

今日人类学民族学论丛

Anthropology and Ethnology Today Series

国际人类学民族学联合会第十六届大会文集

Book Series of the 16th World Congress of IUAES

黄忠彩 总编

Editor-in-Chief Huang Zhongcai

全球化人类学

Global Anthropologies

[巴西] 古斯塔夫·林司·里贝罗◎主编

Edited by **Gustavo Lins Ribeiro**



知识产权出版社

全国百佳图书出版单位

今日人类学民族学论丛

Anthropology and Ethnology Today Series

国际人类学民族学联合会第十六届大会文集

Book Series of the 16th World Congress of IUAES

黄忠彩 总编

Editor-in-Chief Huang Zhongcai

全球化人类学

Global Anthropologies

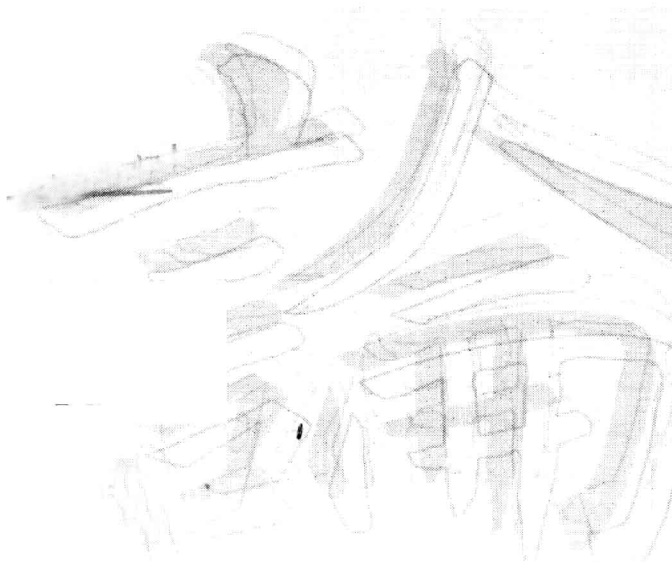
[巴西] 古斯塔夫·林司·里贝罗◎主编

Edited by **Gustavo Lins Ribeiro**



知识产权出版社

全国百佳图书出版单位



责任编辑：石红华

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

全球化人类学 = Global Anthropologies: 英文/ (巴西) 里贝罗
(Ribeiro, G. L.) 主编. —北京: 知识产权出版社,
2011. 12

(今日人类学民族学论丛: 国际人类学民族学联合
会第十六届大会论文集/黄忠彩主编)

ISBN 978-7-5130-0870-9

I. ①全… II. ①里… III. ①人类学-国际学术会议
-文集-英文 IV. ①Q98-53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2011) 第 204106 号

全球化人类学/Global Anthropologies

QUANQIUHUA RENLEIXUE

[巴西] 古斯塔夫·林司·里贝罗

出版发行：知识产权出版社

社 址：北京市海淀区马甸南村 1 号

网 址：<http://www.ipph.cn>

发行电话：010-82000860 转 8101/8102

责编电话：010-82000860 转 8130

印 刷：知识产权出版社电子印制中心

开 本：720mm×960mm 1/16

版 次：2012 年 1 月第 1 版

字 数：280 千字

邮 编：100088

邮 箱：bjb@cnipr.com

传 真：010-82005070 转 82000893

责编邮箱：shihonghua@cnipr.com

经 销：新华书店及相关销售网点

印 张：8

印 次：2012 年 1 月第 1 次印刷

定 价：30.00 元

ISBN 978-7-5130-0870-9/Q·012 (10365)

出版权专有 侵权必究

如有印装质量问题，本社负责调换。

Preface

China won the right to host the 16th IUAES World Congress in July, 2003. After six years of preparation, the Congress will be held in Kunming, China during July 27-31, 2009.

The International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) was established on August 23, 1948, when it merged, in fact, with the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (ICAES), which was founded in 1934. The latter was the product of various Congresses of Anthropological Sciences, starting in 1865.

The IUAES is one of the member organizations of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and also of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS). The IUAES is also a member of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). Its aim is to enhance exchange and communication among scholars of all regions of the world, in a collective effort to expand human knowledge. In this way, it hopes to contribute to a better understanding of human society, and to a sustainable future based on harmony between nature and culture. The IUAES once noted a draft statement on the future of world anthropology in "Current Anthropology" (1979): "The scope of anthropology in terms of areas of human interest includes such critical issues of the contemporary world as problems of environmental management, pressure for the progressive reduction of disparities and the restructuring of the world order, the future of the nation-state, ethnic pluralism and the future of national society, and the harmonization of the roles and functions of institutions with the basic and derived biological and psychic drives of man". The IUAES itself consists of national and institutional organizations in more than 50 countries in all parts of the world, and also includes some hundreds of individual members. The research effort and involvement of the IUAES is principally arranged by its scientific commissions, of which, currently, there are twenty-seven, and each of which concentrates on some areas of anthropological interest. They included ethnic relations, aging and the aged, women, children, youth, migration, epidemiology and Aids, tourism, primatology, linguistics, and so on.

The theme of the 16th IUAES World Congress in Kunming, China is "Humanity, Development, and Cultural Diversity". The Anthropologists and Ethnologists around the world will present over 4 000 papers, which covered 33 sub-disciplines or research fields as

follows: Aging and the Aged Studies, Aids, Archaeological Anthropology, Children, Youth and Childhood Studies, Communication Anthropology, Development and Economic Anthropology, Educational Anthropology, Enterprise Anthropology, Ecological/Environmental Anthropology, Ethnic Culture Studies, Ethnic Relations and Ethnic Identities, Food and Nutrition Anthropology, Gender and Woman Studies, Globalization Anthropology, Historical Anthropology, Human Ecology, Human Rights Studies, Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development Studies, Legal Anthropology and Legal Pluralism, Linguistic Anthropology, Medical Anthropology and Epidemiology, Migration Anthropology, Museum and Cultural Heritage, Nomadic Peoples Studies, Physical Anthropology and Molecular Anthropology, Psycho-anthropology, Religious Studies, Sport Anthropology, Theoretical Anthropology, Tourism Anthropology, Urban Anthropology, Urgent Anthropological Research, and Yunnan Studies.

As the organizer of the 16th IUAES World Congress, the Chinese Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (CUAES) decided to edit and publish “Anthropology and Ethnology Today Series”—the paper collection series of the above sub-disciplines or research fields, for example, Physical Anthropology, Molecular Anthropology, Migration Anthropology, Museum and Cultural Heritage, Nomadic Peoples Studies, Linguistic Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, and Ethnic Culture Studies. We hope that the scholars from different parts of the world can share with all the achievements collected in the book series of this congress.

**Zhou Mingfu, Executive Vice-president
Chinese Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences**

**Huang Zhongcai, Secretary-general
Chinese Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences**

July 14, 2009

Foreword

Discussing World Anthropologies in Kunming, China

Gustavo Lins Ribeiro

This book results from a symposium of the World Council of Anthropological Associations (WCAA) convened by Thomas Reuter and myself, with the support of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (New York). It was held at the 16th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Kunming, China, in July 2009. Following several previous WCAA's sessions that took place during other national and international congresses, the symposium "Opportunities and Challenges for International Cooperation and Participation in Anthropology: Toward an Agenda for World Anthropology" was a perfect occasion for colleagues from different countries to discuss cooperative efforts to facilitate international communication and collaboration among anthropologists. Participants came from Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, France, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They were all leaders in WCAA member associations, including the congress host, the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. Some of the papers addressed the features of national anthropologies, while others focused on the global anthropological scenario, its problems and promises. The main debates clearly reflected the symposium's title. The chapters published in this volume are an excellent example of the quality of the papers delivered in Kunming.

WCAA is a network of national and international organizations that aims at promoting worldwide communication and cooperation in anthropology. It was founded in Recife (Brazil) in 2004, at a Wenner-Gren funded conference organized by Paul E. Little (at the time my colleague at the University of Brasilia) and myself during my tenure as president of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology (ABA). I had the honor to be elected as the Council's first chair by the fourteen association representatives who attended the Recife conference. The founding agreement we wrote then has been amended at two other major

WCAA business meetings held in Osaka (Japan) in 2008, and in Maynooth (Ireland) in 2010. WCAA's primary objectives are to promote the discipline on a global scale, to encourage cooperation and information sharing among anthropologists worldwide, to help organize joint events for scientific debate and cooperation in research activities, and to disseminate anthropological knowledge globally, both in academic circles and among the public at large (see its constitution on www.wcaanet.org). With nearly forty members in 2011, WCAA has become an important international political network acting on behalf of the anthropological community. It is an open and democratic forum for anthropologists to share their experiences and discuss ways in which the discipline can more vigorously contribute to global issues.

This book is one more step towards accomplishing the mission the World Council of Anthropological Associations has set up. I am particularly pleased that this publication will bring the possibility of debate about world anthropologies to the growing Chinese anthropological community. Hopefully, it will one day be published in one or more of the languages spoken in China. I would like to thank our Chinese colleagues not only for their hospitality in Kunming, but also for this opportunity to disseminate our ideas in their country. Finally, I thank the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research for sponsoring the symposium in Kunming, and all the authors who took their time to rework their papers into the texts that follow this foreword.

Contents

Foreword

Discussing World Anthropologies in Kunming, China	1
1. Anthropology as Cosmopolitics Globalizing Anthropology	
Today	Gustavo Lins Ribeiro 1
2. From World Anthropology to World Anthropologies: Continuities in the Project of Decolonizing and Internationalizing	
Anthropology	Greg Acciaioli 20
3. On the Referee System as a Barrier to Global	
Anthropology	Gordon Mathews 45
4. Defining the Practical Tasks of a Global Anthropology and the Role of Democracy in Their Accomplishment	Thomas A. Reuter 58
5. Engaging with Multiple Publics: a Case Study from the United Kingdom	Hilary Callan 64
6. Liminal Spaces in World Anthropology	Michael Goldsmith 75
7. Role of Japanese Anthropology in the World System of Anthropological Knowledge	Matori Yamamoto 85
8. Engaged Anthropology in the United States and its Relevance for World Anthropologies	Setha Low and Sally Merry 93
List of Contributors	111

Anthropology as Cosmopolitics Globalizing Anthropology Today^①

Gustavo Lins Ribeiro

On croit souvent que la vie intellectuelle est spontanément internationale. Rien n'est plus faux. La vie intellectuelle est le lieu, comme tous les autres espaces sociaux, de nationalismes et d'impérialismes, et les intellectuels véhiculent, presque autant que les autres, des préjugés, des stéréotypes, des idées reçues, des représentations très sommaires, très élémentaires, qui se nourrissent des accidents de la vie quotidienne, des incompréhensions, des malentendus, des blessures (celles par exemple que peut infliger au narcissisme le fait d'être inconnu dans un pays étranger). Tout cela me fait penser que l'instauration d'un véritable internationalisme scientifique, qui, à mes yeux, est le début d'un internationalisme tout court, ne peut pas se faire toute seule. En matière de culture comme ailleurs, je ne crois pas au laisser faire et l'intention de mon propos est de montrer comment, dans les échanges internationaux, la logique du laisser-faire conduit souvent à faire circuler le pire et à empêcher le meilleur de circuler (Pierre Bourdieu, 2002)^②.

① I want to thank my colleague, Alcida Ramos, for the English revision of the original text. A slightly different version of it was published in 2010 in *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 34 (1): 197-216.

② "We often think that intellectual life is spontaneously international. Nothing could be wronger. Like all other social spaces, intellectual life is the locus of nationalisms and imperialisms, and intellectuals convey, almost as much as anyone else, prejudices, stereotypes, received ideas, and very synoptic and elementary representations fed from accidents of daily life, misconceptions, misunderstandings, and wounds (such as those inflicted upon narcissism if one is unknown in a foreign country). All this makes me think that the set up of a truly scientific internationalism—which, to my mind, is the beginning of a properly speaking internationalism—will not happen spontaneously. In culture as anywhere else, I do not believe in laissez-faire and my goal is to show how, in international exchanges, the logic of laissez-faire often encourages the dissemination of the worst and curtails the spreading of the best" (Pierre Bourdieu, 2002; my translation).

The process that led to the recognition that today's global anthropological community is made up of complex and rich multiple realities having a history that requires a two-fold interpretation. One is the examination of how the anthropologists themselves have been debating the onset of a global anthropology; the other is the consideration of the major global forces that structure our own contexts.

Anthropologists have been aware of their need to discuss the dissemination of their discipline worldwide at least since Alfred Kroeber published his well-known book *Anthropology Today* in 1953. In 1982, almost thirty years later, Egyptian anthropologist Hussein Fahim edited *Indigenous Anthropology in Non-Western Countries*. Among other goals, Fahim intended to develop "a world discipline of anthropology" and promote the "de-Westernization of the anthropological enterprise" (1982a: 138). The book anticipated some of the issues that later would be taken up again and sometimes presented as novelties. For instance, in his own chapter, Fahim laid out some of the powerful ideas that others unknowingly would repeat:

I wish to point out that the need for communication among non-Western anthropologists does not, and should not, imply a call for political alliance against, nor a plea for academic desertion from, the works of Western fellows ... for it will always be useful, and perhaps essential, to have different perspectives regarding social problems and their solutions, providing that individual interests and views are constructively exchanged. Rather, the task should be conceived of as a positive attempt to ... share the responsibility of liberating anthropology from domination by any country or group (1982a: 150).

Fahim concluded that the contributions made by "Third World Anthropologies"

should not be viewed in terms of just a feedback process for existing Western anthropological knowledge, since this reflects an implicit assumption of the centrality, dominance, and patronship of Western anthropology. Equality and reciprocity should be the key notions toward the development of a world anthropology (1982a: 151).

In the same year of 1982, the Swedish journal *Ethnos* published an issue edited by Thomas Gerholm and Ulf Hannerz with a debate on "national anthropologies." A critical standpoint of global anthropology was implicit in a metaphor in the introduction they wrote.

According to them, world anthropologies were an archipelago in which “national anthropologies” were islands that had no communication among themselves, but had bridges to “international anthropologies” that were located in the mainland. On the rare occasions when some of the islands communicated with each other, they did so via the mainland.

An approach highly concerned with power imbalance was soon to develop. Gerholm himself, in 1995, mentioned the existence of central and peripheral anthropologies and coined the expression “world system of anthropology.” Mexican anthropologist Esteban Krotz (1997) wrote about “anthropologies of the South,” while Brazilian anthropologist Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1999/2000) discussed peripheral anthropologies and emphasized the problem of their mutual ignorance. In 2004, Japanese anthropologist Takami Kuwayama argued that the United States, Great Britain, and to a lesser extent, France were the core of the world system of anthropology. He wrote:

Simply put, the world system of anthropology defines the politics involved in the production, dissemination, and consumption of knowledge about other peoples and cultures. Influential scholars in the core countries are in a position to decide what kinds of knowledge should be given authority and merit attention. The peer-review system at prestigious journals reinforces this structure. Thus, knowledge produced in the periphery, however significant and valuable, is destined to be buried locally unless it meets the standards and expectations of the core (2004: 9-10).

How then to explain the optimistic assertion Arturo Escobar and I made in the introduction of our edited volume “World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations within systems of Power”? when we say that “the time is ripe for world anthropologies” (Ribeiro and Escobar, 2006: 24) means that we are ready for new and more productive relationships among anthropologists on a global scale. How is Aleksandar Boskovic (2008: 9) justified in saying that “there is no such a thing as ‘peripheral anthropologies’, but many, arising from highly distinct historical circumstances, and functioning under extremely different institutional, financial and intellectual conditions”? Consider also the following statement by Brazilian anthropologist Mariza Peirano (2008: 186) about a new divide in anthropology:

while in the metropolitan centers it (anthropology) appears either doomed to extinction or

bent into ‘studies’ (feminist, cultural, science and technology, etc.) in other locations anthropology is well and thriving or, if not thriving, at least providing a positive and constructive edge or approach (2008: 186).

Is this a rebellion in the backyard of the hegemonic anthropologies? Is it self-aggrandizement or self-complacency on the part of anthropologists from non-hegemonic centers? The answer surely varies according to different positions in the global geopolitics of knowledge (for the notion of geopolitics of knowledge, *see* Mignolo, 2001). But there seems to be more to it than just different subject positions and the politics of locality. There is, for instance, George Marcus’ standpoint (2008: 214) according to which US anthropology “needs to learn from the experiences of other anthropologies”. What to say of the 2007 creation of a Commission on World Anthropologies by the American Anthropological Association?

To answer these questions we need to take into account two interrelated processes. Firstly, the most recent debates on world anthropologies have benefited from the knowledge accumulated on these issues over the last decades. Secondly, anthropologists’ experiences must be put in the larger context of the intensifying globalization process in the last two or three decades.

Changes In Global Anthropology

It is true that our knowledge of how anthropological practice differs on a global level is still very incipient. But it is also true that today we know more about other anthropologies than we did in the 1970’s and that international networks are now more numerous and more heterodox than before (Fry, 2004, on the internationalization of Brazilian anthropology). These are some outcomes of macro globalization processes that I will briefly underline.

The increasing expansion of Western university systems throughout the globe has turned universities into a capillary mode of organizing the relationship between knowledge and power everywhere. The importance of this trend cannot be overstated since universities and Western modernity are intermingled, especially when at stake is the discourse of science and reason that pretends to be universal. The worldwide expansion of anthropology in the last five decades has gone hand in hand with the growth of universities. Social sciences in India are a productive example of the tensions between Western and non-Western knowledge (Uberoi, 2002; Visvanathan, 2006). Anthropologist Satish Deshpande (personal communication) considers universities to be “enclaves of the West” that have to be put into

question. Ajit K. Danda rightly argues for the need to distinguish between anthropology as an “academic discipline” and anthropology as a “body of knowledge.” He goes on to say that it “appears as a mistaken notion to assume that the rest of the world was void of anthropological knowledge and until such impetus from the North Atlantic region had spread elsewhere, there was no significant exercise worth the reference from those areas” (Danda, 1995: 23). As an example he brings up ancient Indian literature that goes back as far as 1350 BC when the *Manava Dharmashastra* (The Sacred Science of Man) was written.

Regardless of the specificities of the indigenization of universities and of the disciplines that have travelled along with them, the growth of anthropology departments around the world has caused a major change in the demography of the global anthropology. In 1982, Fahim pointed out that anthropologists working outside the core of anthropological production were a “relatively small portion of the world-wide community of anthropologists” (1982a: 150-151). This is no longer the case. There are more anthropologists working outside the hegemonic centers than within them.

The growing numbers of practitioners in all continents have generated interesting and apparently contradictory results. On the one hand, worldwide consumption of literature and theories produced by hegemonic anthropologies has risen considerably. On the other, there has been an increase in the quantity of foreign professors in American and British universities, besides the consolidation of a global academic regime (Chun, 2008). Brain drain notwithstanding, this sort of emergent global academic labor market seems to entail the recognition of the professional quality of non hegemonic anthropologists. Hong Kong based American anthropologist Gordon Mathews reckons this diversity has “a curious downside”:

the implicit assumption made by many American anthropologists is that any really good anthropologist, whether African, Indian, Brazilian, Mexican, Chinese, or Japanese, would have left the periphery and come to the center, and would have a position in an American university. There may be the unspoken assumption that anthropologists not in the United States but choosing to remain in their own society are simply “not good enough” to be in the American center. This attitude contributes to and worsens the American tendency not to be interested in anthropology beyond its own shores. This is the case despite the fact that salaries and working conditions may now be better for anthropologists in a number of foreign countries ... than in the

United States (Mathews, 2009: 6)

In the last two decades, there have been significant changes in the positions within the world system of anthropology. Most French anthropologists no longer see themselves as belonging to the core (De L'Estoile, 2008: 113) while the US academic milieu has become the real, and for some, only hegemonic center.

The sociological implications of these changes point at the influence of powerful centralizing forces rather than a move towards a less centered and more balanced distribution of visibility and influence in world anthropology. However, awareness of this extreme centralization prompts the need to overcome it. Furthermore, the fact that non-hegemonic anthropologists outnumber those in the center has further consequences. For instance, it has generated a series of heterodox alliances, networks and scholarly exchanges, itself the result of a growing time-space compression that has allowed for more frequent international travel, for cheaper international phone calls, and most importantly, has franchised the most efficient tool in academic communication today, namely, the internet. If in the early 1980's communication among "national anthropologies" within the anthropological archipelago had to go through the mainland, home to the hegemonic anthropologies, today this is no longer necessary. The internet has provided a variety of virtual public spaces available to all anthropologists anywhere. At the same time, new political ideologies soon to be disseminated from the hegemonic centers, especially the U.S., recognized the legitimacy of multicultural and identity politics. Cultural diversity and respect for differences became major values in daily institutional life and in politics.

Politics is a keyword here. As we know, sociological changes have to be accompanied by political thought and action if we are to develop some trends in the right direction. And this is exactly what happened to the world anthropologies project, a political project that Eduardo Restrepo and Arturo Escobar summarize as follows:

rather than assuming that there is a privileged position from which a "real anthropology" (in the singular) can be produced and in relation to which all other anthropologies would define themselves, "world anthropologies" seek to take seriously the multiple and contradictory historical, social, cultural and political locatedness of the different communities of anthropologists and their anthropologies (Restrepo and Escobar, 2005: 100).

In the following section, I spell out my understanding of the conceptual framework that, from my standpoint, helps us appraise the world anthropologies project to then consider two related political offshoots: the World Anthropologies Network and the World Council of Anthropological Associations.

Conceptual Framework

The same theoretical framework used to think about any transnationalized subject-matter must be applied to understand transnational anthropology. Elsewhere (Ribeiro, 2003) I explored a set of seven conditions that have to coexist if we are to examine “the condition of transnationality”: integrative, historical, economic, technological, ideological and cultural, social, and ritual. Perhaps the most important in theoretical terms is what I call integrative conditions to explore the articulation of several levels of integration. I borrowed the term from Julian Steward who, in the early 1950s, sought to understand the relationship between local and supralocal realities (in his case, the influence of national scenarios upon local ones). I am aware of the possible critiques the term “integration” may stir up if taken conservatively. However, my real interest is in the idea of “pluralistic integration,” to use the expression Indian linguist P. B. Bandit coined in 1977:

pluralist integration is ... different from “melting pot” on the one hand and segregation on the other. Melting pot results into complete assimilation with the dominant group, a merger of identity. Segregation results into isolation (or stratification) and the tensions thereof (quoted in Uberoi, 2002: 127).

Bandit’s arguments are based on India’s linguistic diversity. Pluralist integration can be understood as the possibility to keep one’s difference while performing different roles in society: “the assertion and acceptance of identities are reciprocal and mutual. In this way, different social groups can maintain their separateness on the one hand and express their togetherness on the other” (idem). I shall come back to the issue of pluralism later.

In short, I believe integration does not necessarily mean assimilation and obliteration of cultural differences. Furthermore, my own notion of levels of integration is greatly influenced by regional analysis. By way of visual aid, I picture these levels as a set of encompassing concentric circles comprising local, regional, national, and international levels of integration. The transnational level of integration is an exception. In contrast to the others, the transnational level of integration cannot be represented in spatial terms because

it is impossible to find a concrete territory that might correspond to it. I thus represent the transnational level of integration as an axis that traverses the others [the typical space of the transnational level of integration is cyberspace, for this reason I discussed in the same text the emergence of a virtual-imagined transnational community (Ribeiro, 1998)].

Nowadays all levels of integration coexist. Their structuring powers differ according to circumstances and how intensively social agents are exposed to all and to each one of them. Levels of integration are thus a strong force in identity formation. Their influence results in the fragmented identities studied by anthropologists in the 1990's.

Like any other social actor, anthropologists are exposed to the structuring powers of these levels of integration. Our identities are thus fragmented and contingent upon them. To put it plainly, our mindset, social identities, and representations can vary from how we and others conceive ourselves in our daily places to how we act either as participants in processes of nation-building or as scholars in international congresses or, still, as cosmopolitans interested in global politics. What I am suggesting is that the practice of anthropology is local, regional, national, and international at one and the same time. To construct a real transnational anthropology is the aim of the world anthropologies project. I must clarify that my own definition of transnational refers to those situations in which the national origins of an agent or agency are irrelevant or almost impossible to trace or identify.

Despite the fact that all the levels of integration are coeval, one of them has a stronger structuring power over anthropologists, namely, the national level of integration. As I once wrote,

although anthropologists have long been weaving transnational networks, most of their work—including systems of funding, training and publishing—remain bound within the confines of nation-states. This is mostly because anthropologists keep their allegiances to cliques that operate within these boundaries and partially derive their prestige from being members of national circuits of power. Thus, nation-states remain the primary place where the reproduction of the profession is defined in particular ways. In consequence, there is still a great need for stronger intercommunication and exchange across national borders (Ribeiro, 2005: 5-6).

Why Go beyond the Nation-State

The relationship between anthropology and nation-building is complex, especially when it involves relations with repressive state elites that wish to transform the discipline into a sort

of social engineering. However, in spite of many drawbacks in the history of anthropological practice such as its involvement with colonial administrations, the Camelot Project and the current weaponization of US anthropology, it is possible to say that, in general, anthropologists have given positive contributions to processes of nation-building. Anthropologists tend to relativize the normalcy of centralizing national ideologies and policies, to advocate a more plural vision of national life, and, in countries where they are politically active, to defend the rights of different kinds of minorities. Whatever the case may be, however, anthropologists and other social scientists are, in varying degrees, imbued with the idea that historically they have been key actors in nation-building.

Globalization has brought new tensions to the relationship between national and transnational ideologies and between infra-national, national and supranational levels of integration. Relationships between the social sciences and the nation-states have been challenged both from above and from below. In Europe, for instance, the European Union is interested in the role the social sciences may play in building an imagined European community, a supranational entity, while in Brazil, many anthropologists are engaged in an anthropology of “difference-building,” legitimating rights to ethnic identities and territories, on an infra-national level.

If anthropologists have attempted to contribute to the building of national imagined communities that are more democratic and open to difference, they can likewise attempt to contribute to the construction of other kinds of imagined communities, including international and transnational, where pluralistic integration can be an explicit political goal. Indeed, we need to be proactive in all levels of integration.

I do not see why we should not strive to reach this goal within our own community, that is, the global community of anthropologists. To do so, anthropologists, like any other political actors who can exert political influence beyond the realm of the nation-state, must recognize the specificities of our insertion in local, regional, national, international, and transnational levels of integration and act upon them. My contention is not that we should forget the importance of acting on local, regional, and national levels, but that we must add a supranational dimension to our academic and political responsibilities. This task is facilitated by the fact that anthropologists are inclined to believe in universal categories and are firm believers in the role of diversity to enhance human inventiveness and conviviality.

What Are the Challenges

First and foremost, there is a need to change the established structures of power that prevent