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REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Title of Session: Ethnography at the Crossroads: On the Rims of the Post-Soviet World

Name of Session Convener(s): Barbro Klein; Seteney Shami

University/Organization incl. City: Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS) in Uppsala (Klein); Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), (Shami)

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Comments:

Session Abstract (up to 250 words):

Since the early 1990s, the ethnography of the post-Soviet world has undergone great transformations. With special emphasis on the projects of state- and nation-building, border areas, transboundary crossings and political and cultural movements, the new ethnography is re-imagining space, identity, representation and networks from the Baltic regions to the Far East, from Siberia to the Caucasus. In this panel, three sessions will address and debate some of the many pressing questions linked to these changes. Questions of particular interest include, but are not limited to, the following.

One set concerns the discipline and practice of ethnography as such. What are the important concerns and topics currently pursued under such banners as anthropology, ethnology, ethnography, museology, linguistics, or folkloristics? What is the relationship between the research pursued in the regions in focus, and the researchers themselves with their counterparts in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere? To what extent are ethnographers or anthropologists from one part of the region engaged in studying peoples of others parts, such as Baltic scholars working on Uralic peoples, i.e. research topics in which they have long had a stake? What are the new projects that relate to emerging social, cultural, or political concerns.

Another set of issues concern heritage politics. To what extent are folkloristic and ethnographic inquiries conducted before the Soviet era revitalized as part of new national reassertions? Are artistic and traditional materials which were long dismissed or hidden now resurfacing under new cultural or religious banners? What roles do ethnographers, anthropologists, oral historians, or folklorists play in these processes? How are national

museums (and other museums) responding to new regional, national, and transnational challenges and demands? How is the communist period itself dismissed or being represented in new ways?

A third, and critical, set of questions are diasporas. What kinds of ethnographic or anthropological studies are now being pursued of groups that are diasporic within the region (e.g. due to forced resettlement or voluntary migration) or outside the region (e.g. due to historical dispersions and transboundary population movements). How do artifacts and ideas circulate in these diasporic networks? What perspective does the post-Soviet world offer the broader literature on diasporas and cultural globalization? What is the role of diaspora scholars themselves in carrying out such investigations?

General information

During each afternoon of the congress, there will be room for a large number of parallel regular sessions. Each session is 90 minutes long and consists of an oral presentation of 4 to 6 papers. Session conveners are expected to administer and chair their session at the 2009 IIS World Congress.

Starting in mid-December, calls for papers to participate in approved sessions will be posted on the website. Interested participants will contact the session convener (you) directly with an abstract no later than February 28, 2009. The session convener should take in all submissions and select the best 4 to 6 papers to be presented and forward this information, including e-mail addresses of accepted authors, to the IIS Secretariat no later than March 15, 2009.