

DISCIPLINE ON THE DEFENSIVE?

Introduction

The 1960s found British social anthropology nursing a post-colonial hangover. The unseemly scramble out of Africa at the end of empire had meant a sudden end of CSSRC funding. The new generation of academic anthropologists could no longer be sure that their students would get research funding, or even research access, and found themselves negotiating increasingly politicised fieldwork environments. Many turned their attention to research questions 'at home'. But this too had its challenges and compromises, such as the hidden agendas of would-be corporate sponsors of applied research, or the challenge of studying racism. Even the discipline's professional associations turned against each other, as they tried to adapt to the expectations placed upon them in this uncertain world.

In this chapter, I show how the demise of funding meant the loss of epistemological security, and doubts over the discipline's constituency, purpose and future. The growing numbers of trained social anthropologists employed outside the discipline added further discordant voices to the debate about social anthropology's changing place in the order of things. I begin with the final years of the CSSRC, and describe anthropologists' efforts to influence two major British higher education commissions – those led by Lord Robbins (Robbins 1963) and Lord Geoffrey Heyworth (Heyworth 1965). In each case 'Britishness' was again an issue, but this time anthropologists had to make the case for funding international research, in an atmosphere of increasing attention to pressing questions of domestic social policy.

A similar debate about the discipline's place in the world was refracted in the more quotidian debates over membership criteria of the Association of Social Anthropologists. Should membership of the association be restricted to people trained within 'British' social anthropology, or should it be opened up to citizens of the new imperial power – America? The debate exemplified the growing tension between disciplinary stewardship and popularisation, a recurring theme in the history of the discipline (MacClancy and McDonough 1996). It was memorably described by Paul Stirling as the 'mandarin/missionary divide'.

As the discipline sought to redefine itself, it began to grapple with questions of pedagogy and reproduction. How important was an 'authorised' disciplinary textbook, expanding into new universities, or introducing anthropology into schools? I describe the ASA's abortive attempts to produce a collective introduction to social anthropology, and the constant concern about recruiting and training students. Despite the changing times, the views of the 'mandarins' continued to prevail. Despite the best efforts of disciplinary proselytisers, anthropology never became an A level subject, and only established its presence in a handful of post-Robbins universities.

The end of empire and the last years of the CSSRC

The anthropological project was particularly vulnerable to the shifting political winds in Africa and elsewhere in the empire, even though British universities were experiencing a funding boom times in the 1950s and early 1960s. The gathering strength of anti-colonial sentiment overtook the bureaucrats' longer-term agendas for withdrawal, leaving the Colonial Office in London seem increasingly irrelevant. The voices calling for independence – including anthropologists among their number – made it impossible for defend colonial funding for independent social research in these regions. The valiant efforts of Audrey Richards to protect funding for social research in these new nations made her an isolated voice.

The post-war development consensus unravelled surprisingly quickly (Porter and Stockwell 1987). By 1947, Attlee's struggling post-war government preferred to see the colonies as sources of raw materials and resources to help aid British economic recovery. Colonial economic policy began to develop a 'neo-mercantilist' character, more reminiscent of the 1890s (Butler 1999). In a climate of economic stringency, British interests took precedence. The Colonial Office's progressive philosophies and 'colony-centred' approach were increasingly criticised and overruled by the Treasury and other parts of

government. Even the promised financial allocation amounted to less than £2 per person amongst a population of 60 million. Much of this was never distributed. The sums were far outweighed by the territories' payments on outstanding loans from London. Colonies found it increasingly hard to raise the necessary capital funds to match new loans for capital, and the growing austerity strengthened the anti-colonial movement.

Leftist calls for decolonisation, based on the rights to self-determination of those who had contributed to the war effort, began to receive a hearing. There was also an increasing awareness that the 'benefits of empire' had gone to only a small strata of investors and businessmen. George Padmore was one of the more famous critics of empire (e.g. Padmore 1936). His wholesale critique of the CDAW policy, commissioned by the Pan-African Congress, viewed it as a 'sop to the coloured races of the Empire', and as evidence of a new form of 'Economic Imperialism' (Padmore 1948: 9, 157). He pointed out that 'Africans had no say in drawing up the plans' and that 'to carry out the schemes the Government have had to recruit from Britain an elaborate staff of high-salaried officials to supervise and direct the operation of the Plan at all levels'. In the case of Nigeria, he felt that the ten-year plan 'amounts to nothing more than a series of disjointed projects drawn up by various government departments and co-ordinated for the purpose of budgeting' (ibid., 162). The Gold Coast riots of 1948 demonstrated the growing demand for change, and the increasing divergence between Colonial Office planners and African aspirations.

If the strength of anti-colonial resistance had been hard to predict, so too was the speed with which independence was granted to many African countries. Riots in Kampala in 1949 and the Mau Mau rebellion in early 1950s Kenya upset the cautious timetables for gradual self-government. As Sally Chilver, Secretary to the CSSRC, commented, the attitude in the Colonial Office began to shift, with the view developing that one had to get out 'without getting one's tail caught in the door'.¹ Yet these momentous changes were not reflected in the research proposals and programmes put before the Council. The single-focus ethnographic and sociological surveys continued as before. Audrey Richards was herself a case in point. She kept a careful diary of the political intrigue surrounding the British Governor's expulsion of Buganda's *Kabaka* (king) to exile in London, and his subsequent triumphant return to Uganda. Yet she published little on the topic. Her Carnegie-funded 'Leadership' project at Makerere continued, and her contributions to Lloyd Fallers's *All the Kings Men* (Richards 1964, Fallers 1964) on the Buganda polity made no mention of the complexity of nationalist and anti-colonial politics. Only by the late 1950s did the Council's attitude begin to initiate a

programme of 'comparative studies of election procedures'; involving Lucy Mair and others.

Instead a significant proportion of the remaining Council funding went into supporting the production of regional histories. These included the multiply authored three-volume *Oxford History of East Africa* (the last of which was edited by Low and Smith 1976). The Council's energy was also directed towards incorporating the research institutes more closely with the university colleges. During the same period, a new Applied Research Unit was established at the East African Institute for Social Research, funded by the Ford Foundation. American funding and policy interests became increasingly visible in African Higher Education.

In December 1956, Audrey Richards, back on the Council after five years at Makerere, received an ominous letter from Professor Sir Arnold Plant, retired LSE economist and by then Chairman of the CSSRC. 'What I have been trying to decide', he begins, 'is whether there is a special case for continuing Treasury finance for Colonial research in this field.' His letter revealed how the Council was increasingly being perceived. 'I have been thinking about the special problem of ex-dependencies which are attaining independence. I expect the Colonial Office and the Treasury will be very concerned to avoid involvement in continuing finance. They may feel that any finance ... [is] likely to be misinterpreted as interference if the UK government puts up the money'.² His concern that CSSRC research funding was being viewed as trying to correct 'misinterpretations of nationalism' reveals the growing suspicion of colonial-sponsored social research in many African nations. He went on to note how in other cases Treasury funding was being routed through the British Academy. All sides feared being accused of political interference.

Audrey Richards was unwilling to accept the full implications of this new political landscape. In her responses to Plant she reiterated the importance of ensuring the continuity of research in the social sciences, calling for a 'rather energetic re-examination of the whole position of colonial research'. She also had strong views on state disregard for academic autonomy in newly independent African states, as she wrote in November 1956:

There are already signs that the new Governments wish to control research in the cultural and historical fields and that they sometimes have objectives beyond those of pure scholarship. Nor are they yet aware of the qualifications needed for directors of research schemes. By continuing to make grants for even a skeleton staff of local administration of research, some measure of control of appointments of this sort would remain in the hands of persons academically qualified, whether in this country or overseas, and a tradition of scholarship might be established.³

Finally cognisant of the threat to the CSSRC, Richards immediately began mobilising her contacts. One of her main arguments in favour of continued colonial funding of the research institutes was that this would preserve their academic freedom. She wrote to her old friend Andrew Cohen, by now Governor of Uganda, expressing her concern that about the demise of grants to the institutes:

The point is that the social sciences are new in the colonies. They have no government department which understands what they are doing, such as the medical research workers, agriculturalists etc have. They are liable to be concerned with questions of social policy which are controversial and which it would be tempting for the governments of newly self-governing territories, such as the Gold Coast, to try to run.

The irony of this statement, given the history of colonial control, seems lost on her. Richards goes on to give the example of a Nigerian director 'whose motives seem entirely political'. In a separate informal note to Cohen, she is blunt in her assessment of post-colonial governance: 'the universities want local autonomy over social research and to have this research under their own aegis. This means in effect that they will keep their autonomy but do no research.'⁴

Ever energetic, Richards fired off numerous letters, and began to develop an idea for an organisation to replace the CSSRC. She also lobbied for the CSSRC to take a stronger position against its likely demise. A widely circulated 1961 memo expressed the council's great concern at the likely 'break' in the field of social science research, and proposed continued support 'for UK scientists to undertake research in the social sciences in colonial territories that were newly independent'. The council firmly recommended its reconstitution as an advisory body to the new Department for Technical Co-operation. The consequences of not doing so included the veiled threat of increasing American and Soviet academic dominance of the research field, with 'the leading position and international influence of the UK in the study of the social sciences ... lost to other countries'. The memo went on to suggest that the institutes would be under heavy pressure to meet research needs 'of immediate practical interest' at the expense of dealing with 'the fundamental problems of underdeveloped countries.' This was hardly the moment at which to emphasise the institutes' detachment from their applied roots. Despite the strong words, little came of the proposal, and the council gradually wound up its affairs.

Robbins and university expansion in the 1960s

The new politics forced the discipline to seek new sources of support. Despite the expansion in the number of UGC-funded posts for social anthropology, this had not been accompanied by funds for research and training. Social anthropology's past reliance on the Colonial Social Science Research Council became all too visible. Raymond Firth raised the issue at an ASA committee meeting in March 1956. He proposed that the ASA made a public pronouncement on the situation, 'perhaps in a letter to the Times', 'an interview with the Chairman of the UGC', or a 'meeting with heads of the new Colonial University Colleges'. Nothing came of his ideas, and even an approach by Firth to the Nuffield Foundation to fund twenty PhD studentships was rebuffed. Four years later, Firth sounded the alarm again suggesting that 'British scholarship is now being seriously threatened' by the lack of a British Social Science Research Council, and called for the British Academy to administer funds for postgraduate students.⁵

The concerns of anthropologists paled against the general optimism felt within universities, and the upbeat findings of the first ever government commission on higher education, led by Lord Robbins. The commission marked a major shift towards a mass higher education system. It was also a response to a crisis in student places following the post-war population 'bump', and applications from a number of county towns to create new universities. A total of 82,000 places in universities in 1954 increased to 118,000 in 1962, even before Robbins recommended the creation of six new universities (Halsey and Trow 1971). Keele was the first to gain its statutes in 1961, closely followed by Sussex, East Anglia, York, Essex, Kent, Warwick, Lancaster, Strathclyde, Heriot-Watt, Dundee and Stirling.

Predictable concerns over funding for research and training informed the discipline's submission to the Robbins commission. This was coordinated by Max Gluckman and the eminent demographer David Glass on behalf of Section N (Sociology) of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. When the British Association finally decided in 1958 to include sociology within its remit, the proposal for a common section to be entitled 'Social Science' was rejected, with Glass arguing that 'sociology should not be brought into the BA simply as an appendage to any of the existing associations'. Glass instead proposed a separate sociology section. Max Gluckman became the first Chair of the new section, and was seen as the ideal face of a politically united set of social sciences, 'in order to encourage anthropologists to take more part in the British Association'.⁶

The Glass-Gluckman memo, as it became known, was entitled 'The Social Sciences in British Universities'. It stressed the common interests

of the three social sciences, including social psychology, and focused primarily on 'the lack of consistent policy in developing the Social Sciences within the University framework'. Keen to emphasise their scientific contribution, they bemoaned the 'lack of research funds which would make it possible systematically to build up knowledge and valid generalisations in their respective spheres'. A special case for anthropology was made in reference to the threat of American dominance, where 'the study of developing societies is becoming increasingly the preserve of US universities – hardly surprising when a single US research grant given in this connection may be larger than the total annual expenditure of all UK universities for anthropological and sociological research in less developed countries'. Glass and Gluckman also viewed 'with grave disquiet the tendency of the Government and of the UGC to put their main emphasis upon undergraduate teaching', and instead emphasised the importance of a proper postgraduate training programme. Repeated stress was put on 'catching up with the older disciplines', along with the recommendation to establish 'a Human Sciences Research Council to match the other existing councils'. They described the constant search for grants for young scholars as leading to 'senior teachers having to spend a large proportion of their time searching, cap in hand for small amounts of money from diverse sources' (Glass and Gluckman 1962). Firth, as ASA Chair, lent the association's support to the memorandum, and, in his own letter, equally emphasised anthropology's increasing interest in industrialising societies.⁷

Not everyone supported the idea of a joint submission with sociology. Edmund Leach, perhaps because of growing theoretical differences and increasing personal rivalry with Gluckman, was distinctly unimpressed. Gluckman had strongly disagreed with Leach's emphasis on conflicting individual interpretations of social models and collective political processes. (Kapferer 1987). Leach saw the memo as presenting social anthropology as 'an appendix to sociology', and assuming that the interests of the two disciplines were 'always identical'. He went on to suggest that in some universities 'social anthropology needs independent support', and made a special plea for the Royal Anthropological Institute and the co-ordinating role it could play within anthropology. In so doing, he brought the discipline's infighting over the role of its professional associations full circle, for he held a rather different view of the discipline and its future. He was appointed President of the RAI the following year.⁸

Gluckman responded suggesting that 'Leach has misunderstood the enquiry' and pointing out that the key issue facing anthropology was that the new committee 'says that it is only concerning itself with research in Britain'. 'What I feel we must do,' he went on, 'is point out

that the substantial body of experts and knowledge built up in Britain about overseas countries should be contained in the future. We are competing on very unsatisfactory terms in this respect with other countries.'

The Robbins report was sympathetic to the nascent social sciences, calling for broader first degrees, and an increase in funded postgraduate study. The inevitable downside was the social science's increased reliance on British government funding. As Shattock notes, 'Robbins represented the essential watershed between the period when university autonomy was taken for granted and when its gradual reduction became part of a litany of university complaint against the government of the day' (Shattock 1994, 107).

The Heyworth Report and the founding of the SSRC

If Robbins envisaged an expansive future for universities, the future of anthropological research was more directly shaped by the 1965 Heyworth committee on social studies. Despite the findings of the Robbins committee, many in the Conservative Government were strongly resistant to funding social science research. Lord Hailsham famously saw the whole field as a 'happy hunting ground for the bogus and the meretricious' (quoted in Nicol 2001). After persistent lobbying, he was forced to concede 'not quite another inquiry, but an inquiry into whether an inquiry was required' (Nicol 2001, 10). When a committee on social science research was finally convened, the appointment of a corporate figure like Lord Geoffrey Heyworth, then Chairman of ICI, ensured a highly utilitarian and policy-focused vision for the social sciences.

Predictably, Lord Heyworth drew heavily on his business background. His terms of reference saw the relevance of the social sciences as reaching far beyond universities. For the first time, 'users' of social research, including the government, were included in the consultation, with an implicit corollary that social research could and should be policy-oriented. Whilst its terms of reference were 'to review the research at present being done in the field of social studies in Government departments, universities and other institutions', the commission's own appendix called for submissions that looked 'for evidence concerning the application of these subjects' in 'administration, education, employment and industry, government, law, medicine and social services'.⁹

Was Heyworth only interested in research in Britain? The committee's view was that they were concerned with 'research abroad as part of a study which includes research in this country (e.g. a

comparative study)'. The ASA decided to challenge this narrow interpretation. Stressing the comparative nature of their discipline, Banton and Gluckman insisted that it was 'impossible to have a social anthropology of British life unless it is set in the general perspective provided by the study of human societies throughout the world'. They described this British focus as 'meaningless in the case of our subject as it is founded upon social comparisons and cannot be forced into a national straight jacket [*sic*]'. 'British' social anthropology was, in their eyes, international by definition.

They went on to note that 'any interpretation of the committee's terms of reference which virtually excludes social anthropology would be bizarre in the extreme'. Finally, they pointed out that the USA, the USSR, France, Belgium, Holland and Italy were putting more money for research in less developed countries, and 'that the international reputation of British work in these fields is such that American institutions have drawn away some of our best young anthropologists'. A second submission from the ASA sought to cover all corners by also emphasising anthropology's 'contribution to understanding British social and industrial life'. In a similarly strategic move, the British Sociological Association also made a two-page submission, written by Michael Banton, to the committee entitled 'Statement concerning Under-developed Societies', and emphasising that British sociology 'should not become parochial or limited in its perspectives to industrialised nations alone'.

The secretary to the Heyworth committee invited representatives from the RAI and the ASA to do an oral presentation, in order for 'representatives of the profession to speak in unison'. Leach's opposition to the Glass–Gluckman memo and his counter-proposal to make the RAI the funded centre of British Anthropology made unanimity unlikely, and an anxious correspondence followed. The ASA secretary went as far as to suggest that 'some of our members would feel there was a better case for our appealing jointly with the British Sociological Association than with the Royal Anthropological Institute'.¹⁰

The Heyworth committee held a number of consultation seminars, including one in Manchester on 'Research into problems of regional and urban development'. The meeting was dominated by a professor of planning, who suggested that a new research council should get involved in regional planning for the North West. Gluckman's response was crisp and revealing. 'I would have thought that for a research council to get involved in this kind of project would involve it in so many political complications that its effectiveness would soon be destroyed ... What I think is important is to distinguish academic from practical research.'¹¹

Disciplinary special pleading dominated the consultation. As a result, the final report attempted to try and define the disciplines, ostensibly because 'outside universities people are often unfamiliar with their technicalities', but also to reiterate the scientific potentials of the social sciences. Yet this was easier said than done: 'Sociology is perhaps the discipline which people find the most puzzling of the major social sciences,' the report began. (Heyworth 1965, 3). As the Heyworth report noted, 'Sociology has recently grown with explosive force from two or three centres to practically every university.' The report argues that the difference between the two disciplines is primarily one of method, but also highlights the discipline's 'useful' qualities: 'In addition to their traditional work in underdeveloped countries, anthropologists have been able to make a number of highly useful observations about British life by setting it in the general perspectives provided by the study of human societies throughout the world' (*ibid.*, 3).

Whilst the committee's recommendation to establish a Social Science Research Council (subsequently renamed the Economic and Social Research Council in 1981) was broadly welcomed by anthropologists, its focus on the rational application of social scientific knowledge to national social planning was far less palatable. The final report stated that 'basic research and applied research both have to be carried out simultaneously; neither can advance without the other' (*ibid.*, 28). The list of research priorities, such as 'What is the most effective form of classroom organisation' or 'What are the most effective forms of organisation of industrial enterprises' all adopt a narrowly functionalist and utilitarian rationale for social research. It encouraged policy-makers, and many academics themselves, to view the social sciences in positivist terms. The one international research priority – the social and cultural legacy of colonialism for newly independent countries – was one that anthropology had not really begun to address.

This rhetoric put anthropology in a double bind. On the one hand, its survival as a distinct intellectual discipline depended on state funding. On the other hand this patronage was accompanied by and linked to a constant negotiation and conflict over what counted as useful, as opposed to merely important, social knowledge.

Empires old and new

Whilst the long-term future of social sciences was in the hands of these high-level commissions, the discipline itself faced more immediate problems. The Association of Social Anthropologists

continued to face the challenge of whether to become more inclusive in its membership policies or to maintain its role as mouthpiece for a distinctive 'British social anthropology'.

The first problem that emerged in the 1950s was that of graduates from British anthropology departments who 'then took posts in foreign countries' (here 'foreign' needs to be read as non-Commonwealth countries). Though they were not then eligible for ASA membership, the committee recognised that 'it might be fruitful to link them in some way with the ASA', especially as they 'were working in the tradition of British social anthropology'. Once again, national and academic identities were conflated. Social anthropology was never described as a Commonwealth intellectual tradition, even though many of its key protagonists hailed from New Zealand (Piddington, Firth), Australia (Kaberry) and South Africa (Fortes, Gluckman, Schapera). 'British' became code for the imperial context and networks within which social anthropology had developed. During the course of his peripatetic career, Radcliffe-Brown held teaching posts in Sydney, Cape Town and Chicago, creating cohorts of influential students, and later also in Yenching, São Paulo and Alexandria.

Yet those in the 'dominions' faced a difficult logistical challenge if they wished to attend the twice-yearly meetings in England. When the Professor of Anthropology in Sydney wrote in the summer of 1952 proposing that an Australian subgroup be formed, to be called 'ASA (Australia branch)', the ASA's own committee responded by changing their organisation's title. They published a short piece in *Man* announcing that its new title was the 'Association of Social Anthropologists of Great Britain and the Commonwealth'. The Australian branch was welcomed, but their members were asked to continue their individual membership of the umbrella association.

The following year John Peristiany, an Oxford lecturer who specialized in the Mediterranean, pointed out the corollary problem of international students who had done postgraduate work in this country. A fuzzy modification to the rules was agreed in 1960 – that 'persons who are not nationals of the Commonwealth should have received "a substantial" part of their training in a commonwealth institution'. In the same meeting the eligibility of 'persons working in the industrial field' was raised. This was seen as far less controversial, with both Gluckman and Firth pointing out that the discipline was defined not by its object of study but by its methods. Gluckman, however, was the only senior ASA member to have a significant number of students doing research on 'complex societies'. Most of these subsequently became employed in sociology departments, though many also joined the ASA.

The rules governing membership got steadily longer and more difficult to interpret. On the other hand, the small size of the association in this period ensured both scholarly familiarity and a shared focus on a cohesive set of theoretical questions. The bureaucratic ritual of scrutinising applicants served to 'beat the bounds' of disciplinary discussion. Did the applicant share the 'tradition' of 'British' social anthropology? Were they one of us?

The Americans are coming

The great unmentionable in these debates was the ASA's relationship with American anthropology. The 'Britishness' of social anthropology increasingly began to be defined in counterpoint to a Boasian tradition and the 'culture and personality' approach of Ruth Benedict and others. Yet both Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski had taught in the USA, and their students became increasingly influential. Radcliffe-Brown was Professor at Chicago between 1932 and 1937, and a number of his postgraduate students, including Fred Eggan and Sol Tax, took up his theoretical interests. By ASA rules, they were not permitted to join because they did not hold positions in 'social anthropology' departments. Meanwhile, the American Anthropological Association, through its conferences and journal, continued to expand its international influence. It was in the *American Anthropologist* that George Murdock attacked the narrowness and ahistoricism of the new British school of social anthropology in 1951 (Murdock 1951). Whilst Murdock's call for 'comparative or cross-cultural validation' hardly represented all American scholarly opinion, his caricature was influential. The article was entitled 'British Social Anthropology', and the label stuck.

Not everyone in the USA was unsympathetic to social anthropology. In 1958 Fred Eggan, one of Radcliffe-Brown's students at Chicago, nominated Firth and Fortes for fellowships at the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences at Stanford. Once selected, they were joined by the American scholars Lloyd Fallers, Clifford Geertz, Cora DuBois, Fred Eggan, George Murdock, Melford Spiro, Dozier and Greenberg. During their stay there was an extended discussion over the need for a journal of social anthropology. Recognising that 'every other major branch of anthropology has at least one journal to cater for its needs', a title was tentatively proposed: 'Social Anthropology: A Journal of Society and Culture'. On his return to the UK, Firth sent the proposal out to ten 'British leaders' in the discipline. Responses were mixed, to say the least. Evans-Pritchard responded that he was 'unenthusiastic about the proposed new journal ... I would myself like to see a British journal of the kind, but not an Anglo-American one ... I just don't care

for their kind of writing.' He added that it would be 'unwise to start off with a purely Anglo-Saxon set up and then ask people like the French to come in later. The French are sensitive in such matters.' On the question of national influence, Leach added that 'quantitatively the American contributions to the new journal would heavily outweigh all the rest put together and this would lead to a debasement of the standing of British Social Anthropology'. With more than a touch of irony, he went on to acknowledge that 'the phrase "social anthropology" is becoming OK in America though very few American anthropologists know what we mean by this expression'.¹³

During 1961 disagreements over expanding the ASA beyond the 'Commonwealth' divided the committee. In a lengthy memo, Firth, then ASA Chair, questioned the restrictive membership policy. He felt that both the issue of the Australian branch and the forthcoming 'Anglo-American' conference (later known as the first ASA decennial) made the issue of membership particularly urgent. Firth had obtained US National Science Foundation support for American scholars to travel and participate in a conference that he envisaged would address 'divergences between British and American Social Anthropology'. In a strongly worded response, Chairman-elect Gluckman rebuffed these anxieties:

What is the crisis in ASA affairs? There is no indication that the Australian branch wants to withdraw, despite the difference of opinion over one rule. On the major issues, I don't see how we, as a strong association are threatened by the possibility of Americans forming an association of social anthropologists. I think we are more likely to be swamped if we continue to open the doors to Americans, for where do we draw the line between social anthropology and other forms of anthropology?¹⁴

Gluckman went on to discuss individual possible candidates, so revealing his view of the brand of comparative cultural anthropology propounded by George Murdock and others:

In Chicago there are three ASA members – Fallers, Schnieder and Pitt-Rivers ... Obviously Eggan – but then? Are we to take in Murdock, White, Aberle etc etc? They would swamp us, and I would not recognise Aberle as a social anthropologist, having just had him here for a year. The whole operation looks fraught with difficulties to me, and I consider that we had better continue along our own road. We should explain to Barnes why we restrict membership to people in the British Commonwealth trained there – it is not xenophobic, since we would welcome people like Eggan, but because we have to think about the Murdocks and the Herskovites. Secondly, if we change the rules of membership, we alter completely the character of the ASA: instead of growing steadily on the basis of personal

association of one kind or another, it would with a jump in size become a different sort of body altogether.

Firth quickly responded in a conciliatory fashion, agreeing that there was 'of course, no crisis in ASA affairs'. Reassured, Gluckman was in turn more amenable. 'My main worry about throwing the whole association open, is that we would then have ourselves to take on the very invidious job of selecting among foreign taught applicants those whom we thought were social anthropologists rather than other kinds of anthropologists'.¹⁵ Gluckman carefully avoided mentioning that it was precisely this 'invidious' process of selection that had always characterized the ASA.

On the whole, differences were kept within the committee. In 1963 the committee agreed that the Anglo-American meeting would be the ideal place to discuss the 'internationalisation' of the association. In public, however, it was left to Jack Goody to propose that the word 'Commonwealth' be deleted, and that all candidates be admitted on their merits, putting the association on an international basis. Yet he had little support amongst members, many of whom felt that the association was already expanding too fast.

The 1963 conference was seen as a success (Eggan 1987), and led to the publication of the first four ASA monographs (Banton 1965a, b, 1966a, b), though they faced the usual drawbacks of all edited collections. Frankenberg (1988, 3) remembers how one US speaker proclaimed his pleasure at being invited to 'the joint meeting of the British Empire and the University of Chicago'. The issue of internationalisation was not raised at the conference itself, but three months afterwards the committee nonetheless proposed offering membership to a number of American anthropologist (including Fred Eggan, Clifford Geertz, Ward Goodenough, Marshall Sahlins, Melford Spiro and Eric Wolf) and 'to allow them to nominate others so that an American branch could be formed'. However, Fred Eggan, one of the conference chairs, thought it would cause great embarrassment if only a select few known to be sympathetic to the aims of the ASA were invited to join, and dissuaded Max Gluckman from doing so.

This was one of several attempts to set up an American 'branch' of the ASA. Raymond Firth again mooted expanding the association in 1969, proposing an 'International Association of Social Anthropologists'. Again, the committee demurred, feeling that 'it might prove embarrassing to have to define a social anthropologist' and that 'it was hard to see what such an association might achieve'. The outcome of this proposal was simply that it was agreed to hold another large conference, 'to which social anthropologists from other countries would be invited', a proposal that led to the holding of the second decennial in 1973 and the setting in train of a precedent for a ten-yearly conference.

Unresolved, the 'Commonwealth' label continued to stir up anxieties over self-definition. Relations with the Australian branch worsened. Far more students were receiving anthropology degrees in South Africa, Australia and India than in the UK, and yet the focus of the ASA was almost entirely on metropolitan concerns. Led by John Barnes, the Australian branch asked to be able to elect their own members, and for the membership criteria to be expanded to include all four fields of the discipline. The ASA committee was unanimous in rejecting this proposal. Rebuffed but not cowed, the Australian ASA disassociated from its 'British' parent and formed an independent association in May 1969.

'The most useful kind of textbook'

The early history of the ASA is marked by repeated concerns over self-definition. When the ASA committee members were not revisiting their membership criteria, they seemed to be concerned with teaching and the production of a representative textbook. On the ASA's founding in July 1946, the first objective of its draft constitution was 'to promote the study and teaching of social anthropology'. Early meetings dwelt repeatedly on the idea of producing either a journal or a textbook for scholars and students that would capture the concerns of this new discipline. One of Evans-Pritchard's initial aims for the ASA had been 'a journal devoted solely to social anthropology'. 'Such a journal', he went on, 'would publish only contributions to theory and methodology, and not ethnographic fieldwork reports'.

In Evans-Pritchard's initial plans, drawn up in the autumn of 1946, he proposed a journal modeled on *L'Année Sociologique*, with a number of extended review articles and memoirs. His draft listed the contribution of each: Radcliffe-Brown – General Sociology; Firth – Economics; Fortes – Social Psychology; Schapera – Political Institutions; Gluckman – Law; Evans-Pritchard – Ritual; Forde – Marriage and Kinship; Nadel – Culture Change; Audrey Richards – Applied Anthropology (Firth 1986). Evans-Pritchard even had a title: 'Annals of Social Anthropology'. The journal, he felt, would legitimise this new intellectual school, and be a way of inspiring and informing potential students.

Evans-Pritchard was quoted £500 for the publication of a 500-page journal, a huge sum of money for an association with only £6 in hand. The committee resolved to seek support from the Carnegie Foundation. Carnegie were not convinced, and instead Firth proposed to publish the volume in an LSE series. The growing rivalry between Oxford and LSE meant that this was not greeted with enthusiasm

either. By the following summer the committee agreed to focus solely on a textbook with the provisional title 'Advances in Social Anthropology', and a sub-committee was formed. Seigfried Nadel and Max Gluckman were appointed joint editors, and a text of 150,000 words was envisaged, with publication in October 1950.

This plan also ran into problems. American colleagues recommended that such a text should 'include anthropology generally', but this was rejected by a now divided ASA committee. Eventually the editors resigned from the task, though Gluckman, at Evans-Pritchard's instigation, relaunched the initiative in the summer of 1951. Gluckman wrote a lengthy memo on the developments thus far for those new to the ASA: 'Primarily we should aim at a book, or series of books, which would evaluate the development of British social anthropology into a specific distinctive discipline.' Focusing on the developments in the 'technique of intensive field research by Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski', he adds, 'I consider that it is possible to isolate the new technique as producing a new discipline.' The aim was the 'most useful kind of textbook, since an unformed discipline is best taught through its historical development'. 'Britishness' was invoked as a key – if undefined – marker of this new intellectual development. A new editor, John Peristiany, was appointed, and again members were urged to submit papers.¹⁶ But soliciting written contributions again proved impossible, and there was a growing recognition that the association had neither the financial means nor the critical mass to produce its own journal. Even plans to stenograph copies of talks made at ASA meetings never materialized. Instead, individual anthropologists began to publish their own introductory textbooks (e.g. Piddington 1950; Nadel 1951, Pocock 1961).

In 1956 Jack Goody returned to the idea of 'a collection of articles representing the more theoretical achievements in Social Anthropology'. The twist was that the articles were to be selected by younger members of the association, 'on the grounds that they are in a better position to assess the achievements of the senior generation'. It too became mired in the controversy over who would select such articles. According to one critic, 'it divided the ASA into seniors and juniors when at meetings all were equal'. Goody's idea did, however, inform the structure of the 1963 'Anglo-American' conference, which sought to highlight the work of younger scholars. Despite almost two decades of effort, the first official ASA publications were the monographs from this conference. Edited by Michael Banton, and with an introduction by Gluckman and Eggan, the contributions clustered (not always synergistically) around four major themes of social anthropological study – political systems, religion, the relevance of models and complex societies. Whilst hardly the textbook originally envisaged, the four volumes represented a final compromise

between the ASA's initial pedagogic ideals and the limited market for the discipline.

Pedagogic mandarins or educational missionaries?

Despite Firth's failure to get the Nuffield Foundation to fund Ph.D. studentships, not everyone was worried about finances. Fortes, secure at Cambridge, announced himself 'relieved that Nuffield did not give money', insisting that 'more money is about than good people to take jobs'. He instead noted that despite a decade of expansion and advance into teaching and research, there had been 'no opportunity to pool experience' around pedagogy. He proposed an ASA meeting to consider 'undergraduate teaching and patterns of training and research'. Backed by Audrey Richards and Barbara Ward, plans were made for a major ASA meeting to discuss teaching.¹⁷

The meeting, simply entitled 'The Teaching of Social Anthropology', was held in September 1958 at Kings College, Cambridge. It was the first annual ASA 'conference', replacing the twice-yearly meetings that had been held since 1946, meetings that were now increasingly poorly attended. Instead of the usual one or two speakers, seven papers were presented in four separate sessions – 'Social Anthropology for the Non-professionals', 'The Teaching of Undergraduates', 'The Teaching of Graduates and Training for Field-work', and 'Training for Fieldwork in Retrospect'. Twenty-nine senior ASA members attended, though, after earlier unhappiness about the presence of uninvited graduate students, no students were present.

Barbara Ward – an ex-teacher and a Cambridge-based anthropologist of China – opened the conference with a discussion of anthropology for 'non-professionals'. She argued that a 'comparative and structural approach to the study of human relationships could add to the moral equipment of educated people' and advocated the wider dissemination of the discipline's insights. She used the precedent of history, which at the turn of the century had equally been faced with 'a dilemma similar to our own', namely 'whether to give research priority over all other considerations or to broaden their approach'. She described how her own research had found a widespread ignorance amongst beginners about the discipline, and argued for a 'professional' committee to focus on the problems of 'teaching anthropology to non-professionals'. More controversially, she noted that teaching was often 'neglected or even despised' in the research universities. Kenneth Little, another disciplinary reformer, suggested that there was value in schoolteachers having knowledge of the discipline for handling children, and that it would be a 'good thing' if they understood the anthropological approach

to race relations. But these positions caused a good deal of controversy. Leach, in particular, thought the proposal of 'selling' social anthropology to be 'preposterous', and that 'if the subject was any good it would sell itself'.¹⁸ He continued to take a strong position against social anthropology in schools (Leach 1973), and popularisation in general.

Should teaching be an individual matter, or was promoting the discipline's contribution to 'general education' a priority? The tension between the two approaches dominated the conference. The importance of a textbook of social anthropology was again raised, with Freedman pointing out 'that if we had accepted this view earlier we would have produced the basic textbooks which were so woefully lacking'.

During the conference, undergraduate teaching provision at Cambridge, Manchester and LSE were compared in some depth, to the extent of comparing set readings and course options. The conference proceedings provide an excellent record of the different departmental approaches to teaching. Fortes, for example, advocated that 'current controversies should be excluded' in the teaching of undergraduates, and that 'no thorough treatment of the subject's history was needed at this stage'. The place of history and sociology in the teaching of anthropology was constantly returned to, with Fortes suggesting that 'were one to stick to social anthropology as an educational subject without bearing in mind these links it could have a narrowing influence'. On the other hand, the Manchester honours course involved 'one sociological problem examined in detail'. A good deal of anxiety was expressed about the 'mediocre' quality of anthropology students, for which Evans-Pritchard blamed 'the lowly place accorded to social studies in the this country', though he also acknowledged that 'we have not yet attained the high standards of rigorous scholarship an exacting student might require', and also 'to some extent lost touch with other fields of learning'. Gluckman, on the other hand, took the position that the 'lower seconds' were 'good, able and valuable'.

There was a good deal of debate about research training, particularly in the two sessions devoted to fieldwork preparation. Debate hinged around the appropriate length of graduate training, the necessary prerequisites for Ph.D. registration, the contents of pre-fieldwork seminars, and appropriate forms of supervision. Firth asked whether 'supervision should be as loose and informal as appeared to be the case in Oxford', whilst others suggested that the fieldwork should be learnt through the 'do-it-yourself' style of apprenticeship, or placed emphasis on the value of informal peer-tutoring from those engaged on 'writing up'.

Summing up the conference, Forde concluded that ‘the association should put expansion into the field of general education as one of its objectives’, and the meeting agreed to set up a sub-committee ‘for the study of the presentation of social anthropology to non-specialised audiences’.¹⁹ The 1958 conference set a precedent for a disciplinary concern with pedagogy, but from then on the focus was on ‘educating’ others about anthropology, rather than on how it was taught within universities.

‘People who know what they are talking about’: teaching anthropology from above

Plans for a regular meeting went into abeyance, only to be resurrected by Paul Stirling in 1964. That December, six years after the first, another conference on ‘The Place of Anthropology in General Education’ was held at the LSE, funded by Wenner Gren.²⁰ This time it focused on the teaching of anthropology in schools, further education and teacher training colleges. In his provocative call for papers, Stirling acknowledges the tensions within the association about its pedagogic role:

This topic has so far divided us into the Mandarins (social anthropology for professionals and mature minds only) and the Missionaries (social anthropology has a message for everyone). We are meeting to discuss how to help, not whether to help, and cannot afford publicly to divide amongst ourselves. There are plenty of problems, – what is to be taught, how, to whom, by whom, and from what books.²¹

This second conference attracted many senior figures. It began with a ‘closed’ session, where Stirling polemically announced that teachers and pupils were ‘pathetically not to say dangerously ignorant about society and societies’. ‘Have we not’, he asked, ‘a clear moral duty to propagate the truth as we see it?’ He went on to declare his reluctance to ‘sit by and see schools teach a sociology in which social anthropology is scarcely represented’. In the same session Gluckman talked in pragmatic terms of the actual services the association could offer to schools and education authorities, and raised the question of how far it would be possible to use ‘professionally trained’ staff. This was followed by a discussion on how best to present the discipline to the guests, and what people considered the ‘five main strengths’ of the subject when taught as a school subject. These, it was finally agreed, included ‘eroding ethnocentricity’, ‘a solid respect for facts’, ‘the limitations of all languages and cultures’ and the ‘general principles underlying the uniqueness of all societies’. There was very much less

consensus on 'the very great practical difficulties' of what to teach. One of the key subtexts to the gathering was whether sociology and social anthropology should be taught as A level subjects. Some welcomed the proposal, whilst others were 'strongly opposed'. The proceedings note that 'some of the opposition agreed that it was better to bow to the inevitable and cooperate'. All agreed that anthropology should only be taught by 'qualified people', and must not become 'woolly or doctrinaire'!

The open session on the following day, with around twenty-five invited guests – primarily teachers and policymakers – began with presentations by Mary Douglas and Frankenberg on 'What anthropology has to offer'. Mary Douglas, supporting Stirling's position, argued that 'neither knowledge nor even admiration of other cultures is harmful to faith or morals, unless illuminated by a falsely romantic halo'. Frankenberg discussed sociology's relation to anthropology, noting that 'some people find sociology vague, general and abstract' whilst 'social anthropology is specific and detailed', and also has the 'advantage' of the 'shock and interest of the unfamiliar'. The day also included papers by practising teachers, for the Manchester department had developed a close linkage with a teacher training college, giving advice on teaching the subject in schools.

As ever, the theory-practice dichotomy was cause for dispute. Some of the teachers reacted to the aura of abstraction by challenging anthropologists to 'provide solutions to specific practical problems'. On the other hand, several anthropologists 'expressed serious misgivings about a general policy of encouraging anthropology students to do practical local research as part of an initial training', noting that 'not even universities attempt this'. Others voiced strong objections to the students carrying out practical research as part of their initial training. The complex relationship between sociology and social anthropology also confused many outside the discipline. This was hardly surprising given the mixed messages they received from academics. Fortes argued that anthropology had to keep itself distinct and that 'the awareness of differences between societies was the crucial point', whilst Tyler, for tactical reasons, taught anthropology but called it sociology.

This problem of definition was not only a problem for the 'guests', but also a key dilemma for the final closed ASA session, and indeed for policy developments in subsequent years, during which the teaching of sociology at university and school expanded rapidly. As the 'overlap between sociology and social anthropology is so great and our interests so close, it would be absurd to appear publicly as rivals' went the argument recorded in the proceedings, whilst also recognising that 'complete identification with sociology is unacceptable both to them

and us'. It was agreed to act independently, but in the 'fullest possible co-operation' with sociologists.

With no publications or public record, the 1964 conference is little remembered in contrast to the first ASA decennial – the 'Anglo-American' conference – the previous year. It deserves better. The dialogue was a diverse but productive one, and in a final 'closed' ASA session it was agreed that there was a strong case for anthropologists to 'take more interest' in non-university education. The general enthusiasm for action led – perhaps inevitably – to the creation of another high-powered committee. Convened and chaired by Stirling, this was grandly entitled the 'Committee on Anthropology in General Education', consisting of the national ASA office-holders and representatives from all the main university departments. Each regional representative was also envisaged as setting up their own committee, as 'we seem unanimous that more about anthropology should be made known to colleges of education and school teachers'. 'Furthering the cause' involved responding to requests for help with syllabuses, offering talks to sixth forms and doing school visits. As the request to the departments ends, 'we all stand to gain from a wider dissemination by people who know what they are talking about, and the more interest we take ourselves, the less will it be left to non-anthropological amateurs to lead each other into the ditch'. Whilst such efforts at outreach continued into the 1970s, before being taken up by the RAI's own Education Committee, they remained largely marginal to disciplinary preoccupations.

One of the decisions of this committee was to cooperate as closely as possible with the British Sociological Association (BSA) in organising future conferences. However this was easier said than done. The BSA was already divided between senior research-focused academics and a 'teacher's caucus' within its ranks. Such internal feuds limited ASA/BSA cooperation. The Sociology Teachers Section of the BSA did subsequently hold their own conference on teaching sociology in colleges jointly with the ASA in 1966, and in 1968 an informal working party sought to put together an A level syllabus that was presented to the Oxford and Cambridge exam boards in 1970. Nothing came of the joint initiative. The reluctance of many anthropologists to consider the possibility of teaching anthropology as an A level was also not shared by sociologists, and the growth of sociology in schools buttressed its expansion in the new universities.

Conclusion

With hindsight, the 1960s was a crossroads in social anthropology's development in the UK. The end of empire forced it to find new sources of funding and to reflect on its organisation, its structure and the training of its students. The ASA continued to play a central role in the discipline. It could have been a strong advocate for change, reform and popularisation. But the rifts and tensions of the 1930s were still raw, and some did not want to be reminded of the discipline's colonial legacies by allowing administrators and amateurs to become members. The discipline was caught between the past and the future.

Despite the desire of some to proselytise on the discipline's behalf, intellectual coherence came first. The debate over who counted as 'one of us' continued to dominate the association's proceedings.²³ This selectivity came at the price of declining public influence, despite the media profiles of Max Gluckman, Mary Douglas and others. However, anthropologists were far from marginalized. Firmly tenured within the major research universities, they could begin to put their long-awaited disciplinary autonomy to use. From Firth's role in founding the new Social Science Research Council in 1965 to Rothschild's robust defence of the discipline in 1982 (Rothschild 1982), anthropologists had a wealth of political experience and social networks from which to protect and develop their intellectual legacies. Difficult folk they may have been, but canny too.

Notes

1. Interview, 6.3.00.
2. Letter from Arnold Plant to Audrey Richards, 4.12.56, Richards papers, 16/11, BLPES.
3. Letter to Arnold Plant, 12.11.56, Richards papers, 16/11, BLPES.
4. Letter to Sir Andrew Cohen, 3.12.56, Richards papers, 16/11, BLPES.
5. Firth, paper given to the British Association of Advancement of Science 1960, Firth Archives, BLPES.
6. Firth Archives, LSE Firth 3/3, Minutes of British Association executive committee meeting, Nov. 1958.
7. Firth Archives 3/3, BLPES.
8. ASA Archives 6.3, BLPES.
9. ASA Archives 1.2, Terms of reference for Heyworth committee, and correspondence from Banton, 4.11.63, to Cherns, secretary of Heyworth committee, BLPES.
10. *Ibid.*, 1.2.
11. Committee on Social Studies, Oral evidence transcripts part 1, Seminars 1964, PRO ED 144/5.
12. Firth Archives, 3/2 Firth to Fortes 9.6.59, BLPES.
13. *Ibid.*, LSE 3/2 Leach to Firth 10.6.59, BLPES.

14. Ibid, 3/9 Gluckman to Firth 1960, BLPES.
15. Ibid, 3/9 Firth to Gluckman 11.12.61, Gluckman to Firth 1.2.62, BLPES.
16. Firth Archives, File 3/1, BLPES.
17. ASA Archives E4/1, BLPES.
18. ASA Archives A2/1, BLPES.
19. ASA Archives, A2/1, BLPES.
20. Wenner Gren had just funded a series of international seminars on teaching anthropology (Mandelbaum 1963).
21. ASA Archives, A2/2, BLPES.
22. Titmuss papers, 2/187, BLPES.
23. In the succeeding forty years there have been many further revisions of the ASA's membership criteria.