

Хроника Currents Actualités

The Fifth Congress of the Portuguese Anthropological Association (APA): "Anthropology in Counterpoint". Vila Real, Portugal: 8-11 September 2013.

The Fifth Congress of the Portuguese Anthropological Association (V Congresso da Associação Portuguesa de Antropologia), entitled "Anthropology in Counterpoint" (Antropologia em Contraponto), took place in Vila Real, Portugal, during the period of September 8-11, 2013.

In his welcoming message, the President of the Portuguese Anthropological Association, Prof. Robert Rowland noted that, "the theme of this congress referred at the same time to the unity and diversity of our discipline, and aimed to make us reflect on the relation between what each of us is doing and the anthropological tradition as a whole".

The purpose of the conference was to facilitate the presentation of the research results and discussions on varied anthropological topics, studied worldwide. It further aimed at developing mutual ties between researchers within Portugal, but also with colleagues from other Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries. Owing to the fact that the anthropological community's response to the call for participation was overwhelming, the conference program included 57 panels and 474 participants, coming from over 20 countries. The most numerous participants were from Brazil and Portugal, somewhat less from Spain, while the

others came from 17 other countries, mainly European and Latin American.

The Fifth APA Congress, "Anthropology in Counterpoint", took place at the University of Trás-os-Montes and Upper Douro (UTAD) in the beautiful city of Vila Real in northern Portugal. Beside the paper presentation panels, the program envisaged plenary sessions, the ethnographic film exhibit, the parallel program and social events.

The ceremonial opening of the conference took place on Monday, 8 September, in the afternoon. The participants were welcomed by Prof. Humberto Martins, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee, by the Rector and by the Head of the School of Human and Social Sciences of the University, and by Prof. Robert Rowland. Prof. Gustavo Lins Ribeiro from the University of Brasília, Brazil then gave the inaugural lecture entitled "Temas e desafios para a antropologia, hoje" (Themes and Challenges for Anthropology Today).

The three full conference days were structured so as to comprise three periods (two in the morning and one in the afternoon) of parallel panel sessions, followed by plenary sessions, which included a Duet, during which two anthropologists informally debated a theme of general interest, and a Keynote lecture, given by an invited speaker. The plenary sessions were followed by different social or cultural events in the evening. In parallel, ethnographic film screenings were organized during the mornings and evenings.

The major part of the Congress, in which individual papers were presented, took place within sixteen to twenty parallel panel sessions. The papers given in the 57 panels covered a wide range of subjects, including (in no particular order): Methodology; Health and welfare; Religion; Gypsies; Migration; Climate change; Heritage and tourism; Islam; Family and gender; Colonialism; Urban anthropology; and Globalization. The papers were presented mainly in Portuguese, but also in English and Spanish.

The Duets were devoted to general themes selected by the Program Committee. The first was "A Antropologia no espaço publico" (Anthropology in public space), discussed by Carmen Rial (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, and President of the Brazilian Anthropological Association) and Miguel Vale de Almeida (ISCTE-IUL, Portugal). "O que é feito dos temas classicos em antropologia?" (What became of classic themes in Anthropology?) was the theme for the second Duet, in which Óscar Calavia (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil) and Filipe Verde (ISCTE-IUL, Portugal) confronted their different points of view. The third Duet was performed by Wilson Trajano Filho (Universidade de Brasilia, Brazil) and Cristiana Bastos (Instituto de Ciencias Sociais, Portugal) and had as its theme "Caminhos e descaminhos da Antropologia contemporanea" (Trends in contemporary Anthropology). These hour-long academic conversations, accompanied by an espresso or a glass of beer, took place across a café table on the stage of the Municipal Theatre, and were very well received by the audience.

The academic part of each conference day ended with a Keynote lecture. On the first day, João de Pina Cabral (School of Anthropology and Conservation, U. of

Kent, UK) gave a lecture on "Que é mundo? Antropologia e condição humana" (What is World? Anthropology and the human condition). On the second day, Vesna Vucinic Neskovic (U. of Belgrade, Serbia) gave a talk entitled "I like the off-beat: An account of an anthropologist from Southeastern Europe". Finally, a presentation on "A ABA e a antropologia brasileira: entre conhecimento e politica" (ABA and Brazilian anthropology: between knowledge and politics) was given by the President of ABA, Carmen Rial.

A printed conference program was distributed at the conference, while a fuller version, including abstracts of all the papers presented, has been made available on the APA website (www.antropologia.org/category/inicio). The site also features full video documentation of all the plenary sessions.

During the three conference days, beside the formal exchange of scientific results and experiences, the participants had a chance to interact during the coffee breaks and lunch time. Socializing continued in the evening hours. On the first day of the conference, after the ceremonial opening, a welcome reception was organized in the Panoramic Restaurant at the university campus. Also, on the last conference day, the participants were invited to a conference dinner at the same beautifully positioned premises.

The Congress was organized by the Portuguese Anthropological Association, while logistic support was provided by Rohan Jackson and the NomadIT team. Students from several Portuguese universities volunteered to help on different tasks during the conference. In the current context of austerity in Portugal, no national funding was available, and international foundations were not prepared to finance a national conference. In

the event, apart from the locales which were generously made available by UTAD and the Vila Real Municipal Theatre, the conference was entirely self-financed.

One might wonder: What could a Serbian anthropologist who is a non-Portuguese speaker offer to share with the Portuguese colleagues? Well, this the question I posed to myself when I received Robert Rowland's invitation to give a keynote lecture at the Congress of the Portuguese Anthropological Association. However, as soon as he explained that the Program Committee actually wanted to bring someone from another European anthropological tradition which the Portuguese anthropologists don't know anything about, I was intrigued by the idea and could not resist but say "yes, I will come". In Robert's argumentation I immediately recognized the idea that the World Council of Anthropological Associations was trying to promote and implement, which is that small and peripheral anthropological traditions should get to know more about each other, and recognize not only differences but mutual similarities. This ideal is very well illustrated in what Robert said in the introduction to my talk. This is why I will cite him in full:

"In deference to our guest tonight, this plenary session will take place in English. I want to introduce our speaker this evening, Vesna Vucinic Neskovic. (I think I got the names right. In Portugal, we will now have to practice these Serbian names, because Benfica has got so many Serbian players in the front line, we will have to get used to it). Vesna has been chosen as our guest today with the idea of illustrating yet another sense in which we can speak of "anthropology in counterpoint". Anthropology in counterpoint, as I have mentioned before, is

something that we can talk about in terms of the relationship between anthropology's various voices, and of how they combine together to form a whole. And as we have just seen [referring to the Duet that preceded the lecture, marked by clear differences of opinion], the whole need not necessarily be marked by harmony – in polyphony it is also possible for there to be difference and dissonance. In this particular case, we have to remember that the contrapuntal nature of anthropology is also a question of the relationship of different anthropologies to each other, and between each different anthropology and mainstream international anthropology. Now, each of us, in Portugal or in Brazil, is accustomed to thinking about the way our anthropological tradition relates to the dominant international mainstream, and to think in terms of center-periphery, in terms of anthropological hegemony and counter-hegemonies, in terms of a relationship between the center, the whole anthropological framework, and the particular space within it that we occupy.

What we tend to forget is that each different periphery, within this global anthropology, has a different relation to the center. And if we want to understand how anthropology is a polyphonic phenomenon, to insist on the metaphor, we should also think about how the different peripheries relate to one another in the way that they relate to the center. And, it's in that sense that it seemed to make particularly good sense, in the context of this congress, to have a plenary session in which it would be possible for us to learn something about the way another peripheral anthropology, with which we are not familiar, has related to the center. And we've chosen to do this by inviting a very distinguished anthropologist from

southeastern Europe, who has her own very special and peculiar relationship both to southeast European anthropology and to the center, to tell us something on how she entered anthropology and how she has experienced the relationship between the center and the periphery. Southeastern Europe in this context is a special case. Those of you who are familiar with John Davis's book on Mediterranean Countrymen, will perhaps remember his description, an unkind description, of how Western anthropologists sometimes enter anthropology departments in the Balkans and are suddenly confronted by "Tyloean professors", who, he says, 'like Japanese corporals in the Pacific, are still fighting theoretical and ideological wars, that only they think exist'.

If we think about peripheral anthropologies, all of us have an inheritance from the past. In the case of Portugal, we have the notion that anthropology in some way provides a key to the ethnogenealogy of the nation and provides us with a key to national identity. In the case of Brazil, anthropology had a role in defining the official ideology of Brazil as a multi-racial society. In southeastern Europe, anthropology has also had a role in defining nationhood, ethnicity, and there has been a very strong emphasis, as in Portugal, on popular traditions. And, how someone brought up in that background has learned to relate to the international tradition is something that presents many implicit parallels to the experience at least of those of us who live in Portugal, and possibly of people who live in other traditions.

Vesna is Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology at the University of Belgrade. She was active during a decade in the International Association for South-

east European Anthropology, InASEA. And she has recently become the member of the Organizing Committee of the World Council of Anthropological Associations. She has therefore found her initial starting point in Belgrade, in southeastern Europe, and began to be active in the framework of world anthropology, and was therefore particularly well placed to tell us about this relationship. It's a relationship that she has also explored through her own research. She has done research on southeastern Europe, and she will be telling us about this, but also, and this is something that, as she will explain to us, put her into international framework – she conceived a desire and an interest in doing research on cities in China. Now, for someone from southeastern Europe to do research on cities in China, I imagine was not very usual. And that research project took her out of the initial southeastern European framework and into the international framework. It is in the relationship of these two that we have one more illustration of how anthropology can be thought of in term of the relationship between the part and the whole, as part of polyphonic and contrapuntal symphony."

In the end, I would like to conclude that my participation in the Fifth Congress of the Portuguese Anthropological Association was an extremely valuable professional and personal experience. My hosts were most hospitable; they took care of me with the ever present awareness that I can easily be left out of communication due to my lack of Portuguese speaking skills. João de Pina Cabral made sure to sit by me and translate the plenary talks, while everyone else conversed with me in English in every possible situation. After a while, I even started understanding some Portuguese by intensely listening to

lectures and informal conversations, and concluded that it is a beautiful language. Beside interesting questions following the lecture, I also received informal comments during dinner. Some of them were: "Well, we now know everything about you", or "we should all start our paper presentation by talking about how we grew up". In addition, the strange beauty of Vila Real and the immediate surroundings of our hotel, positioned above the ravine, from which you could hear the sounds of the river deep below, made the whole experience esthetically overwhelming. For all this, I am grateful to my hosts and all the conference participants.

In Belgrade, December 8, 2013.

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World Council of Anthropological Associations Organizing Committee member

The 17th World Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES). August 5-10, 2013, University of Manchester, UK.

Since its founding in 1934, the world congresses of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) have been organized every five years, preferably in different world regions (see the IUAES website www.iaaes.org). The venue of the 17th World Congress was proposed and accepted by the IUAES General Assembly during the 16th World Congress of IUAES, which took place in Kunming, China in August 2009.

The 2013 World Congress of the IUAES, entitled "Evolving Humanity, Emerging Worlds", was hosted by the

University of Manchester, with the principal organizers being Prof. John Gledhill and NomadIT team. The Congress lasted from August 5th to 10th, and was attended by 1260 anthropologists from 65 countries. During the conference 1283 papers were presented in 211 parallel panels. (The permanent link to the program book is: www.nomadit.co.uk/iaaes/iaaes2013/IUAES2013_programme.pdf).

The Manchester IUAES 2013 Congress was a rich and multi-layered event, both in terms of intellectual content and organizational features. It started with the inaugural lecture given by Prof. Leslie Aiello, the president of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, entitled: "The Wenner-Gren Foundation and the Past, Present and Future of Anthropology". The conference featured six other academic plenary sessions. Two were devoted to honorary lectures, namely: The Firth Lecture given by Lourdes Arizpe (U. of Mexico) on "Arbitrating Collective Dreams: Anthropology and the New Worlding", and The Huxley Lecture delivered by Prof. Howard Morphy (Australian National University) entitled "Extended Lives in Global Spaces: The Anthropology of Yolngu Pre-burial Ceremonies".

Another three sessions in the main auditorium were devoted to the plenary debates, which featured the traditional form of debating at The University of Manchester Department of Social Anthropology. For each debate, the organizer invited six renowned international scholars to take one of the opposing stands and support them in a 10 minute presentation. Thus, two teams with three participants in each debated against each other. The themes chosen for debates were: "Humans have no nature, what they have is history", "Justice for people must come before justice for the envi-