



**Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology**

CALL FOR PAPERS

First Conference of the Visegrád Anthropologists' Network

Visegrád Belongings: Freedoms, Responsibilities and Everyday Dilemmas

7-8 June 2018

Venue: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany

Convenor: Chris Hann, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

The Visegrád Anthropologists' Network (V4 Net) was launched in October 2017 at the Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology on the initiative of Chris Hann. Its main purpose is to contribute to a better understanding of contemporary social phenomena in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (the V4) by applying the theories and methods of anthropology, broadly defined. A second goal, especially important when many educational institutions in the V4 face severe pressures, is to consolidate the standing of the discipline, in fruitful conversations with fluid adjacent fields of the social sciences and the humanities.

The first conference of V4 Net will tackle very broad themes pertaining to “belonging”: from face-to-face communities and regional identifications to loyalties to larger imaginary constructions such as the nation. Beyond the nation-state, does the V4 itself generate sentiments of belonging, and if so, how are these effects achieved? How can anthropologists illuminate current tensions between national belonging and larger entities such as the EU, or a Christian European civilization? In addition to all these forms of collective belonging, other forms may also be explored: to one's family or larger kin groups, to workplaces, secular associations, religious congregations etc. In all cases, acts of categorization and processes of boundary construction result in exclusions, with implications for social relations and their imagination.

The juxtaposition of “freedom” and “responsibility” is inspired by Karl Polanyi (see the final chapter of *The Great Transformation*, 1944). The mature Polanyi argued that freedom cannot be attained in conditions of bourgeois liberalism, where market is the dominant form of economic integration, but only through socialist democracy based on the recognition of society and responsible action towards others. Today, when economic

pressures force families apart and politicians manipulate sentiments of belonging to a nation-state to disguise increasing social inequality and to monopolise power, Polanyi's social philosophy seems utterly utopian. In his home region and elsewhere, the notion of responsibility may itself be acquiring darker aspects. But is this to paint the picture too black? Can we detect other forms of belonging in the contemporary V4 that might contain the seeds of a new emancipatory "double movement" in Polanyi's sense?

Proposals should draw upon recent ethnographic research. The prime focus should be on one or more countries of the V4 but papers that engage with the former East Germany will also be considered.

Proposals should be submitted to Chris Hann (hann@eth.mpg.de) before **28 February, 2018**. Decisions will be communicated before 13th April. Invited participants will have their expenses covered in full.



Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

Conference

**Visegrád Belongings:
Freedoms, Responsibilities and Everyday Dilemmas**

7 – 8 June 2018

Organiser: Chris Hann

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 6th June 2018

19.00 Informal get-together at 'Café Nexus'

Thursday, 7th June 2018

8.30 – 9.15 Registration

9.15 – 11.15 Panel I

Chair: David Henig

Chris Hann

Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology

One Hundred Years of the Polish Peasant, at Home and Abroad

Anna Malewska-Szalygin

University of Warsaw

Family, Ethnos, Religion: Three belongings, three problems



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Juraj Buzalka
Comenius University

The Paradox of Visegrád Belonging in the Populist Era

*Discussant: **Frances Pine** (Goldsmiths, University of London)*

11.15 – 11.40 *Coffee break*

11.40 – 13.00 **Panel II**

Chair: Tatjana Thelen

Agnieszka Pasiaka
University of Vienna

Far Right and (Supra)national Belonging

Margit Feischmidt
Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Discourses of Belonging and Indignation: Neo-nationalism and the support of right-wing populism among the Hungarian youth

*Discussant: **Don Kalb** (University of Bergen)*

13.00 – 14.00 *Lunch break*

(13.30 – 14.00: PhD Students' meeting with Research Coordinator, Bettina Mann; Guesthouse Seminar Room)

14.00 – 16.00 **Panel III**

Chair: Nicolette Makovicky

Michał Buchowski
Adam Mickiewicz University and European University Viadrina

Class and Xenophobia in Central Europe in the Era of Refugees Crisis



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Marcin Brocki
Jagiellonian University

Revival of Local Identity under Political Pressure: Collapsing resentments toward Germans in German-minority ruled municipality in south-western Poland

Agnieszka Halemba
University of Warsaw

“Pogranicze” and “Przygranicze” – “Borderland” and “Land by the Border”: Dynamics of everyday life next to the Polish-German state border

*Discussant: **Peter Skalník** (University of Hradec Králové)*

16.00 – 16.30 *Coffee break*

16.30 – 17.50 **Panel IV**

Chair: Marek Mikuš

Jessica Robbins
Wayne State University

National Belonging and Responsibilities of the Third Age in Poland

Péter Török
Károli Gáspár Reformed University

Where Do They Belong? Research among Hungarian Gypsy/ Roma people?

*Discussant: **Bertalan Pusztai** (University of Szeged)*

18.30 – 20.00 *Reception at the Institute*

20.00 – 21.30 *Wrap-up and discussion*



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Friday, 8th June 2018

09.15 – 11.15 Panel V

Chair: Chris Hann

Daniel Sosna

University of West Bohemia

From Landfilling to Incineration: Informality and belonging near the end of the value chain

Joanna Mroczkowska

Polish Academy of Sciences

Informal Meat Economies of Small-scale Farmers in Eastern Poland: A safety valve in or resistance to the market reality

Emma Greeson

University of California, San Diego

Collections as Valuation Mechanisms in the Making of “Polish Design”

*Discussant: **Ludek Broz** (Czech Academy of Sciences)*

11.15 – 11.40 Coffee break

11.40 – 13.00 Panel VI

Chair: Mihaly Sárkány

Elena Soler

Charles University

“Brotherhood” (Bratrství) and Sentiments of Belonging Among Czechs and Slovaks in the Centenary Anniversary of the Birth of Czechoslovakia



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László Fosztó

The Romanian Institute For Research On National Minorities

Hungary Imagined and Enacted: Local views and practices in Transylvania under the new Hungarian national policy

*Discussant: **David Henig** (University of Kent)*

13.00 – 14.00 *Lunch break*

14.00 – 15.20 **Panel VII**

Chair: Lale Yalçın-Heckmann

Peter Skalník

University of Hradec Králové

Poland's New Energy: Social costs of coal nationalism

Piotr Goldstein

University of Manchester

Between Responsibility and Affirmation of Freedom and Belonging: Everyday activism in Łódź, Warsaw and Debrecen

*Discussant: **Marcin Lubaś** (Jagiellonian University)*

15.20 – 16.00 *Coffee break*

16.00 **Network Business Meeting of V4-Net Committee**

Discussion of future conferences, support for graduate students & postdocs

First assembly of first cohort of prospective PhD students

19.00 – 20.00 *Dinner at restaurant 'Delphi'*

20.00 – 21.00 *Concluding discussion*



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THE VISEGRÁD STATES IN THE MAELSTROM OF POSTSOCIALIST CHANGE

The Visegrád States in the Maelstrom of Postsocialist Change

May 31, 2018

Low wages, expanding social inequality, labour migration, xenophobia: these are all familiar problems in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, known as the Visegrád countries, or V4. An international conference entitled "Visegrád Belongings: Freedoms, Responsibilities and Everyday Dilemmas" on 7 and 8 June 2018 will consider the causes and the wide-ranging consequences of this situation. The conference, which will be held at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPI), will take place in English.

United against the EU

The Visegrád Group originated in 1991 with a cooperation agreement between Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, which was succeeded in 1993 by the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Since that time a multitude of institutional links have been initiated that bind these four nations closely together. In recent years they have repeatedly been in the spotlight of media attention, especially when their governments have spoken out vehemently against the refugee quotas agreed upon by the interior ministers of EU member states. Jarosław Kaczyński and Viktor Orbán in particular have enjoyed great success at home with their opposition to Brussels, which is generally justified by appealing to a need to protect not only national identity but also European, Christian values.

Economic and social inequality

"This harsh stance on refugee policy is not the only thing that the Visegrád states have in common," says Chris Hann, organizer of the conference and Director of the Department 'Resilience and Transformation in Eurasia' at the MPI. "Another common feature is their economic predicament – for example, the prevalence of labour migration. Many people leave these countries because wages are too low or because they can't find work at all." The researchers at the conference will give particular attention to the implications of the demise of socialism and the effects of global capitalism on the societies of the V4 at a micro-level. "When one considers, for example, that a worker at Mercedes-Benz in Stuttgart earns about four times as much as a worker at the new Mercedes-Benz factory in Kecskemét, Hungary, it is easy to see why Orbán has found so many supporters with his critique of the EU, from which postsocialist citizens had such optimistic expectations."

Forms of identity beyond nationalism

Even if the Western media like to suggest that the populist politics of the Visegrád countries exemplify a general increase in nationalism in Eastern Europe, this picture is painted with too broad a brush. "At our conference we intend to look beyond nationalism and investigate what other forms of identity and belonging play a role in the V4 today," Hann says. "Therefore we are interested

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in the ways that identity is created through connections with family and relatives, in secular and religious organizations, and with reference to regions." Perhaps these sources of identity have the potential to counter aggressive nationalism and the demands of global capitalism, and to form a basis for new forms of social solidarity. Hann: "The current processes imposed by neoliberal economics are clearly contributing to an increase in authoritarian populism. That is the bad news. At the same time, there may be opportunities for new emancipatory social movements. Both the positive and the malignant can be understood as a societal mobilization against the catastrophic impact of the disembedded market-dominated economy – just as described by the Hungarian economic historian Karl Polanyi with his famous concept of a 'double movement'."

Studying global social change

The Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology is one of the world's leading centres for research in socio-cultural anthropology. It was established in 1999 by Chris Hann and Günther Schlee, and moved to its permanent buildings at Advokatenweg 36 in Halle/Saale in 2001. Marie-Claire Foblets joined the Institute as Director of the Department 'Law & Anthropology' in 2012.

Common to all research projects at the Max Planck Institute is the comparative analysis of social change; it is primarily in this domain that its researchers contribute to anthropological theory, though many programmes also have applied significance and political topicality. Fieldwork is an essential part of almost all projects. Some 175 researchers from over 30 countries currently work at the Institute. In addition, the Institute also hosts countless guest researchers who join in the scholarly discussions.

🔗 Conference programme

More information on the Visegrád Anthropologists' Network (V4 Net)

http://www.eth.mpg.de/4638411/Visegrad_Network

Contact for this press release

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VISEGRÁD BELONGINGS – A CONFERENCE REPORT

Visegrád Belongings – a conference report

June 29, 2018

Over the course of two days filled with intensive discussion, the conference “Visegrád Belongings: Freedoms, Responsibilities and Everyday Dilemmas” at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology demonstrated the vigor of the newly established research Network dedicated to the V4 states – Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

The conference provided an opportunity to renew existing ties and form many new ones at multiple levels. Participants included retired colleagues whose research experience stretches back to the socialist era (Mihály Sárkány and Peter Skalník), leading figures in the present institutional landscape, and a range of younger researchers (postdocs and doctoral students). Although most participants were based within the Visegrád countries, other EU countries and North America were also represented. As envisaged in this Network, the states of former East Germany also figured prominently in the comparative debates. Topics for future meetings and conferences were discussed during the network’s business meeting. A workshop will be organized on 18–19 October at the University of West Bohemia (Pilsen, Czech Republic) by Daniel Sosna: “Thrift in Anthropology”. This has been made possible by a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation; additional support will be provided by the MPI. A conference on migration-related issues is envisioned for summer 2019 in Poznań.

The detention in Slovakia of a colleague, Professor David Scheffel, was a matter of great concern to Network members. They unanimously agreed to issue a statement urging prompt and transparent action by the Slovak authorities. The statement can be read [here](#).

More information about the conference:

- Press release from 31 May 2018
- Photo documentation of the conference
- [Conference programme](#)

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At their business meeting on 8th June 2018, Network members unanimously endorsed a statement expressing concern over the predicament of our colleague David Scheffel, currently being held in custody in Slovakia.

DAVID SCHEFFEL: CAUSE FOR CONCERN IN SLOVAKIA

David Scheffel: Cause for Concern in Slovakia

June 11, 2018

The "Visegrád Anthropologists' Network" is concerned to hear about the predicament of our respected colleague David Scheffel (Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC, Canada). It is clear from the information available to us <https://www.justicefordavidscheffel.com/> that the procedures being followed, and the conditions in which he is being held in custody in Slovakia, fall short of EU standards. We urge that David Scheffel be given the opportunity to clear his name in a transparent process as rapidly as possible.

Chris Hann, on behalf of the V4Network, Halle, 11th June 2018