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Country Report – Germany

German equivalents of “anthropology” (and when terms were coined)
- Anthropologie (16th to 18th century)
- Völkerkunde (18th century)
- Volkskunde (18th century)
- Ethnologie (18th century)
- Ethnographie (18th century)
- Kulturwissenschaft

Meaning of the terms since the 19th century
- Anthropologie: human biology or philosophical anthropology
- Völkerkunde, Ethnologie: ethnology primarily of non-European peoples
- Volkskunde: national ethnography and study of “folk” literary genres in Germany

Institutionalization of Anthropologie, Völkerkunde, and Volkskunde in late 19th and early 20th century through the founding of …
- learned societies
- journals
- museums
- Dozenturen, professorships, university departments

Example with reference to Völkerkunde or Ethnologie – Adolf Bastian

- 1868 – Bastian, a physician, gentleman scholar, world traveler, and collector of cultural artifacts, became assistant curator for the ethnographic and prehistoric collections in the königliches Museum in Berlin.

- 1869 – Bastian (who had completed the Habilitation two years earlier) became Dozent für Völkerkunde at the University of Berlin – the first Dozentur in ethnology in Germany.

- 1869 – Bastian, together with Robert Hartmann, founded the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie.

- 1869 – Bastian, together with Rudolf Virchow and others, founded the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte. The founding of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte followed in 1870.
• 1873 – Bastian was instrumental in the first phase of the founding of an independent Völkerkundemuseum in Berlin.

• 1886 – The Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde zu Berlin was opened to the public, with Bastian as director. During this period, Franz Boas served in the museum as assistant curator, before departing for his new field site in British Columbia.

After Bastian

• In 1914, the first university department of ethnology was founded (originally consisting of two parts, the Ethnographisches Seminar der Universität Leipzig and the Sächsisches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde). The founder was Karl Weule, a student of Ratzel’s and director of Leipziger Museum für Völkerkunde, which had been founded in 1869 on the basis of Gustav Klemm’s personal collection.

• In 1929, the Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde (the forerunner to today’s Deutsche Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde, renamed in 1936) was founded by Fritz Krause to create an organization in which ethnologists could confer largely independently of physical anthropologist, who had, in recent years, become increasingly dominant.

• In 1946, at the time of the first postwar conference of German ethnologists, there were professorships of ethnology at the following universities: Leipzig, Jena, Hamburg, Göttingen, Köln, Wien, and (as of that same year) Frankfurt am Main. Furthermore, there were Dozenturen for Völkerkunde in Berlin, München, Münster, Marburg, Bonn, and Mainz.

The formation of national schools in German ethnology in the early to mid-20th century

• National schools gain a lasting profile when certain scholars, advocating specific research programs, become dominant during processes of institutionalization and professionalization.

• There were many currents in German ethnology in the early 20th century (Gingrich 2005); but Germany ethnology came to be identified with three:
  o Kulturkreislehre and related forms of diffusionism (Fritz Graebner, Bernhard Ankermann, Wilhelm Schmidt, Wilhelm Koppers, and others)
  o Kulturmorphologie (Leo Frobenius)
  o Ethnosoziologie, similar to British structural-functionalism (Richard Thurnwald, Wilhelm Mühlmann)

Divergence from the “mainstream” of international anthropology?

• In retrospect, today’s historians of ethnology in Germany see this era as the time when German ethnology diverged from a supposed “international mainstream” in the development of anthropology (Gingrich 2005; Rössler 2007).

• But perhaps the apparent divergence of intellectual orientations was over-determined by larger political developments, which separated Germany from France, Great Britain, and the United States:
  o First World War, which resulted in the loss of Germany’s colonies
German ethnology was isolated from international developments after WWII:
- Integration of defeated and disgraced country into new international political, economic, and cultural structures occurred only gradually
- With the emergence of the U.S.A. as a global power, English becomes the dominant lingua franca, while German loses its status as a language of science
- Representatives of old schools retained or regained influential positions after war

Two phases in history of German ethnology after World War II:
- the “restoration” of national traditions in West Germany and Austria after 1945
- the break with the national traditions – a trend which first became evident in the late 1960s and which continues today in ongoing, if uneven, processes of internationalization.

Restoration:
- cultural historical approaches (e.g., Hermann Baumann, on one hand, and Wilhelm Schmidt, on the other)
- cultural morphological approaches (Adolf Jensen)
- functionalist approaches (the Thurnwald protégée, Wilhelm Mühlmann)

Context of break with national traditions:
- increasing integration of West Germany into “Western” world – European Community, NATO, etc.
- larger social movements for modernization and “Westernization” beginning in 1960s and 1970s
- BUT: In German ethnology, there was no single figure, such as Frederik Barth in Norway, to “show the way.”

University departments, chairs, interdisciplinary research programs in Germany today (21)
- Institut für Ethnologie, Freie Universität Berlin
- Seminar für Ethnologie, Universität Halle
- Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Leipzig
- Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Hamburg
- Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Göttingen
- Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Heidelberg
- Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Münster
- Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Tübingen
- Institut für Völkerkunde, Universität Köln
- Institut für Altamerikanistik und Ethnologie, Universität Bonn
- Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, Universität Mainz
- Institut für Historische Ethnologie, Universität Frankfurt am Main
- Institut für Völkerkunde, Universität Freiburg
- Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikanistik, Universität München
Institut für Vergleichende Kulturforschung: Religionswissenschaft und Völkerkunde, Universität Marburg
• Facheinheit Ethnologie, Universität Bayreuth
• Fachbereich IV – Ethnologie, Universität Trier
• Institut für Kulturforschung, Universität Bremen
• Sektion für Sozialpsychologie und –anthropologie, Ruhr-Universität Bochum
• Vergleichende Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Europa Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt an der Oder
• Abteilung Kulturanthropologie, Universitätsklinikum Ulm

Research Institutes in Germany today
• Frobenius-Institut, Frankfurt am Main
• Südasien-Institut, Heidelberg
• Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung (Social Anthropology) Halle

University departments in Austria & Switzerland
• Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Universität Wien
• Ethnologisches Seminar, Universität Zürich
• Institut für Sozialanthropologie, Universität Bern
• Seminar für Sozialanthropologie, Universität Fribourg

Four major “clusters” in German speaking world (according to Gingrich 2007)
• Wien
• Zurich
• Berlin
• Halle/Leipzig

Research orientations today – Gingrich’s view:
• There was a “gradual ‘fading out’ of any specifically ‘national’ tradition of socio-cultural anthropology in German during the 1980s and 1990s” (Gingrich 2007:15).

• “Anthropologists in the German language zone, like their colleagues in the Portuguese and the Spanish language zones but unlike their French counterparts, have disentangled themselves from most of their ‘national’ legacies today, while they continue to publish primarily in their own language … a majority among them represent one or the other German-speaking sub-branch of global anthropology” (Gingrich 2007:15).

Research orientations – my qualifications:
• German ethnologists are still confronted with the following questions: Who are we, and how do we fit into the larger picture?
• Four aspects of this dilemma: German ethnologists’ relationship to …
  o their own national disciplinary traditions
  o relationship to Volkskunde
their own language
their own degree programs and curricula

Relations to own national disciplinary traditions:
• total rejection or qualified acceptance (e.g., Gingrich 2005, Streck 1997, & Schlee 1990)
• social science vs. historical science
• persistence of area studies (and corresponding language studies)
• openness to “globalization,” etc. (e.g., AG Migration, Multiculturalism, and Identity, DGV 1995)

New initiatives in “internationalizing” research orientations – for example, the founding of two new institutes by the Max Planck Society
• Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 1998 in Leipzig
• Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, 1999 in Halle

Comments on new MPI foundings:
• Based on an American “four field” conception of anthropology
• Directors drawn from Germany, U.S., Great Britain, France, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, etc.
• Idea that two new MPI would cooperate largely unrealized
• Founding of MPI for Social Anthropology accompanied by founding of new Seminar für Ethnologie in Halle
• High degree of cooperation between MPI in Halle, Seminar für Ethnologie in Halle, and Institut für Ethnologie in Leipzig
• Differences among anthropologists in Halle & Leipzig: despite varying attitudes toward older German ethnological traditions; social science vs. “postmodern” approaches, etc.

Relationship between Ethnologie and Volkskunde
• Volkskunde institutionalized at about the same time, with orientation toward national ethnography (peasants, artisans, miners; regional differences) or “folk” literary genres
• Volkskunde in early 20th century often in conjunction with territorial history & dialectology, atlas projects
• Since the 1960s, Volkskunde has been reformed and also renamed: Europäische Ethnologie, empirische Kulturwissenschaft, Kulturanthropologie, etc.
• Today, represented at 26 German universities (with full departments or individual chairs), 4 Austrian universities, and 2 Swiss universities
• The two disciplines, Volkskunde and Ethnologie, are largely separate, and mutual prejudices exist; but there are signs that both are becoming more similar to socio-cultural anthropology.

Relations of German ethnologists to the German language

Two groups:
• Publishing primarily in German is parochial and isolating and will doom German ethnology to provincialism and irrelevance.
• German ethnologists subject themselves too willingly to the hegemony of the English language; they should (also) publish in German.

Relations of German ethnologists to their own degree programs and curricula; or Responses to the Bologna Process:

• 1999 – Representatives of 29 European ministries of education agree to far-reaching reforms aimed at standardizing degree programs in Europe, making “credits” transferable across international boundaries, & assuring uniformity in university qualifications and the mobility of students and graduates within the European Union.

• 2003 – the Kultusministerkonferenz of Germany decided to order the implementation of the corresponding reform of higher education in Germany
• Recently, transition to Bachelor of Arts (3 yrs.) and Master of Arts (2 yrs.) programs – note: the names of the degrees are in English!

• Complaints, difficulties:
  o “inexact copy of a supposedly American model”
  o “Verschulung,” i.e., making university study in the Humboldtian tradition more like going to school
  o loss of “Freiheit in der Lehre,” freedom in university teaching
  o does not have desired effect – differences still make mobility difficult

General observations on the institutional situation of anthropology in Germany:
• University colleagues working to reverse trend towards few faculty members and more students (degree requirements, etc.)Too few regular positions for too many graduates and postgraduates
• Many part-time teaching contracts & temporary positions in research projects
• Danger of positions being cut and departments close, when professors retireMore departments & chairs than ever before
• My impressions of professional association and main journals are positive
• Anecdotal evidence suggests a fair rate of success in creating temporary positions for doctoral candidates and postdocs by getting funding for research projectsGerman colleagues often find jobs internationally
• Recognized influence of socio-cultural anthropology in other fields – history, the new field of Kulturwissenschaften

References


