



**MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT
FÜR ETHNOLOGISCHE FORSCHUNG**

Big Picture and Fine Grain: Disseminating Results (Phase One)

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December 19, 2017

ENIUGH Conference, Budapest, 31st August – 3rd September

The 5th conference of the European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH) was hosted by various institutions in Budapest and organized around the keywords “Ruptures, Empires, Revolutions”. Chris Hann convened a Panel titled “Empire, Exchange and Civilizational Connectivity in Eurasia”. He engaged with the theme of revolution by emphasizing the commonalities of agrarian civilizations across Eurasia since the urban revolution of the Bronze Age (as theorized by Jack Goody, following V. Gordon Childe). While Ildikó Bellér-Hann (Copenhagen) emphasized terrestrial links along the “Silk Roads” and offered fine grain from her research in the oasis of Qumul, Burkhard Schnepel (Halle) deployed the concept of “connectivity in motion” in demonstrating the equal importance of maritime links across the Indian Ocean. Marie Favereau (Oxford) explored the accomplishments of nomadic empires under the “Mongol peace” and Krishan Kumar (Virginia), drawing on his major new book, compared different sedentary empires as “vehicles and vectors” of Eurasia. Finally, Dagmar Schäfer (Berlin) critiqued Goody from the point of view of an historian of science concerned with knowledge production, focusing in this case on knowledge of the heavens (“cosmology”).



From left: Chris Hann, Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Dagmar Schäfer, Marie Favereau, Krishan Kumar and Burkhard Schnepel.

Photo: Maaïke van Berkel.

Despite its early Saturday morning slot, the Panel (which was held in the Quantum Room of the

Central European University) was well attended and generated good discussion. It ranged more widely in space and deeper in time than other sessions at this conference, reflecting the fact that most “global history” is biased toward recent centuries and the empires established by countries of Western Europe. Plans are under way to publish the papers, probably as a Special Issue of a prestigious journal.

DGV Conference, Berlin, 4th–7th October

The theme of the 2017 biennial conference of the German Anthropological Association (DGV) was “Belonging: Affective, moral and political practices in an interconnected world”. Lale Yalçın-Heckmann organised a panel with the title „On social action and belonging(s) between economy and religion“ with the aim of presenting some of the REALEURASIA team’s preliminary findings and opening new conversations with like-minded scholars. Tijo Salverda (University of Cologne) outlined an original perspective on “moral economy from afar” in the case of international actors in Zambian agribusiness who nowadays have to reckon with their company’s global reputation in all their dealings with local actors. Barbora Spalová (Charles University - Prague) and Isabelle Jonveaux (University of Graz) presented the results of collaborative research on monasteries in the Czech Republic and Austria, adding an eschatological dimension to discussions of moral economy while underlining the historical path-dependencies of their case studies. From our own PhD students, Daria Tereshina and Sudeshna Chaki compared the entangled moralities of the manager-owners of family firms in India and Russia. Ceren Deniz and Luca Szücs presented a comparative study in which they examined the responsibility of managers towards their employees in Turkey and Hungary respectively. They concluded that, even if family membership is important in employee-employer relationships in both countries, managers’ strategies to construct the community of the firm have differed significantly. As Discussant, Chris Hann cautioned against over-extending and reifying the concept of moral economy.

This Conference included several other panels on related themes. Some of the participants got together to re-establish the network of economic anthropology within the Association. At the end of the meeting there were heated, emotional discussions when members voted to change the Association’s name from *Völkerkunde* to *Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie*. We are now all members of the German Association of Social and Cultural Anthropology (see <https://www.dgv-net.de/wir-heissen-anders/>).





Lale Yalçın-Heckmann at the general Meeting of the DGV (henceforth DGSKA).

Photo: Timur Kiselev.

Presentations by Chris Hann in Copenhagen (27th October) and Frankfurt (24th November)

At the invitation of Peter Fibiger Bang, Associate Professor of Ancient History at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, who had attended the above-mentioned Panel in Budapest, Chris Hann devoted an afternoon seminar to the life and work of Jack Goody. Having just completed a rounded “memoir” for the British Academy (see <https://www.britac.ac.uk/publications/goody-john-rankine-1919-2015>), Hann emphasized the unusual trajectory by which Goody moved from being an ethnographer of northern Ghana to becoming a historian of Eurasia and a scourge of Eurocentric theorists in the social sciences.



(http://www.normativeorders.net/media/images/Plakate/2017_Jahreskonferenz.jpg)

Goody also figured prominently in the presentation made by Hann a few weeks later at the 10th annual conference of the Cluster of Excellence “The Formation of Normative Orders”, led by Rainer Forst and Klaus Günther and located at the University of Frankfurt. Sharing a Panel with Bernhard Jussen, Hann supported this historian’s questioning of the standard periodization of Antiquity/Middle Ages/Modern in Western Eurasia. With reference to the overall conference theme of “crisis”, Hann commended the “eco-Marxism” of Jason Moore as superior to alternative accounts which connect the Anthropocene too tightly to the impact of industrialization. Even Moore, however, focuses too narrowly on Western Eurasia (Europe and the Mediterranean). For a more satisfying account, Hann argued, it was preferable to follow the

narrative of Goody and recognize that the social relations of the Anthropocene can be traced back to Bronze Age Eurasia.¹

AAA Conference, Washington DC, 29th November – 3rd December

The theme of the American Anthropological Association's meeting this year was "Anthropology Matters!". As usual, thousands of anthropologists from all over the world attended. Lale Yalçın-Heckmann gave a presentation in a panel organised by Antonio Maria Pusceddu and Giacomo Loperfido (both University of Barcelona and researchers of the ERC Research Project 'Grassroots Economics,' GRECO). The title of the panel was "'Global North' and 'Global South' Revisited: Putting Core-Periphery Relations in Context". The aim was critically to assess the dichotomous construction of global power relations and offer ethnographically informed discussions of different scales of local power structures and differentiations. Yalçın-Heckmann discussed the development and expansion strategies of rose oil industrialists in her field site Isparta, exploring the inherent tensions in these strategies between local interests and economically dominant Western firms, and the new opportunities for both to expand to the periphery of the EU and the global south. She asked to what degree Islamic values and religious conservatism in public and economic life in the province of Isparta could be seen as offering conducive conditions and moral background for expansion. Other presenters at this panel included Miriam Driessen (Jesus College, Oxford) on the unintended consequences of Chinese migration to Ethiopia; Bronwyn Isaacs (Harvard) on the advertising industry and the reproduction of whiteness and middle class tastes; Anna Tuckett (LSE) on adult education and citizenship tests in the UK; Anne-Christine Trémon (University of Lausanne) on shifting cores and peripheries in Chinese diaspora contexts; and finally Giacomo Loperfido and Antonio Maria Pusceddu (both University of Barcelona) on Italian North-South dualism and the local embodiment of dual cultural typologies and their contestations. Jane Schneider brought out the common themes and arguments in an eloquent critical discussion.

Other economic anthropological panels at this AAA meeting included one on 'Embodying austerity in Europe' convened by Susana Narotzky (University of Barcelona) and 'Islam and economic theologies' convened by David Henig (University of Kent) and Amira Mittermaier (University of Toronto). Among noteworthy themes raised (from the point of view of our REALEURASIA priorities) were *emotional* aspects of austerity, and the theological roots of Muslim attitudes to gift giving and charity.

Conference: "Moral Economies, Work, Values and Economic Ethics" Wittenberg, 6th -9th December

Organized by Chris Hann, Sylvia Terpe and Lale Yalçın-Heckmann in Wittenberg, at the end of a year of celebrations to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, this international

conference was designed to involve all REALEURASIA researchers, together with a similar number of international presenters (selected via a competitive Call). We also invited several additional Discussants, and were delighted to renew contact with a number of scholars who have been supporters of the REALEURASIA project from the beginning. The keynote lecture on Wednesday 6th December was given by one of Germany's outstanding intellectuals, Hans Joas (Humboldt University, Berlin). Following a *Grußwort* by Udo Sträter, long-serving Rector of the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, Joas delivered an elegant digest of the theses of his new book, *Die Macht des Heiligen* (The Power of the Sacred). Central concepts and themes of Max Weber were taken up again the next morning by a Panel of distinguished German sociologists coordinated by Sylvia Terpe. A detailed account of these presentations and the questions they generated will be posted shortly at this blog by Terpe herself.



Conference participants.

Photo: Stefan Schwendtner (MPI for Social Anthropology).

The rest of the conference was dominated by presentations that foregrounded ethnography, most of them by anthropologists. Max Weber continued to figure prominently, both on account of *The Protestant Ethic* and in connection with his conceptualization of value spheres (the focus of Terpe's theoretical work). Seven papers were given by the REALEURASIA doctoral students. Sudeshna Chaki, Ceren Deniz and Luca Szücs all addressed the dynamics of family businesses with reference to kinship, in the context of state economic policies designed to promote marketization policies. The influence of religious (moral) ideals played a more significant role in the presentations by Lizhou Hao and Laura Hornig. While Daria Tereshina showed how some Russian Orthodox priests are shifting away from their Church's traditional antipathy toward market capitalism, Anne-Erita Berta outlined the historical impact of Lutheran Protestantism on Danish society, in which successful entrepreneurs nowadays endorse massive state redistribution and are more concerned that their children should inherit values of fairness and frugality, rather than wealth.

The papers given by external participants covered a huge range. Alongside the Weberian themes, the concept of moral economy featured prominently, from autonomous militarized

districts in Myanmar to agribusiness in Israel and Cuba's dual currency system. There was no consensus concerning how best to define and use the concept launched by British historian E.P. Thompson half a century ago. The REALEURASIA team was privileged to be offered a wealth of comparative materials and theoretical approaches. It is up to us to decide what use to make of them in the year ahead, as the individual projects draw to a close.

During the conference Chris Hann circulated the final proof of an article that will appear shortly in *New Literary History*.ⁱⁱ The timing of this contribution was fortuitous as it brings together the two outstanding figures of the "REALEURASIA Pantheon", Max Weber and Jack Goody, as set out at the first major conference of the team more than two years ago (see Hann's post of July 21st, 2015, written immediately after Goody's passing).

Notes

ⁱ See Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life. Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. London: Verso (2015); Chris Hann, "Social anthropology and the Anthropocene: micro and macro perspectives". *European Journal of Social Theory* 20 (1): 183-96 (2017).

ⁱⁱ Chris Hann, „Making sense of Eurasia. Reflections on Max Weber and Jack Goody". *New Literary History* 48: 685–699 (2017).