the United Nations University)
 - **Integrated Research on Disaster Risk programme** - www.irdrinternational.org (co-sponsored by the International Council for Science)

- **Comparative Research Programme on Poverty** - www.crop.org
- **Gender, Globalisation and Democratization programme** - www.isscggd.org
- International Prizes including the **Stein Rokkan** and **Mattei Dogan prizes**

ISSC

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