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## REPATRIATING POLANYI

### MARKET SOCIETY IN THE VISEGRÁD STATES

Karl Polanyi's "substantivist" critique of market society has found new popularity in the era of neoliberal globalization. The author reclaims this polymath for contemporary anthropology, especially economic anthropology, in the context of Central Europe, where Polanyi (1886–1964) grew up. The Polanyian approach illuminates both the communist era, in particular the "market socialist" economy which evolved under János Kádár in Hungary, as well as the postsocialist transformations of property relations, civil society, ethnicity, and national identities throughout the region.

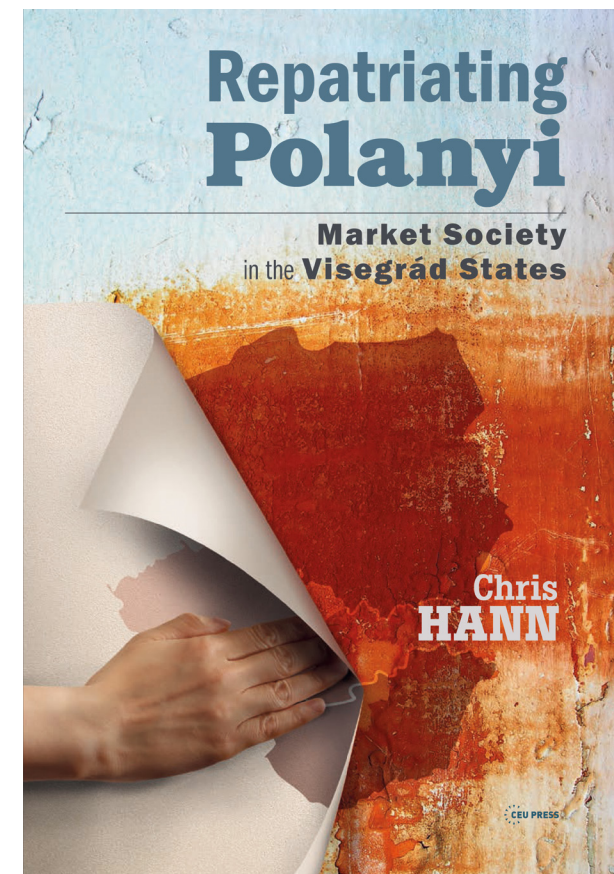
Hann's analyses are based primarily on his own ethnographic investigations in Hungary and southeast Poland. They are pertinent to the rise of neo-nationalism in those countries, which is theorized as a malign countermovement to the domination of the market. At another level, Hann's adaptation of Polanyi's social philosophy points beyond current political turbulence to an original concept of "social Eurasia."

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Chris Hann** was born and raised in Wales and educated at Oxford and Cambridge. He has carried out fieldwork in Central Europe as a social anthropologist since 1975. After teaching at the Universities of Cambridge and Kent (Canterbury), Hann moved to Germany in 1999 to co-found the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (Halle/Saale). He is an Ordinary Member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and of the World Academy of Rusyn Culture. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Hungarian Ethnographical Society.

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## REPATRIATING POLANYI

### MARKET SOCIETY IN THE VISEGRÁD STATES

#### Chris Hann

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale  
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Central European University Press  
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## CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR REPATRIATING POLANYI

*Chris Hann is a recognized anthropological expert on socialist societies, as well as on Karl Polanyi's theory of economy embedded in social relations. In this book he applies this double knowledge to a study of the neo-liberal postsocialist social formation that has emerged in the last three decades in the region of Polanyi's origin. This repatriation of his ideas brings first-rate, critical interpretation of the processes currently unfolding in Central and Eastern Europe.*

**Michał Buchowski** (Professor of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)

*In this book, Chris Hann contends that Karl Polanyi's intellectual repertoire is more relevant than ever. Long an insightful observer of Hungarian rural society, Hann makes a convincing argument by providing an invaluable selection of his writings old and new on the cultural and economic dilemmas faced by Polanyi's compatriots over the last half century.*

**Martha Lampland** (Professor of Sociology and Science Studies, University of California San Diego)

*With rare eloquence and integrity, Chris Hann has formulated a coherent (non-Eurocentric, plebeian and Polanyian) intellectual and moral-political perspective from which to view the consolidation of the neoliberal era in Central and Eastern Europe. Karl Polanyi prophesied that the imposition of "free markets" would risk "opening the door to the reintroduction of a crazy nationalism" (in *Universal Capitalism or Regional Planning?*, 1945). While confirming Polanyi's classic argument of the "countermovement,"*

*Hann urges avoidance of the all too easy political and moral contempt expressed by local and global elite groups for the masses that have been pushed into a new dystopia. For this, not only critical scholars but also the inhabitants of places like Tázlár and Kiskunhalas owe Chris Hann a lot.*

**Attila Melegh** (Director of the Karl Polanyi Research Center for Global Social Studies at Corvinus University, Budapest)

*Three decades of postsocialism have been no "end of history." Chris Hann guides us through the twists and turns of postsocialist life in Central Europe, from Polish Greek Catholics to Hungarian Mercedes factories, never losing sight of the human drama. This is what anthropology is all about.*

**Steven Sampson** (Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology, Lund University)

*Relying on his vast knowledge of Hungary and Poland, Chris Hann demonstrates how ideas concerning property, nation, ethnicity, and religion persisted and played a role in the passage from socialism to postsocialism. This was carried through according to neoliberal principles and it had unexpected results. Hann constructs a powerful argument for Karl Polanyi's vision of history, his notion of economy as instituted process in society, and his insistence on moral standards in orienting our world, and not only in the countries of Central Europe.*

**Mihály Sárkány** (Senior Honoris Causa, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

*Repatriating Polanyi is a fascinating book that shows the relevance of Karl Polanyi (born and raised in the Habsburg Empire) to the study of socialist and post-socialist Eastern Europe. Polanyi – a major inspiration worldwide for all those who are critical of neoliberalism – is now "repatriated" by Chris Hann, who has deep ethnographic knowledge of provincial worlds in Hungary and Poland. This book is a must for all those interested in socialism, postsocialism, and the critical study of neoliberalism.*

**Ivan Szelenyi** (William Graham Sumner Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Political Science, Yale University)

*This insightful compilation brings together the author's longstanding efforts to situate Karl Polanyi both at the heart of economic anthropology and also in his region of origin. Spanning topics such as property reforms, civil society, and diverse processes of belonging, the book has much to contribute to the analysis of the current historical moment. Grounded in nuanced ethnography, it will help students of Central and Eastern Europe to avoid the trope of negative othering, thereby opening novel perspectives on emergent futures.*

**Tatjana Thelen** (Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna)