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SANA: Where to next?

For our retreat at the San Francisco meetings this year, SANA President Sandi Morgan asked Patricia Zavella, Jeff Maskovsky, and Catherine Kingfisher to present their views on current and future directions for SANA. Sandi indicated that she wanted board members to

.....consider longer term and strategic goals for the section. Given what is hopefully going to be a momentous change in the direction of the United States, with other changes afoot both related to these and separately in Mexico and Canada, the point is to think about what SANA should be doing as we enter and weather an unprecedented economic crisis, the potential for significant changes in political direction and politics, and the legacy of and potential changes in foreign policy and global relations.

After the presentations, the board decided to publish the three statements in this issue of NAD, in the hopes of getting a conversation going about these topics. Readers are encouraged to submit their responses to these

comments, or, alternatively, to send in their own visions for SANA. Responses to the information provided in this issue on Non-Americans Researching Mainstream American Culture (MACnet) are also welcome. Please send your comments and suggestions to c.kingfisher@uleth.ca by June 1 for inclusion in the next issue of NAD. Thank you.

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Commentary I Transnational Migration and Latinization: Reflections on Key Research Directions for the Society of the Anthropology of North America

Patricia Zavella

Transnational migration from Latin America to the United States and Canada has increased significantly in the past 20 years or so, yet there are differences in terms of social policies and social relations in each nation. About half of all authorized migrants arriving in the United States in the 1990s but only seven percent of migrants

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Maria D. Vesperi and Alisse Waterston are SANA publications co-chairs. Ideas and submissions for NAD can be addressed to the editor, Catherine Kingfisher, Department of Anthropology, University of Lethbridge, in Alberta, Canada (c.kingfisher@uleth.ca).

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in Canada in the same time frame came from Latin America and the Caribbean (Bloemraad 2006). I will describe briefly the changes engendered by transnational migration, focusing on my own expertise in relation to Latinos in the United States, and then discuss the implications in terms of possible future directions for those of us who conduct research in North America.

In the United States, the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 set in motion a series of transformations that accelerated after the passage of NAFTA. IRCA was designed to prevent further unauthorized immigration through increased border enforcement and sanctions for employers who hired the unauthorized. However, the bill also established a legalization program, or

“amnesty” as it became known, allowing those who could demonstrate they had lived in the United States for five years or who had 90 days of agricultural employment to apply for permanent residence. With the help of many community-based and faith-based organizations, more than three million immigrants gained permanent resident status through this law, over a million through the Special Agricultural Workers program. These permanent residents, mainly men, then were able to reunite their families by bringing over partners and children, although the process of family stage migration could take years. In the post-IRCA era, there has been an increase in migration by women and children so that women now make up 46 percent of authorized migrants from Mexico and about one-third of all unauthorized migrants, up from 45 percent of women migrants in the pre-IRCA era for authorized migrants and 26 percent for unauthorized women migrants (Massey et al. 2002:134).

While family stage migration and increased migration by women was taking place, NAFTA (passed in 1994) solidified integration in North America. Indeed, some argue that at least in agriculture, there already was one labor market linking the United States and Mexico (Palerm and Urquiola 1993). My own research on food processing finds that NAFTA advanced integration in North America as production and processing were outsourced from California to Mexico and frozen food was marketed to the United States and Canada (Borrego and Zavella 1999). In particular, NAFTA’s agricultural provisions resulted in a flood of subsidized corn being imported into Mexico from the United States, leaving at least 1.5 million rural families (some researchers claim twice that number) unable to market their corn and driven out of business. Many displaced peasants were forced to move to cities or to cross the border into the United States to seek work. In addition, with NAFTA’s weak labor provisions, Mexican workers lost their ability to join unions and saw their real wages fall by more than 20 percent

during the first five years after the implementation of NAFTA. Today, workers in Mexico's vast export manufacturing sector, the maquiladoras, earn less in real wages than previously and are unable to provide basic necessities for a family. Many of these workers eventually choose the hardships and uncertainties of crossing the border over the certainty of long hours in unhealthy conditions for below-subsistence wages (López 2007), leading to increased unauthorized migration to the United States.

The U.S. federal government tends to see migrant settlement as a private concern and only officially recognized refugees, historically those fleeing Communist regimes, receive benefits under refugee resettlement programs. The Canadian federal government views immigrant settlement and incorporation as a public issue necessitating some government support and oversees programs helping immigrants with basic language instruction (in English or French), and providing settlement support; the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program also funds community organizations to provide reception, orientation, translation, interpretation and referral services as well as some counseling, especially related to employment (Bloemraad 2006). Mexico serves as a migrant settlement locale for U.S. citizens, where an estimated one million, mainly retirees, reside. Further, Mexico's own border enforcement practices against migrants from Latin America who are seeking entry into the United States are as draconian as those in the United States (Nazario 2006; Ruíz 2001).

In the aftermath of IRCA and NAFTA in the United States, a discernable "baby boom" of children born to Latina permanent residents ensued (Johnson et al. 2001). However, the fertility of women in Mexico as well as U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinas has been declining (Chavez 2004), leading demographers to predict the Latina baby boom will be of relatively short duration. Nonetheless, the increased migrations from Latin America and increased births to Latinas in the United States are fueling the

growing numbers of Latinos in the United States as well as their dispersal throughout the country.

There are now sizable enclaves of migrants from Latin America who are establishing new communities throughout North America away from historical settlement regions in the Southwest. These new settlement regions range from Atlanta to Alaska, Vancouver to Pennsylvania—places without long histories of Latino migration, although there may be many other migrant populations. Further, emigration has profound implications for Mexico, where approximately 11 percent of those who were born in Mexico and remain Mexican citizens reside in the United States (Castañeda 2007: xii). Indeed, the inability to forge a new migration policy through the initiatives of George W. Bush and Vicente Fox contributed to Fox's political demise. Cities like Vancouver in Canada are also experiencing a small but noticeable increase in migration from Latin America, especially exiles from Chile and Argentina, as well as economic migrants from the Caribbean and Central America (Habell-Pallán 2002).

These demographic and social changes pose myriad challenges to scholars who aim to understand the complex nature and multifaceted consequences of these population shifts as well as to policy leaders who must develop the best policies and practices for nations with new ethno-racial mixtures.

In the United States, the Latino population is increasing dramatically yet is diverse. Among the more than 35 million Latinos in the United States, of which Mexicans are about 60 percent, less than half (approximately 15 million) were born in Latin America (U.S. Census 2000). By 2006, through birthrates and immigration, Latinos had become the largest ethno-racial group in the United States, comprising 15 percent of the population (Pew Hispanic Center 2008). Latinos will reach 24 percent of the country's population by 2050. The press reports daily about the surging numbers of Latinos in the United States, their emerging majority status in California (already visible in elementary

schools), and their influence throughout the country. Indeed some suggest that Latinos are “remaking America” (Suárez-Orozco and Páez 2002). Demographers estimate there are more than 12 million unauthorized migrants, of which more than half are from Mexico (Passel 2005:4). Yet in 2005 migrants were only about 13 percent of the total U.S. population (Hossain 2007). Further, according to the PEW Hispanic Center, the undocumented are only five percent of the U.S. labor force (cited in Pear 2007).

These demographic shifts have significant implications for research in the United States. I want to share some brief findings to suggest how social relations and constructions of meaning will become even more complicated:

- Victoria Malkin (2007) and Jennifer Hirsch (2003) illustrate the process of settlement in new locales, often quite recent, where migrants negotiate workplaces, changing gender expectations and practices, and construct some transnational ties.
- Some research shows worrisome processes of ethnic succession, for example Nestor Rodriguez’s (1995) work in Dallas where employers recruited indigenous Guatemalans over African Americans in service sector work. Ironically, Guatemalan migrants, who normally could only afford low-income housing, found upscale apartments as the housing market tanked.
- Natalia Deeb-Sossa and Jennifer Bickham-Mendez’s (2008) research in the Nuevo South illustrates troubling gendered and racial dynamics where African American social workers and professionals are enforcing exclusionary practices toward new migrants, especially women.
- Michelle Habell-Pallán’s (2002) work on a Latino theater group suggests that immigrants are expressing their cultural pride and political sentiments in Canada.
- Francis Aparicio’s (2007) research on the immigrant rights protests in Chicago finds that significant numbers of the participants were U.S. citizens, the children of migrants,

who are demanding both state accountability for abuses against the undocumented and that they be seen as belonging to the nation rather than as security threats.

These projects, based on ethnographic research, suggest the possibilities for multicultural collaborations as well as tensions between migrants from Latin America and already established ethno-racial groups.

In addition, there are myriad changes occurring in relation to migrants’ relationships with their countries of origin, *transnational* social fields, communication processes, social formations such as binational families or grassroots organizations, as well as transnational imaginaries and identities:

- Lynn Stephen (2007) illustrates how indigenous Mexican migrants construct diverse, transborder organizing activities as they move along well-known routes that take them from Oaxaca through California before arriving in Oregon. Indigenous organizations struggle for access to rights related to labor, health, education, cultural revitalization, and reunited families, often using the Internet to maintain communication across national borders.
- Ann López (2007) illustrates how the agricultural labor market transcends the international border between Mexico and the United States as peasants in west central Mexico struggle to grow crops despite green revolution pressures and migrate to work in agribusiness in California.
- Gina Pérez (2004) illuminates translocal constructions of family and identity where Puerto Ricans in Chicago have long histories of connections to Puerto Rico, U.S. citizenship and frequent migration, which lead to fluid identities.
- Lionel Cantú’s (2000, 2001, 2008) research on gay Mexican men finds that social networks that cross class and racial lines facilitate movement of men seeking communities and when they are able to send home remittances,

their families are more likely to express acceptance of their out identities and chosen families.

These ethnographies leave us with understandings of translocality (Guarnizo and Smith 1998)—a set of social relations that differ in sites linked by globalization and that are yet connected through transitional social relations or imaginaries.

As I sketch out these remarks, I notice that I keep circumscribing myself and referring only to the countries in North America when some of these processes encompass larger geopolitical areas. For example, the relatively large number of people (11 percent) who leave Mexico for the United States suddenly seems less so when we compare them to the 25 percent who leave El Salvador, initially displaced by civil war and increasingly fleeing poverty and dollarization of the Salvadoran economy. Further, there are suggestions that declining births in Mexico indicate migration to the United States may actually *decrease* by as early as 2015 (Castañeda 2007: 111), perhaps leading to labor shortages in sectors such as agriculture. These findings suggest to me the importance of historicizing social transformations, attentive to processes that are not necessarily likely to continue as well as those with deep roots.

All of this research raises questions that we should ponder as we reflect upon future directions in research in North America: How are ethno-racial subjects rooted in Canada, Mexico or the United States interacting with “newcomers” who may be migrant from locales around the world? Where are the points of tension or conflict and what are the conditions that lead to moments of solidarity between migrants and citizens? How do these processes of migration relate to power relations based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and/or class? How are subjects expressing their human agency through collective action, cultural activities, labor organizing, or directing their efforts to their countries of origin? How can we conduct research that pays attention to transnationalism

that may involve all three countries in North America? How do we research processes related to U.S. imperialism or hegemony without U.S. centrism? And finally, given, how globalization has transformed North America, does it make sense to move from the Society for the Anthropology of North America to the Society for the Anthropology of the Americas?

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Commentary II

Some New Directions in Anthropology "At Home"

Jeff Maskovsky

The anthropology of the United States is a tricky business, and scholars conducting research "at home" continue to face several critical intellectual challenges. As I have argued in a previous issue of *North American Dialogue* (Maskovsky 2006), we must first and foremost take seriously the postcolonial critique of area studies' complicity with imperialism and place U.S. empire at the center of analysis. This will require us not only to bring other regions into our frame of knowledge about the United States. It will also require us to treat U.S. imperialism as a domestic phenomenon—that is, as a mode of U.S. state activity that has concrete effects not only upon the nations and cultures it seeks to impact but also upon the nation and culture from which it emanates.

The story of the decline of Bush's imperial presidency, for example, cannot be told without

mention of the domestic travesty of the bungled federal response to Hurricane Katrina in August and September 2005—a tragedy created and worsened, in part, by the demotion of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to a department of Homeland Security and by the long-term diversion of National Guard personnel and government resources to Iraq. Accordingly, I think much can be learned by providing detailed ethnographic accounts of U.S. imperialism's instabilities, limits, complexities, and contradictions at home. Here are a few tentative suggestions for future directions that build from this perspective.

First, we may wish to rethink some of the ways we talk about neoliberalism. The concept has been helpful in describing the connection of U.S. imperialism to the global reorganization of the relationship of capital and labor and in describing the attendant modes of subjectification and governmentalization that have accompanied this reorganization. Yet, we should be careful not to overstate the power of neoliberalism, or to focus on it to the exclusion of other forms of power, authority and government. As Catherine Kingfisher and I have argued recently (Kingfisher and Maskovsky 2008), if the concept is not used with a great deal of nuance, major power dynamics can be overlooked. It may be useful, in fact, to think more in terms of neoliberalism's limits, limitations, and failures rather than in terms of its apparent successes. The current global economic crisis dramatizes this point (though it appears that neoliberal economic orthodoxy continues to hold sway in some quarters, particularly inside of the United States). So too does the U.S. ascendancy of neoconservatism during the Bush era, which is in many respects a direct consequence of the failures of Clinton-era neoliberalism to work as promised at governmental, economic, and social levels. The point here is that by complicating our understanding of neoliberalism, by emphasizing its articulations with other governing, institutional and structural forces and practices, we can gain a better understanding of contemporary power relations.

A second and related point is that we need to concern ourselves as much with illiberal governing practices as with liberal governing practices. Post 9/11, we saw a pronounced yet highly contradictory (and hardly unprecedented) expansion of coercive state action and surveillance in domestic and foreign arenas of politics, culture, and economics, and the Bush Administration's shift toward a more openly aggressive and authoritarian state will have far-reaching effects inside and outside of the United States. The Obama Administration has already reversed some of the Bush Administration's most egregious imperial policies. But others will remain in place. Let us not forget President Obama's vow to step up U.S. involvement in the war on terror in Afghanistan even as he promises to withdraw from Iraq, and that in his first week in office, he authorized U.S. military interdiction in Pakistan. Indeed, thus far Obama's criticism of the Iraq war is less about the immorality of this war (or about war in general) and more about its deleterious impact on the United States' capacity to maintain global hegemonic status. We must also contend with the endemic pattern of corruption that has been exposed by the current economic crisis. Unfortunately, the recent fascination with post-Foucaultian governmentalism is one theoretical tendency that may screen out attention to the modes of domination, corruption, and authoritarianism that are in play at the current conjuncture. We need to talk about domination and consent, the liberal and the illiberal, as part and parcel of contemporary regimes of power.

Third, we must retain our focus on difference and inequality. New imperial dynamics will shape—and be shaped by—interrelations of race, class, gender, and sexuality. The wave of populist resentment at the Wall Street bailout poses the most significant challenges to the U.S. business elite's political domination that we have seen in decades, supply side orthodoxy is now in shambles, and the Obama administration's economic stimulus package promises job creation and other demand-side measures that

have been off the table for decades. Yet the precise implications of these developments and of others, such as the Obama Administration's return to multinationalist foreign policy, for U.S. — and global — class politics is far from clear.

Moreover, articulations of race to class continue to shape U.S. political culture in complex and unexpected ways. For example, the debate over economic stimulus has been framed — most notably by Barack Obama, not by neoconservatives — as a battle for priority between Wall Street and Main Street. Although the concept of Main Street has proven an effective populist rallying cry, outflanking the right's divisive rhetoric of "small town values" and "the real America" (most explicitly deployed by Sarah Palin), it also resonates with long-standing U.S. class and racial ideologies that prioritize some segments of the U.S. working class (suburban whites) over others (urban blacks). Simultaneously, the right has attempted repeatedly to place blame for the credit crisis on what it considers to be misguided attempts during the Clinton Administration to extend homeownership opportunities to victims of racial discrimination. It comes as no surprise that the right is using the current situation to lay the groundwork for a renewed attack on governmental policies that address racial and class-based inequalities. To make matters even more complicated, the Obama Administration is by no means averse to using postracial rhetoric to justify and legitimate its domestic policies. For example, the new White House's urban agenda thus far places an inordinate amount of emphasis on personal responsibility and almost none at all on racial discrimination in labor and housing markets. In fact, Obama's urban agenda thus far resonates strongly with the ideas of William Julius Wilson, whose "underclass" paradigm calls for "structural" solutions (demand-side public employment) but also downplays the persistence of racial inequality and endorses the idea of ghetto pathology. This fact — and the challenges it poses for the pursuit of racial justice — cannot be ignored even by those of us

who celebrate his electoral victory and who see it as an important milestone in American politics.

The fault lines of 21st century U.S. culture wars are also shifting. In some respects, the religious right's power is in decline, but the political and cultural obsession with family values continues in many respects to hold sway, as is evidenced by the passage of Proposition 8 in California. Indeed, the struggle for — and against — same-sex marriage is but one example that demonstrates the changing nature of coalition politics on both the left and the right. And some on the left are using the credit crisis as the latest excuse to push for a platform of economic populism that is disdainful of cultural radicalism and that tends to view identity politics — feminism and movements for racial justice and sexual liberation — as at best a troublesome diversion from, and at worst a threat to, a new working class politics. Clearly, more ethnography is needed to trace new articulations of difference and inequality in U.S. politics — and in new transnational movements as well.

What may be emerging in the United States today is a kinder, gentler imperial scene, one that gains leeway for itself by prioritizing postpartisanship and pragmatism and by discrediting identity politics and class politics as divisive. But life in Barack Obama's America, as the pundits are now calling it, is likely to be unpredictable. The sources of instability are numerous, and cannot be traced exclusively to the global economic crisis, the limitations of neoliberalism or geopolitics alone. The impoverished and oppressed may yet weigh in. What, if anything, subordinated groups do with the newfound sense of political power that Barack Obama's political victory has given to them will be interesting to watch. By focusing on the limits, limitations, and failures of neoliberal government, on new modes of coercion and consent, and on new patterns of difference and inequality, we will keep ourselves busy for many years to come.

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Commentary III

Continuities, Travels and Directions

Catherine Kingfisher

When Sandi asked me to discuss possible research directions for SANA, I tried to think about what might be different about these times that would herald new terrain we need to pay attention to, but in the end I decided that, in many ways, what we have is a case of *plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*. There's nothing terribly surprising, for instance, about the current economic crisis, or about the ways in which we're dealing with it—bail outs that benefit the wealthy and tax (in all senses of the word) the struggling and the poor, and that are allowing us to do in the so-called first world what we've never allowed indebted so-called third world countries to do. Nor are the various wars we're embroiled in surprising. Nor is the environmental crisis news. All of these things, of course, take on the valence of emergencies, but these kinds of phenomena always have and always will. And so, despite the election of Barack Obama, and the levels of electricity that has generated across the globe, this is a time of urgency, and of urgent sameness.

But I think this more-of-the-sameness and the urgencies associated with it require some rethinking of our research strategies, and I want

to discuss two topics in this regard: our centering of the United States, and knowledge travels. I'll then conclude with a few comments about some specific topics we might want to attend to.

First, SANA needs to continue to work on balancing the relative emphases on Canada, the United States, and Mexico. There have, of course, been good reasons for placing the U.S. at the center of our research endeavors. In terms of anthropology as a discipline, we've historically needed to focus on the U.S. because a cultural blind spot, or less generously, an arguably racist emphasis on the exotic other undermined the legitimacy of an anthropology at home. Putting the U.S. front and center has thus served as a theoretical and political corrective.

In addition, the U.S. does in fact play a central role internationally, both materially and in global imaginaries. Just about the entire world had its eyes fixed on the U.S. during this last election. On election night, the coverage I watched was Canadian, and polls were conducted not just in the United States but across the globe, indicating some kind of collective agreement that the U.S. is very important. (I'm sure, for instance, that NBC didn't have five hours of special coverage of the recent Canadian election—and many Americans probably didn't even know we were having an election in Canada.)

In putting the U.S. front and center, however, we reinforce its own idea of itself as the center of the universe, and so I've always advocated for putting the U.S. in a larger international and global context. It's pretty much *de rigueur* in anthropological work in other places (like New Zealand and Canada, where I work) that analyses need to be situated in the context of a global political and cultural economy. This has to do with basic reality: what goes on in Canada, for instance, is inextricably tied to what goes on in New Zealand, the UK, the U.S., etc. Much of what we pay attention to at the local level has connections with elsewhere. In my own work, looking at policy trends in one place has entailed looking at what Collier and Ong (2005) refer to as "global forms," like neoliberalism. So we

always need to ask, how do these trends in governance, ideology, or forms of violence emerge? What are the circuits of travel and transformation of ideas and practices, and how do particular assemblages come into being? I think we need to extend that framing and contextualizing of our work to research on and in the U.S. as well. Not that people don't already do this. I'd just like to see it done more.

Having said that, we need to always also remain firmly grounded in the local, in the ethnographic particulars of specific contexts and unfolding, emergent patterns. These tensions of scale and contextualization are no news to anyone in SANA—I just want to underscore their ongoing importance, and our ongoing need to take them seriously.

There is another issue related to context and scale that I'd like to raise here, and that is the temporal disjuncture between research time and the stream of life. What is the relationship between the temporality of our research projects, and the immediacies and urgencies that we see unfolding, in terms of, for example, the current economic melt down?

My own research practices evince a glaring temporal gap. For the last five years I've been doing work on the travel of the New Zealand model of neoliberal welfare state restructuring to Alberta, Canada, and on the indigenization of New Zealand approaches in the Albertan context. This has involved securing funds, lots of fieldwork in two research sites, reams of data, endless analysis, and now writing—with an effort to include analysis not only of the ethnographic particulars of my field sites, but also, at a more general theoretical level, analysis of what happens to our understanding of global shifts toward neoliberalism if instead of looking at central welfare states, like the U.S. and the UK, we look at more marginal welfare states, like New Zealand and Canada—which, as it turns out, played huge, if unrecognized, roles in these global shifts. All of these things take time. And even now, I'm looking at another two to three years before actual publication of this material.

This is typical of my functioning as a researcher. But I struggle, as no doubt do others, with the shape of my final products in relation to the actual social processes to which they're referring and to nonacademic audiences, and policy makers in particular.

I did make an attempt recently to accommodate my research work to real time. A few years ago, there was a homelessness crisis in my town that absorbed pretty much everyone. I was lucky enough to be on sabbatical at the time, and because the crisis spoke to my interests in both policy and the negotiation of pariah status, I decided to do some very short and dirty work on how the homeless and homelessness were being constructed. I hoped to contribute to local decision making about what resources would be offered to which homeless, when, and how.

Although the situation was neither more nor less urgent than that of the poor single mothers I usually work with, I decided to go for a more immediate response as opposed to taking a year or two to really figure out what was going on, and so I undertook a mere four months of fieldwork. And in trying to do something that fit within the temporal frames of local debate and decision making, I produced a report for the city that in retrospect was piecemeal and incomplete—and so, at one level dangerous—although the alternative was to stay out of the conversation altogether, because a report written five years after the event is useless. I say piecemeal and incomplete because of what I learned this past year when I got involved in another shelter crisis in my town, this time having to do with a homeless shelter for women and kids. Without going into too much detail, the first shelter controversy centered on addicted aboriginal men, who served as the symbolic repository of everything that was wrong in Lethbridge. I argued in my analysis that gender was one of the reasons why Native homeless men were such a problem for the non-Native housed: they violated one set of gender norms in their dependence but at the same time were hypermasculinized in the physical and

sexualized threat that people felt they posed. So this year, six years later, I participated in some public hearings on the relocation of the Native Women's Transition Home, a shelter that serves mostly Native women and their children, only to find that the same fear and loathing were there, only this time directed against women and kids. And I realized in retrospect that my original analysis, although heavily focused on race, wasn't focused on it enough, because the non-Native people resisting the placement of Native Women's Transition in their neighborhood expressed fear of their (white) kids encountering Native kids in the local playground. My original analysis was not baseless—it's not that short-term research can't provide some good insights into what's going on—but if I'd had more time I could have done a better job of maintaining the integrity of complexity and context.

So, there are two things I think we need to think about. First, how can we engage in states of urgency in ways that are sound and rigorous in terms of scholarship and yet more in tune with how things unfold in real time (as opposed to how they unfold in academic, research time)? And second, how can we best translate anthropological knowledge for use in other domains? I don't want to be naïve here about making our work relevant to the "real world," but am, rather, trying to be simultaneously practical and thoughtful about it.

We need to think more carefully about how our work travels: about how to render academic knowledge portable, about what happens to it as it travels, how it's translated, how it's read and used, and how it transforms (or doesn't) particular knowledge communities. In the past I've relied on my mentor Frederick Erickson's suggestion to distinguish between four audiences: those for whom the data will be no news, but good news; those for whom the data will be no news, but bad news; those for whom the data will be news that will be positively viewed; and those for whom the data will be news that will be viewed negatively. Specifically, he said, bad news is best sandwiched between

good news, and the worst news of all is news that is no news but bad news, simply because energy has already been expended in keeping it in the closet.

But this is not what I'm advocating. I think we need to move beyond formulas for writing op-eds or reports for official consumption, and beyond speculation about how our work travels and is received to conduct actual research that systematically traces the processes associated with the production and travel of knowledge. Marilyn Strathern raises two questions in her work on the relationship between science and society that I think are particularly pertinent in this regard. In exploring the "oscillation between the condition of knowing through investigation (or research) ... and the condition of asking what is to be done with that knowledge (or management)" (Strathern 2006:195), she asks, first, "what does it mean to produce information for educational and policy purposes in an increasingly complex and information-saturated world alongside ... practitioners who have very concrete applications and needs in mind?" (Strathern 2004:11); and, second, how is knowledge produced in a form "amenable to travel, export (and) wandering"? (Strathern *ibid.*:17). In other words, "how is knowledge transmitted from one kind of community to another—and what happens to what knowledge when it travels?" (Strathern 2004). These questions draw our attention to the fact that we need to think carefully not only about the production, but also about the distribution and consumption of the forms of knowledge we produce—and, in particular, about their redeployment in relation to different orders of knowledge in various nonacademic communities. This is not a way of advocating for an anthropological version of "social cause marketing," with its unholy alliances with social engineering. Clearly, we have to maintain the integrity of the anthropological sensibility to nuance, context, and complexity so that we can engage in productive rather than in historically blind, patronizing, and arrogantly manipulative

ways with various knowledgeable insiders. This is also not to assume that anthropological engagement is always, by definition, a good thing, or that it is what we all need to be doing all the time. I certainly don't want to take that for granted. But I do think we need to give more thought to the travel of the kinds of knowledge we produce.

I'll end by mentioning just a few issues of content that I think we need to pay more or ongoing attention to.

First, I think we need to pay more attention to religion. It seems to me that we haven't done as good a job with this as we could have, perhaps because of the personal disaffinity many of us have for religion, particularly in its fundamentalist incarnations. It has become clear to me in my current project that religion plays a crucial role in the lives of many of the poor women I work with—from their own perspective—as well as in some of the cultural frameworks that construct them as deficient and wanting as persons, and yet I haven't given it much place in my research in the past. It's also clear, certainly in portions of Canada and the United States, that religion plays an enormously important role in electoral politics; that it plays a role in aggression and conflict at a variety of scales; and that it is instrumental in creating and maintaining social demarcations between persons and nonpersons, citizens and noncitizens.

Second, I think we need to pay more attention to children and youth. Some of us have, but more of us could. Children and youth are both key objects governance and key players in various political and cultural trends.

Third, we need to continue to pay attention to marginalization and eviction. This is an old issue in anthropology, which has been addressed in one way or another by everyone from Mary Douglas to Michel Foucault. We need to stick with this one.

Finally, we need to challenge an exclusive focus on the beast (whether we take it to be capitalism or empire or racism, etc.)—and on the various forms that it takes and how it morphs across time and space—because such an

exclusive focus serves to feed the beast. So I want to end by arguing for the need to do research on what's not beast as well. By this I don't mean to imply that what is not neoliberal or not capitalist, for instance, is automatically good. I mean to suggest that it is important to do research on what we consider to be genuinely progressive so that we can learn about how it emerges, assembles, travels, gains force, etc. For instance, on the day after the U.S. election I watched a *NY Times* video interview with a Kenyan man who said that although he was thrilled, he wasn't most thrilled for Barack Obama, or for African Americans, or for Black people on the entire planet in general, but rather for the White people in the United States who showed that they were finally civilized enough to vote for a black man. Afterwards, I read an article on a living wage experiment being launched by the city of Calgary. How have patterns and ideas like this emerged, and what kinds of material force can they have? We need to pay attention to these kinds of issues, too.

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SANA Prizes

1. SANA Prize for Distinguished Achievement in the Critical Study of North America

The 2008 winner of the SANA Prize for Distinguished Achievement in the Critical Study of North America is **Jane Collins**, an endowed Professor of Rural Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin. She is the author of *Reading National Geographic* (with Cathy Lutz); *Threads: Gender, Labor and Power in the Global Apparel Industry* (2003); and *New Landscapes of Inequality: Neoliberalism and the Erasure of American Democracy* (2008, co-edited with Micaela Di Leonardo and Brett William). A forthcoming book on welfare restructuring in Wisconsin, *Both Hands Tied: Gender, Welfare and Low Wage Labor*, is much anticipated. Jane took her expertise on the apparel industry beyond the pages of books and journals as a campus activist against sweatshops. Collins is a model public intellectual, a distinguished scholar, a fine teacher, a dedicated institution-builder both at UW and within the AAA, and a wonderful colleague who rarely calls attention to herself—which makes it all the more wonderful that we can collectively honor this truly amazing scholar. (Sandra Morgen)

2. St. Claire Drake Award (for travel to the AAAs)

Jessica Johnson, University of Washington. (*The Good Soldier: Fathering "Emerging" Church Families, Patrolling "Domestic" Boundaries*)

Emily Lynch, University of Washington. (*Wellness as Work in Health Insurance Reform*)

Maurice R. Magaña, University of Oregon (*Meshworking in a Mexican Social Movement: The Case of the APPO in Oaxaca*)

Andrea Morrell, CUNY Graduate Center (*The Contradictions of Prisons as a "Public Good" in an*

Era of Privatization: Prisons and Economic Development in an Upstate New York, Prison Town)

Boone W. Shear, University of Massachusetts Amherst (*What Does Diversity have to do with Politics? Multiculturalism and Hegemony in Kalamazoo, MI*)

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Non-Americans Researching Mainstream American Culture (MACnet)

Dieter Haller

A regional network on Mainstream American Culture MACNet was launched on the initiative of Prof. Dieter Haller (Social Anthropology, Ruhr Universität Bochum) at the 2006 Conference of the European Association for Social Anthropology (EASA) in Bristol. Since then, the initiative has become recognized as an official EASA-network, has organized two workshops (one on "Americanization," and one on "Fieldwork within the United States") and has held a first business meeting (at the 2008 EASA-Conference in Ljubljana).

Whereas within U.S.-American anthropology, MAC has been a field of research for a long time, Europeans (if working in the United States at all) have mainly focussed on minorities such as Native Americans, African Americans, migrants, etc. Aspects to be classified as "mainstream" or "All American" such as cheerleaders, cheesecakes, shopping malls, baseball and the like have not been of anthropological interest in Europe or other parts of the world. In brief, while some American anthropologists look at MAC, Non-Americans don't. At least we thought so until MACNet was established. By now we have about 60 members working on such different topics as American waste management, Texan iconography, country music and the politics of war, U.S. evangelical pilgrims in Israel, GOP activists, and the Americanization of sales practices abroad—to name but a few. The objective of MACNet, therefore, is not only to

address the last blind regional spot of Non-American anthropologies by encouraging field-based or archival research on MAC, but also to bring together existing scholarship. This is important because it will help us to close a knowledge gap on this specific, world-affecting region, and will also contribute to our understanding of the creation of “the West” in academia. We share the conviction that what is missing in the anthropological debate on MAC is the cultural comparative angle to the existing research carried out by Americans themselves. Anthropology always has benefited when outsiders as well as insiders study a cultural context—as has been shown in the Hauschild and Warnekens (1999) Tübingen Conference on “Inspecting Germany,” where non-German anthropologists who worked in and on Germany exchanged views. In the case of MAC, we also need a balanced perspective that brings together insider and outsider views.

A further thought incited our preoccupation with MAC. We cannot neglect the fact that American cultural anthropology is dominating the international discipline, but its cultural bias has never been studied *as American* through fieldwork by anthropologists from abroad. Rather, anthropology seems to have forgotten what we and other disciplines such as science studies—and above all Latour and his focus on normative forms of culture and academia—have formulated on a programmatic level: that science is not acultural and ahistorical, and that scientific knowledge is produced in specific settings that are deeply soaked by specific cultural values. However—and this is a lesson we learn not only from Foucault—hegemonic perspectives tend to unname, decontextualize, and deculturalize their own existence, thereby producing an aura of objectivity and self-evidence. It is the dissident and subaltern perspective that are named, marked, and unveiled. Hence, with a few exceptions (Borneman 1995), American anthropology until now has not been valued as a cultural product, rather it has become the aculturalized yardstick against which other

anthropologies are measured or measure themselves. This is most obvious in how to name and address American perspectives: while frequently implicitly and sometimes explicitly contrasting the cultures under study with an undifferentiated “West” or “Judeo-Christian culture” or “Eurocentric values,” and while often theorizing about Western perspectives in an occidentalizing way, the “West” has not been adequately rooted and contextualized in local/region contexts through fieldwork. A proper name for American perspectives is not even existing: we tend to use the term eurocentrism, but there is no term such as *amerocentrism*.

Our discipline has always contributed to a critical reflection on the relationship between its own research foci and the wider socio-political context in which these develop as relevant. It has done so by rooting knowledge in everyday practices. It would be interesting to link the heightened interest of American anthropology in topics such as “agency” and “identity” with everyday practices in American society.

Therefore, it is important to reflect on the links between scientific epistemology and society, which highlight hegemonic perspectives and the blind spots they produce. This has been done quite successfully with other hegemonic notions such as orientalism, whiteness, male bias, heteronormativity, and imperial nostalgia. However, there is one unnamed and unmarked perspective in anthropology that has not undergone thorough reflection, and that is U.S.-American bias.

A closer examination of MAC is therefore important not only because it closes a knowledge gap on a specific world region, but also because it tells us something about the creation of “the West” in academia. It also reflects what is going on in real life, as through the globalization of images, products, and identities, American forms of culture are transferred worldwide. Jeans, Hollywood and the like are American products exported and available everywhere by virtue of globalization, multinational corporations, and

what seems to be the world's appetite for articles of easy and convenient consumption. Besides producing knowledge on everyday culture in the United States, it could be a task for those interested in the MAC-network to study the export, reception and adjustment of American culture abroad.

By studying the interconnectedness between anthropology and its embeddedness in specific – American – practices and discourses, we not only will obtain greater knowledge on how our objects of study are shaped and how they are theorized, but will also come to understand how American ways of shaping, analyzing, and theorizing influence the perception of culture in other cultural contexts. In brief, we will enhance our knowledge about the transfer of culturally shaped knowledge (here: American anthropology) on other cultural contexts (here: non-American anthropologies).

To summarize, MACNet has several goals:

- To conduct field based or thorough archival research on MAC, thereby creating more knowledge about the only remaining regional blind spot for European anthropologists.
- To examine MAC to gain insight into the creation of “the West” in academia.
- To explore what is going on in real life, as through the globalization of images, products, and identities, American forms of culture are transferred worldwide.

- To study anthropology's embeddedness in specific – American – practices and discourses in order to obtain greater understanding of how our objects of study are shaped and theorized, and of how American ways of shaping, analyzing and theorizing influence the perception of culture in other cultural contexts.

The Network is run and organized by Prof. Dieter Haller (Ruhr Universität/Germany, dieter.haller@ruhr-uni-bochum.de) and Dr. Irene Stengs (Meertens Institute in Amsterdam/Netherlands, irene.stengs@meertens.knaw.nl). Colleagues are welcome to contact us.

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