MASN
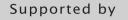
Moving
Anthropology
Student
Network

Final Report

4th MASN
Coordination
Meeting

Discussing the future of MASN

11. -13. December 2009 | Vienna

Preface

Finally, after a year without an international MASN conference, a motivated group of (former) students from the Viennese Social and Cultural Anthropology Department in collaboration with MASN-Austria, organized the 4th MASN-Coordination Meeting in Vienna, a network open to everybody who is interested in a range of anthropological topics.

During the weekend 10.-13. December 2009, 22 people from different countries and universities discussed the future of MASN and worked on a range of several topics concerning the MASN network: improving internal communication processes, fact-finding for usage and participation patterns, designing the web page, planning for the future of MASN, creating a journal, discussing the next conferences (Poland, Ireland and Romania), exchanging funding strategies.

It has been a long time since the last face-to-face happening. We questioned how to enrich the life of the network. The common basis has already been created and seemed to work well, but basically through the internet; therefore we thought it was time to organize a face-to-face meeting.
It happened to be the perfect timing, as at the same time students on strike were occupying their universities in different cities and countries. Motivated by such events and the awareness that students can indeed do and change something, we were encouraged to move on into MASN and anthropology in general.

The entire weekend was designed to review what already exists and to move a step further together.

Friday 11.12.2009

Welcome gathering

Our welcome gathering on Friday took place at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna. The aim was to get to know each other (networking) and at the same time to introduce the idea of MASN to anthropology students in Vienna who were new to the network.

Thomas Fillitz, head of the department, welcomed our international guests and everybody participating to the conference. Then representatives of the students' protest-groups gave us a short introduction of what was going on in Vienna. We took also the chance to present the developments and products of other Viennese anthropological students' institutions, like the Viennese anthropological journal, called 'Maske' and the ethnographic film festival 'Ethnocineca'. The incoming students also presented their posters: they were asked to present their departments, specializations and student relevant topics.

Panel I: 'The new era of MASN'
The panel started with an introduction round. Then, the presentation and discussion of the program for the weekend followed.
The central question was: "WHAT IS MASN AND WHAT DO WE WANT IT TO BE?"
We collected different associations. First MASN is supposed to be an open space for people to discuss, engage and share ideas. Further the internet platform provides the possibility to get to know people who are working on the same issues like oneself. During the transnational masn conferences

one can win experiences like, presenting papers and research findings.

In addition, the network makes it easy to get to know other people and to get access to other institutions or organizations concerned with anthropology. Our aim is to widen the borders and limitations of the network, it should be open for everyone, whether BA or MA student, professor or anybody interested in anthropology, above all, anti-hierarchical (flat) network structures should remain.

IDEAS FOR CHANGES
Something that could be advanced and improved is the structure of MASN, the intensification of contact and support between local groups, and the avoidance of reproducing the same ideas over and over again. It is better to think transnational, to contact the global network and at the same time, it is useful to present and feedback on the internet what is happening in local settings. Furthermore both, the communication through the internet, as well as the interpersonal meetings are rather important for MASN and it would be best to have as many anthropology students/professionals as possible on the platform. The MASN homepage needs to become more attractive and has to show Non-MASNers more specifically the idea of MASN.

Concerning the topic of conference organization, it is a must to transnationalize this process, for example share the "paper reading" through the platform. Further, it would be helpful to connect and cooperate in order to get international funds and exchange experiences in this area of work.
But not only organizational matters should have a place on the platform.

BA/MA SYSTEM
Does the Bologna Process affect MASN? An advantage of the Bachelor/Master system is the mobility of the students. Through MASN one can get a first idea which area and institute abroad is more suitable. But due to the more structured and time-consuming studies, the engagement for MASN might suffer. Therefore we have to try to work within and bend the BA/MA system!
At the end of Panel I we agreed to define MASN as:

> Living, communicating, CELEBRATING
> common interests in anthropology -> THAT's MASN

Saturday, 12.12.2009

The Polish Surprise

Our 2nd coordination meeting day started with Artur's big surprise:

The 7th MASN Conference was to be held the following year at Krzyzowa, Poland! Students from Krakow and Warsaw organized the conference, which took place from the 24-28.03.2010.

The topic is "*Ethics and Human Rights in Anthropological Perspective*" and it was divided in three days:

> day 1: Anthropology of development
> day 2: Fieldwork dilemmas
> day 3: Human rights – relativity and universalism of categories

For further information, please check the conference website (http://masn-poland.cba.pl).

Panel II: 'MASN in Action'

CONFERENCES

After the very positive start in the morning, a surprising conclusion followed, namely that there might be three MASN conferences in 2010!

- Poland in March
- Romania in June
- Ireland in August (ends two days before EASA* conference)

This leads to the next question: How can we help each other to organize the conferences?

For the conference in Poland the papers and conference activities had been chosen transnationally by a paper-review committee. Also concerning the

* EASA - European Association of Social Anthropologists

funding, we should work together and look for international funding. The rest will probably be organized locally. We recommend that every institute shall contribute somehow to the Poland conference. This does not only have to be in finances, but also in other small matters such as letters of support.

IDEA OF A JOURNAL

Next, the idea of a journal arose. The journal might start with the publication of the conference-papers. Over all, it should be very open. It is not clear yet, whether there should be a 'Journal-Team', as this never worked out in the past. Dynamics of engaged people make the process.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR MASN

We discussed the necessity of formalizing a philosophy or guidelines for MASN and came to the conclusion that it would be helpful, for it would make MASN more transparent and easier to follow. We decided on a project of formulating an "ethical mission statement", which includes the main properties of MASN (e.g. anti-sexism, anti-racism, anti-hierarchism, process-orientation etc.).

QUESTION OF PARTNERS

Is there a need that MASN has official partners, like EASA for example?
It might perhaps not be the best idea, as EASA is hierarchical and professional-based, which is definitely not like the MASN structure. Furthermore EASA is not representing all anthropologists and some topics are marginalized at the conferences of EASA. Therefore it might not be useful to institutionalize relations with bodies like the EASA.

But what would be the added value of being connected to other scientific communities? We already have some experiences from the past: In Ljubljana it was attempted to connect an EASA conference with a MASN conference, which worked out well. But there is no use of being a "junior"-organization to EASA. We think it will be a good idea to bring a MASN plenum into the EASA conference as we really can use the space there.

Similarly we can think about broadening the relations to the NASA (National Association of Student Anthropologists) and AAA (American Anthropological Association).

Panel III: 'Structuring MASN' and 'Evening Plenum'

How to develop further the structure of MASN?

CONTENT

There are two points, first to get more people in the network and second to make the structure clearer to everyone.

Therefore, it would be worthy to redesign the homepage and to make a clearer welcome page that is not overloaded, but shows everyone the main information about MASN.

A big discussion started about language. Shall we translate the homepage or any abstracts also into other languages in order to reach more people? Or would this even raise more barriers?

We did not really come to any common conclusion here.

SPREADING MASN

But we were all sure about wanting to spread the MASN idea. This will be happening on a face-to-face level and the virtual space. We will try to connect transdisciplinary with other institutes and involve also non-European countries.

MISSION STATEMENT

We made a draft of a new mission statement:

The "Moving Anthropology Student Network" ("MASN") is an open network & meeting-ground intended to promote communication, networking and interaction among all people interested in topics related to anthropology. The term "Student" refers to anyone who has an active interest in the subject field of anthropology. Post-graduate, ongoing studies and general non-academic life interest are all welcome contributions to the network. Since the creation of MASN in 2005, it has become the largest transnational anthropological network of its kind. In addition to ongoing transnational conferences organized by MASN groups, this homepage offers a variety of different tools to communicate and network. Students and scholars from more than 80 different countries have already become members of the MASN community!

Everyone is invited to become a part of the network, meet other

members, participate and practice his or her skills in conferences, and share knowledge with others. You can contribute by organizing your own MASN-meetings and workshops, or by filling this website with your information, questions, and answers. You can also subscribe to our mailing list *to be informed about our activities and discuss urgent issues via email. You can also find MASN on* Facebook*.*

(...)

Sunday, 13.12.2009

Panel IV – 'Conclusions'

In our last session, we summed up all of our outcomes and results of the weekend:

There will be new projects like for example, a fieldwork blog for sharing information. Moreover there will be some concrete actions for spreading MASN: e.g. institutes all over the world shall get information or advertising. Also the website will wander through some changes. And finally we are looking forward to our first own MASN journal.

To put it in a nutshell, the MASN Coordination Meeting had been a complete success! Communication barriers had been relieved, new ideas have emerged and are now waiting for the real implementation. And most important: we are looking forward to the upcoming conferences this year.

With this in mind: Keep on moving……

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