

Invitation by IAS:

(within the BIGSAS-Workshop,
Encounters: Crossing Perspectives – Crossing Disciplinaries)



14.11.2016, 5.30 - 7.00 pm, Iwalewahaus (Foyer)

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The Challenge of the South-South Comparison

The South-South perspective is an urgent political project, but it is not a natural fact as it requires quite a degree of social and theoretical, methodological and political engineering. A. To begin with, it requires a new ethnographic sensibility. As seen from the South, our curiosity has mostly been South-North much rather than South-South. One good possibility is developing joint research projects based on themes that are priority both in Africa and Latin America, rather than centered on priorities established by Northern donors. Collaborative research could tease out projects on a variety of topics, such as durable and extreme poverty and the processes of identity and cultural production they generate, urban (un) planning, new communication technologies and daily life, (dis)organized crime, and the politics of heritage. B. It also requires that we advance in terms of methodology, by refining the techniques of comparison, beyond the large scale of the nation as is usually done. In ethnic studies, for instance, there is a tradition of comparing systems of ethnic or racial relations of entire nations, or colonial styles of different empires, but much less so, for instance, cities, cultural phenomena and their reinvention or biographies of national leaders. C. We must advance also in terms of the politics of the university and funding. In Brazil we are experiencing an ironical situation: we are too great to receive US and, to some extent, European money, but the mastering of our national money is rather whimsical. The real question is how to conceive of the South-South exchange so as to make it sustainable: based on our own resource plus the support of interesting, key centers in the North such as the University of Bayreuth. In concluding I would like to expand on how new communication technologies can also offer new opportunities for collaborative project based on combinations of on distance and face-to-face teaching/learning (just think of international doctoral schools), crowd sharing, crowd sourcing and new forms of collective curatorship of research data of a variety of genres. Here I will focus on heritage preservation and heritage economics – a topic that deserves a careful South-South perspective. The field of intangible heritage is especially interesting, if only because our two continents are the continents of the intangible, with few exceptions, especially in Egypt. They are anyway the regions where the list of intangible culture has grown the most over the last two decades.

Livio Sansone (Palermo, Italy, October 5 1956) got his BA in sociology at the University of Rome and MA and PhD from the University of Amsterdam (1992). From 1992 Sansone lives in Brazil where he is associate professor of anthropology at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). He is the head of the Factory of Ideas Program - an advanced international course in ethnic and racial studies - and coordinates the Digital Museum of African and Afro-Brazilian Heritage (www.museuafrodigital.ufba.br). He has published extensively on youth culture, ethnicity, inequalities, international transit of ideas of race and antiracism, anthropology and colonialism, and globalization with research based in the UK, Holland, Suriname, Brazil and, recently, Cape Verde, Senegal and Guiné Bissau.



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