EASA Network meeting – Anthropology of Race and Ethnicity

Berlin, 17-19 July

Freie Universität, TOPOI Building and Heinrich Böll Foundation

Conference Report

The network meeting of the EASA network for race and ethnicity took place in Berlin from 17-19 July 2017. The program consisted of a postcolonial city walk, a public panel, and two days of formal and informal sessions. The city tour offered an opportunity to reflect on the place of the meeting, Berlin, and its colonial history. The public panel reflected on the question of what an engaged anthropology could look like. The workshop itself raised scholarly questions, but also forced all participants to reflect on the network itself and the degree to which it reproduces, but also has the potential to change existing relations of power within anthropology and beyond.

Several themes ran through the meeting:

1. Activism and scholarship

The conference began with a workshop which was opened by a panel discussing what a network of anthropologists can contribute to questions of social justice. Such a question pertains not only to anthropologists in society at large, but also concretely addresses the question of how to build a network that takes social justice as a point of departure. In other words, the question was what the place of activism is in anthropological practice.

2. Decolonizing anthropology

The opening panel also discussed racism in the academy. Anthropologists have been relatively good at providing critical self-reflection on anthropological scholarship. However, there is ample room for improvement where institutional politics are concerned (diversity in departments, hiring practices, positions of anthropologists of color/from the global South, politics of citation, etc.).

3. Race as an object of study

An anthropological approach to race implies an understanding that race is not a priori, but emerges through various practices: it is something people *do*, and as such can be subjected to anthropological scrutiny

4. Anthropology and postcolonial theory

Cultural and postcolonial studies are not a self-evident part of the anthropological canon. We explored the question of how these fields can be made useful in anthropological studies.

5. Anthropology and other disciplines

Several participants suggested that race, because of can be understood as a cultural/social/biological/technological nexus, is best studied in trans- or interdisciplinary approaches.

6. Building a network

These themes were taken into consideration during the final session, which was dedicated to making concrete steps towards further building the network. In that session we established several working groups to address the issues raised throughout the workshop.

At the end of the conference, several working groups were formed by volunteers to engage in a variety of tasks.

Working groups

1. Mission statement taskforce (Mariquian, Markus, Katharina, Jennifer)
2. 1-2 months before EASA. Feedback group (Anna, Kristine , Karel, Tilmann, Gajendran) and send out request to list
3. Advisory board (Markus)
4. Collecting experiences of anthropologists of color (working title) (Sinan, Adnan, Mihir, Duane)
5. Curriculum (Anna, Adnan, Anouk)
6. Support infrastructure within network (mentoring, working towards institutional change) (Kristine, Markus, Jessica)
7. Facebook page (Mihir, Gajendran, Thiago)
8. How to engage / activism (Karel, Ira)

ARE-EASA Network Meeting 2017: Berlin 17-19 July: Program Overview

17th July

14:30-16:30: Postcolonial Tour of the *Afrikanisches Viertel* by "Berlin Postkolonial"
Meeting Point: U Afrikanische Straße, End Point: U Rehberge
BREAK FOR DINNER/MEAL
18:00-20:00: **Opening Public Panel:**
Race and Ethnicity: Anthropological Responses to Contemporary Challenges
Venue: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Schumannstraße 8, 10117, Berlin
There will be a reception hosted by the Heinrich Böll Foundation following the panel.

18th July

Venue: Freie Universität Berlin
Topoi Building Dahlem
Hittorfstraße 18
D-14195 Berlin

09:30-10:00: **Welcome and Introductions**

10:00-12:00: **Race, Anthropology, Institutions/Decolonizing comfort zones**

Moderated by: Adnan Hossain, Jessica de Abreu,
Duane Jethro, and Mihir Sharma

12:00-13:00: **Lunch at Ristorante Galileo, Otto-von-Simson Straße 26, 14195 Berlin**

13:00-14:30: **Postcolonial Europe**
Anouk de Koning
Mischa Twitchin
 Kpêdétin Mariquian Ahounasou.
Coordinator: Markus Balkenhol
Response: Manuela Bojadzijev

14:30-14:45: **Coffee/Tea Break**

14:45-16:15: **Migration, Labour and Whiteness**
Karel Arnaut
Katherine Tylor
Paul Mepschen
Coordinator: Tirza Snoijl
Response: Sinan Çankaya
17:00-19:00: **Network session: Open Space for Discussions**

19th July

Venue: TOPOI, Hittorfstraße 18
10:00-10:30: Reflections on Day 1
10:30-12:00: **Decolonizing epistemology**
              Livia Jimenez
              Susanne Wessendorf
Coordinator: Kristine Krause
              Response: Jennifer Tosch

12:00-13:00: **Lunch at Ristorante Galileo, Otto-von-Simson Straße 26, 14195 Berlin**

13:00-14:30: **Critical Caste Studies**
              Gajendran Ayyathurai
              Dag Erik Berg
              Coordinator:
              Markus Balkenhol
              Response: Damani Partridge

14:30-14:45: **Coffee/Tea Break**
14:45-16:15: **STS: On Race as a Conceptual and Methodological Challenge**
              Christoph Lange
              Katharina Schramm
              Sarah Fründt
              Coordinator: Katharina Schramm

17:00-19:00: **Closing session: Network focused**