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Volume I**

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Foreword

The members of the Kollegium and the Editorial Board are pleased to present the fifth biennial report of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. This time, the report is divided into two volumes. The first volume contains contributions from the various departments, groups and networks and also includes publication lists. The second volume is an appendix, which provides more detailed information on the scientific activities and achievements of all researchers.

In volume one, the main contributions from Department I “Integration and Conflict,” Department II “Socialist and Postsocialist Eurasia,” the Project Group Legal Pluralism and the Max Planck Fellow Group “Law, Organisation, Science and Technology” are based on talks that were given during the Joint Institutes Colloquium of the MPI for Social Anthropology and the Seminar for Social Anthropology at Martin Luther University, Summer Semester 2009. In this series of talks, held in the year of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the MPI for Social Anthropology, the heads of various units reflected on work to date and mapped out future plans. This lends these four chapters a retrospective and also a programmatic character that distinguishes them from corresponding sections in past editions of our biennial report. As in past reports, however, the main contributions from the two departments and from the Project Group Legal Pluralism are supplemented with texts describing activities in the various research groups that are situated within them. In addition, the Siberian Studies Centre has updated its contributions to past reports with a description of one of its innovative new projects.

The authors of the texts featured in this report and, where appropriate, the members of the various research groups are indicated at the beginning of each section. Within parameters specified by the Editorial Board, representatives of each department, group or network have altered the style of presentation according to their own needs. The result attests to the wide range of topics, the variety of approaches and also to the crosscutting ties and cooperative relations among the researchers in our Institute.

John Eidson
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Bertram Turner

Department I: Integration and Conflict

Director: Günther Schlee

Choice and Identity

Günther Schlee

1. The Question of Rationality or How Changing Compositions Affect their Composites

‘Integration’ and ‘conflict’ both deal with changes in the composition of social entities. In cases of ‘integration’ new actors or groups of actors become part of an administrative system or a network of exchange; in the case of ‘conflict’ changes in composition may be caused by massacres, expulsion or the addition of new allies. In fact, processes of identification and differentiation occurring in conflict situations and when population groups become part of new configurations have been understudied. The secondary literature on identity and difference is, of course, extensive, but it is often somewhat “loose” or “soft”, insofar as it does not fully exploit the analytical techniques of cognitive anthropology and related approaches in linguistic anthropology that have been available since the 1960s. Many of the existing analyses of identity and difference do not really take account of indigenous concepts and cognitive schemes, such as taxonomies, that people apply when they identify themselves and others. We explore the semantic fields of social identification. Which taxonomies are involved? Which categories? How do they crosscut? How do they combine? Is there a kind of grammar that tells us which operators (e.g., ‘and’ or ‘or’) are used? A northern German Protestant may feel solidarity with everyone who is northern German *and* Protestant or with everyone who is northern German *or* Protestant, but in the second case his feelings of solidarity comprise millions more. So we have to study not only categories but also the operations carried out with categories. But even the categories themselves differ widely in their semantic range and, hence, in the size of the populations they comprise. There are broader categories or more narrow, more exclusive ones. Their detailed study reveals a matrix of identification, or a structure of the cognitive space of identity and difference, which provides us with all the options of identification or at least with numerous options of identification which may become relevant in situations of interaction, including conflict.

Once we consider options of identification, it becomes clear that the second part of the theory we are working on needs to be about decision making. Rational choice theory is an obvious candidate, because it is the most elaborate and best known theory of decisions we have. In fact it is the only one I know. The ones that claim to be different are somehow derived from it. After exploring all the options, we have to study which options are taken up in which situations. That is where resources

and interests come in. Many conflict theorists start with the resource question and think that they have explained the conflict when they say that a certain “religious” conflict is not really about religion but about oil, water or scarce agricultural land. By naming the resource that is contested, they have given an answer to the question of what the conflict is about, but from our point of view this is only one important aspect among others. It does not really explain the whole conflict, because the contested resource does not determine the formation of the groups and alliances that are involved in the conflict. It does not answer the question of who takes whose side against whom.

At this point categories quite different from water, oil or land come in, namely the categories of collective identification, e.g., along lines of descent, language, religion, exchange networks, shared history, or intermarriage. It may be, for example, that actors in any given group find themselves in possession of more resources than they themselves can effectively defend. If so, they would be inclined to co-opt others to strengthen the defence of these resources. With these, they would then have to share the resources in question, which is the price to be paid for a larger group or a wider alliance. To achieve this widening, they are likely to use inclusive categories in their identity rhetoric. Once strong enough to feel in sure possession of a resource base, however, they would not choose to share with many other people and could be expected to change to a more exclusive kind of discourse. Which identifications are chosen may be related to the resource question, but they are not determined by it. Whether I seek my allies along linguistic lines or along kin lines or along networks of intermarriage or gift exchange – or whatever else – is not determined by whether I need more allies in order to defend my resources or whether I can get by with fewer.

So our focus in the initial stage of work has been on the ‘who’ question, rather than the ‘what’ question. It is only after exploring the cognitive order, the *Wortfeld* – i.e., the semantic space of identity and difference – that we can examine the choices that are made within this space with the necessary conceptual precision. We expect these choices to be interest-related, and that is where resources come in.

At this point critics tend to interject that this perspective does not leave enough room for emotions. A mere glance at Homer or Shakespeare or other contributions to world literature will show that people are not concerned mainly with identity and difference but with love and hatred, not re-affiliation but betrayal, not tit-for-tat but revenge – and so on. From this perspective, our approach seems to be very rationalistic, and one might say that it deals with emotions inadequately. The emotional load of the processes we study and the effects that emotions might have are indeed among our most difficult research problems, and we have identified them as such and have started to work on them. Tackling the matter from a rational perspective does not mean denying the importance of emotions. But first it must be made clear that choice theories do not contradict or preclude emotion-based or psychological explanations of conflict. I do not think that there is actual competition between the

two lines of reasoning, because the things they refer to are in fact different and exist side by side.

If we say that the outcome of a decision-making process appears to be rational, what we mean by that, and what rational choice theorists mean, is that the outcome is characterised by *Rationalitätsförmigkeit*, i.e., that it looks *as if* it had been shaped by rational considerations. This line of reasoning goes like this: If the actor under study calculates carefully the costs and benefits of alternative actions in view of a target he wants to achieve, his decision will be called rational. But, if he were to arrive at the same decision by other means or in some emotionally loaded or intoxicated state, we would still call it rational. This term does not imply anything about the psychological processes actually involved. Useful actions which look quite rational and are rational can result from habituation (doing what one is used to doing in such a situation), general experience, which is the same thing as informal statistics (in such situations it has often been good to do this or that), or even purely emotional reactions (such as disgust which keeps one away from a source of infection). Gigerenzer (2007) has shown the efficiency of “gut decisions”, in which much information is left aside. Also cultural learning, including pure imitation of apparently successful models, needs to be considered in this context. Thinking can be greatly simplified or even left to others.

Considering the “rationality” of results rather than of processes, even evolutionary biologists have applied rational choice theory. The spines of a cactus can be described as representing a positive balance of benefits (protection against being eaten) and costs (the nutrients used for growing them), without attributing a high capacity for deliberation to the cactus. A creeper is a skeleton parasite. By attaching itself to the stem and branches of a tree, it reaches the sunlight without incurring the cost of developing its own skeleton. And a cuckoo that puts its eggs into another bird’s nest saves the costs of caring for its progeny, and so on. In all of these cases, a cost-benefit-analysis can help to explain how things have evolved in nature without implying that the organisms in question actually went through a psychological process that we would interpret as rational deliberation. We even speak about the egoism of genes. The ones that spread faster than others are those that produce phenotypes that do a lot to spread them.¹ That makes them look quite rational and makes us look like their instruments, at least from a socio-biological perspective and irrespective of the level of consciousness and the forms of agency involved in each context. Applications of rational choice theory are not based on assumptions about mental states.

¹ They do a lot to spread them without knowing it. Also the phenotypes themselves normally are not aware of the evolutionary processes or the population dynamics in which they are involved. There are proximate mechanisms. Animals engage in sex because they want sex, not in order to produce progeny. If producing progeny was the aim of these animals, sex would not have to feel good to them.

From this we can conclude that choices conforming to the expectations of rational choice theory can be accompanied by the most variable kinds of psychological set-ups. So if someone appears to be highly emotional and offers us an entirely emotional account of his or her motivations, it does not mean that the outcome of his or her actions is not rational. It means only that he or she is motivated by other factors. Of course, emotions can lead us straight into disaster; but the same can be said of rational calculation (e.g., in the case of miscalculation or incomplete information), while emotional reactions can sometimes be quite adaptive. In sum, emotions cannot explain rationality away or vice versa. Emotions accompany decisions with both rational and irrational outcomes alike. We need to study both the kinds of rationality and the kinds of emotions involved in various situations.

The relationship between behaviour, including behaviour in violent conflicts, and emotions needs to be clarified. It is an empirical question that needs to be answered with case-specific evidence. To infer from actions to emotions is problematic. To kill does not mean to hate. And, as we have just seen, the types of explanations that involve reasoning about emotional states do not necessarily compete with rational choice types of explanations. The question of whether killing a certain person leads to a rational outcome can be asked and answered independently of the question of whether the killer hates that person. The two explanations complement each other rather than competing with each other. Taking emotions into consideration does not abolish rational choice but adds complexity.

My favourite anecdote about killings and emotion comes from northern Kenya. We were visiting a group of Degodia Somali, who lived peacefully together with Ajuran Somali when I visited them some years earlier. In the meantime there had been major massacres between the two groups. A young boy explained to us who everyone in the hamlet was: “This is the house of so and so; this is the house of so and so”. He also enumerated the people who had died recently in the “tribal clashes”, as the press called them. He said: “Well, one brother of my father was killed when he was newly married. So his widow just went back to her family. And that house belonged to the other brother of my father who has been killed. His wife already has two small children and so she stayed with us (...)” And on he went enumerating with the precision of an accountant who in his family had been killed, without showing any emotions. I presume a ten-year old male Somali is a man and needs to show that he is a man – and a man does not show emotions. He would not have answered questions that related to emotions. We are left alone with these questions. Does he hate his enemies? I am sure that somewhere he must feel hatred and outrage. But at the same time he was in perfect harmony with himself, because he was growing into the role that was expected of him. He was a future avenger in a supportive environment for future avengers. One cannot have strong emotions all the time. Later, when the time for killing has come, he will have to work himself into an emotional state which will enable him to kill someone in face-to-face combat. The AK 47, which allows killing at a distance, however, alleviates this problem somewhat.

In the future, we should expand our focus by devoting more attention to the emotions attached to collective identifications of friend and foe. One of our main concerns to date has been the delineation of group boundaries and alliances and how they change over time – under which constraints, under which incentives and so on. The fact, however, that someone draws the boundary of his or her we-group in a specific way, including some people and excluding others, does not tell us much about how he or she feels. The emotions that come with identification can be strong or weak and of many different kinds. There are some assumed identities to which people do not attach a great deal of emotion, for example, those that serve in the process of “passing as”. If, when out on the street during the daytime, a person of Moroccan origin living in Belgium likes to be taken for a Belgian, he or she will not be gravely disappointed if unsuccessful in this endeavour, at least not necessarily and in all cases. The relevant others are those Moroccans whom one meets again in the evening, when no pretence is required. On the other hand there are identifications for which people die or kill, and there are those which may never be admitted without shame and can never be mentioned without mortal offence. Moreover, identification refers not only to categorical inclusion but also to bonding. Simons (2000) has explained what makes it possible to mobilise young males for conflict. Socialisation into the military role comprises teaching them to rely on each other, to defend each other and to die for each other in combat. Certain types of emotional identification are required for close bonding, which is necessary for performing certain tasks successfully or increasing ones chances of surviving in certain situations.²

A great deal remains to be done, but we (Donahoe et al. 2009) have already attempted at least to develop a set of hypotheses concerning the ways in which different kinds of identification are subjectively experienced.

2. Choosing an Identity

The question of whether identity is a matter of choice tends to be answered in one of two ways: yes or no.³ Some say yes, identification, i.e., the choice of an identity, is guided by interests and aims and is therefore instrumental and located within the domain of human agency. Others tend to say no and stress that there are many collective identities into which the individual is born. Strangely enough, these “given” identities are not called “innate” or “congenital” but “ascriptive”. “Ascriptive” means here ascribed by others, beyond the influence of the bearers of such identities.

² There may be situations in which the defection of one could jeopardize the lives of everyone else or even of everyone including the defector. Military trainers will evoke just this type of situation if they want to create strong bonding.

³ I am thinking here of the decades-long, rather one-sided debate of constructivists/instrumentalists against “primordialism” and “essentialism”, which does not deserve to be summarised here. See Donahoe et al. 2009: 8–9.

Personally I prefer to rephrase the question: To what extent are collective identities a matter of choice? I expect the answer to differ from case to case. In the preceding paragraphs we have explored differences in the extent to which identifications can be emotionally loaded, and these may not be the only factors that affect their potential to be given up and replaced or re-shaped. In other words: identities have higher or lower amenability to choice and other cognitive and discursive processes that affect them. We are dealing with a variable or a set of variables.

Trying to bring order into our approach to this question, we can delineate three areas of research with permeable boundaries, by which I mean that our research logic leads us almost automatically from one into the other and back and forth between them. These three areas are: limitations on the freedom of identification, the space of agency left by these limitations, and the factors that guide decisions about identification within this space.

1. Limitations to the Freedom of Identification

It may be hard to change or manipulate identities or to choose freely from a set of identities. There are, once again, three reasons for this (higher or lower) resistance to change, or for the kind and extent of the difficulty we have in moulding identities – the degree of recalcitrance of the material we wish to shape. One reason is the characteristics of identities: there are sticky identities, dense identities, salient identities, emotionally loaded identities and so on, and they all form part of wider taxonomies and are ruled by a kind of grammar that tells us how they can or cannot be combined with each other. Another reason is linked to the characteristics of persons (identity bearers or persons engaged in identity discourses about others): in these persons we may find political instinct and manipulative drive, knowledge about history and society, and persuasive skills to a higher or lower degree – or these factors may be absent entirely. A third reason is linked to the characteristics of situations. We may also call this the sphere of interaction.⁴ Depending on a whole series of situational variables, our claims to an identity may not be plausible to others, or others may have a material interest in denying them. We are not alone in designing our social world.

2. The Space of Agency Left by these Limitations

These different limitations imply that different spaces of agency remain. These spaces are also used with different frequency and intensity. Some people are virtuosi who play with social identities with the same ease with which a real virtuoso glides his fingers over the keyboard of a piano. Then again, there will always be those who assume that the collective identities with which they themselves identify are given and fixed and to whom it never occurs that they may be manipulable. The lack

⁴ We locate the sphere of interaction at the place where the domain of action (the agency) of actors overlaps with that of other actors and where their actions have effects on each other.

of a manipulative attitude towards collective identities may be the result of a lack of capability or a lack of will. An apparent lack of will to engage in identification games may be the absence of initiative or it can itself be an act of will: the will to stick to one's identity as a moral imperative – or scruples against doing otherwise. Furthermore, people may find it quite rewarding to live in harmony with their social environment and never to challenge their place in society or in the system of categories others use to describe them. Identity work and re-identification, whether successful or not, often take place in situations of violent conflict or of rapid social and economic change (Schlee 2003) or “when history accelerates”, to borrow a book title (Hann 1994). If there are no circumstances forcing people to re-negotiate identities, it may be quite rational not to engage in identity games but to enjoy the warmth of conformity and unquestioned belonging.

3. The Question of What Guides Decisions about Identification within this Space

Domains 1 and 2 are by and large the positive and the negative image of the same thing. There are limitations to choosing, inventing or changing identities on the interactive level (e.g., acceptance by others, lack of plausibility to them) or the individual level (e.g., lack of skill or knowledge needed to manipulate identities, the quest for biographical or moral consistency, etc.), and the space left open by these limitations is the space of agency. Research area number 2, outlined in the preceding paragraph, concerns the domain inside of which people make decisions. As they are made inside people's heads, these decisions cannot be directly observed, but the circumstances that accompany them, the conditions that shape them and their consequences can be observed. Verbal explanations, which, like the decisions to which they refer, are also influenced by interests, taboos, conventions and other social forces, are as close as we get to the conscious elements of the decision-making process. Trying to explain identification by modelling such decisions is research area 3 in our enumeration.

In earlier versions of the departmental research programme and in publications of recent years (e.g., Schlee 2008), a great deal has been said about the costs and benefits of identifications, which provided the incentives and disincentives for identifying in one way or another. The basic figure of thought was that identification decisions are influenced by anticipated group sizes. A group can be too large or too small in relation to its resource base or the need to defend it. While micro-census methods and the collection of genealogies to include persons who are absent⁵ are standard methods of anthropological field research, our interest in group sizes has also directed

⁵ My teacher, Hans Fischer, always encouraged his students to collect basic information about full sets of siblings as far back as the genealogical memory of their interlocutors reached. This is useful for all topics, from economics to religion. With reference to absent siblings and their whereabouts, one can reach conclusions about migration rates; or, if one asks about their religious affiliation, this might reveal the extent of conversion, etc. I try to pass on this advice.

our attention to the structure of larger populations. This has brought us close to the MPI for Demographic Research in Rostock, where we have also encountered a keen interest in the micro-perspectives that we provide. My department is part of the Max Planck International Research Network on Aging (MaxNetAging) and benefits from special funding from the Max Planck Society to facilitate interdisciplinary research on aging. Aging in this context is not to be confused with gerontology. It means the life-course from birth to death. The funds in question are administered by the Rostock institute, the lead institute of this programme, which also provides training to researchers. In my department, a doctoral research project on an Ethiopian age-grading system has been part of this programme, and recently, this line of research has been strengthened by two new PostDocs.⁶ But also irrespective of the MaxNetAging, demographic perspectives and demographic skills are important for us. Sophie Roche's research on the youth bulge in Tajikistan has greatly benefited from a prolonged stay at Rostock.



Aksana Ismailbekova collecting a genealogy, Epkin village, Issik-Ata rayon, Chuy valley, Kyrgyzstan. (Photo: G. Schlee, 2008)

⁶ The researcher working on an Ethiopian age-grading system is Ambaye Ogato; and the two PostDocs are Andrea Nicolas and Anita von Poser. A list of the titles of the projects that have been mentioned in this chapter can be found at the end.



*Identifying houses for a micro-census in a nomadic hamlet, Rendilleland, northern Kenya.
(Photo: Y. Schlee, 2007)*

Demographic categories are not just part of the analysis. They are also actors' categories, or emic categories. Ethno-demography is a neglected branch of ethnoscience, to which more attention should be devoted.⁷ Exerting demographic pressure or nurturing the suspicion that one's neighbours might be engaged in such a strategy are topics with a history in anthropological writing. Sahlins (1961) has written about the 'predatory expansion' of the Nuer against the Dinka, and Dereje (2003)⁸ reports that the Anywaa, the eastern neighbours of the Nuer, accuse them of the same thing. Nuer expansion is based on inclusive identity discourses and strategies of admitting and assimilating strangers, but also on polygynous marriages and the maximisation

⁷ The term ethno-science has been used for the system of knowledge held by the people we study with regard to what we call 'nature'. Ethno-botany deals with local knowledge about plants, etc. I would suggest also to study ethno-demography (local beliefs about demography) and ethno-anthropology (what they think about what we would like to explain).

⁸ After interludes in Japan and America, Dereje Feyissa is currently working again with us on a EU-financed Project (DIASPEACE- Diasporas for Peace), which, in addition to Markus Hoehne and myself, involves an international team of researchers based in four countries. Dereje's 2003 thesis has been reworked and is now accepted for publication in our series Integration and Conflict Studies with Berghahn Publishers.

of patrilineal offspring. Reproductive strategies, economy and demography are closely intertwined subjects, both in scholarly discourse and in the reasoning of the people under study.

African agropastoralists and pastoralists (and presumably also farmers) often engage in active growth strategies that transcend their economic base, thus forcing them to expand at the expense of their neighbours – and also giving them the strength to do so. In much of Eurasia, on the other hand, according to Goody (1976), not just urban but even agricultural societies were characterised by more restrictive reproductive policies. Here, Goody suggests, the transmission of an undivided estate to the next generation was a central value. Ideally, a family would produce only one male heir and maybe one daughter, who would then marry the heir of another estate. Additional children were a buffer against mortality and would have to depart (e.g., to America) if they survived or would have to accept a dependent and non-reproductive position (Goody starts his account with reference to the ubiquity of unmarried aunts in his own childhood). This ‘undivided estate’ policy has many repercussions. If there is no heir, a boy might be adopted in his stead, but the links to his family of origin would have to be cut. This is at complete variance with foster parentage in Africa, which multiplies links between families (Alber 2008). Polygyny in Eurasian systems is forbidden or discouraged. Prospective heirs of undivided estates do not like to have half-siblings around.

The Nuer, the Nilotic group cited earlier, do just the opposite in all this. Marriage is too good a thing to be restricted to just one. Half-brothers may help a man to herd the animals (which he and they need in order to marry more women) and in chasing away anyone who might claim that these herds are encroaching on his land. Jack Goody was aware of this contrast with Africa. Nevertheless I think the time has come to go back to his ideas and to substantiate and elaborate them. We now have a remarkable body of new data.

The EU funded KASS (Kinship and Social Security) project, for which the entire MPI (and not just my department) was the lead institution, has been concluded, and three volumes of results are about to appear. Far beyond what can be said in three volumes, the kinship data from eight European countries collected for KASS can become the basis of research for years to come. With the lead researcher of KASS, Patrick Heady, I have started to engage in a comparison of kinship terminologies and social organisation which goes beyond Europe (Schlee and Heady, forthcoming), and there is a draft paper that takes up the ideas of Goody (1976) but still needs to engage the KASS data seriously and systematically (Heady and Schlee, in preparation). In the meantime, the kinship software needed to trace specific types of relationship (in light of the differences expected in the relationship between half-siblings this might involve finding everyone who has a half-sibling) is being refined in the context of the

HArVe (Archiving Project for Humanities)⁹ project. Of course, not only the major contrasts with a completely different type of society (quickly segmenting patrilineal African herders) will be discussed, but also differences within Europe, which KASS has revealed to be quite significant.

It goes without saying that we have to consider not only the size of a group but also the “weight” or relative importance of various group members. Adoption, marriage and other institutions affect not only the number of people in one’s group but also the kinds of persons who are included or excluded. Status comes into play in quite different ways. In many pre-industrial Eurasian systems it was preferable to leave children unmarried rather than having them marry below their status, and the concern of writers such as Lévi-Strauss and Leach with the relative status of wife-givers and wife-takers¹⁰ is part of the core of anthropology which has come down on us from its classical phase. All this needs to be taken up again. In the present context of size and numbers, it is, however, enough to recall that not all people are alike. Some are better to have than others.

While we still expect important contributions from the demographic perspective and from new field research projects in our established line of research about identification in relation to a resource base and anticipated group sizes, in the following section of this outline I want to open a new research question. So far, our ‘cost and benefit’ inspired perspective has led us to ask what a given identification is worth. I am now convinced that we should also think more systematically about how much information concerning any given identification is worth.

3. The Information Economics of Identification

Stiglitz (2002)¹¹, in the article based on the speech he gave when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics, writes about the classical domains of economics: labour relations, the stock market, production firms, insurance and the like. He finds that classical economic models do not describe the world we live in. There is no invisible hand that balances demand and supply, and there is much more unemployment than classical theory would predict. In classical economics, an oversupply of labour should cause a decline in the price of labour, which would then meet an

⁹ The Max Planck Institutes for Social Anthropology, Human Development, and Psycholinguistics, in close collaboration with the Max Planck Digital Library, aim to set up a network of archives to profit from synergetic effects emerging from such a collaboration. A further goal is to formulate a theoretical and methodological basis for the development of a new software (Kinscape) as one major component of the HArVe project. Kinscape will provide a tool to be used by anthropologists to record information about individual persons, their kinship relations and other associated networks and to test hypotheses and formulate analyses on the gathered data.

¹⁰ The male bias implicit in these terms has been critically discussed by many authors, including Lévi-Strauss himself.

¹¹ I thank Steve Reyna for this reference.

increased demand in response to the low price. So wages should vary a great deal more than employment figures. In the real world, the opposite is the case. Stiglitz explains this discrepancy between the classical theory and the empirical data by pointing to the neglect of one factor: information. He says we need an information economics. Information economics is about what people want other people to believe or to know or to ignore. An employer might prefer to keep his workforce at relatively high wages, so that they do not look for higher wages elsewhere. There are strong economic incentives to keep the fluctuation of a workforce low. He would not automatically go for the cheapest labour and allow his own labour force to go for the highest wage offers. Training and the acquisition of job experience are expensive. He may also be concerned with the motivation of his workers, and with their expectation of ‘justice’, in order to keep them working properly. On the other hand, top workers might not be promoted (but might be allowed to enjoy some less conspicuous advantages) so as not to attract the attention of competing firms who might offer higher wages. If you have a top worker whose market value is higher than what you pay him, there is no need to let him know. But he should have an incentive to keep his high performance up by having a good salary in comparison to the ones he knows about. All this is about what people know or do not know in not totally transparent markets.

We cannot dwell much longer here on the economy. What I propose instead is to apply an economics of information of the type proposed by Stiglitz to our own research topic, which is identification with collective identities.

As we noted in the conclusion of the last section, in considering costs and benefits of identities, we have, so far, looked mainly at various groups and the resources they hold. To belong to a small but powerful group that is in secure possession of a rich resource base (so that one does not need to build up strength by admitting more members or seeking alliances with people with whom one would then have to share) is obviously good, because it implies a favourable balance between resource base and group size. Of course, from the point of view of the individual, questions of the uneven distribution of wealth, for example, among leaders and followers, are important. We have also dealt with these differentiations and complications – perhaps not fully in every case, but we have been aware of them. So far, however, we may have had a blind spot when it comes to information. Consider the following questions:

Question 1. What is the value of the information that a given identification is “false” or “fake”?

Let me start with a case history in which this value appears to be very low. A British colleague, Professor Stewart (the name has been changed), once told me that he is Hungarian by birth. He came to Britain with his parents during the crackdown on the insurgents in the 1956 uprising, and the family then changed its name to Stewart, I suppose for the benefit of the British who might have found the Hungarian family name hard to pronounce. After he had become a senior academic – I think he was a

Reader at the time – he was invited by a Stewart Family Association. This association comprised many notable Stewarts who were proud of their ancestry. Of course, he immediately explained that he was not a “real” Stewart and was told that this did not matter. He is a witty person and nice to have at a dinner table.

Why did the information about “real” or “fake” family affiliation matter so little in this context? Obviously the family name was little more than an excuse to meet interesting people, and he as a person was considered to be an asset. What would have happened if he had been a notorious bore, a vegan with missionary zeal, a pauper who asked everyone for money, or some other unpleasant kind of person? He probably would not have been asked to attend any meetings, even if he had been a “real” Stewart.

Another story, which is at first glance different but which has a very similar “deep structure”, is based on my conversation with a Somali businesswoman in Marsabit, Kenya (Schlee 1989: 29). Like others in the Somali business community, she originated from the British colony in the north, the region or country now known as Somaliland. She was of the Eidagalla clan of the Isaaq clan family. To the local Rendille, who have a clan named Elegella, she was known as the “Somali woman of Elegella”. Since their arrival in Kenya, the members of her family had claimed that Eidagalla was the same thing as Elegella. I pointed out to her that, according to my research, this was not the case and that the similarity of the names was just coincidental. This did not really seem to surprise her. Her answer was pragmatic: “It is much better to have people than to be alone.”

What this family had done was to enter into a contractual relationship, which only looked like finding ones long lost clan brothers in a foreign country. They claimed to be Elegella and gave some preferential treatment to Rendille customers who belonged to that clan. This gave them an entry point into Rendille society. People would call them *abiyo* (mother’s brother) or *ingo* (mother’s sister) if their mother was from that clan or address them as grandparents if that was the case with their mother’s father or mother. Those people with wives from Elegalla would call them wife’s brother or wife’s sister, and so on. The arrangement lasted, as it was not costly and it was convenient to both sides. Critical questions about clan history were out of place.

With reference to these examples, one might conclude that, when identities are based on contractuality, the value of the information that they are “fake” is relatively low. Conversely, the value of this information increases when identities lack a high degree of contractuality. My use of the term “contractuality” might require clarification. Recently (Schlee 2008: 30–33) I have argued that, rather than thinking in terms of a dichotomy between given or inherited relations (“status” – see Maine 1986 [1861]¹²), on one hand, and contract, on the other, we should view relationships as having more or less of a contractual character, i.e., varying degrees of contrac-

¹² See also Feaver (1969).

tuality: “Speaking of the economics of identity change, an important distinction is whether an identity is thought of as natural or as contractual. Contractual elements can be more strongly or more weakly represented, so we can speak of contractuality as varying along a scale” (Schlee 2008: 30). Let me summarise the argument here briefly. Contractual elements are especially evident when relationships of inclusion and exclusion can be changed, and this applies equally to groups and alliances. In widening the membership of one’s group, one includes more people in the category to which the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ refer, while an alliance is always about relations with others. Alliances do not abolish group boundaries; they do not even blur them. On the contrary, boundaries are highlighted in the processes of defining partners and concluding, affirming and reaffirming an alliance.

There may be implicit contractual arrangements in cases involving the widening of membership in descent groups, although on a scale from ‘status’ to ‘contract’ one would expect descent groups to be way over on the status side.

“Such an implicit contract may take the form of a veiled threat of expulsion: ‘We will treat you as a brother as long as you behave like one.’ If the group has a formal character, like a voluntary association, membership is of a contractual type. The duties of a member and the obligation of the group towards its members are defined by the by-laws of the association and accepted by the act of joining it. Group membership may thus comprise contractual elements to a higher or lesser degree, depending on the status of a member and the kind of group. In the case of an alliance, however, the relationship is always openly contractual, involving two or more different parties and the form of cooperation they have agreed on.” (Schlee 2008: 31)

Parliamentary coalitions are good examples of alliances. The parties that form them remain separate entities. Their main aim is to bundle votes to grant the government they wish to form a safe majority. But even they are not pure contracts in the sense of a purely instrumental, target-oriented relationship between total strangers. There tends to be some degree of “sameness” between coalition partners.

“The parties forming a coalition, though remaining separate, have some common denominator. They are part of wider groupings. They are all bourgeois or leftist, belonging to one or the other class-based block. In other cases the moderates of different former blocks, striving for the middle of society where they expect most votes to be, form centrist coalitions against what they perceive as the margins: the parties subscribing to more radical versions of their respective political ideologies. In other words, alliances are always between different groups, but these groups may belong to the same or different wider groupings. Even single-issue ad hoc alliances that are immediately dissolved after the shared aim has been achieved

might have identity-related aspects that go beyond the purely contractual.” (Schlee 2008: 31f)

This shows, I think, that there is variation between two extremes, namely inclusion based on status or sameness (who we are) and inclusion based on contract; but it also indicates that even the purest, apparently ascribed, status-based, inherited forms of inclusion in a group contain contractual elements (you may be shunned if you break the rules), while, at the other extreme, even the purest contractual forms of inclusion contain elements of group identity.

“To the extent that alliances are not ‘purely contractual’ but are guided by considerations of social identities and the moral obligations attached to them, one can therefore rephrase the contractual nature of alliances as a question of degree. This is in line with my attempts to rephrase other dichotomies so prevalent in social theory in a gradualist language and to regard them as variables so as to be able to study their variation and co-variation and thereby their interconnections. ‘Contractuality’ as a variable would have to state to what degree an arrangement is contractual and, by implication, to what degree it is shaped by non-contractual elements. On a contractuality scale from 0 to 1 a given alliance may have a value of, say, 0.6, and this would mean that it is primarily contractual but significantly influenced by other factors. These other factors may be:

1. The partners are not freely chosen. The choice of allies is limited by considerations of closeness or similarity rather than purely strategic considerations like optimal group size for the formation of a minimal winning coalition.
2. The context of agreement shows a mixture of strategic considerations with ‘culture’ and ‘custom’.” (Schlee 2008: 32)

Many other factors can interfere with the purely contractual character of a relationship.

In the case of one mixed type (the implicit contract in the claim of the Somali woman to belong to the Rendille clan Elegella), we have seen that the contractual element of the relationship made the question about the historical authenticity of her claim irrelevant. This leads us to our next question.

Question 2. What is the value of information in identifications with different degrees of contractuality?

Professor Stewart played the game. His family history, especially the fact that he was not a “real” Stewart, was an amusing item at the dinner table, and that is something that turned it from a liability into an asset. Playing the game is basically a contractual agreement. I am nice to you, as long as you are nice to me. Stewart or not, if he had accused his hosts of incest or corruption, he would not have been around for long.

The Somali woman did a similar thing. She behaved as a clan sister and people reciprocated by treating her as such.

Our initial conclusion, after looking at these case histories, is that, in each case, it was the contractual element that made the relationship negotiable and helped to maintain it, even though both had an element of “fake” descent – in the Stewart case, one that was admitted from the start and, in the Somali case, one that was easy to discover. We may conclude that the more pronounced the contractual character of a relationship, the lower the value of information about whether the identities underlying the relationship are “real” or “fake”.

Other kinds of information become valuable in contractual relationships. In such a relationship one needs to know whether the partner fulfils his or her part of the contract. So it is not surprising that there is a huge literature in business administration and experimental social psychology dealing with “monitoring”, “auditing”, “trust”, “free-riding”, “control”, “defection”, etc. All this has to do with information about partners and our inability to look into their brains and to know whether and when they will stop playing the cooperative game and turn against us. What is the price of their loyalty? There is no need to convince anyone of the importance of information in this context. It may have gone unrecognised in economics for a long time but certainly not in business administration.

In the two cases presented here there was, actually, not very much to monitor. One more element shared by both cases is that little was at stake. None of them was about life or death or huge amounts of money. This leads us to question 3.

Question 3. What is at stake in identity claims?

As Boris Nieswand has argued in his thesis about Ghanaian migrants in Germany¹³, the single best predictor of the wealth of any given person is nationality. In other words, if you have no information about a person – no name, no picture, no knowledge of age, gender, or anything else – and you have to make a blind guess about how much money that person has after asking only one question, the best thing to ask about is his or her nationality. It is an even better indicator than class. After all, the welfare recipients in one country might be better off than the middle class of another. Anything to do with legal entitlements is also a hopelessly bad wealth indicator. History shows that today’s organised crime is tomorrow’s aristocracy (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

The enormous income differences from one country to another motivate boundary crossings and exclusionist practices to prevent just that. No doubt hiding information that might lead to deportation or providing information (e.g., in the shape of real or fake documents) that might lead to a secure and legal form of residence is

¹³ Boris Nieswand has since taken up a PostDoc position at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen.

of enormous importance to illegal immigrants, and they are ready to invest a lot in hiding or providing information about their identities.

In addition to what is at stake, the cost of providing knowledge needs to be taken into account in the information economics of identification. Think of an academic whose family name is reminiscent of that of a knight who lived in the year 1300. He faces the following questions: Do I really wish to trace the relationships in church registers and other documents? Would that take me half a year or more or less? Do I take the risk of not finding anything and making a fool of myself? He will possibly conclude that the knowledge of being the offspring of some long-defunct iron-clad predator is not worth the costs and the risks involved in gaining it, and that focusing on his academic career is the safer road to fame. The question might be answered differently if the case involved the inheritance of real estate or a bank account. Then the value of the information might clearly exceed the costs of getting it.

4. The System Perspective

How do decision-making processes on the individual and small or medium-sized group level feed into macro-level structures and processes, or how are they shaped by them? This is an area in which we encounter more open questions than answers. It is therefore also known as a “problem”: the micro-macro problem. We have focused so far on the micro perspective, as one would expect of anthropologists. We should, however, not forget that looking at group formation from the other end can also be fascinating.

Looking at any map that shows not only physical but also human factors (states and their provinces, language families and languages, “ethnic” groups, etc.), we find very uneven distributions, which are not easy to explain. Why is it that in areas such as the Caucasus or the lower Omo river in Ethiopia, we find much smaller particle sizes or a finer grain (in the photographic sense) in everything. Geography appears to explain only part of it. Mountains and other obstacles to communication seem to favour heterogeneity, and both the Alps and the Caucasus have a high level of diversity. But in the Alps we have languages from just three language families – Romance, Germanic and Slavic – which are all related to each other on the next higher level as Indoeuropean subfamilies; and this is nothing in comparison to the levels of diversity we find in the Caucasus. And the Lower Omo area¹⁴, where we find many Nilotic, Omoti and Cushitic languages numbering a few thousand speakers each, is, after all, rather flat or merely hilly at best.

¹⁴ Felix Girke has completed his study of the Kara (see references). Ongoing work on the Lower Omo area includes the Arbore studies by Christina Gabbert and Sophia Thubauville. Together with the University of Kyoto and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of the University of Addis Ababa, we maintain a research station at Jinka, the central locality, namely, the South Omo Research Centre, founded by Ivo Strecker.

Apart from all these riddles about higher and lower degrees of diversity, we also find some universals. One of these universal features of human beings is the capacity to deal with diversity. Since the disappearance of other human species such as the Neanderthal, we have been left alone. There are no other hominids apart from Homo “sapiens”. Still, we seem to be biologically equipped to deal with a high degree of internal diversity.¹⁵ Stephen Levinson (2006) has proclaimed the existence of a human interaction engine. Starting from observations about “first contacts” between people who have no knowledge about each other and do not share a language, and from his experience with deaf-mute people, he has come to the conclusion that human beings start to create sign systems instantly and spontaneously. How has this engine evolved? And why do we have the capacity to learn ten languages or more, and why are we able to translate and interpret? Why do we possess the basic skills for doing anthropology? Nature does not pay for luxuries. These features must have offered an evolutionary advantage.¹⁶ The game we are studying, the game of identification and re-identification, of making group differences narrower or wider, might be a very old game. We have evolved with it and in response to it. Cultural diversity is natural. It has existed for a long time, and we are biologically adapted to it.

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¹⁵ Communication with other species, such as canines and ungulates, in a symbiotic system (pastoralism), would be a different topic, though not a less interesting one (cf. my current projects with Kirill Istomin and Wolfgang Holzwarth in the framework of the SFB).

¹⁶ This human interaction engine must be something on the same level of generality as the “ability to read and share intentions” stressed by Tomasello et al. (2005: 690). It is one of the prerequisites for the development of languages and language-based complex collaboration. We cannot derive it from language, because it must have been there before.

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Cited Ongoing Projects

Inclusion in this list only means that these projects have been cited in the above text because of their thematic fit. Other outstanding projects have been or will be cited in other contexts. So this is not a selection by quality and omission from this list does not have any negative implications. Projects like MaxNet Aging and DIASPEACE, and KASS, about which fuller information is given in the text are not included here again.

- Ogato Ambaye: *Age Grade System, Power and Identity among the Sidama of Northeast Africa (Ethiopia). Change, continuity and (re)construction*
- Christina Gabbert: *Knowledge about War and Peace among the Arbore of Southern Ethiopia*
- Wolfgang Holzwarth, Jürgen Paul and Günther Schlee: *D5 (Former) Nomads and Pastoral Land Use in Changing Political and Economic Contexts: Eastern Bukhara/Southern Tajikistan, 1868–2008*. Collaborative Research Centre 586: “Difference and Integration”
- Aksana Ismailbekova: *Patron-Client Relations within the Context of a Kyrgyz Community, Kyrgyzstan*
- Kirill Istomin, Joachim Otto Habeck and Günther Schlee: *E8 New Technologies in the Tundra: high-tech equipment, perception of space and spatial orientation of nomadic and settled populations of the Russian Arctic*. Collaborative Research Centre 586: “Difference and Integration” The affiliation of this project at the MPI is with the Siberian Studies Centre.
- Andrea Nicolas: *Feasting and the Politics of Age: Tulama-Oromo Gadaa organisation*. Max Planck International Research Network on Aging
- Kristin Pfeifer: *The Construction of Amazigh Identity in Contemporary Morocco: in between international influences and local practice*
- Anita von Poser: *Bosmun Notions of Aging (Lower Ramu River, Northeast Papua New Guinea)*. Max Planck International Research Network on Aging
- Sophie Roche: *Generation Groups in the Transformation Process in Tajikistan. On the problem of embedded conflicts in multi-ethnic youth bulge societies*
- Sophia Thubauville: *Emotionality and Rationality in Marriage Conflicts among the Maale of South Ethiopia*

Language and Identity

Günther Schlee with Jacqueline Knörr

In our last report (2006–2007: 25) we pointed out that there were quite a few projects in this department that looked into identity and difference with a particular focus on language and the interaction of linguistic identification with identification along other lines (nation, region). We regretted that, due to limited space, the topic had to be reserved for a future report.

Some of that work has now been finished and other projects nearly completed. All of these projects involve variations on a single theme. In an encyclopaedia article (Schlee 2001 or Schlee 2008, ch. 11), I had the opportunity to explore all, or at least most existing combinations of language and ethnicity. This took the form of a gross typology illustrated with contrasting examples, ranging from so close a link between the two that the question of how language influences ethnicity appears tautological (insofar as the language defines the ethnic group) to cases of ethnic groups without a shared language. It places the close association between peoplehood and having a separate language in a historical context, tracing it – within Europe – back to romanticism and – outside Europe – back to the export of European ideas and administrative practices through colonialism.

In terms of types of identification with a language, the article ranges from identification with a putative ancestral language that is no longer spoken to popular beliefs and scholarly theories about a close and intimate relationship between a particular language and ways of thinking, including the “national character” of the language’s speakers. In other words, the poles of the continuum consist in the purely symbolic or emblematic use of a language (as a marker or label), on one hand, and the psychological reality of a lived language that shapes the thought and experience of its speakers, on the other.

Olaf Zenker, now a lecturer at the University of Bern, completed his dissertation, *Irish/ness is All Around Us: the Irish language and Irish identity in West Belfast*, in 2008. As the subtitle indicates, his thesis is about the relationship between language and identity in a (former) political hotspot. The work has two other minor foci on Irish sports and Irish music, with very detailed and interesting histories/ethnographies on these two domains of activity. Zenker’s central concern, however, remains the question of why so many people have been taking the trouble to revive the Irish language in an area where it had already died out. While the other two domains have a clearly subordinate or instrumental status in the thesis, they are seen as part of the ubiquity of an Irishness that is “all around us”, one which indeed provides a condition favourable to the attempts of some of the dwellers of West Belfast to revive the Irish language.

In his case study of the Irish-learning subculture of West Belfast, Zenker mainly investigates the linguistic “axis” (Vertovec) or “dimension” (Schlee) of identifica-

tion, and relates it to other dimensions such as ethnicity and nationality/nationhood (which, in the European and culturally loaded sense, corresponds to ethnicity plus an existing or desired statehood), and to the resulting “identity” in general.

In Zenker’s case histories, we find a whole range of variation. The congruence or divergence between linguistic and ethnic/national classification in the views of Zenker’s interlocutors covers the breadth of variability from classical linguistic nationalism (the nation being defined by the language) to a very loose nexus between the two. In terms of the psychological relevance of the language, moreover, we find both extremes and many intermediate forms. Irish as a dead language (in those places where it has died) may be nothing but a historical and symbolic reference point for identification. On the other hand, many of the language enthusiasts Zenker has interviewed stress, in a truly Herderian spirit, how much the use of Irish enriches their intellectual and emotional lives.

There is, however, one twist in the role of the Irish language in West Belfast (and in Zenker’s way of looking at it) that makes it a rather special case. Ethnic markers in current theories of ethnicity are generally believed to be entirely constructed (or even “invented” in Hobsbawm’s and Ranger’s diction) or to be selected from an existing range of cultural particularities. The language enthusiasts of West Belfast do not, however, fit into this equation. They neither make up the Irish language (which is clearly “real”, as it is the ancestral language of many of them and has survived in rural niches elsewhere in Ireland) nor do they select it from a range of existing cultural particularities. They say that, being Irish, they should be able to “speak their own language”, and therefore make an effort to learn it, hoping that others will do the same and that this will lead to a revival of the language in places where it has not been spoken for a long time. Identification in this case is not with something that *is* but with something that *should be* (an Irish-speaking Irish people – and a monolingual one at that, according to some), and efforts are made to transform this identification with an ideal into an identification with a reality. The project, at least in its more modest variants, is not entirely utopian, and it has already resulted in the revival of the language, at least to some extent. In certain contexts and certain niches, there are once again people who speak Irish in West Belfast.¹⁷

It has always been part of the research design of this department not only to have geographical clusters of projects (which are located in West Africa, Northeast Africa and Central Asia), but also to have some projects focused on “paradigmatic cases” that are richly documented and – so it is hoped – provide some theoretical inspiration. Without a doubt, Northern Ireland, sadly for many of the people affected, has

¹⁷ Not many cases of successful language revival are known. Hebrew comes to mind as another example of a language that has been revived and, some would say, “artificially” so, i.e. with a considerable amount of conscious effort. While Irish had survived in regional niches and could be re-introduced in places in which it had died out, Hebrew had survived in a functional niche as a sacred language. Hebrew was then extended – and substantially changed in the process – to other domains of life, so becoming the everyday language it had ceased to be nearly two millennia ago.

become a paradigmatic case for conflict studies. When it comes to language and ethnicity or “the nation”, Belgium cannot be ignored, and Jolanda Lindenberg has now completed and submitted her thesis on “Negotiating language and identity: The case of Belgium”. Despite the ring of familiarity that the Belgian case may have (as a “close” other to many Europeans, and having received ample media coverage), this thesis offers fascinating new perspectives. It raises the question of whether a language that stands primarily for a language community and its linguistic rights (in short, a language that stands for a language) is not in fact a resource, rather than being a marker of something else (culture, *Volkstum*, nation, or whatever). Do people not defend their right to speak their own language in official contexts, including educational institutions, primarily in their own language areas? Is this not fundamentally a struggle against being forced to learn another language (Dutch in the case of the Francophones, French in the case of the Flemings). It is not quite as easy as that. Language is territorialised and linguistic rights are defined by territory. Still, French provides a more universalistic form of identification, and for both groups language is not just a means of communication but is thought to be closely associated with the way they think and the way they feel.

This territorialisation of language resonates with a European model of the nation state (with one language, one people, one state, and one territory). What is atypical about this case is that the territorialisation of language has taken place at the sub-national level. In many ways, however, Belgium shows a clearly European pattern of linguistic nationalism that has even been taken to extremes in its forms of bureaucratisation and legalism. This pattern stands in stark contrast, for example, with West Africa, where languages are often not associated with territories but with professions, and, due to the interdependence of professional groups, necessarily intermingle in their spatial distributions. The pattern also differs from that of Uzbekistan, where Tajik (Indo-European), a non-Uzbek and indeed non-Turkic language, exists alongside highly differentiated Uzbek dialects, with Khorezmian being at the extreme end of that continuum or even an outlier.

Khorezmian is a liminal case. It is right on the border of being a language of its own or an Uzbek dialect, if the linguistic criterion of mutual intelligibility is applied.¹⁸ This makes it a particularly interesting case for identification discourses and strategies. Speakers can play the Uzbek card, describing being Khorezmian as one of many ways of being Uzbek, or they can try to pass as Tashkenti or some other subgroup of Uzbeks, or they can stress their distinction, which includes the option of speaking Khorezmian in a way that renders it a secret language, unintelligible to others. The linguistic training of the researcher, Rano Turaeva, and the coaching she has received from her co-supervisor, Wolfgang Klein of the MPI for

¹⁸ It is much easier to form a political definition of “dialect” and “language” than a linguistic one. For our purposes, we can just follow Weinreich’s (1945, cited from an anonymous source) famous aphorism that “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy”.

Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, have made it possible for her not just to analyse “discourses” involving linguistic differences, but to relate them to an actual and measurable level of difference.

In Morocco, Kristin Pfeiffer is currently studying the revitalisation of Berber, including the two dialects that are actually spoken and a compromise, standardised version that is not really spoken by anyone. The (Arabic-speaking) king favours the introduction of Tifinagh, the old Tuareg (Berber) script, for putting the new amalgamated Berber language into writing, possibly because he does not want anyone to be able to read it. This is one of the many ways alphabets are used for identification purposes.

Merle Schatz¹⁹ reports that the Mongols in the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia – now outnumbered by Han Chinese and often bilingual, though sometimes with limited proficiency in Mongol – are viewed as “Chinese” by the Mongols of Mongolia. And yet, they take special pride in using the old Mongol alphabet, said to go back to Genghis Khan, and they accuse their co-ethnics in Mongolia of lacking authenticity due to their use of the Cyrillic alphabet. As was shown at the opening conference of the new *Convivencia* programme of the Max Planck Society in Madrid,²⁰ the western Mediterranean in the medieval era seems to provide us with a laboratory for research on identity politics and the use of alphabets. Documents from this period display all conceivable combinations, from Hebrew and Romance texts written in Arabic characters to Arabic texts written in the Hebrew or Latin alphabet.

The Upper Guinea Coast²¹, a region characterised by a high degree of cultural and linguistic diversity, has also turned out to be a laboratory for questions of language and identity. For analytical purposes, one may distinguish among three types of languages: a) official languages that are specified by the respective governments; b) ethnic languages that are employed by ethnic groups in specific regions; and c) *linguae francae* that are used when members of neighbouring “(...) communities do not speak each other’s language but use instead a third language as a means of mutual communication” (Chirikba 2008: 31).²²

Currently, the official languages of the area are identical with neither ethnic languages nor with *linguae francae* (as is the case elsewhere in Africa). Instead of declaring (a selection of) indigenous ethnic languages to be official languages, African governments, upon independence, adopted the language of their respective former colonial powers as the only official language. This was meant to create a common identification across ethnic lines and to promote the nation-building process.

¹⁹ The title of her dissertation project is *Language and Identity of the Mongols in China*. Klaus Sagaster of Bonn, professor emeritus in Mongolian Studies, is her co-supervisor.

²⁰ The programme’s Spanish partner is the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas*. The conference took place from May 27, 2009 to May 30, 2009.

²¹ The Upper Guinea Coast section has been contributed by Jacqueline Knörr.

²² We also thank Christoph Kohl for his input on the part of the text concerning the Upper Guinea Coast.

Opting for a single ethnic language would likely have caused a feeling of neglect among speakers of other ethnic languages and might have resulted in ethnic conflict rather than national unification. Consequently, Guinea-Conakry and Senegal adopted French as their official language, while Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau retained Portuguese, and Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia²³ opted for English.

We hope to have shown that there is a broad basis for comparative research on language and identity at our Institute. Further perspectives are provided by other programmes of the Max Planck Society (Madrid, Göttingen). In addition to the production of case studies in the form of dissertations and articles, we plan to engage in publications at the comparative level as well. Our next step will be to expand this report into a working paper.

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²³ Liberia was never formally colonised, but strongly influenced by the United States.

Research Group ‘Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast’²⁴*Jacqueline Knörr***Institutional, Organisational, and Structural Features**

Formed in 2005, the research group is currently the only group worldwide engaging in long-term systematic and comparative research on this particular region of the world. The group includes researchers who have reached different stages of their academic careers and who are either full members of the MPI or associates based at different international institutions. The latter members complement our thematic and regional expertise and assist in the supervision of our PhD students. The research group organises regular informal meetings to exchange ideas on thematic and methodological issues, to address problems encountered in the research process, and to intensify the debate concerning the comparative dimensions of our research. We organise a special UGC Conference every two years and smaller workshops (among them workshops in the field) in-between, and regularly invite scholars from around the world to give lectures and to engage in discussions with members of the research group and colleagues at the Institute.

Our Approach to Integration and Conflict

We look at integration and conflict as interrelated dimensions of social interaction in any given society, which need to be studied as facets of the social dynamics within which they occur.²⁵ We study integration and conflict as dimensions of social relationships and constructions of identity and difference within society at large, thereby moving towards a better understanding of the social mechanisms that affect processes of integration and conflict at the local, regional, and (trans-)national levels. Within this framework, we take into consideration the impact and repercussions of specific historical processes that have had an important impact on how values, institutions, and traditions are applied in specific strategies of conflict initiation, conflict avoidance, and conflict resolution.

²⁴ Current members of the research group are (in alphabetical order): Christian Højbjerg (associate), Nathaniel King, Jacqueline Knörr, Christoph Kohl, Markus Rudolf, Anita Schroven, and Wilson Trajano Filho (associate). I thank all of them for their input on this text.

²⁵ See Schlee (2002, 2008) and earlier reports for more in-depth specifications concerning the development of our approach to processes of integration and conflict.

The Research Programme

We conceptualise the Upper Guinea Coast as a primarily geographic label that helps us to place and correlate cultural, linguistic, and social phenomena and processes in regional terms (cf. d’Azevedo 1962 and Fardon 1996). However, the region is characterised by much more than mere physical contiguity. The Upper Guinea Coast is indeed very heterogeneous in terms of its physical geography, social and political structures, and its linguistic features. The region’s societies have intermingled to such a degree that their very genesis is a conundrum, as Paul E. H. Hair pointed out (1967). The region is united in a shared historical experience of specific intersocietal encounters that challenged, disrupted, and changed previous modes of life in specific ways. Interaction and mixture often engendered identities characterised by fluidity and ambiguous means of self-ascription and assigning identity to others.²⁶ The negotiation of one’s identity according to specific situations, contexts, and individual preferences is particularly common, and the criteria for (ethnic) membership may include categories such as descent, language, religion, and shared historical memories.²⁷ The malleable nature of ethnic identity and the ambivalent notions of indigeneity attached to them are also used to claim citizenship rights (or to deny them to others) at the level of the nation state, particularly in times of crisis.²⁸ We have explored how social life has been changed by inter-societal exchange and external influences (colonialism, migration, trade), and how the historical experience of foreign domination and local resistance relates to more recent experiences of political suppression and economic exploitation both by local autocratic rulers and global structures of inequality. We have studied the meanings and explanations people attach to the violence and suffering they have experienced and to the symbols and representations that they have employed to that end. We have also investigated how the narratives of the past shape the ways in which identities are socially constructed, represented, and practiced today, and how they function as instruments of identification by means of which social actors advocate and establish particular interests.

Prospects

While we have so far concentrated mainly on the comparative exploration of processes of integration and conflict *within* the region of the Upper Guinea Coast, we will now also take into consideration societies *beyond* the Upper Guinea Coast which are connected with the latter as the result of the expansion of colonialism and

²⁶ See Knörr (2007a, 2008) and the articles in Stewart (2007) for comparative perspectives on creole identities.

²⁷ See contributions by Sarró, Fairhead, and Højbjerg in Knörr and Trajano Filho (in print).

²⁸ The members of the research group currently dealing with these issues are: Højbjerg, Knörr, Rudolf, Schroven.

the Atlantic slave trade, processes which are, of course, interconnected in manifold ways. We will investigate both the internal and external encounters and exchanges the societies of the Upper Guinea Coast are part of now and have been part of in the past, and which have shaped their social configuration to generate specific (new) identities and alliances to this day. By focusing more closely on the transnational dimension of our research, we aim to improve our understanding of the involvement of the Upper Guinea Coast in contemporary processes of regional and global interaction and exchange. The presence of the Upper Guinea Coast in different diasporas and the interactions of dispersed groups of people with their “home” societies is just one important dimension that we will integrate into our research agenda. We also aim to include in our research those creole identities *beyond* the Upper Guinea Coast that are historically connected with the region. This reflects the role of creole identities and “Eurafrican” groups (Brooks 2003) that have played an important role in interethnic relations and the construction of transethnic identifications, and in processes of ethnic and religious differentiation and postcolonial nation-building.²⁹ Creole groups have triggered conflict as the result of exclusionary discourses and policies,³⁰ but they have also fostered integration by providing, for example, a model of postcolonial “unity-in-diversity”.³¹ Their role in the historical and contemporary processes of integration and conflict has been marked by differences and similarities that depend on their social contextualisation in the societies in which they are situated, and which therefore need to be studied comparatively. Comparisons, particularly with regard to creole identity, may well prove fruitful beyond (West) Africa as well – and would thus also break new ground. For example, the Luso-Creole identity that emerged in Guinea-Bissau developed in a highly heterogeneous environment and traces its origins back to the times of Portuguese colonialism (Havik 2004; Trajano Filho 1998). The same holds for many Luso-Creole identities³² elsewhere, like those that developed in several coastal South(east) Asian settlements and in parts of Latin America.³³ The Luso-Creole identity constituted (just) one of the early “travelling models” that would spread across entire continents. The understanding of this identity would therefore benefit from a type of comparative research that does not restrict itself to criteria of mainly regional concern, but which also spans societies that are interconnected through historical and contemporary processes of interaction, and which involve people and ideas as well as social practices and ideological models.

²⁹ The members of the research group dealing with these issues are: King, Knörr, Kohl, Trajano Filho. See Cohen 1981; cf. Knörr 1995, 2008; Wyse 1989.

³¹ See Knörr (1995, 2007b, 2008) concerning the relationship between creole and national identity and the role of creole identity in postcolonial nation-building.

³² See Mark (2002) on Portuguese style and Luso-African identity in precolonial Senegambia.

³³ On (Luso-)creole identity in South(east) Asia, see Ferreira Reis Thomaz 1981/82 (Goa); Marbeck 1995 (Malacca); McGilvray 1982 (Sri Lanka); Bertrand 2008; da Franca 1970; Knörr 2007a (Indonesia). On Latin America see de Friedemann 1990; Kiddy 2000; Mulvey 1982.

New researchers are expected to join the research group during the first part of 2010. In order to round out our research (agenda), we will also endeavour to include further researchers to our group through third party funding. This will help us to successfully engage in our new scientific and organisational endeavours while continuing to accomplish our current work.

Accomplishments of Research Group Members

By the time this report will be published, both Christoph Kohl and Anita Schroven will have handed in their PhD dissertations. Nathaniel King and Markus Rudolf have both successfully completed their field research in Sierra Leone and Senegal, respectively, and are now writing up their findings. Nathaniel King is scheduled to hand in his dissertation by the end of 2010. Markus Rudolf is on paternity leave through spring 2011.

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Department II: Socialist and Postsocialist Eurasia

Director: Chris Hann

Highlights

- Completion of our second cycle of projects concerning religion. A final report is published by the Department simultaneously with this Institute Report: *Religion, Identity, Postsocialism; The Halle Focus Group, 2003–2010*.
- Completion of the projects of the Research Group led by Lale Yalçın-Heckmann, *Caucasian Boundaries and Citizenship from Below*; a final report is provided below.
- Completion of collaborative projects in Xinjiang with colleagues based at Xinjiang University, Urumchi. Plans for a joint workshop in Urumchi were thwarted in both 2008 and 2009 by political factors. However, the Focus Group *Kinship and Social Support in China and Vietnam* is continuing its work (see below) and we have intensified our links with the Minzu University of China in Beijing.
- Launch in 2009 of a new Focus Group, *Historical Anthropology in Eurasia*, under the leadership of Dittmar Schorkowitz. The initial projects are described below.
- Launch in 2009 of a new Focus Group in economic anthropology, led jointly by Stephen Gudeman and Chris Hann. The team is investigating *Economy and Ritual* in rural settings in six postsocialist societies (see below).
- Publication of the papers from our interdisciplinary conference in 2006 on the contemporary relevance of Karl Polanyi: Chris Hann and Keith Hart (eds.), *Market and Society; The Great Transformation today* (2009, Cambridge University Press).

Anthropology *In-between*

Chris Hann

Preliminary Remarks: continuity and change, science and politics

In this text, which is an abbreviated revision of a presentation made on June 23, 2009 to the joint research seminar of the MPI and the Seminar für Ethnologie of Halle's Martin Luther University, I use the term *in-between* in a variety of ways. The main goal is to take stock of my Department's research programme ten years after it came into existence. I shall outline the enduring, cumulative elements in this programme, but also draw attention to its new developments. The balance of continuity and change was quite distinctive in 2009, which was a year of renewal for the Department. After indicating the directions in which we are moving, I shall attempt to dig deeper and, relying on the metaphor of *in-between*, conclude with some portentous suggestions which connect our trajectory to the future of comparative social anthropology.

Let me begin with some points that, while not the main themes of this report, are nonetheless basic to everything we do. The unity of our programme lies in the fact that almost all of our projects have concerned places that either claim to be socialist, or claim that they were socialist until about twenty years ago (including the region of Germany in which our Institute is located). In either case, the shift away from the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist model of socialism raises issues which are more complex than the balance of continuity and change over the short history of an academic department. If a human population survives continuously, to what degree is a true *rupture* – in terms of its social institutions, its norms, and its values – possible? If we are obliged to think through metaphors, is the German term *Wende* (“turn”) more realistic and thus preferable to the sweep of the Hungarian *rendszer váltás*, literally “system change”? Or might the Vietnamese term *Đổi Mới*, “renovation”, be nearer the mark, even for those countries in the former Soviet bloc that claim to have abandoned socialism? Whatever term one prefers, a magnificent laboratory for ethnographic studies of the turbulent present stretches out from Halle across Eurasia to the South China Sea, and over the last ten years we have taken full advantage of these opportunities. But socialism and postsocialist transformation are also world-historical phenomena that open up vistas of theory and *longue durée* historical perspectives, to which I shall return below.

Themes such as the demise of central planning and the revival of older forms of religion following the demise of “scientific atheism” are not the classical terrain of social anthropology. It is incumbent on those of us who work on these themes to seek conversations with colleagues in disciplines such as economics or political science. At the same time, of course, we want to contribute to the development of our own discipline: But how is that possible in the maelstrom of these “transformation socie-

ties”? One possible answer is that, while the larger disciplines have privileged the changes, e.g., in legal, political and administrative systems, it falls to us anthropologists to focus on deeper levels of continuity, in terms of the motivations of individual actors and the norms and values of their communities. If this is the case, it would confirm what US anthropologist Joel Robbins has identified in another context as a general bias toward “continuity thinking” in our discipline (Robbins 2007).

There is already a vast academic industry revolving around how the history of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist socialism is being written and rewritten by states, scholars and “civil society actors”. Significant attention has been paid to social memory (see Pine, Kaneff, and Haukanes 2004). Precisely because of the prominence of these themes in the literature, we have chosen not to prioritise them in our MPI projects.¹ Yet how ordinary people look back on “high” socialism has been important in all our research: on rural property relations between 1999 and 2005; on religion between 2003 and 2009; and in the projects on kinship and social support in East Asia which we launched in 2006. Most of our researchers have been too young to have any first-hand experience of those systems and only a few have carried out fieldwork in their own countries. Of course this is no guarantee of “objectivity”, but we have done our best to carry out our analyses free of partisan prejudice. More specifically, we have tried to avoid two extreme positions. On the one hand, some models of “totalitarianism” cast every aspect of life in a socialist society as unambiguously repressive, as bad as – if not worse than Nazi Germany. On the other hand, a “sanitising” of memory leads some to recall only the positive elements, the experiences of a contented youth, when jobs were guaranteed and social security provision better in many respects than it is today. The latter position, commonly glossed in Germany as *Ostalgie*, has come through strongly in our ethnographic reports. Of course it is important to contextualise these positive memories: they are data to be taken seriously for being sincerely conveyed by those we worked with, but they still demand reasoned explanation (cf. Berdahl 1999). In contemporary Germany, the two extreme interpretations are prominent. There is still a common tendency in the scholarly literature and in public discourses to invoke the stereotypes of totalitarianism, and to mock or dismiss the phenomenon of *Ostalgie* instead of analysing its causes. We seek to work *in-between* these extremes.

The stance we advocate is “value-free” in the sense of Max Weber. But, as Weber himself recognised, it is hard to separate the objective methods of the man of science from the subjective commitments and values of the man of politics. The Max Planck Society stands for “basic research” and it is not our business to apply the results of our ethnographic research in the form of prescriptions to policymakers. At the same time, the nature of our themes, the collapse twenty years ago of one model of modernity and the current crisis of the victor of that moment, mean that our researchers can

¹ These questions will be explored in a series of seminars concerning the world-historical significance of socialism which we shall organize in the summer term of 2010.

hardly ignore topical questions about the kind of society we want to live in. In 1944 Karl Polanyi published *The Great Transformation*, an indictment of market liberalism which has an often uncanny relevance to today's "neoliberalism". It is worth revisiting his critique and asking once again how market exchange can be – must be – complemented by other forms of economic integration. It already seems archaic to speak of a "third way", since the old dichotomy died with the end of the Cold War (and in Britain the term was thoroughly discredited by a combination of Tony Blair and Tony Giddens). Yet the antinomies of that era (above all market economy versus regulation and central planning) still shape the scholarly literature as well as popular perceptions. In this sense, too, we are interested in the no-man's land *in-between*; for example, it may be worthwhile to revisit concepts such as "market socialism". An interdisciplinary conference that we organised in 2006, based on Polanyi's magnum opus, led this year to a timely publication, edited by myself and co-convenor Keith Hart. We think it moves the academic debates forward by providing a reminder of the range and potential of the subdiscipline of economic anthropology, but it also offers insights into crucial political challenges of our age.

In short, the challenge of the socialist and postsocialist world is both acutely topical and of unlimited intellectual interest. Karl Polanyi himself stands somewhere in the middle of a continuum between committed revolutionaries, such as Marx and Lenin, and liberal philosophers, such as Popper and Hayek, utterly opposed to any form of "social engineering". If anthropology is the discipline which specialises in the deeper continuities, thereby implying the futility of revolutionary intervention, does that mean that we are predisposed to gravitate towards Hayek and favour the decentralised spontaneity of market solutions? Not necessarily, because in Polanyi's view the "free market" was itself a misguided utopian invention of the nineteenth century; viewed in his terms, socialist movements can be best understood as part of society's spontaneous response to this prior "great transformation".

Where Have We Been?

The Department organises its research primarily through Focus Groups. Our first group, "Property Relations", derived from interests I had been developing for much of the 1990s (Hann 1993, 1998). The invitation to help prepare a research proposal for the Max Planck Society allowed me to come up with a comparative programme to analyse rural decollectivisation, going beyond the individual case studies that were beginning to appear by the late 1990s. The preliminary results of our projects were presented in our collective volume of 2003, *The Postsocialist Agrarian Question*, and we published a final report on this work in 2005 (Hann 2005; copies available free on request). It is impossible to summarise all these projects here, but they certainly provided ample support for my theme of the *in-between*. Both socialism and capitalism are associated with strong property ideologies, collectivist and individualist respectively, but real world property systems always contain elements of

both. The economically optimal solutions may depend considerably on the nature of local crops and environments. For example, in the Rhodope Mountains community studied by Barbara Cellarius, individualist solutions predominated for agricultural land, but cooperative ownership proved economically as well as socially attractive for the forests (Cellarius 2004). Although we began this work before Keebet and Franz von Benda-Beckmann joined the MPI, their legal-anthropological approaches provided additional stimulus to it and we organised a conference together in 2003. This Focus Group left lasting traces at the MPI. These include the Siberian Studies Centre, as we know it today, which derives from a very productive team of post-docs and PhD students who investigated multiple facets of property in different parts of the Russian north (including “cultural property” – see Kasten 2004). The Volkswagen Foundation project *Political, Economic and Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Bulgaria and Poland*, led by Frances Pine and Deema Kaneff, was also a kind of offshoot from the comparative rural research of this first Focus Group.

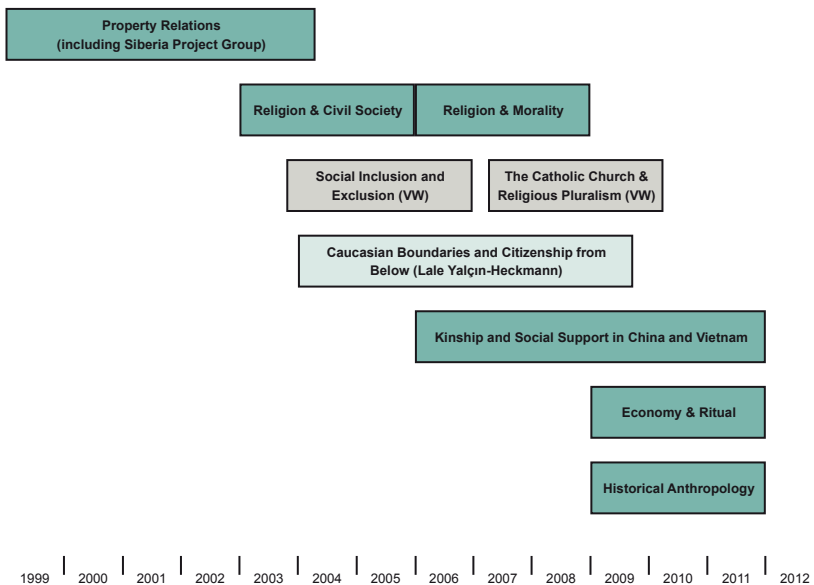


Fig. 1: Department II – Research overview, 1999–2012

In our second Focus Group, which began work in early 2003 and continued until the beginning of 2009, we shifted away from economic anthropology to address religion. Whereas the property projects were very widely scattered across the Eurasian landmass and only the Siberianists came close to forming a regional sub-group, this time we opted to build regional clusters. In the years 2003–2006 the regions involved were Central Asia and East-Central Europe and the programme was titled “Religion and Civil Society”. Participants in these clusters showed that numerous influential arguments in the sociology of religion pertaining to globalisation, secularisation, and the “return of religion” to the public sphere needed modification in postsocialist contexts, in which religion was frequently co-opted by national(ist) powerholders. Early results and a synthesis of these projects were presented in the 2006 collective volume *The Postsocialist Religious Question* (see also Hann and Pelkmans 2009).

The second phase of the Focus Group (2006–2009) saw a shift of emphasis towards “Religion and Morality”. The regions also shifted: This time we were able to recruit strong clusters for the former East Germany and for European Russia, and a rather smaller one for Vietnam and Taiwan. Despite the change of title, there was in fact a lot of continuity. Indeed, the theme of morality was consolidated on the basis of the foundations laid down by participants in the first phase of the Focus Group, notably Monica Heintz and Johan Rasanayagam. I draw on the results of our continuing engagement with Eastern Christianity in broaching the theme of “otherness” below. In 2007, thanks to the generosity of the Volkswagen Foundation, we were able to launch another offshoot project, a comparative investigation of contemporary Catholicism in Poland and Lithuania, led by Ingo Schröder and Kinga Sekerdej (a progress report on this project is provided below).

Between 2003 and 2009, Lale Yalçın-Heckmann, who had previously been a member of the Focus Group investigating rural property relations, led the Research Group *Caucasian Boundaries and Citizenship from Below*, established within the Max Planck Society’s Minerva programme. The papers from the first conference of this group (Grant and Yalçın-Heckmann 2007) have been very well reviewed. A full report on the various projects undertaken by this team is provided below.

In 2006 we launched our third Focus Group, “Kinship and Social Support in China and Vietnam”. By now we felt it was high time to extend our coverage to these large East Asian states, which have had such successful economies since embarking on market-oriented reforms in the 1980s, but which still declare themselves socialist. By choosing to analyse social support, we aimed to explore key tensions of “reform socialism”, ranging from micro-level changes in family organisation and kin ties to hotly debated social issues such as the significance of volunteering, the cost of health care and the importance of educational qualifications for social mobility. Contested notions such as trust, solidarity, and “multiple modernities” have figured prominently in the work to date. I have participated in this Focus Group myself with a project in Xinjiang, where I have been working with Ildikó Bellér-Hann intermittently since 1986. In an early publication arising out of this recent work, a chapter in the Karl

Polanyi volume noted above, I have suggested that the reform path followed by China since the 1980s can be usefully understood as “embedded socialism”, analogous to the “embedded liberalism” characteristic of Western welfare states until its recent erosion. This embedded socialism can be seen as a successful form of the *in-between* in the sense discussed above, although I note that the high growth rates have been accompanied by sharp increases in inequality.

In these projects, as in the earlier work on property, we have been fortunate in being able to draw on path-breaking work by Keebet and Franz von Benda-Beckmann, and also on the experiences of the *Kinship and Social Security in Europe* programme, led by Patrick Heady (for details see the two previous Institute reports). This Focus Group is still evolving; a provisional collective report is provided below.

Where Are We Going?

In the early months of 2009, when the final religion clusters dispersed, we established two new Focus Groups. The larger group consists of six post-docs working with Stephen Gudeman and myself on comparative research into “Economy and Ritual” in six postsocialist countries (five of them contiguous in South-East Europe). This resumption of work in economic anthropology builds heavily on the theoretical foundations laid by Gudeman himself (e.g., Gudeman 2008). At the core of his model is the dialectic between what he terms mutuality or community, where economic behaviour is shaped by a multiplicity of values, and the market, which relies on calculated reason and the value of efficiency. By approaching topics such as hospitality, social capital, and informal networks, we aim to explore path-dependency through successive historical eras, and also to engage in a dialogue with economists and others concerning the social and cultural foundations of markets. The theoretical framework of these projects is provided below).

The second new departure of 2009 is expected to become the greater innovation in time, though the current group is tiny. Regular readers of our reports will know that it has long been my wish to extend our temporal framework to include work in historical anthropology. The recruitment of Dittmar Schorkowitz to a W2 position to open up the field of *longue durée* research in various parts of Eurasia is the first step in this direction. With higher degrees both in anthropology and East European history, Dittmar is ideally qualified to head up this new Focus Group. In addition to carrying out historical research into Russia’s Mongolian minorities, he has recently undertaken fieldwork in the northern Black Sea region. For the next few years he will be joined by Patrice Ladwig and Oliver Tappe, two post-docs who work primarily in Laos. More details of the first projects of this group are provided below.

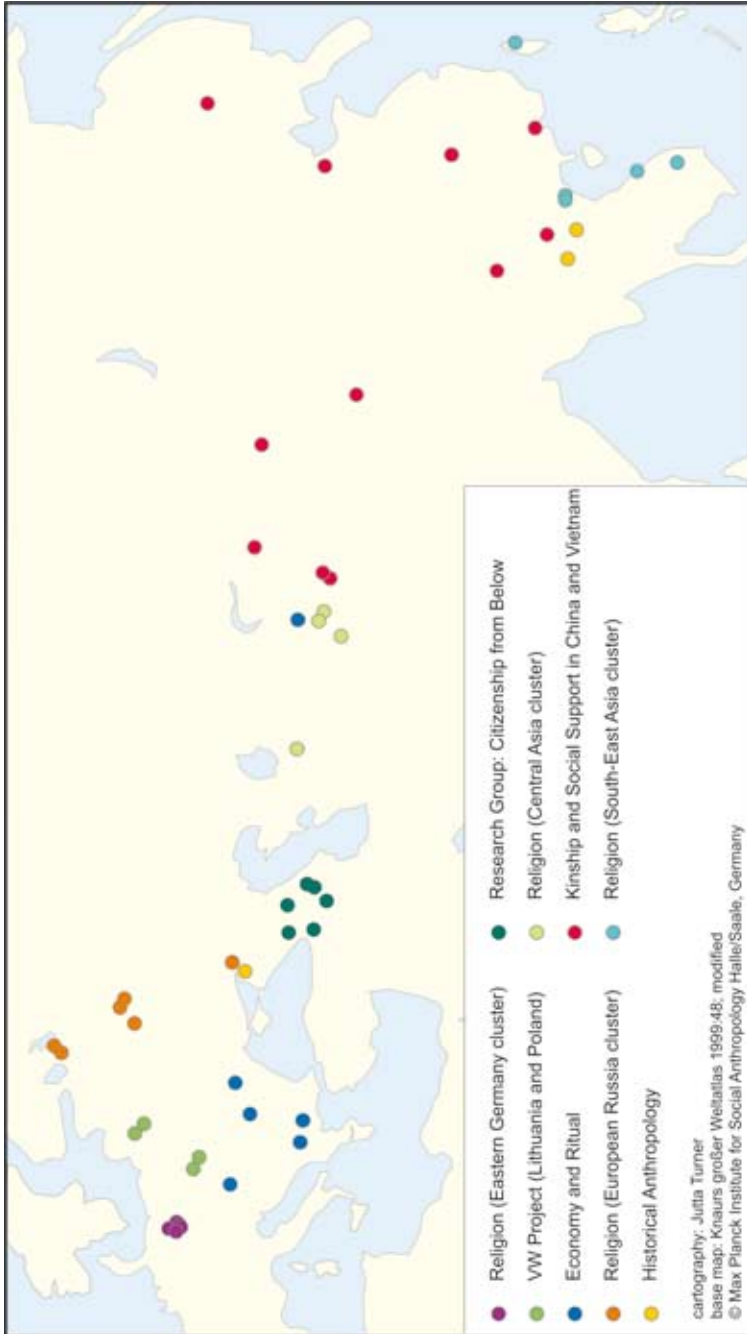


Fig. 2: Department II – Main fieldsites (as of 2008–2009)

Enough of Otherness!

Having given you a panorama of the Department's past, present, and future activities, let me now venture some remarks about how all these projects fit into the broader discipline of social anthropology. In the tradition in which I was trained in Britain, anthropology emerged as the study of the exotic, "savage" other. It basically resembled German *Völkerkunde* (the major difference in the twentieth century was that Germany lost its colonies half a century before Britain). My PhD was supervised by Jack Goody, who did fieldwork in the early 1950s in a colony called the Gold Coast, but by the time I was ready to go to the field in the mid-1970s there were not many such colonies left. Some of my contemporaries chose to work "at home"; literally, they stayed in the UK. Others helped consolidate the "anthropology of Europe", a major development of the second half of the twentieth century; the Mediterranean was the most popular destination. I ended up working in Hungary and Poland, in yet another variant of the *in-between*. Both of these countries had traditions of anthropology (ethnography/ethnology), but their object of study was primarily the national peasantry in its pre-industrial condition. Some folklorists and ethnographers were heavily involved in national movements. This meant that I, trained in the comparative discipline that studied exotic others in colonial settings, was doing my fieldwork in countries that exhibited the distinctive otherness of socialism, but which had their own academic traditions focused on the nation, traditions strongly resistant to the ideological imposition of class analysis. These settings presented puzzles that were very different from the problems which had confronted Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard. (One enduring puzzle was why modernist Marxist-Leninist regimes should invest significant resources into such an antiquated, bourgeois subject as ethnography; we have already explored this issue in several conferences on the history of anthropology in the region, an initiative we plan to continue).

Note that I did not consider myself to be doing "anthropology at home" when working in Eastern Europe. I was pleased to be invited to the 1985 conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists on "Anthropology at Home", but I always felt it was a mistake. After all, I had struggled hard to learn Hungarian and Polish, and felt I had had to cope with just as much "culture shock" as my colleagues in postcolonial settings. In retrospect I see that I was part of a process summed up by US anthropologist John Cole in 1977 as "anthropology comes part-way home". Cole was referring explicitly to work in Southern and Eastern Europe. A generation later, following the demise of the Soviet bloc, I argue that the time has come to work with a broader notion of Eurasia, since this landmass has been relatively neglected in the history of our discipline. Unfortunately, the fall of the Iron Curtain has not put an end to "orientalising" practices within Europe (Buchowski 2003). The alleged "continental" divide between Europe and Asia is asserted as strongly as ever, sometimes in "civilisational" terms (Huntington 1996). I think anthropologists must take a stance against such trends; perhaps we can even find a way to reclaim

the term civilisation in ways that do not imply hard, bounded entities of the kind imagined by Huntington.

Our recent projects on Christianity provide some good examples of how “anthropology *in-between*” can remedy the distortions of our disciplinary history and transcend easy dichotomies. Christianity is nowadays commonly taken to be *the* religion of the West, one which spread globally thanks to Western imperialism. Many anthropologists have documented how missionaries spread the Christian gospel, and how new ideas and practices interacted with local cults to produce new forms of syncretism and hybridity. The ultimate effect has often been to reinforce the “otherness” paradigm. An ideal-type of Western (usually specifically Protestant) Christianity is the basis of the existing Anglophone “anthropology of Christianity”. However, as I have tried to show in recent articles and in a volume co-edited with Halle theologian Hermann Goltz (Hann and Goltz, forthcoming), it is really absurd to tell this story as a “West versus the rest” narrative. Christianity originated and developed as an *Eastern* religion and substantial communities persist to this day throughout the region quaintly known as the “Middle East”. The dissemination of Christianity across northern Eurasia to Alaska was the work of Russian imperialism, not Western powers. Eastern Christians in Russia and elsewhere are just as interesting as the Weberian Protestant model that so dominates our literature, and Orthodoxy is arguably no less well adapted to “modernity”. The Greek Catholics of Central Europe are an especially interesting group between East and West. They acknowledge the authority of the Pope in Rome, and power relations over the centuries have supported a trend toward Latinisation. Their practical religion, however, remains rooted in the Byzantine liturgical tradition (Mahieu and Naumescu 2008). As with the Hui Muslims of China (Gladney 2004), a long-term boundary persists despite the omnipresent syncretism. Such interstitial groups expose the crudity of the Huntingtonian vision of a clash of civilisations.

Conclusion

It seems to me that our moment in the history of anthropology is an *in-between* moment, in the sense made popular by Van Gennep and Turner. The lesson to be drawn from the anthropology of Eastern Christianity, and of Christianity in general, and the historical anthropology of Eurasia even more generally, is that our discipline is best pursued as a comparative historical science that is permanently suspicious of all our inherited Eurocentric dichotomies. Otherness is always relative and contingent. We should be wary of writing such terms into the very definition of our discipline. The foreigner in Halle is still struck, twenty years after the *Wende*, by the mutual stereotyping of Osis and Wesis. But of course Poles remain more distinctively “other” for both. Socialism in Eastern Europe was “other” for those brought up in the West: It made a difference for a while, and for many people it still makes a difference in their everyday lives even two decades after its collapse, subjectively as well as through

its objective, material legacies. Yet in many respects the barriers of the Iron Curtain have turned out to have been highly ephemeral. Some of today's Hungarians can be just as rightwing and noisily racist as some of their neighbours in provincial Austria, despite the Cold War which divided them for almost half a century.

At the end of his chapter for our *Market and Society* volume, Gerd Spittler wrote:

“The art of anthropology consists in navigating carefully between Scylla (the other as the opposite) and Charybdis (the other as the same).” (Spittler 2009: 174)

Despite its pithy elegance, this formulation by one of anthropology's most distinguished contemporary practitioners remains inadequate. It seems to me that, in setting up this dichotomy, Spittler is already implicitly taking the position of the European *Völkerkundler* vis-à-vis an exotic people. Self/other dialectics may be ubiquitous but to make this the touchstone, the foundational principle of social anthropology, makes little sense if you have spent your career working *in-between*, in places like Eastern Europe, Turkey, or Central Asia. I therefore conclude with a plea for transcending the dichotomy between *Völkerkunde* and *Volkskunde* and our perpetual obsession with ‘the other’. This would be a coming of age of our discipline, overcoming the nefarious legacies of both *Völkerkunde* (imperialism) and *Volkskunde* (nationalism). It should also be the prelude to a further consolidation, which might include building new bridges between the social sciences and the humanities, and ultimately carving out a new terrain for social anthropology *in-between* these and the so-called natural sciences.

This should be enough to keep us busy for the next ten years!

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Caucasian Boundaries and Citizenship from Below

Lale Yalçın-Heckmann (Head of the Research Group),
Nino Aivazishvili, Milena Baghdasaryan, Teona Mataradze, Florian Mühlfried,
Neşe Özgen

Studies dealing with the South Caucasus often consider ethno-nationalism to be a central phenomenon and the cause of all political conflict in the postsocialist era. The purpose of the Research Group has been to challenge this assumption by examining notions and practices of citizenship, and applying the perspective of the anthropology of the state to the new independent states of this region. The significance of this theme was evident to us primarily because of the new citizenship and border regimes, as well as new patterns of mobility and migration within the South Caucasus and in the larger region covering Turkey and the Russian Federation. Not only have ethno-national groups been affected by new passport and citizenship rules, but also individuals and groups whose activities cannot all be explained by some ethnic-national principle alone. Moreover, the issue of social inequality, exacerbated in post-war and postsocialist settings, also demands a different framework for understanding state-citizen relations. We aimed to look particularly at how citizens cope with these new inequalities, even if they culturally, ethnically, and nationally belong to one of the new independent states of the region.

Citizenship has been a much discussed concept in the social sciences. We have addressed the classical Marshallian components, namely the political, the civil, and the social. Despite the fact that they were developed in a specific historical context very different from our setting, we aimed to go beyond this perspective to the meaning of citizenship as understood and practiced from below, by the people, in the recent past and the present.

Our findings can be summarised under three themes. All our projects touched on all three, although their emphases differed.

1. Social Citizenship and Migration

Teona Mataradze's research project explores citizenship practices in a rural settlement in western Georgia with a high rate of out-migration. This particular region was formerly highly dependent on the state subsidised coal industry and tea plantations. Both declined in late socialism and were dissolved, privatised, and downsized in the postsocialist period. Apart from subsistence agriculture and a few remaining state and health resort jobs, the population is oriented towards out-migration (17% of the households surveyed had at least one member who had migrated abroad, and 10% of them had a migrant within Georgia, mostly in the capital city Tbilisi). Migrants support their families through remittances and fulfil the role of the state in terms of social citizenship, but the financial support and the prestige gained through migration

do not fully compensate for the symbolic loss felt by families that are left without their male head of household or their wife and mother. Remittances are also used to invest in the higher education of the family's children, although they are not sufficiently effective to change the overall economic structure of the locality. When the payments are substantial enough, they are used to invest in education and/or buying flats in urban centres, but not in the job-creating sectors. Mataradze was able to observe several cases of the deportation of labour migrants from Russia back to Georgia during the diplomatic crisis between the two countries in 2006, which revealed the vulnerability of labour migrants and how passport and visa regimes force them to be creative in subverting bureaucratic and diplomatic regulations. These strategies are carried out on an individual basis and Georgian citizenship is not necessarily activated in order to claim legal protection or economic compensation.

Forced migrants and their citizenship issues are the focus of Milena Baghdasaryan's research with Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan. Most arrived in the years 1988–1992, many leaving Armenia thereafter to migrate further onward, primarily to Russia. Economic crisis coupled with access to family networks, cultural capital, jobs, and property in Armenia seem to be primary factors in determining this double migration. Her particular focus is on those who stayed in Armenia to live in so-called “temporary” state-provided housing. She found that acquiring formal citizenship was mainly an instrumental and strategic matter, quite different from cultural citizenship and a sense of national belonging. Refugee Armenians believed that Armenia as a country and as a state was the ultimate homeland for all Armenians, especially after having been expelled from other locations that they had also considered to be their home. Some refugees resisted formal citizenship as a way of protesting against the two-decade-long lack of state social support, especially regarding housing. Baghdasaryan examined how people defined their various attachments to the former Soviet state (and within it the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic) and to contemporary Armenia; how they selectively remembered and reconstructed the state and their own citizenship practices; and how legislation, political ideologies and housing policies combine to shape contemporary understandings of citizenship, while full social citizenship benefits are still denied to those who have acquired the formal status.

2. Mobility and Citizenship

In his postdoctoral project, Florian Mühlfried explores historical and contemporary mobility patterns and perceptions. Using cognitive analysis to analyse his data, he examines the meaning of citizenship for the Tushetians, a transhumant ethnic group traditionally settled in the Georgian Highlands, bordering Chechnya and Dagestan. Mühlfried does so by exploring “how memories of the programmatically anti-bourgeois Soviet state” shape and compete with present-day notions and practices of citizenship. He identifies belonging and entitlement as two crucial and

contrasting concepts of citizenship among the Tushetians. The notion of entitlement is, as in other projects of the Research Group, historically embedded in the Soviet notion of the strong state, and Tush distinguish between the new nation-state and current citizenship: While the former is almost universally appreciated and preferred to the Soviet Union, Georgian citizenship is generally dismissed as inferior to Soviet citizenship. Freedom is conceptualised in two ways: While the nation is now sovereign, mobility is limited by the new state boundaries, which thus constrain freedom. Mühlfried relates the significance of mobility to the transhumance of Tushetians and to the different symbolic, historical, and social meanings they attach to lowlands and highlands. This mobile life and settlement pattern allows them to enact a distinctive “flexible citizenship” as a way of coping with unpredictable changes in state forms over the last century.

South Caucasian states have all adopted the market economy, a step which could be seen as an invigoration of “economic citizenship”, allowing citizens to follow the flow of goods as consumers and traders. The conspicuous rise of the informal economy led Lale Yalçın-Heckmann to focus on the rise and decline of small-scale, local markets in Azerbaijan and to examine how citizenship regimes affect the economic behaviour and political notions of Azerbaijani citizens. Internationally produced goods are now available in most cities of the region. Yalçın-Heckmann’s research shows that goods and traders do not conform to the logic of reducing costs and optimising benefits. Traders at her research site, a small town in western Azerbaijan, were a mere 50 km from the Georgian capital, yet they travelled to the wholesale market in Baku, some 450 km away, to acquire the goods that they would later resell at the local market. The logic was not one of economy but one of the new citizenship. Tbilisi is close but inaccessible to petty traders; as trade in Western consumer goods is said to be controlled by monopolistic clans and family networks, small traders have to go to Baku. The power-holders who occupy central state positions ensure that upward mobility is only available to those traders who take the “exit option”, usually by becoming citizens of other states, notably the Russian Federation and Turkey.

3. Borders and States

The impact of borders on people’s everyday lives is a central theme in the research of Nino Aivazishvili, who joined the Group as an associate PhD student in 2008. Her research site lies in North-West Azerbaijan, close to the border with Georgia. A border that was hardly noticeable during the Soviet period, its presence and materiality in the lives of the ethnic Ingiloy now shape their political citizenship. While those who have the means to trade and travel have maintained ethnic and religious ties to the Georgians across the border, visits and contacts have become much less frequent. They are remembered in private but cannot be evoked publicly, unless expressed by a member of the ethnic minority elite under the scrutiny of the state.

Border regimes are also at the centre of another associated project: H. Neşe Özgen looks at changes in property and citizenship regimes in the marches between Georgia, Turkey, and Armenia over the last century and a half, during which the region has experienced depopulation, re-population, and radical changes in land tenure. The border was closed during the Soviet period, during which the Turkish side built up its self-image of “protecting democracy and the West.” Since 1991 the residents have had to justify their cultural belonging in different ways, which involve reclaiming and rewriting the history of land and power in the region. The new Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline has opened up new possibilities in the evaluation of land, and in terms of claiming it as property through citizenship entitlements. Özgen uses historical narratives to illustrate how families of renown and power were able to employ their citizenship in bargaining with the state during the “Iron Curtain” years, and how their power is nowadays re-established through the strategic use of legislation and governmental methods such as enforcing land registries. New discourses of global governmentality are invoked to claim rights and entitlements that no longer depend solely on national citizenship.

Conclusions

Our results have contributed to the theory of citizenship in various ways. Many recent writings have pointed to the erosion of social citizenship. Others have drawn attention to proliferating varieties of citizenship – transnational, postnational, multicultural, flexible, biological, etc. These developments are seen as emerging from global processes of migration, multiculturalism, human rights discourses, and neoliberal economic and political processes. Yet other authors have argued that citizenship in Western societies has diminishing value, and that we live in an era of “citizenship lite”. Our findings modify all these arguments: Citizenship as a category of formal belonging with political and economic implications plays a crucial role in people’s lives in the South Caucasus. The differentiation of the Marshallian components is still useful here: Social citizenship is taken seriously in terms of entitlements from a state that has been withdrawing from its social security obligations. Historical concepts of citizenship are strongest when this social aspect of citizenship is evoked, but less so when the civil aspect of citizenship is at stake. The different aspects of citizenship are activated and differentiated from one another according to historical experiences and contemporary economic and political issues. It is therefore important that the traditional notion of citizenship is not simply dismissed as irrelevant in modern global times. It instead needs to be empirically studied and re-evaluated as a sub-theme in the anthropology of the state. In all of these projects, we have been engaged in examining not only changing notions and practices of citizenship but also changing relationships with the state.

Kinship and Social Support in China and Vietnam

Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Giovanni Da Col, Ayxem Eli, Kirsten Endres, Friederike Fleischer, Chris Hann, Helena Obendiek, Sawut Pawan, Sarah Schefold, Markus Schlecker, Johannes Steinmüller, Xiujie Wu

The Focus Group began work in January 2006 with one-year fieldwork stints carried out in 2006 and 2007 in China (including 3 in Xinjiang) and Vietnam. Aside from kinship, the Group has covered topics including education and social mobility (Obendiek); deindustrialisation and unemployment (Schefold); the one-child family and notions of social responsibility (Fleischer); state welfare and war dead (Schlecker); and rural policies and local concepts of fairness (Wu; Xinjiang Group).

Three new members joined the Group in 2009. Kirsten Endres has brought to the Group her extensive knowledge of rural and urban Vietnam, and will focus on trade relationships and support networks among market vendors at the Sino-Vietnamese border. Johannes Steinmüller has added his regional expertise on rural China with a project on the relation between social support, ritual, and apprenticeship in Hubei province. Giovanni Da Col will extend the Group's regional coverage to Tibet, where his research examines changing concepts and practices regarding fortune, luck, sorcery, and witchcraft.

The research carried out by the Focus Group thus far has pinpointed a need to address the semantic openness of social support. Previous work in this field has tended to build on the basic economic models of give and take, reciprocity, and exchange. The danger is that, all too often, the roles of the actors involved are presumed to be unequivocal, as is the motivation and nature of different transactions. But whether a transaction and its consequences are considered support and who is recognised as those supporting and those supported is often open to negotiation and subject to a host of factors. Moreover, persons and groups involved in several support relationships may come to construe one as detrimental to the other.

Another important finding of the group has been the significance of processes in which the formalised nature of state support may bring about unintended consequences when they are implemented "on the ground". Local support is often arranged in shifting and rather informal contexts that are not clearly separated from non-supportive transactions. The formality of state support may coerce local actors into making these non-state support arrangements more explicit. Conversely, state support may undergo a process of informalisation, as funds are allocated and eligibility is determined. Relationships between local government officials and residents, relationships within families and kin groups, and other particularistic ties channel such processes. These observations have a bearing on wider debates concerning the relationship between state and society in China and Vietnam, the nature of the public and private spheres, and changing ideologies in these still nominally socialist countries. With the economic reforms, new ideals have emerged and been actively shaped

and promoted by the leadership in both China and Vietnam. Support has become ever more difficult to find as entrepreneurship is celebrated as a new model to emulate and the vision of a prosperous society is promoted rather than an equitable one. Losers in this new game often return home to their family and places of origin to fall back on old-style support networks. But the extent to which they will find such networks and the concepts that go with them has become a matter of uncertainty.

The Focus Group argues that support has to be studied as interpretative processes wherein so-called hard variables involving factors such as economy, state policies, and human geography materialise in highly unpredictable ways. These meaning processes often involve visions of a better life, as they mobilise moral concepts (loyalty, equity, trust, etc.), build on models of human agency and relationships, and become intermingled with non-support social processes.

Wu (Hebei Province), Obendiek (Gansu Province), and Schlecker (Hai Phong, Vietnam) conducted fieldwork in rural areas. The researchers shared the observation that, despite the abolition of agricultural taxes and the introduction of some state welfare policies during the reform period, the villagers' dependence on land has become a greater burden. Peasants in both countries have to augment their earnings through work as hired labourers, various home-based sideline businesses, or alternative cash crops. State policies often turned out to have unintended consequences that impinged on local notions and practices of non-state support. Wu noted increased tensions among kin concerning perceptions of fairness and loyalty, as the state defines those eligible to receive benefits. Obendiek observed both increasing competition and mutual dependency among siblings in securing support for their education. Parents in turn felt the increased burden of responsibility in their educational investment decisions. Schlecker noted the dramatic depopulation of villages due to ineffective rural policies and a bias toward urban investments. Those left behind, mostly elderly villagers, seek to compensate for their isolation by way of ritual practices, especially as a means of obtaining spiritual support. Fleischer (Guangzhou City) and Schefold (Harbin Province and Saxony-Anhalt, Germany) conducted their research in urban areas among mostly working-class families. Fleischer noted especially that economic decentralisation has led to a growing confusion with regard to support roles and responsibilities within the family. Analogous to Schlecker's observation of new collective ritual activities, she found thriving new support communities of volunteers and Protestant faith groups. They provided contexts for experiencing solidarity and for self-exploration beyond kin relations. Schefold, who compared unemployment in China and the former East Germany, also found that support was semantically open. Contrary to the image of the socially isolated unemployed, she described diverse local neighbourhoods where the unemployed are embedded in social networks of both employed and unemployed people. She drew attention to highly varying notions of what unemployment meant to her informants.



Rural markets in China and Vietnam reflect vividly the turning of families to sideline businesses and more profitable cash crops since the decentralization of the countries' economies and the downsizing of state support. (Photo: M. Schlecker; Hai Phong, Vietnam, 2006)

The Uyghur population of rural Xinjiang was the object of three closely related projects within the Focus Group. Ayxem Eli has documented the ways in which traditional gender relations and high divorce rates continue to shape contemporary household economic strategies near the Kashgar oasis. Sawut Pawan has collected narratives concerning the destruction of established mechanisms of support in the Maoist era in two contrasting regions of the province. Finally, Ildikó Bellér-Hann and Chris Hann have drawn on historical data to supplement their investigations of the present “market socialist” economy of the eastern oasis of Qumul (Hami).

The Focus Group found narratives in the context of support to be another important field of inquiry. The modes of reflecting on and accounting for the experience of support both before and after the economic reforms serve at the same time as models that conceptualise the dramatic changes that have engulfed people. Such models turn out to be not merely ways of enunciating this experience, but also cultural resources that feed back into the practices and perceptions of support. The well-documented double life led under state socialism, divided between public and private selves, has contributed to the manner in which narratives of support are framed. Since the reforms, people in China and Vietnam, although they are still state-socialist nations, often lead a new double life, that of state-guided citizens and self-responsible

entrepreneurs. Talk of investing in children and participation in volunteer support groups is part of a trend toward “changing one’s own fate.” Narratives of support are clearly informed by the discourse on becoming self-made, which in China often appears in conjunction with the term *suzhi* (quality). But narratives of support also frequently hark back to the pre-reform past, when people tended to be “more equal” and “more united”.

The group organised an international conference on anthropological approaches to support at the Max Planck Institute (June 3–5, 2008), which provided an opportunity to situate the group’s findings in relation to research undertaken in the US, Britain, Canada, Australia, France, Portugal, Spain, and elsewhere in Germany. The papers have been edited for publication by Fleischer and Schlecker.

The insights gained thus far – semantic openness, the problematic intersection between informal and formal practice, and narratives of support as models of society – will now shape the next phase of the Focus Group’s work. We shall be investigating four broad themes: life’s uncertainty and concepts of fate, luck, and fortune; modes of relatedness and categories of closeness and familiarity; moral exemplars of care and protection; and the politics of population quality.

Economy and Ritual

Stephen Gudeman, Chris Hann (Heads of the Focus Group)

Jennifer Cash, Nathan Light, Miladina Monova, Detelina Tocheva, Monica Vasile, Bea Vidacs

What is the relation between economy and ritual? Are they opposed or mutually supportive? Rituals are modes of expression: they include religious and secular practices that evoke shared meanings and feelings. In contrast, economy is home to material actions that are designed to accomplish something, often in the most efficacious way possible. A ritual performance, whether in words or deeds, is usually considered to be an end in itself, but an economic action, in production, consumption, or exchange, is a means to accomplish something else. From the instrumental to the expressive, and the practical to the symbolic, social life seems to be caught between “the useful” and “the superfluous”, and even if ritual performances sometimes provide the emotional and volitional impetus for instrumental behaviour, one action surely cannot be both.

This project focuses on the relationship of these two modes of action in a context where both are changing in unpredictable ways. We are comparing the connections between economic and ritual life in six post-socialist countries – Macedonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan – with an emphasis on rural areas. Markets have now replaced central planning, some state rituals have disappeared, and local and church celebrations have generally grown in significance. From the perspective of ritual life, one may ask: Do rituals increase in number and cost as

market life grows, as if to counterbalance the impact of the competitive relations in life? Or does ritual life decrease as living standards rise and life is increasingly filled by instrumental activities? From the standpoint of economic life, one may reverse these questions: as the material standard of life rises, are social ceremonies carried out to show off wealth, or as living standards decline, do ritual expressions proliferate to compensate for diminished material wellbeing?

Ritual and economy are not discrete variables, however, and we are exploring their relations in more complex ways. Some rituals may be integral to economy as modes of consumption, production, or exchange. An economy can itself be seen as a ritual or expressive action, as when self-sufficiency is more a display of independence than an act central to one's livelihood. Conversely, postsocialist citizens may use rituals to build economic connections.

To address changes in economies and rituals in local contexts, we are employing a comparative framework for the study of the economy and an in-depth methodology for examining characteristic rituals in the research areas. Most economists see economies in terms of markets and market-like behaviour, but we approach them as social structures that consist of overlapping and conflicting spheres of values and practices. We have labelled these facets of economic structure in contemporary capitalism: house, community, commerce, finance, and finance of finance. These facets are separate but intermingled. Individuals and cultures emphasise them differently; their prominence changes over time; and they represent contesting interests and perspectives. The five realms exhibit an increasing reach in terms of space and the inclusiveness of material activities, and hence exert greater influence over the economy as a whole. Our research sites cluster in the realms of house and community, and we focus on their crucial intersections with the commercial realm. But global markets and the financial realms influence all facets of the contemporary economy; even villages at the periphery may be affected by the realm of "finance of finance" (or meta-finance).

We use the term house economy to refer not only to the small household family but also to compound groups, and to members living elsewhere who express their connection through rituals and labour exchanges. The house is the cellular unit of economy. It may display a division of labour, but this differs from the division of labour typical of market entities, which seek efficiencies and profit. The house is characterised by joint or collaborative work and by sharing. No house is self-sufficient or autarkic, but this inner cell of economy may turn inward as well in changing economic conditions, when the larger economy turns down and retreats from marginal areas. The house economy is characterised by practices of thrift, self-sufficiency, and hoarding, which can lead to lassitude in a market economy. The house may express itself and its identity through local rituals; in some cases, houses even have a ritual economy in that they practice a degree of self-sufficiency as an ideal or fantasy. But the house is also part of a community economy in that it reaches out to others through forms of reciprocity, through labour exchange and help, and by

sharing goods and services, thus extending its borders. Often, these socioeconomic connections are made, solidified, and celebrated through rituals, such as life-cycle rituals, secular celebrations, and religious feasts. At these and other times, a house may put itself on display in material ways, incur debts, and gather benefits.

The communal realm of economy is characterised by shared interests from common possessions to modes of distribution, such as holding collective land, practicing collective herding, sharing consumption, and maintaining cultural centres. Unlike markets that allocate according to efficiency, the distribution of material wealth in the communal realm is guided by many values, such as need, gender, age, and social merit. Together these two facets – the house and community – make up the mutual realm of economy. They are connected to the use of money and to markets, but in the first instance they have to do with material economy and the way that work, objects, and services mediate social relationships, and vice versa.

In all our research areas, the communal realm of economy has experienced radical changes in recent years. Our research includes gathering local voices about post-socialist changes in economic values and their impact on social life. It is important not to confuse the communal ideals of socialism with the actual realities. For many villagers, collectivisation was a traumatic experience. The household plot was used not only for subsistence but to produce for local markets, and this opportunity was welcomed. Even in those countries that gravitated towards “market socialism”, the opaque institutions of central planning were never completely abandoned. Beyond the realm of the planners in the national capital, the “planning of the plan” was shaped by the unstable politics of the Cold War.

In our research areas, market transactions often take place in local markets just as anonymous, global markets influence them. Some market exchanges merge with local barter, when money becomes scarce at the margin, and house economies grow important. Market relations also overlap with reciprocity when the ties are stretched over time, when no interest is charged, and when market exchange is accompanied by gifts that solidify relationships. Similarly, markets and communities become interwoven when local tradesmen are expected to play a prominent part in helping and financing communal rituals; if they refuse, they may face sanctions.

One difficult and daunting question concerns the “mentality” or “subjectivity” required for market participation. Do people become more calculative as markets become more important? Does the market realm expand into greater and greater spheres of life as this mode of reason takes hold? Are there local stories and narratives that capture the subtle changes that have emerged since socialist times? And, in a matter that is more difficult to specify, does calculative reason become a ritual and a source of pleasure through its increased practice in markets? Are market customs, whether in consumption, exchange, or production, a type of ritual by participants, even as it socially sets them apart and leads to wealth asymmetries?

The fourth realm of contemporary capitalism, that of finance, includes banks and moneylenders, and brokers of all types. These institutions provide liquidity

for markets and the other spheres, and they reap a profit for the services provided. While very few analysts place this realm within the “real” economy, it does have a profound influence on material life and real wealth.

Finally, the “finance of finance” realm, (analogous to the “planning of the plan” under the *ancien régime*), is concentrated in financial centres such as Wall Street and the City of London. We do not expect economies on the periphery to be directly involved with this realm, except as recipients of the economic waves that originate in these centres. These waves may have a pronounced effect on local economies through their impact on national budgets and the employment opportunities and social supports that must consequently be curtailed or withdrawn. Marginal economies may serve as places of refuge for family and others who live in cities and cannot find full-time work. Food self-sufficiency serves to counteract market failures.

These models of the social structure of economy allow us to compare and contrast economies over time, and to place and intertwine the meanings, costs, and subjectivities of rituals within new economic contexts.



Group members during a field workshop in Macedonia, with staff of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of St. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje. (Photo: R. Gudeman, 2010)

Historical Anthropology in Eurasia

Dittmar Schorkowitz (Head of the Focus Group)

Patrice Ladwig, Oliver Tappe

The Significance of Historical Anthropology for the Study of Eurasia

In many traditions of anthropology this title would be puzzling: How could there possibly be an anthropology that is *not* historical? The answer is that the dominance of the ethnographic method over the last century, especially in the Anglophone traditions, has been accompanied by an emphasis, if not exclusively on the synchronic, then at any rate on relatively shallow temporalities, seldom extending back beyond the reach of the memory of elderly informants. This “presentist” bias has been productive in many fields, including, in recent years, the study of postsocialist transformations. Yet the potential of *longue durée* approaches remains undiminished, not least from the point of view of understanding contemporary diversity in the wake of “high socialism”. With the 2009 appointment of Dittmar Schorkowitz to a W2 position, the Department established a Focus Group to develop new approaches along these lines.

Of course we are not the first to explore the interface between anthropology and history. Early efforts to integrate historical methods date back to the colonial era and the intellectual debates can be traced through to the present in currents such as postcolonial studies and subaltern studies. A great deal of this work has addressed the colonial empires of North Atlantic states in recent centuries. Significant work has also been undertaken in many parts of Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. However, for most of the twentieth century, it was difficult for foreign anthropologists to conduct studies, synchronic or diachronic, in the Russian/Soviet and Chinese multinational empires.

Against this background and in the wake of the demise of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist socialism in Eurasia, the Focus Group will take advantage of the great improvements in access to elaborate new research agendas for historically minded anthropologists in this part of the world. We shall adapt theories and methods developed for other places and other timeframes in order to open up new avenues for comparison, and to initiate or renew cooperation with adjacent disciplines. We treat Eurasia as a single continent; this unity is reflected not only in the recent history of socialism (varieties of which have also had a massive impact in regions such as Western Europe and South Asia) but by the evolution of complex societies across the landmass since the Bronze Age. We shall define the boundaries flexibly; regions such as North Africa and Indonesia can certainly be included whenever warranted by particular research questions. It is not intended to reify Eurasia in the way that so much effort has been invested over the years in reifying Europe.

Ethnic Minorities and the State in Eurasia (EMSE)

The first project of this group will be a threefold pilot study to investigate relations between ethnic minorities and the state. Focus Group leader Dittmar Schorkowitz's research project is entitled "Dealing with nationalities in Eurasia: How Russian and Chinese agencies managed ethnic diversity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries". This project will explore the classification of minority groups in the later tsarist/early Soviet and Qing empires, and the consequences of these majority-minority dynamics for minority policies in twentieth-century socialist states.

Central institutions set up to regulate the various relationships (tribute, tax, service to state, legal system, elite cooptation, etc.) of ethnic minorities with the state have strong traditions in Russia and China. Bearing different names between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, these institutions, of which the better known include the early Soviet People's Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnats) and the Qing Chinese Court of Colonial Affairs (Lifanyuan), are at the centre of this research. Comparing the historical development of these institutions, and their changing functions, tasks, and ideological bases over time will sharpen our view of these crucial interfaces between minority and state in two vast regions of Eurasia. Of particular interest are questions concerning how far the aspirations of nationalities were perceived and represented within these governmental bodies, and the extent to which they were used as instruments of social engineering, reinforcing governmental conceptions of ethnicity, cultural diversity, and national cohesion.

The project is intended as a historical-anthropological contribution to the study of continental colonialism in Eurasia. Its focus is not on the relations of the state with any particular group, but rather on the general principles of minority policies. The continuity of these institutions in both cases reveals their cross-epochal importance for the integration of multi-national states. The functionality and operations of these administrative institutions have not been studied intensively and most historical-anthropological research on the consequences of nationality policies has been restricted to single regions and aspects, and to the socialist core era (1930–1980). Conceptually, the aim of the project is to connect the idea of the "frontier", which has proved so productive in Inner Asia, with that of "internal colonialism", and to work towards a new model of continental colonialism. Such a synthesis could prove illuminating in comparison with more familiar models of "indirect rule" as practised in British overseas colonialism in India and by the French in Indochina. Recently, applications of postcolonial theory to Russian rule in Samarkand and Tashkent have shown the potential for cross-fertilisation, but this does not have to be a one-way street. A comparative study of the practices of Russia and China in regard to ethnic minorities could expand existing perspectives on British and French penetration to the south.

A second field of inquiry is Southeast Asia, where two postdoctoral researchers will be examining the combined impact of Buddhism, the French colonial regime, and socialism on majority-minority relations in Laos. The project run by Patrice Ladwig is entitled “Buddhist Statecraft and the Politics of Ethnicity in Laos”. The project’s aim is to explore how the relationships between ethnic minorities in the highlands and Buddhist groups living in the lowlands of the current Lao PDR have been mediated by Buddhism, its notions of statecraft, and its political technologies of power. In mainland Southeast Asia, Theravada Buddhism is perceived as a force of “civilisation” that brought with it a class of religious professionals, permanent and interconnected religious institutions, writing, and most importantly concepts of kingship, statecraft, and legitimacy. Buddhism provided the basis for forming (taxable) political entities beyond the village level for groups cultivating wet rice in the valleys. In contrast, the highlands were populated by numerous and highly diverse “animistic” ethnic minorities, belonging to the Mon-Khmer, Tibeto-Burman, and Tai-Kadai linguistic families. Due to their forms of livelihood, they were highly mobile and occupied peripheral regions, mostly out of reach of the early Buddhist “states” and “empires”. This periphery outside and at the margins of the state was and still is perceived as backward and uncivilised by lowlanders. Due to economic and cultural links, however, ethnic and religious identities have taken multiple and fluid forms. The region has been characterised by complex interactions involving domination, resistance, integration, and segregation along the blurred lines of ethnic and religious affiliation.

From the perspective of the anthropology of the state, Ladwig’s project explores whether and how this statecraft and its practices can be conceptualised as forms of a specific governmentality and “internal colonialism” aiming at Buddhification and a process of civilisation at the margins of the state. It will also research processes of “acculturation” and strategies of resistance to this process of integration into larger state formations. Employing a historical and social-anthropological perspective, the project examines a period spanning from the pre-colonial era (19th century) to the current phase of reformed socialism. *Longue durée* concerns are combined with a strong ethnographic focus on the present in order to investigate to what extent modern Lao state socialism and its politics of ethnicity and religion are still imbued with older patterns of Buddhist statecraft and its “political theology”. In addition to the current focus on a specific region in the present Lao PDR, there are plans for the development of a regional comparative approach including research in Thailand in a later phase of the project.

Oliver Tappe will work on a project entitled *Reconfiguring the Past in a Lao-Vietnamese Border Region*. His focus will be on the history of the last 120 years of the ethnically heterogeneous province of Huaphan, located in the mountainous northeastern part of Laos, adjacent to Vietnam. The population of Huaphan (250,000) consists of 22 ethnic groups from the four main language families in Laos (Tai-Kadai, Mon-Khmer, Hmong-Mien, and Tibeto-Burman). Their settlement in the

hills and valleys of the region is the result of complex migration processes. With the arrival of French colonial power in the late 19th century, the highland population at the margins of the later nation-states of Laos and Vietnam saw an increasing degree of external interference in local political and economic organisation. After Laos and Vietnam gained their independence from France in 1954, a post-colonial and socialist nation-building process further transformed the multi-ethnic social structures of the region.

This project will tackle questions of ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations by focusing on the social and cultural shifts caused by the intrusion of modern state power into ethnically heterogeneous regions. The consequences of state politics for multi-ethnic social structures will be analysed with regard to such factors as colonial taxation schemes, recent land reform projects, changing property relations, and the recent emergence of a capitalist agricultural economy. The project identifies ruptures and continuities in four periods: colonialism (1893–1954), contested nation-building (1954–1975), orthodox socialism (1975–1986), and reformed socialism (since 1986). It will focus on two levels of inter-ethnic relations: first, the relations between lowland (Lao/Vietnamese) and highland groups (various ethnic groups); and second, relations between the different highland groups themselves.

This marginal region is characterised by multiple discourses of memory and identity. Given the importance of the support the Lao and Vietnamese communists received from the highland groups during the revolutionary struggle, it is instructive to see how these groups seek to make sense of the revolution and its aftermath, especially as they have not been major beneficiaries of the struggle. The Lao state is currently reshaping social spaces in the highlands by promoting resettlement and the large-scale cultivation of industrial crops, thereby transforming traditional livelihoods and forms of village organisation. This is only the latest stage in a long series of disconcerting experiences for the highland populations of Huaphan Province: from pre-colonial raids and colonial taxation to war, revolution, socialist collectivist experiments, forced resettlement, poverty, encounters with Western tourists, and poorly implemented land titling programs.

The three pilot studies emphasise the need to explore the historical dimensions of state-minority relations in order to advance an understanding both of past processes and of their contemporary configurations, which are often marked by tensions. The evolution and transformation of power structures, and more precisely the question of how the state attempts to control, shape, and order its population through social engineering, are of central concern. So too are the counter-hegemonic movements which these powers provoke.

The Catholic Church and Religious Pluralism in Lithuania and Poland (Volkswagen Foundation Project)

Ingo W. Schröder, Kinga Sekerdej (project leaders)
Agnieszka Pasięka, Lina Pranaitytė (doctoral students)

This project, launched in September 2007, was introduced in the last Institute report. Fieldwork was carried out according to plan from April 2008 to May 2009 in paired urban and rural field sites in both countries (Kaunas/Vilnius – Varėna District in Lithuania; and Kraków – Uście Gorlickie in Poland). We will continue to analyse and write up the results of the project through September 2010.

Despite similar histories of a dominant Catholic Church and a cultural heritage strongly shaped by the Catholic faith, the religious fields in Lithuania and Poland have developed in different directions during the last two decades. It was assumed that, while in Poland the Church continues to play a dominant role in politics and everyday life, in Lithuania an increasing indifference toward the Church's teachings has proliferated alongside a pluralism of individual attitudes and religious beliefs. Based on these premises, we aimed to investigate how Catholicism affects people's everyday lives under conditions of rapid social change, between the church's hegemonic doxa that dominate the public sphere, and individual searches for religious and spiritual meaning. Inspiration for a theoretical framework designed to analyse the internal and external relations of the church was drawn from the Gramscian notion of hegemony and the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu, most important among them the religious field, habitus and collusio, religious capital, and symbolic violence. Our research has been based on interviews with a wide range of individuals, the participant observation of religious activities ranging from the mass to festivals and pilgrimages, various forms of catechesis and religious education, public debates on religious issues, and the analysis of written documents.

Preliminary findings of our project can be summarised as follows:

(1) The current role of the Catholic Church in society cannot be properly understood without taking account of historical processes in the religious field since the 19th century and the place of Catholicism in the idea of a national culture.

(2) The Catholic Church nowadays actively engages in public debates, and its various representatives voice their opinions on political issues. Its public position influences the people's understandings of concepts regarding family, gender roles, sexuality, and reproductive rights, not only in the public sphere but also in the private realm.

(3) Notwithstanding its hierarchical structure and official unity on such issues, the Catholic Church does offer space for groups and individuals with diverse political, social, and moral standpoints. This diversity of expression is nonetheless contained within a hegemonic framework that establishes arbitrary categories as natural. In the public sphere and state institutions, these categories are rarely questioned, thus

forming a set of doxa in which Catholicism constitutes the norm for all citizens. Yet, especially in the urban environment, there exists a plurality of attitudes to religion as such, to the Catholic Church as an institution, and to Catholicism as a belief, a tradition, and as mere social conformism. The symbolic dominance of Roman Catholicism in the public sphere tends to relegate this pluralism to a marginal position. This is more pronounced in Poland than in Lithuania, where a widening sector of the population can be characterised as secularised.

(4) Lay communities connected to the church are formed either on the basis of ethical convictions or as a means of pursuing practical social aims, thereby establishing an important distinction between a *practical* and an *ideological* understanding of Catholicism. To many believers, Catholicism is no longer an inherited faith, but something to be constituted and validated through personal experience. Church-based lay communities have multiple meanings and functions for their members. They often form support groups for those who are separated from their kin, have lost close relatives, or who seek a place of temporary refuge. One important factor behind the engagement of lay people in such groups is a personal history of serious illness. Religious mass media (notably the controversial *Radio Maryja* in Poland) offer a sense of close family relations that transcends the parish and immediate neighbourhood and creates a nationwide virtual community.

(5) The hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church is reflected in all research settings, in the arrangement of social positions, religious symbolism, and religious teachings. In local fields within the religious community, however, this model can be modified or even subverted, and seemingly important roles can also be accorded to those at the lower end of the hierarchy. Gender has been identified as a key category in the organisation of the institutional church, including parish-based groups and Catholic associations. It is also one of the most important categories in the ordering of the social world of believers, since, in both countries, Catholicism continues to offer a clear vision of the social roles of men and women.

(6) Finally, we have noted, especially in Lithuania, a widening gap between people who are believers in the Catholic faith and active in the Church, and those who show little interest in religious matters. Among the religious, we have established a provisional typology which distinguishes between (a) the superficial Catholic *habitus* of the majority of churchgoers, (b) an intellectual Catholicism among the educated elite, and (c) a “newly discovered” emotional Catholicism (e.g., among the youth). We have documented a religious culture for the latter two types, based on music, the arts, and the media, which allows one to engage in the Catholic faith without necessarily having a close connection to the institutional church. Especially in the urban context, some of the believers in these categories prefer to maintain a critical distance to the institution.

In sum, our initial assumptions have been largely confirmed by the research, but our fieldwork has provided many additional nuances to the overall picture.



A procession in Kraków to honour Saint Stanisław (Photo: K. Sekerdej, 2008)

In certain areas, further research is called for to resolve lingering puzzles. In terms of theory, the Gramscian concepts of hegemony and common sense, little used so far in the anthropological study of religion, have provided an appropriate framework for the study of these majority Catholic societies and merit further use in the emerging field of the anthropology of Christianity. Our findings will also have a practical importance in terms of governance at various levels, as we amply document how one dominant religion continues to impact social life and ideals of pluralism and tolerance in these “transforming societies.”

The importance of the historical perspective has turned out to be even greater than we had anticipated. As our project draws to a close we shall examine historicity more explicitly and seek to place the cases of Lithuania and Poland in a wider comparative context. This work will culminate in an international conference convened by the research team at the Max Planck Institute in June 2010 (“Religious Hegemony and Religious Diversity in Eastern Europe: Postsocialism vis-à-vis the *Longue Durée*”) and in a panel at the 2010 EASA Conference.

Project Group Legal Pluralism

Heads of the Group: Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann

Law in Motion: understanding the dynamics of plural legal orders and their social consequences

Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann

Introduction

In this report we will look back at what we have done during the past nine years in the Project Group Legal Pluralism at the MPI. The aim of the Project Group is to contribute to the anthropological study of law in the context of globalisation and to provide theoretical and methodological ideas about the place of law and legal pluralism across time and space.

Before we moved to Halle, we had worked in Wageningen and Rotterdam, respectively, on issues of social security and on plural legal and institutional orders with a focus on dispute management and property relations. Processes of legal engineering and the instrumental use of legal models, foreign or home grown, for changing social, economic, and political organisation had been an important part of our research and analysis. Building on these issues, we developed our first research programme at the Institute together with Bertram Turner and Julia Eckert. Our research would focus on processes of dispute and conflict management; issues of social security; rights to natural resources, land, forests, and water; and on changes in governance in the context of legal transnationalisation, decentralisation, and privatisation. We particularly emphasised two crosscutting themes: The significance of religion and religious laws within constellations of plural legal orders; and the transnational dimension of legal pluralism and the legal, economic, and political consequences of supra-state legal regulations within the framework of current processes of regionalisation and globalisation. This led to issues of identity, power, and inequality, issues of legal insecurity, and the changing relations between individuals, communities, and state governance in the context of political transformation. The core of our current research is thus situated within the contradictory processes of an increasing juridification of politics, a religious enchantment of the legal world, and a repoliticisation of law and religion (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2006).

Over the past two years, our main focus has been on the topic of *Religion in Disputes: religious belief, law, and authority in dispute management*. The aim of the project has been to understand the various ways in which people draw on beliefs, religious concepts, and religious authorities to deal with disputes, and how this affects plural legal constellations. Martin Ramstedt, for instance, has been focusing on the recent provincial legislation in Bali that stipulates the sovereignty of local customary

law at the village level under the heading of “Hindu Law”. Fadjar Thufail has shown that the role of religion in social justice and cultural rights is being negotiated in practices of reconciliation and the politics of revising *adat*. Carolien Jacobs, comparing Christian, traditional, and state modes of dispute management in Gorongosa, Central Mozambique, found that spirits remain an influential and dynamic force, compelling state authorities to forge strategic partnerships with religious leaders in the administration of justice. Arskal Salim has analysed how different notions of social justice implied in customary law and Islamic law have affected inheritance disputes in post-tsunami Aceh. Bertram Turner has continued to work on the scalar arrangements among plural legal configurations in rural Morocco and their global legal environment, and on the interfaces of law and religion in Morocco and Canada. Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann have continued to pursue research on the consequences of decentralisation in West Sumatra for the relations between Islam, *adat*, the national state, and local state. Judith Beyer has defended her PhD thesis on the ethnography of the maintenance of customary law in Kyrgyzstan, while Ida Harboe Knudsen has almost finished her PhD thesis on the transformation of EU policy and laws, and their consequences in rural Lithuania.

The VW Foundation is funding the comparative research project *Local State and Social Security in Rural Hungary, Romania, and Serbia*. The project involves three junior and four senior researchers, and is coordinated by Tatjana Thelen together with Larissa Vetter. The project aims to engender theoretical insights into the working of the state in rural settings and its interrelation with other networks of power. The researchers will remain in the field until mid-2010. The project headed by Julia Eckert on *Law against the State, or the Juridification of Protest* is described below.

Law and legal pluralism have become booming issues in academic and political circles over the past ten years. The anthropology of law is becoming a core issue in anthropological curricula. Legal pluralism has become a concept generally accepted among scholars of international law as well as an important topic for international organisations working on human rights and development cooperation. Expertise on non-state law and legal pluralism is an expanding field of consultancy. This was quite different even twenty years ago. When we metamorphosed from law students into anthropologists in Zurich in the early 1970s, the anthropology of law was in the process of expanding beyond the exclusive focus on tribal law. The complex world in which state legal regulations co-exist and interact with local forms of law and power became a part of the research agenda. The nearly exclusive focus on law in disputes that had dominated legal anthropology for several decades, moreover, gave way to the study of the significance of law and constellations of legal pluralism in all sectors of life and all regions of the world. In the development of our own methodological and theoretical approach we profited from the development of Anglo-American legal anthropology, and also built on the theoretical and methodological advances of the Dutch pre-war interest in the reproduction of local ethnic laws in Indonesia and their co-existence with religious laws and the law of the colonial state. The controversies



The normative power of religion in Bali draws thousands of pilgrims to a purification ceremony at Pura Besakih, the island's "mother" temple. The stream of pilgrims comes to a halt when the temple police close the door to the already packed innermost sanctuary. (Photo: M. Ramstedt, 2009)

over the transformations of law under colonial rule were of further interest – issues that were only to be addressed in the Anglophone anthropology of law and social history half a century later.

Theoretical and Methodological Orientation

We have also continued to elaborate on methodological and theoretical assumptions and propositions. Two issues are particularly important: fitting legal pluralism into a wider theoretical understanding of social organisation and the ambition to draw theoretical propositions from the comparison of the individual case studies. In this endeavour we share an interest in the comparative work of the two departments led by Günther Schlee and Chris Hann.

Comparative Exercises

Comparison presupposes a comparative conceptual vocabulary for looking at similarities and differences. Our research in two different regions of Indonesia, Franz von Benda-Beckmann's research in Malawi, Keebet von Benda-Beckmann's research in the Netherlands, and our earlier academic socialisation in our own legal folk systems had provided a good basis for the development of an analytical framework for synchronic and diachronic comparisons. Our main efforts have been directed at the development of concepts of law, legal pluralism, property relations, social security, and community, as well as governance, and the public-private distinction. This includes the exploration of the relationship between law and space, power, religion, and of the social phenomena captured with such categories.

Comparative questions underlie our current research on the role of religion, religious law, and religious authorities in dispute-management processes. They also have inspired our VW project on the local state, and the programme on *Law against the state*. In our earlier research in Indonesia (Ambon and West Sumatra) we focused on a comparison of the counterintuitive relations between religion, *adat*, and the state; on the spatial and temporal dimensions of property rights, including their role in the different constellations of disputing parties; and on the differential use of village and state court procedures. We later compared the role of plural legal constellations in different regional conflict constellations and their centrifugal political impetus in Indonesia. Keebet von Benda-Beckmann recently published a paper explaining the differences in the use of civil and religious state courts, comparing Minangkabau with Aceh. With Bertram Turner we analysed why certain processes of revitalisation of tradition in law and religion take place. Tatjana Thelen and Anja Peleikis compared the ambiguous role of religious networks in social security and their interrelations with family and state sources of support.

Legal Pluralism and Social Interaction

Legal pluralism is a sensitizing concept that draws our attention to the *possibility* of a variety of legal phenomena co-existing within the same social or geographical space and pertaining to more or less the same set of activities and social problems. It presupposes an analytical concept of law that is not directly connected to the state. Law as it is generated and used by state institutions, is only one variant in addition to law as it is generated and maintained by other organisations and authorities with different forms of legitimation, such as religion or tradition. Legal pluralism is also a matter of degree. Our research has shown that the extent to which there is legal pluralism not only varies according to societies and periods of history; it can also vary within a single society, country, or region, and in different fields of social life. The concept thus provides a point of departure for the development of analytical criteria used to distinguish among variations of legal pluralism and for theorising these complexities. This constitutes one important element in the work of our group.



Minangkabau Village Council in Sulit Air, West Sumatra. Most lineage heads have come from Jakarta to act as adat judges in a land dispute. (Photo: F. von Benda-Beckmann, 2009)

Law is a dimension of social organisation. Legal conceptions provide cognitive and normative schemes of meaning, idioms, and repertoires to understand and evaluate the world. They offer structured and legitimate forms of social organisation and institutions, and lay down standards for permissible or prescribed behaviour and valid transactions such as marriages, inheritance, and property transfers. Legal

conceptions also constitute positions and relations of legitimate social and political power and the ways in which such positions can be acquired. Such conceptions are more or less institutionalised in terms of general abstract rules, concepts, and principles, or simply “the law”. These general legal categories may be concretised in different ways. They can be inscribed into status positions of persons and resources and into social relationships, defining a person as an owner, or as a citizen; or a collection of persons as a corporate legal person, a village, or a state. This in turn defines the legal consequences, expressed as social, economic, and political rights and obligations attached to these statuses and relationships. General legal conceptions can also become concretised in processes in which transactions such as marriage, sales, and elections are validated in legal terms. They can be concretised in decisions with legal validity and consequences such as contracts or testaments, or in decision-making processes, in which disputes are, for example, decided with reference to legal rules and principles.

In situations of legal pluralism, people at least have a theoretical range of normative repertoires, institutions, and procedures at their disposal. Inheritance rights may be legally defined in terms of state law, ethnic or religious law, directing the flow of goods, following the death of their owners, in contradictory ways. The political rights of villagers may be defined by state regulations or in terms of local village law. Forest on village territory may be defined either as state land or as village land. A sexual relationship may be defined as occurring within a valid marriage or as criminal and sinful fornication. The proper way to deal with disputes may be the council of lineage elders, the police, or the courts of the state administration. In the past, the institutional setting in which the various types of law have been used were thought to be relatively distinct from each other. One of the results of our research groups has been to note a spectacular increase in the extent of interdependence between overlapping social fields.

Plural legal situations characteristically offer an opportunity to “shop” for a legal forum, making strategic use of certain institutions and procedures. It also allows for “shopping forums”, i.e., the opportunity for institutions such as village elders, the police, or the courts to attract cases or to refuse to hear them. They also provide opportunities for “legal idiom shopping”, i.e., the selective mobilisation of legal repertoires and procedures to give meaning to social interactions in the pursuit of social, economic, political, and ethical objectives. Within this plurality of institutionalised legal rules and procedures, social relationships are potentially “multi-normative”, drawing on different legal repertoires that inscribe specific legal characteristics and attach specific consequences to them. Determining the conditions under which people opt for one or another is central to our research.

The analysis of social interaction in the context of legal pluralism poses important challenges to conventional understandings of the relations between “law” and social interaction. How people actually deal with law and orient their behaviour at law does not follow from the normative demands of the legal orders. Many conventional

sociological studies begin with the gap between law in the books and law in action and approach this question through the distinction between “Ought and Is” (*Sollen and Sein*). They measure the effectiveness of law by the degree to which those addressed by law conform to it, and/or by the degree to which institutions such as courts sanction breaches of the law. Such correlative measurements may be interesting, but they are of limited value as law can significantly affect social interaction in cases that are not in conformity with the law. Examples include land owners who circumvent land reforms by transferring land to relatives or clients, and successful tax evaders. On the other hand, interaction in conformity with law may in fact have nothing to do with the law itself. In plural legal and institutional orders people are confronted with different normative demands, which are often contradictory. Conformity with one order often entails the contravention of the other. Legal pluralism thus requires looking at the relationships between legal rules and principles from different methodological perspectives.

Our own approach to the reproduction and change of plural legal orders builds largely upon ideas taken from what is now often summarised as praxeological theories, in our case mainly ideas taken from the early work of Giddens and Bourdieu. We have developed what we term a “layered” perspective on social organisation, building on earlier ideas of Needham and Moore. We have worked to move away from simple oppositions between ideals and practice, ideology and praxis, etc. which have been so dominant in social scientific approaches. Distinguishing analytically between ideologies, legal institutional frameworks, and social relationships, while investigating their interdependence in social interactions, has also served to provide a better understanding of what has often been summarised as “structure”, a term that lumps together many different and interdependent social phenomena. We thus have to understand social interaction as being enabled and constrained by a large variety of such structures.

Legal repertoires, institutions, and legally defined social relationships form part of the context of social interaction. They may influence human interaction in potentially enabling and constraining ways. They may serve as a motivation for people to act, or to abstain from acting in a certain way. They offer people legally defined modes of transaction and procedures to deal with social problems. The repertoires provide resources for the rationalisation and justification of decisions, objectives, behaviour, and choices – whether this entails a struggle over the registration of land rights, understanding the “correct” legal nature of economic transactions, criticising state actions, or in court decisions. Of course, legal orders, institutions, and relationships only form part of the constraining and enabling conditions under which people interact. There usually are other types of normativity, whether moral, ethical, or religious, that may not coincide with the legal. The legal aspect of social relationships may only be one strand in many-stranded social relationships such as kinship or neighbourhood, which are characterised by power differentials and different kinds of economic dependence.

What Do People Do in the Context of Legal Pluralism?

Most of the time, people just continue along in their daily routines without reflecting on the law that has shaped these routines, their social relationships, and attitudes. The specific relevance or irrelevance of the law, or a certain kind of law, only crops up when people have to deal with problematic situations, whether in new post-migration situations and in processes such as legislation that aim at changing routines, or in interaction with bureaucracies and in disputes. It also may be discussed when people have to decide who is to validate their marriage, who inherits certain rice fields, whether or not they should register their land, or whether they should submit their disputes to the police, village courts, or state courts.

These decisions and choices are highly contextual and occur in different arenas, each of which poses its own constraints. Actors may also avoid any use of the law, opting for non-legal means. They may opt for one law and exclude others; they may also use a combination of more than one system of law. Legal orientation may also play a role when people do *not* want to involve the law and courts at all, but instead focus on informal negotiations. Such negotiations take place “in the shadow of legal pluralism”, to paraphrase Mnookin and Kornhauser. In the context of legal pluralism, each single normative system tends to lose the sense of its being self-evident. People are usually aware of at least some alternative normative repertoires and procedures, and are “multi-legal”, i.e., well versed in or at least vaguely familiar with the basics of different legal orders and the institutions that uphold and apply these orders.

Legal pluralism questions the exclusiveness and self-evidence of normative systems, with the existence of choices being quite conceivable. The choice of one such alternative therefore generally becomes an explicit matter and requires explicit justification. This does not necessarily involve a struggle, however. Different types of law may co-exist peacefully. People may opt to use all of them, for instance, in that they marry both according to religious and customary rites and according to state law. They accumulate legal validities by fulfilling the legal requirements of each available legal system. But since law provides an important legitimation for the exercise of power by social actors or organisations, the question of choosing the proper law is frequently the object of struggles for power over people and resources. In these struggles, state law and the interests supported by it are often mobilised in opposition to local normative, economic, and political interests, or vice versa. As our research has shown, one cannot assume a one-to-one relationship between categories of actors and “their” particular law. The previous association of state bureaucrats with state law, farmers with village law, and religious authorities with religious law can no longer be maintained. While state law is often the legal expression of state domination and dominant economic interests, it can also be mobilised by villagers or ethnic groups against oppression, while local customary or religious laws may be mobilised by the state to legitimise exploitation and oppression. Interaction partners usually make their choices based on a combination of self-interest, commitment to or rejection of normative orders, considerations of the suitability of one kind of law

for one's particular objectives, a range of economic and political considerations, and personal capabilities and preferences. In certain arenas, the relation between state and non-state law may be the most problematic issue. In others, the relation between religious and customary law, or between various customary laws, may be the most contested problem, as the examples from Minangkabau, Kyrgyzstan, and Morocco demonstrate. The major issue may also be the correct interpretation of religious law, as Turner's example of the struggles between local residents and the Salafiyya missionaries and their local recruits illustrate. Beyer has shown how her Kyrgyz informants interpret the *Sharia* as part of their customary law (*salt*), thereby challenging the interpretations of Islamic officials who are themselves subjected to *salt* in their daily interactions. Reference to the rules of one type of law may become a political *pars pro toto* statement. It implies not only opting for rules that should apply to a problematic situation, but to the whole system of which these rules form a part.



Magical video screens are used to display the truth in conflict cases. Here they are being "recharged" in the sun. (Photo: C. Jacobs, 2008)

The study of such processes, however, is not sufficient for developing generalisations about the existence, maintenance, and social significance of law on larger geographical and temporal scales. What significance do single micro-processes have for the maintenance of legal systems and, in case of plural legal systems, for pluralistic constellations? Giddens addressed this issue without really answering it, under the heading of social and system integration. The extent to which time- and space-bound interactions have intended or unintended consequences, and the spatial and temporal scale of such consequences varies considerably. We therefore have to look at their reproduction in different arenas, simultaneously and consecutively. This means, first, that we need to see that macro-representations and taxonomic collectivities such as “the law”, “legal pluralism”, and “the state” are constructed in micro-situations, and how this is so. At this scale, the “macro indeed coexists with and exists within the micro” (Knorr-Cetina 1988: 39). Such micro-events then have the character of “events of articulation” in legal subsystems (Moore 1977). Legal pluralism is reproduced and changed as an outcome of interactions, and thus becomes the context for further interactions. Second, we need to understand the extent to which interactions “carry over into another micro-situation” (Collins 1992: 90), and to what extent they trigger off chains of interdependent action. Thirdly, even the most refined case study or situational analysis cannot replace the need to aggregate what happens in such micro-situations. We also have to generate quantitative aggregates of what happens in the micro-settings in which law is reproduced. For example, looking only at series of individual court cases over a long period of time allows us to see that the use of state courts has remained remarkably stable in West Sumatra over the past four decades, despite substantial economic and political changes in the region. Herein lies an important challenge for further methodological development and warranted generalisations: Qualitative studies of events and social processes and their intended and unintended consequences have to be coupled with quantitative data sets.

Time and Space

The dynamics of plural legal orders involve motion through space on different geographic and socio-political scales, and motion through time. Both are important for theorising about law and have been important elements in our own work and in the research of the Project Group.

The Temporal Dimension of Law

In the 1970s, legal anthropology, like anthropology in general, became increasingly “time-oriented”, combining, as Moore once suggested, individual-centred, short-term choices involving instrumental action with a long-term historical perspective. We planned to do precisely this in our research in West Sumatra in the mid-1970s. While we did not pick our field-sites for these reasons, the ways in which the past was

imagined and contemporary conditions historically constituted made us especially aware of the temporal dimensions and the need for diachronic analysis. The temporal scale of our research projects varied. While the period under investigation stretched roughly 100 years in Franz von Benda-Beckmann's research on legal development in Malawi, our research in West Sumatra had a historical depth of more than 200 years, and, on Ambon, we were able to trace transformations of local institutions over a period of roughly 400 years, through different pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial regimes.

We are pursuing a variety of historical perspectives in our current research on the legal transformations of Minangkabau polities, in a project that has been conceived as longitudinal and micro-historical. We have closely followed the political, economic, and legal developments since decentralisation began ten years ago. This period is embedded in a longer time perspective to compare these recent developments with the 1970s when we first conducted field research in that area, and which also happens to be a focal period for current transformations and imaginations of the past. These developments in turn are set in the wider historical developments of the past 200 years, starting with the major transformations of Minangkabau polities and the changes in the *adat*-Islam-state relationship when the region was forcibly incorporated into the Dutch East Indies.

The temporal dimensions of law and legal relationships are also of interest because of the various ways in which notions of time are inscribed into legal concepts and relationships. For instance, Minangkabau *Adat*, Islamic law, and Dutch law all work with fundamentally different temporal notions of property and inheritance relations, which is one important reason why these legal systems are incompatible in such central social fields.

But there is yet another temporal dimension of law that deserves mention here. The temporal validity inscribed into law provides only a limited indication of the temporal scope of the law's social workings. Legal rules may become obsolete, but we have also seen the opposite happen. Bodies of law may continue to exert influence beyond their formal validity and thus contribute to normative complexity as remembered concepts, standards, or rules, or in their inscription into social relations. In their contributions to a 2006 special issue of the *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, Tatjana Thelen and Anja Peleikis drew attention to the significance of such "lingering law" in postsocialist countries, with some former state law sometimes returning as new folk law. In her research on Lithuania, Ida Harboe Knudsen was also confronted with European law with advance repercussions even before being enacted. In the same issue, Bertram Turner found that customary regulations of resource management in Morocco, which were no longer respected locally, had nevertheless survived as codified custom in the framework of state legislation and re-incarnated as "good tradition" decades later in the context of development cooperation. Judith Beyer showed that the courts of elders, institutions officially "revitalised" after Kyrgyzstan had gained its independence from the Soviet Union, and that were regarded as part

of the state, are currently in the process of becoming “customised” as the elders change patterns of procedure in alignment with customary law.

In our research on the local appropriation of ideas of democracy, good governance, and decentralisation in West Sumatra, we have adopted a dual temporal perspective in the analysis of transnational flows and their “glocalisation”. On the one hand, we followed the actors and the channels through which such new models and ideas are transmitted into other social fields, and looked into their distribution across time and space. This is the perspective usually taken in studies of the transnationalisation of law and its “glocalisation”. We combined this perspective with one that looks at specific social fields (e.g. regions, states, cities, and villages) and traces the historical developments of the existing constellations of legal pluralism back through time. We could thus show that earlier flows of ideas, persons, organisations, legal rules, and principles that have entered into these social fields and have transformed the local constellations of legal pluralism create the conditions under which current flows are being rejected, appropriated, hybridised, and vernacularised.

The Spatial Dimension of Law

Legal orders define their spatial validity in their own terms. Co-existing bodies of law may therefore cover different geographical or political spaces. Such normative projection onto a particular space, e.g., the territory of a state, does not necessarily mean that the law is established and exists there, or that it acquires social significance. The claims of legal rules and decisions always need to be verified through “ground-truthing”. The distribution of the social processes through which law is reproduced in multi-local spaces, the movement of law through space, and the consequences of the spatial distributions of law and rights have been important aspects of our own theoretical work. We have pursued them in a number of publications, especially in *Mobile People, Mobile Law* of 2005 and *Spatializing Law* of 2009a. The mobility of legal models at the global spatial level and the different ways in which they are “glocalised” and change the existing plural situations are issues of central importance. In addition to these mobile laws, we have also dealt with mobile people who take their law with them to faraway places. Keebet von Benda-Beckmann’s earlier work on Moluccan migrants in the Netherlands and Bert Turner’s work on Islamic law and dispute management in Canada have shown that this involves substantial changes in legal concepts that set migrants apart from their places of origin, however close their social relationships with their homelands may remain.

Transnational and translocal movements of legal models have always been a part of our research that has required a certain amount of what now is called multi-sited research. The transnationalisation of legal models and their appropriation or rejection in different locales in the receiving state has been an important part of the development policies of states and donor agencies since the 1960s. This is not to say that the globalisation of law has remained the same over the past forty years. But it raises the question of what distinguishes contemporary flows from earlier

periods. For the analysis of these differences and similarities, we found the criteria developed by Held et al. (1999) very useful, who suggest viewing globalisation as a matter of degree in the dimensions of extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact of trans-regional and transnational flows and networks.

In recent years, we have focused on the changing significance of law vis-à-vis other normative systems of politics, religion, and morality. We have been studying these processes in a variety of constellations of governance agents at local, national, and global levels. These issues have been central topics at the international conferences we have (co)-organised (F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann and A. Griffiths 2009b, F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann and J. Eckert 2009).

Outlook

The work of the Project Group has been prolonged for a period of three years through the end of 2012, with a new department expected to be established by that point. We will use this period to continue our research on the relationship between law and religion beyond the confines of disputing processes. This is to include rule-making processes and the actors involved, with a focus on religious activism. It will also involve religious argumentation in legal arenas, and religion as the legitimization of legal procedures and decisions. The comparative research project on the local state and social security will, moreover, be continued through 2011.

The perspectives outlined above will continue to inform our theoretical and methodological approaches to the dynamics of legal complexity, and the reproduction and social significance of plural legal orders. In the future, we will intensify our efforts toward the development of important dimensions that account for major differences in plural legal constellations, each with their own specific dynamics and social significance. These include:

- The social scope of the validity of the legal orders concerned, ranging from orders that cover most domains of social organisation. This includes state legal systems and sets of norms that are domain- or functionally specific, such as transnational law or locally specific project law.
- The extent to which legal orders recognise, reject, and possibly criminalise each other.
- The geographical and socio-political scales of their validity claims and actual operations.
- The historical depth and development of constellations of legal pluralism. Non-state law that is historically older than state law tends to have a different position within a plural legal order than if it has been developed within a functioning state legal system, often in reaction to the state organisation itself.
- The changing relations between law, politics, religion, and morality.

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Research Group ‘Law against the State’

Julia Eckert

The research group *Law against the State* took its inspiration from the observation of the increasing juridification of social and political protest worldwide. In many cases, struggles today take the form of legal claims against the state, with reference to rights enshrined in citizenship regimes or in transnational legal norms. The juridification of protest entails not only the application of state law against the state, but also the mobilisation of different legal orders, such as international human rights law, religious and customary law, and locally recognised rules of dispute management. We examine the dynamics between the constraints and possibilities involved in the mobilisation of various sets of law. Such mobilisations often interact with other practices of negotiating conflicts, sometimes replacing non-legal means of protest, and sometimes forming mutually reinforcing interdependent strategies.

In the Russian Federation, for example, legal reforms following the collapse of the Soviet Union promised increased civil, political, and cultural citizenship rights, which Russia’s indigenous peoples have sought to realise through new legislation and appeals to international agreements on the rights of indigenous peoples. But with Russia’s current economic and political course geared toward maximizing revenues from the extraction and sale of natural resources, indigenous peoples have been frustrated in their efforts to realise these rights, and in their attempts to assert rights to land and resources through legal means in particular. Brian Donahoe’s project, *The Law and Environmental Justice in the Russian Federation*, examines how Russia’s historical emphasis on differentiated citizenship has combined with the international movement of indigenous peoples to effect a shift from the Soviet-era focus on redistribution as a means of erasing differences to today’s emphasis on the legal recognition and maintenance of *distinctiveness* as a justification for demands to redistribute resources. Drawing on case studies from southern Siberia, Donahoe first demonstrates how this shift has helped create *indigenous subjects* in the Russian Federation, i.e., people who have come to think and act in new ways in relation to the official definition of “indigenous”, and secondly, how the anticipated transition from indigenous subjects to indigenous citizens has, for the most part, failed to materialise.

In its positivistic drive toward a precision of definition, the law tends to essentialise social categories and identities. It encourages culturally defined indigenous groups to strive to conform to legal definitions of being “indigenous”, which in Russia means leading a vaguely defined and highly essentialised “traditional way of life”. The legal recognition of indigenous groups in Russia, and the rights to which they are entitled as a result of this status, are defined through a confusing tangle of often-times contradictory laws, orders, statutes, and other legislative acts at a variety of hierarchically nested administrative levels (federal, regional, local). These regulate

such broad domains as environmental protection, nature conservation, and access to land, water, forests, and subsurface resources. Russia's indigenous peoples and their representatives expend a great deal of time and energy not only on trying to conform to the official definition of being indigenous, but also on scrabbling their way through this virtually impenetrable thicket of legislation in an effort to protect their lands from industrial development and to gain a degree of control over resources and the benefits that accrue from them. Yet they find themselves thwarted in their efforts to use the law to their advantage, as many of the laws affecting indigenous peoples, including the legal framework adopted specifically to guarantee their rights, change so quickly and frequently that they can never be implemented effectively.

Donahoe's research is complemented by the project *Dynamics of Circumpolar Land Use and Ethnicity: social impacts of policy and climate change*, developed in collaboration with Uppsala University in Sweden and Portland State University in the United States. The three-year project (2009–2011), funded by the US National Science Foundation, investigates the identity-ethnicity-land use nexus among northern populations in a wide variety of institutional environments and administrative regimes (Russia, Scandinavia, and Alaska). The first season of fieldwork (2009) on Sakhalin Island in Russia's Far East yielded valuable case-study material on legal battles between indigenous fishing and reindeer-herding communities and the state-supported oil and gas industry, which will augment Donahoe's critical assessment of the Russian legal system.

Christian Strümpell's project, *Development, Displacement and Human Rights in an East Indian Steel Town*, examines socio-legal conflicts that have emerged – and continue to emerge – around the displacement of 20,000 individuals by the state of Orissa to make way for the establishment of India's first public sector steel plant in Rourkela, Orissa in 1956. The aims of the project are to trace the actual results of legal struggles between the displaced people, the state of Orissa, and/or India from their beginnings in the mid-1950s; to relate this sphere to the changes in the Indian political economy from a developmental to a neoliberal state, with a special focus on corresponding citizenship regimes; to explore the social organisation of juridified and juridifying protest movements and the relations of power prevailing among the displaced people; and to inquire into the ways socio-legal struggles alter the subjectivities of the actors involved.

Field research in Rourkela has so far revealed a remarkable increase over the last twenty years in the number of cases displaced people or their descendants have filed against the state of Orissa, which had acquired the land, and against the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), which had taken possession of it. Furthermore, these cases bring to light significant shifts regarding the specific claims raised. While in earlier years, only a few individual major landowners would have resorted to the law to protest their eviction or to press for higher compensation, two decades ago the descendants of the small-scale displaced farmers, a large majority of whom belonged to communities classified by the post-colonial state as "scheduled tribes", began to go to

court in large numbers to claim compensatory RSP employment which – like public sector undertakings in general – provides workers with much greater job security and remuneration than other local companies. The shift in terms of the background of the appellants and the nature of their claims coincided with fundamental changes in India's political economy that were triggered by the economic liberalisation policies pursued by the government since the early 1990s. These policies include the structural adjustment of the public sector, and most prominently the downsizing of its comparatively privileged workforce. This was done by restricting regular employment to the skilled workforce and outsourcing all other jobs to contractors that employ labour privately, a shift that has exacerbated class divisions within the working class – as it indeed has everywhere else in India. Their lack of required skills and educational qualifications excludes most of the displaced “tribals” and those claiming to have descended from them from regular RSP employment, and pushes them into the informal economy. Right up to the time of their most recent writ petition in 2007, claiming their right to employment on the basis of their parents' displacement, the displaced people took recourse to the law as the most likely means of retaining their status as public sector workers. The recent state rejection of their claims has once again reconstituted the displaced tribals' subjectivity as the “other”, and has confirmed their conviction that only the reassignment of Rourkela to the neighbouring “tribal” state of Jharkhand would provide them with the necessary access to rights and citizenship.

These two trends – the increasing recourse to law as a means of mediating conflicts and the increasing formation of class inequalities – are often described as distinctive features of neoliberalism. To address these themes, Christian Strümpell, in collaboration with his colleagues Daniel Münster (Department of Anthropology, Martin Luther University, Halle) and Patrick Neveling (Department of History, University of Bern), organised a workshop entitled *Neoliberal Crises in Post-Reform India: Ethnographic perspectives on agrarian and industrial distress*. The workshop explored the ways that different segments of Indian society experience neo-liberal change and the variations in the explanatory models they employ to make sense of or criticise the crises of livelihood that are inflicted upon them by economic liberalisation. The results of this workshop will be published in the near future.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with Assyrian-Syriac communities in Sweden and Turkey, Zerrin Özlem Biner's research focuses on the historically informed accounts of socio-political processes that have allowed for the conception and production of “rights” discourses. The project studies complex relationships between the Turkish state and its subject citizens, mainly Kurds and Assyrian-Syriacs, examining the ways in which law is used to pursue legal and political opposition to the state, aimed at the acknowledgement of past atrocities and the recognition of property rights. Through the analysis of these processes of juridification, the project focuses on how global rights discourses inform and shape the historical local experi-

ence and imaginary with regard to issues of citizenship, minority rights, and state accountability.

State policies at the time of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and during the first decades of the new Turkish state led to the deterioration of political, social, and economic conditions for non-Muslim minorities. The massacres of 1915, internationally referred to as the Armenian genocide, led to the execution, forced displacement, and conversion not only of countless Armenians, but also of Assyrian-Syriacs. This can be understood as the “critical event” in the history of the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish nation-state. In the aftermath of the massacres, Assyrian-Syriac migration between Turkey and the neighbouring countries of Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon continued due to feelings of insecurity, fear, and distrust of their “Muslim neighbours” and the “Turkish state”. In the 1970s, Assyrian-Syriacs began to emigrate to Europe, mainly Sweden and Germany, which in turn led to the formation of various identity-based political movements. In 2000, following the unilateral truce between the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) and the Turkish armed forces, Assyrian-Syriacs started returning to their villages and pursuing strategies to reclaim possession of their properties, most of which had been occupied by their Kurdish neighbours.

The project consists of two different yet interrelated components. In Sweden, the main concern was to discuss the process of publicly acknowledging the Assyrian-Syriacs’ individual and collective memories of violence and loss, and in so doing to examine the political discourses and strategies adopted by migrant Assyrian-Syriac political activists to gain recognition as victims of the 1915 massacres. The research material illuminates the ways in which the struggle for the recognition of the genocide has opened up a political space which, on the one hand, engenders historical discourses and imaginaries about the categories of victim and perpetrator, and on the other hand, redefines the relationship between the state and its minority citizens. The project demonstrates how genocide becomes an indexical event to which citizens from different ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds (in this context, Kurds, Armenians, and Assyrian-Syriacs) refer, both to express their positions concerning the repressive practices of the Turkish state and to compare their experiences of victimhood. This comparison highlights the conditions necessary for the international recognition of the massacres as genocide.

The second part of the research project, conducted in southeastern Turkey, examines the conditions and strategies Assyrian-Syriacs employ to pursue their goal of regaining citizenship rights as minority citizens of Turkey. Following the legal battles and negotiation processes between the Turkish state, Kurds, and Assyrian-Syriacs over property ownership, the project analyses the ways in which localised normative orders resist and appropriate transnational law and reshape the spheres of legality and illegality within national law in the course of Turkey’s efforts to adjust its political and legal systems to meet the demands of EU membership.



Demonstration by Syriacs/Assyrians in Brussels to gain international recognition of the massacres and human rights violations in Turkey and Iraq (Photo: Z. Ö. Biner, 2008)

These research observations and preliminary findings on the struggle for state accountability and justice prompted the idea behind the workshop *Possibilities of Reconciliation: Legalisation of justice* (organised by Zerrin Özlem Biner and Sharika Thiranagama, November 12–13, 2009). The workshop focused on the exploration of the historical and contingent meanings of processes of (re)conciliation and the analysis of the relationships constructed between reconciliation, law, and justice in different post-conflict societies undergoing transitional processes: from armed struggles to unilateral truces and/or peace “resolutions”. Highlighting notions of conciliatory justice, participants were invited to discuss the outcomes of the legal implementation of extant reconciliation projects and to examine the aspirations that lead to processes of reconciliation, legal and popular, in countries presently undergoing conflict, without the benefit of formal, legal settings in which to actualise these processes.

Several of the Research Group’s themes were explored during the international workshop *Rethinking Citizenship*, organised together with the Research Group *Citizenship from Below*. At a time when the shape of state sovereignty is being critically transformed, claims to “citizenship” have now become a principle trope in the struggle for justice and social well-being. While the state remains a central instance of

sovereignty, we are beginning to witness the diminution of state accountability, with ever larger fields of productive and distributive activities being removed from the political process. Moreover, the pluralisation of governance actors and the division of labour among these different actors under the influence of globalisation affect the configuration of legal responsibilities. In the context of outsourcing, sub-contracting, devolution and delegation of accountability, cooperation, competition, and usurpation, responsibility has become ever more dispersed and compartmentalised, if not altogether disintegrated. The contradictions, overlaps, and gaps inherent in most plural constellations of governance make it possible for governance bodies to pass responsibility to and from each other, hide behind one another, and otherwise deny liability. The workshop provided a forum to discuss how people come to imagine themselves as legal persons and on what bases they legitimate their claims to citizenship – whether they invoke formal membership, the performance of citizenship, or implicit rights that come along with having invested one's labour in the polity or having suffered on behalf of (or at the hands of) the state. The participants brought to light a variety of models of citizenship that are put forward by different groups, involving different concepts of rights and duties and diverging expectations of the state, of the collective they represent, and of the individual. The papers, which will be published in two special issues of the journal *Citizenship Studies*, not only trace the pathways and development of such models, of their manifold sources, and of the transmission of knowledge about them, but also delve into the precise confluence of the social and formal legal practices involved in defining and exercising citizenship, as well as the question of who legitimately holds the power to engage in these practices.

Siberian Studies Centre

Directors: Chris Hann and Günther Schlee

Coordinator: Joachim Otto Habeck

Kirill Istomin and Joachim Otto Habeck

We will focus in the following on mobile pastoralism and spatial cognition – one particular field of research of the Siberian Studies Centre.¹ Connecting with the Institute’s manifold research activities on mobile pastoralism in the dry belt of Africa and Asia, members of the Siberian Studies Centre have been investigating the conditions of reindeer herding in the Russian Far North – the part of the world where more than 90 percent of domesticated reindeer live.



Motor sledge meets reindeer sledge: motorised herdsman arrive to unload the freight of a reindeer-sledge caravan, eastern part of the Bolshezemelskaya tundra. (Photo: K. Istomin, 2009)

The bulk of this research is being pursued in close collaboration with DFG Collaborative Research Centre 586 “Difference and Integration: Nomadic interaction between nomadic and settled forms of life in the civilisations of the Old World” and the MaxNet Cognition, the Max Planck Society’s network for research on cognition.

¹ The full range of activities of the Siberian Studies Centre is described on the Institute’s website.

The principal investigator is Günther Schlee, while Kirill Istomin is responsible for the research, supported by Joachim Otto Habeck as project coordinator.

In 2003 Florian Stammer, who had just finished his doctoral thesis in Department II (Stammer 2005), suggested turning to study land use, the perception of the environment, and spatial orientation among different groups that live and/or work in the tundra. Such a study was to examine whether or not it is possible to speak of a specifically nomadic way to perceive and cognise space. This interest linked very well with the earlier research by Günther Schlee about the perception of space among camel nomads in northern Kenya (Schlee 1992, 2005). While the two researchers combined to write a research proposal within the framework of the SFB, Stammer would leave the Institute soon after funding for this project was obtained to accept a professorship at Rovaniemi. Kirill Istomin was employed to replace him. In 2007 Istomin initiated a follow-up project for the second phase (see below). In what follows, we present several findings and their far-reaching implications.

Moving with Reindeer

The first part of the research was conducted as part of the project “Orientation in, perception, and utilisation of space on the edge of the Arctic: Nomads and sedentary people in Northwest Siberia” (SFB 586, sub-project B6, 2005–2008)

In this first phase, Istomin used previous fieldwork data to describe the politico-legal framework for reindeer herding in the Barents Sea Region; this led to a comparison of the changing legal dynamics in several parts of Russia, written jointly with MPI colleague Brian Donahoe (Donahoe and Istomin 2007). As a next step, Istomin and Cambridge-based researcher Mark Dwyer investigated how state policy in socialist and postsocialist times influence(d) the reindeer herders’ pastoral strategies and patterns of migration (Dwyer and Istomin 2009a).

Having identified the consequences of state-induced change on the herders’ strategies, the two authors went on to the much more general task of formulating a theory of nomadic movement and decision-making (Dwyer and Istomin 2008). While previous models of nomadic movements described and emphasised a variety of factors – both ecological and non-ecological – to explain herders’ decisions, they all lacked a satisfying analysis of the interaction between herders and animals, since they placed herders and animals in a single conceptual box with “a single locus of decision making” (Dwyer and Istomin 2008: 524). Istomin and Dwyer examined the actual movements of reindeer herders and herds along with the herders’ verbal reasoning for their moving in a particular direction, at a particular speed, etc. in two different groups: the Komi (who migrate mainly in the European North, i.e. west of the Urals) and the Nenets of River Taz (in northwest Siberia, i.e. east of the Urals). In both cases it became evident that, rather than basing their decisions on a continual assessment of a host of environmental factors, reindeer herders move in reaction to

the behaviour of their animals. We are thus able to observe how reindeer-herding migrations emerge from a complex interplay between the behaviour of a reindeer herd and the actions of the herders, which are designed to maintain control over the herd and prevent reindeer losses, while using as little time and energy as possible. Environmental factors influence reindeer herding migrations mainly through their impact on the behaviour of reindeer, while social and political factors do so by limiting or enhancing the actions of herders. This outlook, if correct and applicable to other nomadic groups, creates a new framework for analysing nomadic pastoral ecology. For example, it suggests that the much debated concept of ecological carrying capacity (the maximal number of animals which can be pastured on the given territory without causing its long-term deterioration) should be replaced by the new concept of “technological carrying capacity” (the maximum number of animals nomads can control on the given territory given its environmental characteristics, Dwyer and Istomin 2009b).

Theory of Animal Mind

The theoretical outlook described above immediately leads to two important questions. First, this outlook presupposes that nomadic pastoralists, or at least reindeer-herding pastoralists, are able to decipher and predict with great accuracy the behaviour of their animals; and this ability is indeed an important precondition for their skilful reaction to this behaviour. This ability, by the way, has been noted in many previous accounts of nomadic pastoralists and hunters (Liebenberg 1990; Willerslev 2007), including reindeer herders (Paine 1994). However, how is this ability acquired and what is the cognitive mechanism that supports it? The second question concerns the animal behaviour itself. What is the origin of the animals’ behavioural patterns to which nomadic pastoralists seemingly react? Can we assume that they are biologically determined, or do the animals acquire these patterns in the course of their lives? If the latter is the case, can the actions of the herders themselves play a role in the formation of these patterns? Istomin has attempted to address these questions in his more recent work.

The first of these questions, involving the nomadic pastoralists’ ability to decipher and predict animal behaviour, is usually addressed in anthropology within the framework of studies of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK studies). The recent theoretical developments in the field have questioned the earlier conceptualisation of TEK as a kind of declarative knowledge. Instead it was suggested that this knowledge is processual, situational, and can be better described with the notion of skill(s) (see Ingold 2000 for a review). However, no explanation has been so far suggested for the cognitive mechanisms supporting these skills and the kind of information (memorised or picked up from the environment) they exploit. In his attempt to address the ability of reindeer herders to decipher and predict reindeer behaviour, Istomin pays attention to the fact (also observed among other hunting and herding groups) that

deciphering and predicting are always accompanied by attributing mental states to the animals. Reindeer herders always tend to interpret the reindeer behaviour they observe by making conclusions about the animals' mental states ("the reindeer are afraid", "they are anxious", "they are annoyed by mosquitoes", etc.). Their subsequent predictions of the animals' behaviour and decisions concerning their own actions towards the animals tend to be based on these conclusions. This mechanism is essentially similar to that which all of us continually use to make sense of and predict the behaviour of other people around us. This mechanism (which is indeed an important human skill that is likely to enable our social lives) is well known to cognitive psychologists under the term "theory of mind" (TOM) and has been receiving much attention for more than 25 years. Istomin therefore suggested that the ability of reindeer herders to decipher and predict reindeer behaviour is based on their applying TOM skills – which every mentally healthy person possesses – to their animals. Istomin has, furthermore, discovered that this suggestion is highly consistent with the results of many experimental studies that have been carried out in cognitive psychology.

Several TOM models have been proposed in cognitive psychology. Istomin concluded that the model which is most likely to explain the examples of the deciphering and predicting skills he observed during his fieldwork is the "theory-simulation mix" model proposed in 2003 (Nichols and Stich 2003). In this model, people use the information they have about the personalities and circumstances of others in order to adjust their own mind to theirs, i.e. to "put themselves in their shoes". After this adjustment, they can run their own cognitive and decision-making processes "off-line" – i.e., simulate the work of the other person's mind – in order to understand what that person is likely to feel, think, and do. Istomin suggests, therefore, that reindeer herders simulate the minds of their animals on the basis of certain "adjustment information" that they acquire from their experience with the animals, from their communication with more experienced herders, and, in certain cases, from folklore (particularly from "animal fairytales"). This information is likely to include data on the animals' perception abilities and emotional lives. Istomin argues that this model, apart from explaining deciphering and predicting skills, can also account better for the role of anthropomorphism in hunting and herding cultures. Istomin has summarised his ideas in an article (Istomin submitted a), and has asked fellow anthropologists to check his statements against material from other groups.

Pastoral Systems as Reciprocal Learning Processes among Humans and Animals

The second question – that of the origin of animal behavioural patterns – has been pursued in another paper by Istomin and Dwyer (submitted). Thus far, most anthropological studies of mobile pastoralists' herding practices have described the herders' agency (in either actively adapting to herd behaviour or changing the herd

behaviour) but, notwithstanding piecemeal evidence, have not systematically considered the possibility that animals may actively change their behaviour in response to the herders' actions. Among the few exceptions is Robert Paine (1994: 31) who noted that "[a]nimals learn about their herders' order of things, as well as herders about their animals." Paine coined this "reciprocal learning".

One of the core observations Istomin and Dwyer have made was that Komi reindeer herders can round up their animals with comparatively little energy, because any interference by humans or dogs from a distance of 6 to 8 meters will trigger a reindeer to join its closest neighbour. This incident of unrest causes other deer to do the same, with the result that the herd quickly aggregates. The aggregated herd then tends to behave as a coherent whole, so that any successful operation to change the herd's direction will affect the herd *in toto*. By comparison, the reindeer of the Nenets on the River Taz behave quite differently. First, they respond to approaching herders or dogs much later, i.e., at a closer distance (3 to 6 meters, and in some cases, the herder has to *touch* the animal before it makes a move). It requires more energy on the part of the herder to induce the herd to aggregate. When the herders then try to change the direction of the aggregated herd, it does not always behave as a unit, and may split up, with its animals moving in different directions. While it thus appears that the Nenets have a harder time herding their animals, they can take advantage of the fact that their reindeer, after having been separated from the bulk of the herd, are likely to return to the last campsite after a few days. This is not the case among Komi reindeer, which simply try to find the bulk of the herd wherever it may be. Since all other conditions – reindeer breed, landscape, vegetation, etc. – are largely equal, the different "behavioural traditions" of Komi and Nenets reindeer are, most probably, the result of the animals' learning in the process of coexistence with humans, and an adaptive response to the particular herding technology (as laid out in detail by Istomin and Dwyer, submitted).

The findings of Istomin and Dwyer support Paine's idea of "reciprocal learning"; what is more, they show that the "herders' order of things", which the reindeer learn, is itself the product of the herders' learning of the reindeer's order of things. Thus, reindeer herding is a dual adaptation process that takes place in *feedback loops*.

The gradual mutual attunement of the herders' and animals' behaviour constitutes a positive feedback loop, but there may also be negative cases. MPI researcher Vladislava Vladimirova (cf. her monograph 2006) observed the gradual estrangement of herders and animals in a different part of the Russian North (Kola Peninsula). The shift in the herders from more to less intensive attendance to herds has led to a rise in herd dispersal; the seasonal round-ups take more energy and time, extending into a period in which the animals used to rest. This "untimely" lack of rest causes pregnant animals in particular to escape to remote parts of the tundra, which again means that more energy and time are needed to round up the animals, and so on. This negative feedback loop may ultimately lead to the breakdown of the pastoral system.

One general consequence of this is the insight that when people, for whatever reason, abandon reindeer herding, not only the practical skills of the herders get lost, but the animals' corresponding patterns of behaviour as well. We assume that the same holds true for all forms of mobile pastoralism. The breakdown of a pastoral system occurs among both herders and animals, and any attempts to re-establish it necessitate a new and lengthy process of reciprocal learning.

Why it is Best not to Go Hunting with a Pilot

New Technologies in the Tundra: High-Tech Equipment, Perception of Space and Spatial Orientation of Nomadic and Settled Populations of the Russian Arctic (SFB 586, sub-project E8, 2008–2012)

In his attempt to address the main research question of this project – whether it is possible to speak of a specifically nomadic way of perceiving space and orienting oneself within it – Istomin went on to revise the existing scientific model of human orientation in space, seeking to connect it to the interpretations of this phenomenon in anthropology. There is general agreement among psychologists, cognitive scientists, behavioural geographers, and many anthropologists that humans operate with two different forms of internal representation of spatial relations between objects or places. First, route knowledge (also termed sequential or network knowledge); and second, *mental maps* (also rendered as configurative, survey, or vector knowledge). Both forms – route knowledge and mental maps – appear to co-exist; together they create the complex structures of spatial cognition that facilitate navigation and, more generally, play an essential role in the perception and cognition of the environment. However, the particularities of these structures (e.g. the relative roles of route and survey knowledge, the structure of survey knowledge, etc.) vary significantly among individuals and groups, owing to ecological, economic, social, cultural, and even linguistic factors. The complex ways in which these factors shape spatial cognition are difficult to assess in the framework of laboratory research. Therefore, social sciences and particularly anthropology appear to be in a unique position to help incorporate these factors into an interdisciplinary theory of human spatial cognition (Istomin and Dwyer 2009).

To this end, Istomin undertook empirical research on the similarities and differences in the wayfinding practices of different groups that inhabit the tundra and navigate within it as a part of their everyday practice. Istomin interviewed and conducted pointing experiments with helicopter pilots, herdsman who use reindeer sledges, and semi-nomadic fishermen and hunters who travel by snowmobile (locally known under its brand name, *Buran*). He investigated the extent to which their navigation in the tundra depends on route knowledge and on mental maps, the size and structure of the latter, the different methods they use when applying

their spatial cognition to wayfinding, and the typical mistakes and hardships they experience in wayfinding.

The main result that Istomin was able to obtain was that the ability of the different groups to navigate successfully in the tundra depends significantly on the means of transport they use. Thus, nomadic reindeer herders were both much surer in their navigation capacities and much more successful in finding their way in the tundra when travelling on a reindeer sledge instead of a snowmobile. Similarly, experienced helicopter pilots were found to be able to solve very complicated navigation tasks during a helicopter flight with little or no reliance on navigational equipment. However, many of them had significant problems with doing the same on the ground. As a herdsman said:

“I would advise you not to go hunting with a pilot. Or, if you do, do not allow him to lead the way. The guys cannot orient themselves on the surface at all, but they always believe they can and, therefore, always lead you into a bog or deep river. They always think that certain places are closer than they actually are and forget about the bogs and streams along the way. They cannot recognize a place even if they say they know it.” (Cited in Istomin, submitted b)

Inquiring further into the reasons for this effect, Istomin was able to demonstrate that both the structure of the mental maps the members of the different groups use in wayfinding, as well as the ways in which these mental maps are used, depended significantly on the circumstances in which the spatial information was learned. The means of transportation featured highly among these circumstances. Reindeer herders, who get to know their environment while travelling on a reindeer sledge, thus tend to remember the distances between places in terms of the number of stops one has to make on the way for the reindeer to rest. They also tend to maintain their direction by paying attention to wind direction as well as that of the *zastrugi* (the ripples on the snow crust, shaped by the prevailing winds). Both their ability to estimate distances and to translate their memorised routes into navigation decisions by evaluating winds and *zastrugi* make no sense when travelling on a snowmobile. This only leads to navigational problems, effectively limiting the ways in which a snowmobile can be used by reindeer herders.

The obvious implication of these findings is that the means of transportation – whether a helicopter, a *buran*, or a reindeer sledge – is not only necessary for, but in fact constitutive of, the navigation process. Istomin argues that they, together with the spatial cognition of their users and certain natural phenomena (e.g. winds, *zastrugi*, etc.), must be considered to be integral parts of a *cognitive system*, (the term he derives from Edwin Hutchins’ (1996) theory of distributed cognition). The ability to solve navigation tasks can be better understood as an emergent property of this system as a whole rather than solely the product of the spatial cognition of its human part. Furthermore, this spatial cognition is itself likely to be a product of a specific

cognitive system and to be designed to work within a specific range of cognitive systems. This has, in turn, enabled Istomin to begin to answer the initial research question of his project: Are there specifically *nomadic* forms of spatial cognition? Nomads – as mobile pastoralists – are indeed likely to differ from sedentary groups in the ways they cognise and orient themselves in space because the cognitive systems that underlie their spatial cognition are likely to be different. These systems depend on the interaction of humans with animals as much as on the means of transportation as part of nomadic material culture. However, saying that nomads have a specific cognitive system does not mean that sedentary people do *not* have cognitive systems. In fact, every individual is integrated into multiple cognitive arrangements. Spatial orientation would always appear to be dependent on cognitive systems, and even though different groups “operate” with different cognitive systems, the fact that they all do makes them all equal in a sense (Istomin, submitted b).

Another implication of the research described here has been a new clear demonstration of the impossibility of distinguishing between inborn and acquired aspects or processes of human cognition. Human cognition instead always emerges in specific ecological, cultural, and social settings, and is always specialised to meet the specific demands of the milieu in which one finds oneself. This means that human cognition cannot be understood as in a laboratory setting: In order to understand it, the cognitive research should be undertaken “in the wild” as Hutchins once put it. This makes it essential that anthropology and the cognitive sciences work together in cooperation.

Studying “Cognition in the Wild”

In order to explore how such cooperation can work in the context of nomadic pastoralist studies, Istomin initiated an interdisciplinary workshop “Cognitive specialisations of nomadic pastoralists” (held at MPI, 29–30 October 2009). The initiative was met with great interest not only among cognitive psychologists but also, rather unexpectedly for the organisers, among neuroscientists, and attracted some leading figures in these disciplines to participate in the workshop. It was also fully supported by MaxNet Cognition. The main points made by the participants of the workshop in their presentations and discussion are briefly summarised in the following.

Human experience, which is, of course, always bounded in a social and cultural context, not only shapes cognitive forms and processes, but, more fundamentally, the human brain itself. It has been proven in the course of the last decade that the very physical anatomy and physiology of the human brain are not simply genetically prescribed or programmed, but emerge from complex interaction with the environment, physical as well as (and more importantly) social and cultural. Therefore, not only the “software” but also the “hardware” of human thinking cannot be understood in a kind of laboratory setting, or separately from research on social and cultural processes. Or, more generally speaking, the very distinctions between “hardware”

and “software”, between the “inborn” and the “learned”, and more generally, between “nature” and “culture” are obsolete and should be abandoned. The cognitive sciences, neurosciences, and social sciences do not have separate objects of research – they seem to study the same phenomenon, the cognitive system of “people in the world”. It is therefore logical and necessary that they cooperate, even as the concrete forms that such cooperation can take remain open to debate. A proposal was, for instance, made during the workshop for a new scientific discipline – neuroanthropology – that would study the “great existential cycle”, i.e., how culture (understood as tradition) shapes the human brain, how this shaping is manifested in human thinking, and how this thinking in turn changes and shapes culture (tradition). Results of the work done so far clearly demonstrate the need and willingness to pursue this interdisciplinary cooperation. While this opens up entirely new conditions for debate throughout a wide variety of areas of science and the humanities, we can without a doubt say that experimental psychologists, and cognitive and brain scientists have increasingly appreciated and benefited from the work of anthropologists in this regard.

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Max Planck Fellow Group ‘Law, Organisation, Science and Technology’ (LOST)

Max Planck Fellow: Richard Rottenburg

On Social and Public Experimentation¹

Richard Rottenburg

The “Therapeutic Domination” Hypothesis

One of the core aims of the Group’s research is to rethink the relation between biomedicine and governance in contemporary African contexts.² One of the leading hypotheses emerging from our ethnographic work is that the boundary between the laboratory and life outside the laboratory is transgressed in specific ways, resulting in the emergence of novel forms of social and public experimentation. Within the rapidly increasing literature on this and closely related issues, there has been one outstanding proposal with deep implications for social theory and contemporary politics related to the Global South, which I refer to as the “therapeutic domination approach”. From this perspective, one can presently observe the formation of a new type of biopolitics and governmentality, or in a different but compatible theoretical language, the formation of a new type of domination (in the Weberian sense of political rule, i.e. *Herrschaft*) with its concomitant specific forms of legitimation, governance, citizenship, and sovereignty.

The new approach identifies an emerging figuration, called *therapeutic domination*, which transforms citizenship into a *therapeutic citizenship*. This is legitimized by a *state of exception* related to health conditions that are unacceptable by universal standards, and implies a shift of *sovereignty* away from the nation state. The empirical form in which we encounter this new figuration is the humanitarian intervention normally carried out by agents of the Global North in the Global South as a response to emergencies and humanitarian crises relating to the human body. The systematic link between states of exception, intervention, sovereignty, capital and global markets implies a particular change in the global entanglements of privatised science, governance, and politics addressed as *experimentality* or *government-by-exception* (McFalls 2010; Nguyen 2009; Pandolfi 2008). The empirical sites where this emerging figuration appears most evident are perhaps the African countries and

¹ A more elaborated version of the argument is published in Rottenburg 2009b.

² This topic constitutes “axis 1” of our research and in June 2009 we had an international conference dealing with related issues. Future conferences in 2010 – 2012 will deal with axes 2 to 4 of our research programme.

regions with long-lasting violent conflicts, countries and regions selected for clinical trials, and the countries selected for intervention by the US President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Over several years Adriana Petryna has analysed the mechanisms by which clinical trials are being globalised (Petryna 2009). Before a drug can be legally used it has to be tested, yet the populations of those countries where most drugs are developed (North America and Europe) are increasingly reluctant to participate in clinical trials, except in the case of life-or-death conditions. At the same time, clinical research in the USA and Europe has become increasingly privatised, and the economic viability of those "contracted research organisations" (CRO) that run most clinical trials, and of the entire emerging organisational field surrounding clinical trials, depends on finding suitable and inexpensive trial populations. These are best found in countries with sufficient technical and bureaucratic infrastructure to run a clinical trial, with willing trial subjects motivated by poverty and a poor healthcare system, with motivated local research partners who depend on the income generated by this work, and with a legal system that is predictable and yet not too closely knit and rigid for the interests of research. Petryna calls the *modus operandi* that sustains the global drug market and the concomitant organisational field "experimentality" (Petryna 2009: 30).

Vinh-Kim Nguyen (2009) of the LOST team addresses the same general phenomenon but departing from a different empirical case, namely that of biomedical interventions in the context of the AIDS pandemic, and takes the issue of experimentality a significant step further. PEPFAR is the largest ever international public health programme, spending more money in the twelve African PEPFAR countries than all the other health donors combined. In addition to the large players in this new organisational field of global public health, a whole plethora of other organisations are active, from the Bretton-Woods organisations and various UN organisations to national donor agencies, churches, and a bewildering variety of NGOs and FBOs (faith-based organisations), some of which then build various consortia. Most of these structures and activities are situated more or less outside the local state administration and are hardly under the direct control of any national set-up (Jasanoff 1990). Through these interventions, the sovereign responsibility for public health is underhandedly shifted to a peculiar bricolage of non-state and non-national organisations operating on a global level above national accountability.

According to Nguyen (2009), French university teaching hospitals for infectious diseases have been assigned therapeutic territories corresponding with former French colonies and regions within these countries. The trend is mirrored by American universities, which, within the context of PEPFAR, are now also managing treatment programmes for entire countries. In countries with important extraction industries (oil, bauxite, etc.), international companies have also been dividing the country into therapeutic territories for which they assume the responsibility (unpublished research reports by Virginie Tallio and Maria Hahnekamp).

The most striking feature of humanitarian interventions carried out to rescue people threatened by AIDS is their urgency. They are framed in terms of absolute emergency and unique exceptionality. Like victims of war, famine, earthquakes, and tsunamis, AIDS victims do not have the time to wait for better and tested solutions. Nor can they wait for systematic approaches to broader and more fundamental issues, or for solutions that are more oriented toward the future. Given the unprecedented scale and urgency of both the AIDS pandemic, the attempted response, and the non-availability of well-tried solutions, one can only start with what is available and attempt to proceed in such a way that project implementation becomes a form of experimental variable testing.

This results in the particular figuration of science and politics that is at the core of our research. According to the ideal type, an epistemic kernel is at the centre of, and holds together all the activities, technologies, and theories of laboratory research. This ideal type – by definition – can never correspond with real, everyday laboratory life. A substantial difference, however, remains between the reality of standard laboratory experiments and that of contemporary medical campaigns and humanitarian interventions into situations of human suffering and states of emergency such as the AIDS pandemic. These are experimental enterprises in real time outside the lab where not an epistemic but a technological kernel – like antiretroviral therapy (ART) – holds everything together and unsystematically produces new knowledge that might or might not feed back into the process as “lessons learned”. In comparison not only with the ideal type but also with the daily reality of normal scientific experimentation, the relation between experimentally verified knowledge and its safe usage thus seem to be inverted in humanitarian interventions to save lives.

At the heart of the matter, it is thus argued that there is a contemporary shift from one situation to another. In the first situation, one would first collect sufficient data and much later, after one has acquired enough evidence-based knowledge and when there is need to do so, one would design and implement an intervention based on the verified knowledge available. In the second, due to some emergency, one would first intervene based on whatever foreknowledge is at hand and then generate the relevant data through the intervention itself, with a focus on “lessons learned”.

Another aspect indicating that we are indeed dealing with a novel figuration of science and politics, and thus of legitimacy and sovereignty, is reflected in an emerging territorial pattern. Organisations that run AIDS relief programmes have to adhere to accountability and liability rules in their homelands and in the countries of their activities. In order to do so, their projects must be delimited to specific interventions, populations, and territories. This again requires a complex set of territorial mapping and the identification of individual patients to be included in the accounts. The result is that countries such as Tanzania are divided into spheres of responsibility for AIDS relief among the various organisations active there (unpublished research reports by Babette Müller-Rockstroh).

The territorial delimitation of these experimental interventions has yet another dimension that is emphasised by Wenzel Geissler of the LOST team (Geissler forthcoming). While modernist and, accordingly, developmentalist public health approaches have as their aim uniform standard coverage throughout a whole territory, the spatial configuration that emerges in the context of emergency relief intervention more closely resembles an archipelago pattern. The provision of comparatively sophisticated health services and research facilities is concentrated in areas of economic importance and good access, or in those areas most badly affected by epidemics or other humanitarian disasters. Between these islands of heavily financed and often state-of-the-art facilities, there are vast areas with hardly any service at all. The key characteristic of the archipelago pattern is again that the treatment projects can be employed as experimental set-ups since the intervention effects can be counted, measured, analyzed and, most importantly, compared among the different intervention zones. This provides a unique chance to verify their findings and approaches for the respective research institutions. At the same time, the process as a whole produces both a form of therapeutic citizenship and a new form of fragmented sovereignty.

Foucault saw modern sovereignty as the “governmentalisation” of the state, which rules its citizens by regulating the economy, public life, and, most importantly, the wellbeing, education, and health of the population. The term “biopower” draws attention to the fact that modern sovereign rule is concerned with the improvement of life itself through state regulation. The exercise of biopower, i.e. governmentality, is realised by a range of technologies that describe and regulate specific populations, calling into being ways of life hitherto unknown. Foucauldian governmentality thus refers to how people are formed by the state. In the case of international humanitarian interventions, governmentality – the exercise of biopower as a means of improving life – differs from the Foucauldian concept in two important aspects. Firstly, it transgresses the boundary and jurisdiction of the state, and targets populations not in fact on the basis of national citizenship but on the basis of a universal humanity and on the presupposition of universal human rights. Therapeutic citizenship thus always remains a form of global citizenship. Secondly, international humanitarian interventions, and HIV programmes in particular, are tied to conditions that are classified as exceptional and are run like experiments justified by these exceptional conditions. Programmes are implemented in an experimental way so that lessons can be learned for future interventions. This form of governmentality across sovereign states is described as government-by-exception or experimentality. It frames people as victims to be rescued by foreign agents; it focuses on saving lives and upholding human rights.

In other words, government-by-exception is conceived as a novel form of legitimate domination. It presupposes a state of emergency in humanitarian terms that legitimises exceptional interventions and calls for urgent measures to save lives. One may thus speak of *therapeutic domination*. A therapeutic intervention requires the framing of a standardised population that can be targeted by the deployment of

medical, psychological, and administrative technologies which stabilise this population by transforming bodies and subjectivities. Since all this happens in a state of emergency, there is no evidence that the intervention and its technologies are effective. It is rather the intervention itself that needs to prove that it was effective in a form of post-hoc self-validation.

The government-by-exception hypothesis thus ultimately refers to a newly emerging form of domination and a transformed version of biopolitics. In order to facilitate a sufficiently broad and balanced outlook on these empirical questions, the LOST group keeps an eye on states of emergency that go beyond the immediate context of biomedicine in Africa, including: (1) neoliberal governance; (2) dysfunctional states in postcolonial Africa with fragmented sovereignties and ongoing violent conflicts; (3) the AIDS pandemic and the medical technologies that allow HIV-positive people to live; and (4) the global success of the universal human rights discourse with its new emphasis on health with the support of biomedicine.

In a preliminary conclusion, this raises the straightforward question: Is contemporary humanitarianism caused by emergencies (position a) or, conversely, does Western humanitarianism envision states of emergency in zones of crises in order to legitimise its own logic of intervention (position b)? Position b is indeed the most important – and rather disturbing – point raised by the therapeutic domination approach. From this perspective, the iatrogenic effects of interventions to overcome states of emergency are not unintended consequences or collateral damage but are in fact the true “purpose” of the interventions even if no intentional agency can be identified. Modern societies systematically produce zones of exclusion and states of emergency because they need them to function themselves (McFalls 2010: 12–13).

Our research seems to indicate that both positions (a) and (b), although diametrically opposed, are based on the same flawed assumption. They presuppose that a complex human condition such as an emergency is either (a) something real or (b) something made up, and they assume that one can have a clear-cut concept of “emergency”. A more appropriate assumption seems to be that (a) and (b) stand in a dialectical relation to each other, with the concept itself evolving in this relation. It is certainly impossible to identify an emergency as a category that exists independently of our attempts to describe it. The category “emergency” – in which the rules that constitute normality are suspended – unavoidably takes as much from the ways of life and the conceptual scheme that it is a part of as it does from the outer reality and existential experience that it is supposed to describe. If this is true, the proposition that modernity systematically produces emergencies must be treated according to the same rule.

Thus, we do not see sufficient reason to assume that history has a built-in teleological tendency towards disasters of modernity, which awaits discovery and objective description by philosophers of history and which exists independently of their conceptual schemes and webs of belief. And, taken one step further, we do not see sufficient reason to assume that the systematic production of emergencies is a malady

of modernity only. The expansion of any system of rules (normality) goes hand in hand with the production of critical zones in which these rules are contested, i.e. with the production of zones of exclusion and iatrogenic violence. We can, nevertheless, fully support the hypothesis that humanitarian interventions unavoidably cause damage and iatrogenic violence when they achieve some of their intended aims.

From Experimentation to Experimentality?

The other disputable aspect of the therapeutic domination approach lies in its other key notion: experimentality. As mentioned above, it is argued that therapeutic domination comes along with a particular inversion of the relation between knowledge and practice. In the modus operandi of experimentality, practice produces knowledge, rather than knowledge informing practice. In this section I will critically reflect on this hypothesis with reference to STS literature on experiments.

(1) When ethnographers of scientific practice began to study mundane laboratory life, it soon became clear that scientific practice cannot possibly be conceived as something outside of and unaffected by culture and society. The distinction between science as something free of culture, and culture as something beyond science had to be abandoned (Latour and Woolgar 1979, Knorr-Cetina 1981). In a similar move, the interdependencies of science and law were worked out (Jasanoff 1995). At the heart of the ethnographic work on everyday scientific practice since the late 1970s, one finds, in fact, the making of experiments as opposed to the earlier attention placed on the results of experimentation (Gooding, Pinch, and Schaffer 1989).

(2) As the sciences could never be completely purified of society, modern society could never be brought about without recourse to the sciences. More particularly, this means that while laboratory experiments are always situated in socio-political, cultural, juridical, and economic contexts, inversely, most public decisions are legitimised with reference to scientific findings. Experiments are not autonomous forms of theory-testing in the laboratory, but are part of larger assemblages in which theories, scientific practices, epistemic things, boundary objects, standardised packages, normative and ethical orientations, embodied knowledge, cultural patterns, and aspects of political economies come together or resonate with each other. At the same time, public decisions on all sorts of betterment schemes, regulatory regimes, technological innovations, and their practical implementations are themselves (mostly unintentional) political “experimentations” with largely unknown results. Given this continuity and similarity, it is the historical variations and the particular differences that shed light on the co-production of science and society.

The experimentalisation of life goes hand in hand with the victory of modernist meliorism and thus with the conviction that the human fate can be improved steadily by interfering with processes that would otherwise – i.e. naturally – run differently. The reign of the master narrative of progress relates to a political practice based on scientific knowledge and thus on experimentation. In the language of Michel

Foucault this is biopower geared towards the improvement of life itself through state regulation, under the guidance of technocrats who are legitimised by scientific knowledge, and resulting in social experiments. In short, the idea that science was ever a closed world, producing lessons that would be accepted outside of science, is a form of misleading nostalgia (Shapin 1994).

(3) The same point can be made by considering the necessity of “contextual normalisation” of technology and of large technical systems in particular. In his 1988 article “Unruly Technology”, Bryan Wynne approaches the ever problematic distinction between the testing and routine usage of large technical systems, and proposes the notion of technology in the form of a large-scale, real-time (covert) social experiment. In a Wittgensteinian vein, he analyses technologies as extensive, open-ended technical-social systems that depend on contextualisations into “local behaviour”. If technology is to follow rules, local behaviour is unavoidably underdetermined by the overall rationality inscribed into technological devices. He demonstrates this point using several empirical examples, showing how technologies have to undergo contextual normalisation in order to work at all, and that this process sometimes fragments the overall technology and results in accidents. Because one single process, contextual normalisation, is at once the presupposition for the functionality of a technology and a potential cause of accidents, the solution cannot simply be stricter adherence to the inscribed rules. One would rather have to make do with experimental contextual normalisation or *translation*, as I would call it (Rottenburg 2009a).

(4) In contrast with conventional stereotypes, science and its experiments greatly depend on their public presentation and recognition. While the early history of experimental science was marked by “public experiments,” through which scientists aimed to convince the public, and mainly those in power, of their discoveries and their utility (as Otto von Guericke famously did at the 1654 Regensburg Reichstag with his demonstration of force of vacuums), contemporary public recognition depends mainly on trusting the institutions of science and the experts. However, since it is part of science and technology that new and important questions are controversial and since the experts and their institutions enter into uncompromising academic battles over the issues (sometimes with significant financial implications), the public and those in power cannot know whom to trust and, conversely, the experts often depend heavily on public support (Schaffer 2005). As a result, science and experiments must be staged and presented well and one can speak of public experiments in this sense.

Humanitarian interventions into zones of disaster are opportunities nearly as well-suited to this exercise in stagecraft as are astronautics or military interventions. As PEPFAR and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria run their vast programmes, the whole world watches this massive exercise that demonstrates and impressively proves the superior power of biomedicine and of its technical and institutional support, which “grants life” to an increasing percentage of the HIV-positive

population of Africa. The public presentation of this power also serves to obscure all the other failures related to more mundane medical problems such as fatal dehydration in young children due to diarrhoea and all those even more mundane failures lying behind the medical emergencies, such as the provision of healthy drinking water, urban sewerage systems, healthy and sufficient food, a healthy environment, fresh air, and basic health care for all.

(5) In the wider sense of the term (and following Bryan Wynne), the “laboratory” includes those field sites where untried technologies are tested under semi-controlled circumstances that allow for an optimal handling of the expected and, more importantly, the unexpected and perhaps negative consequences of these trials. Empirically speaking, this problem is often solved by running trials in far-off places.

One of the significant aspects of the age of imperialism was the use of colonies as vast experimental terrains where all kinds of unproven technologies could be tested. The first systematic inventory of population, livestock, crops, and landholdings was in fact conducted by Oliver Cromwell’s adviser William Petty following the conquest of Ireland. Cadastral surveys were instituted by the British in India as a part of administrative routine long before they came to Britain itself, where they threatened the monopoly on information enjoyed by local solicitors. It was in the colonies, too, that identity cards were first designed and issued; and fingerprinting was first used in Bengal, to ensure that only certified pensioners were able to collect their monthly remuneration, and to collect it only once. When these field trials proved successful, the technique could be repackaged and exported back to the metropole. The other significant aspect of the interrelation between colonial dominance and science is the fact that the circulation of ideas between colonial powers and colonised peoples has always been reciprocal; the literature on scientific travels is full of references to this two-way circulation and full of evidence that ideas also moved between and among colonial empires and colonised peoples (MacLeod 2000).

(6) Research is an expensive enterprise with an occasionally uncertain return on capital; the financing of research is thus another source of close links and dependencies between science, politics, and the economy. For our research, one of the most important aspects of neoliberal governance is the emergence of new regimes of knowledge production and the commercialisation of research. This is particularly visible in medical and primarily pharmaceutical research, and the last wave of globalisation since the 1980s has opened up new forms of the commercialisation of research as well, including its subcontracting and offshoring. Adriana Petryna’s work (2009) unveils an unbroken continuity of the tendency to choose trial populations according to criteria that should in fact be avoided by all means, not only for the sake of the trial subjects but also for the sake of the results: Following market rules, trial populations are preferred that have no alternative options for access to treatment, are comparably more ignorant, poor, dependent, and captive in various ways than other populations that could also function well as trial subjects.

Through our research we have identified these six aspects with an influence on the boundary between the laboratory and life outside it, or, in other words, on the kind of experimentalisation of life that results from this boundary definition. The postmodern shift of the authority of science (Ezrahi 1990) has resulted in new forms and practices of science that have in turn led to new types of experimentations and boundary transgressions between science and politics. These are legitimised less by the modernist narrative of progress or the old modernist ideal of finding *one* single universal solution that is binding for all humans, and more by narratives of individual self-fulfilment, universal human rights, and the ideal of attaining an equilibrium by balancing incompatible goals, values, webs of belief, and conceptual schemes. The new forms of legitimation ideally link up with economic interests and privatised forms of research in a globalised economy. The quintessential form of postmodern experimental politics is the humanitarian intervention in the Global South, particularly in the crisis-ridden zones of Africa. On closer examination, humanitarian interventions into emergency scenarios turn out to be social and public experiments legitimised by states of exception and geared more towards survival than towards progress.

In this context, one can observe the emergence of therapeutic domination as the dark side of this downscaled enterprise. As far as we can see, there is as much reason to fear a slide into a catastrophic predicament along these lines as there are reasons to hope for the emergence of civic norms and standards within global networks that would confine the negative implications of therapeutic domination to a tolerable level. Through our ethnographic research we have come to conclude that it is worth following the therapeutic domination hypothesis without, at the same time, buying into teleological prophecies about a “structure of exception” and about the concentration camp as the “biopolitical paradigm of modernity”. We argue that therapeutic domination is a form of legitimate political rule and authority that cannot achieve the same stability as legal rational (bureaucratic) domination, and that is continually paralleled by competing attempts to re-establish the latter.

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Training, Cooperation, and Networking

Bettina Mann, with contributions by Bertram Turner and Patrick Heady

During the last two years, cooperation and exchanges with neighbouring universities, with international partners, and within the Max Planck Society have been intensified through already existing and newly established relations. Based on previous collaboration with the participating institutions, the MPI, together with a number of departments of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, belongs to the new interdisciplinary research cluster *Society and Culture in Motion* (SCM). At the centre of this research cluster is the study of the motion – and consequently also the persistence – of people, ideas, artefacts, and models in contemporary and historical contexts. The Graduate School ‘Society and Culture in Motion’ (formerly, ‘Asia and Africa in Global Reference Systems’) currently forms one pillar of the cluster. In Winter 2008/09, the Institutes’ Colloquium, jointly organised by the MPI and the Seminar for Social Anthropology of the Martin Luther University, served as a forum for discussing conceptions of motion from different disciplinary perspectives, such as anthropology, sociology, political science, philosophy, law, and economy.

Regular fieldwork preparation and writing-up seminars are offered in all Departments and Research Groups. Senior researchers have become increasingly involved in the actual training and advising of doctoral students on a formal and informal level. In addition to several small workshops and study days at the MPI, some of which were organised in cooperation with colleagues from the Martin Luther University, field visits by supervisors and workshops in the field have facilitated exchange with and inclusion of local institutions and researchers. Above all, MPI seminars benefited greatly from the intellectual input and inspiration given by numerous international visiting scholars representing the diversity of anthropological approaches.

Supplementary in-house training has included courses in public speaking and academic writing in English. As part of fieldwork preparation, training in visual anthropology and in the use of specific soft- and hardware has been offered either by MPI staff or externally recruited experts. German language classes and support in the acquisition of local languages were also provided for researchers as part of their training.

Marie Curie EST Programme SocAnth (2006–2010)

Since 2006, the EU-funded Marie Curie Early Stage Training Programme SocAnth has aimed to promote the further institutionalisation of anthropological research and teaching in Central, Eastern, and South-eastern Europe. The SocAnth network comprises University College London, UK (coordinator); Goldsmiths, University of London, UK; Central European University, Hungary; Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania; and the MPI. Based on the complementary expertise of the cooperating

partners, this project combines the strengths of different institutions and research traditions of anthropology in Europe in order to offer high quality training and supervision to the fellows. The Institute hosted fellows of the network in April 2008 and again in 2009 for a week of stimulating discussions with MPI researchers and senior staff from the partner institutions. After completion of their fieldwork, the fellows from the partner universities spent between three and six months in Halle, which allowed them to write up research results and to have access to resources at the MPI, including departmental seminars and the extensive collection and services of the Institute's library. This time, fellows benefited especially from the joint Institutes Colloquium, as the lectures by the directors and department heads – which also form the basis for this report – were given in summer 2009. This allowed the fellows to gain insight into MPI research agendas and into German anthropology, as it is represented at the Martin Luther University. The encounter with a wide range of theoretical and regional perspectives provided an intellectually challenging atmosphere for the further development of the individual projects of the Marie Curie fellows. Furthermore, they were fully integrated into the existing discussion groups, according to their regional and thematic foci and met with some of the most recognised scholars in and across the discipline. Further information on the programme is available at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/mariecuriesocanth>.

International Max Planck Research School 'Retaliation, Mediation and Punishment' (IMPRS-REMPEP)

Bertram Turner

As was announced in the Institute's Report of 2006–2007, the International Max Planck Research School on 'Retaliation, Mediation and Punishment' (IMPRS-REMPEP), which is an interdisciplinary research network connecting four Max Planck Institutes and two universities, started in April 2008. The contributing partners are the MPI for Foreign and International Criminal Law, Freiburg, where the central administration of the Research School is based; the MPI for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg; the MPI for European Legal History, Frankfurt am Main; and the MPI for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale. The cooperating universities are the Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg, and the Martin Luther University. Five of the currently 22 PhD projects within IMPRS-REMPEP are affiliated with the contributing research units in Halle/Saale. For the details of the research profile and further information, access the webpage of IMPRS-REMPEP at: <http://remep.mpg.de>.

The programme started with an inaugural seminar in Freiburg in April 2008 and continued between April and June 2008 with a series of four workshops that were organised by the contributing Max Planck Institutes. The workshops provided basic insights into the REMPEP-related research agendas of the contributing disciplines.

The final workshop in that series was held in Halle in June 2008 and offered intensive teaching in social anthropology, including kinship studies and fieldwork methods. Further teaching units addressed the anthropology of law and of retaliation, conflict and cultural defence. This workshop was also attended by students of the Graduate School 'Asia and Africa in Global Reference Systems' (meanwhile renamed 'Society and Culture in Motion') and by scholars of the Volkswagen-funded research and network-building project 'Travelling Models in Conflict Management', which is located at the Seminar for Social Anthropology of the Martin Luther University.

In a REMEP research colloquium at the Institute, the five Halle-based PhD candidates received training for fieldwork in their respective field sites in South Africa, Sudan, Cameroon, and Afghanistan. In 2008, Severin Lenart started doing fieldwork on dynamics of conflict management in plural legal settings in South Africa and Swaziland, and Johanna Mugler – also working in South Africa – on the organisation and administration of criminal justice in the post-apartheid era. Ghefari Elsayed took up research on the post-war scenario in the Nuba mountains region in Sudan, and Ab Drent on conflict settings among nomadic groups in northern Cameroon. Friederike Stahlmann went to Bamian in Afghanistan and started fieldwork on social control and contested mandates for retaliation, mediation, and punishment at sites of dispute resolution.

By the end of 2009, or in early 2010 at the latest, all of the PhD candidates were expected to be back in Halle in order to start working on their field data. In February 2009, while the Halle PhD candidates were still in the field, the first IMPRS-REMEP Winter School took place in Freiburg. On this occasion, the transdisciplinary dialogue on the central concepts of the IMPRS, notably on retaliation, was carried forward. In this context, Bertram Turner offered a course on the representation of retaliation and revenge in newspapers. It is planned to intensify the exchange of ideas in 2010 within the scope of an international workshop.

The next Winter School is scheduled for February 2010, during which the five PhD candidates based in Halle/Saale are expected to present the preliminary findings of their field stays and the first analytical insights from their research projects to their co-fellows from the other MPIs and to the group of supervisors.

Vocational Training

In addition to offering academic training, the MPI continued to train administrative personnel as *Verwaltungsfachangestellte* (in the German dual system of professional education). Similarly, the IT department has had an *IT-Kaufmann* trainee since 2009. Currently, the Institute has a total of four trainees. Nadine Danders, who finished her training at the MPI in 2007, received the Max Planck Society's award in recognition of outstanding achievements of vocational trainees for the training period 2007/2008. This award bears witness to the high level of practical and theoretical

training at the Institute and demonstrates the commitment of both the trainee and the supervising colleagues.

Archiving, Retrieval, and Dissemination of Research Findings

Over the last ten years, representatives of the scientific community and funding bodies have exhibited an increasing interest in archival and retrieval services, in fully citable online publishing, and in research facilities made possible by digital libraries. Given its own needs to provide effective access to scientific information and research data (including primary data), and given the commitment of the Max Planck Society to an Open Access policy (made evident in its signing of the *Berlin Declaration*), the Institute has taken up new projects concerning the management and publication of research data. The Institute's involvement in the *Archiving Project for Humanities* (HARVe) and in a project on *Advancing Video/Audio Technology in Humanities Research* (AVATeCH) are two examples of collaboration with other Max Planck Institutes and research facilities at the interface of anthropology and innovative software modelling.

In the framework of the HARVe project, which started in April 2009, the Institute is cooperating with the MPI for Psycholinguistics, the MPI for Human Development, and the Max Planck Digital Library in setting up a network of archives. In this way, the cooperation partners expect to profit from synergetic effects and to work together on new ways of providing extended access to stored data.

In September 2009, the Halle team of the HARVe project organised a workshop bringing together two groups of experts: first, anthropologists with an interest in kinship and related social networks and with experience in the practicalities of recording information about such networks; and, second, software developers with skills in abstracting common elements from such practical experiences and in using them to design flexible software architecture.

The goal of the workshop was to formulate a theoretical and methodological basis for the development of a new software tool (Kinscape) as one major component of the HARVe project. Kinscape is planned to provide a tool for anthropologists to a) record information about individual persons, their kinship relations, and other associated networks, b) link this person-related information to other fieldwork material such as audio files, photographs, and film and video clips, and c) test hypotheses and formulate analyses based on the gathered data.

Anthropologists often collect large quantities of raw data, but they sometimes lack sufficient time to analyse them exhaustively. Consequently, these data often suffer a secluded existence on the shelves, although they might be of interest to other researchers, who could, in fact, render us a great service by using and analysing them, if they were accessible to them. This was the idea behind an initiative at the MPI that is intended to create a new institute series of publications, combining text, audio, video, photographic material, maps, and GPS-data. This project has resulted

in the publication of a field diary by Günther Schlee, and it has also provided an incentive to address the issue of archiving more systematically at our MPI.

Furthermore, the Institute's IT-Department currently collaborates with two Fraunhofer Institutes and the MPI for Psycholinguistics in a project on *Advancing Video/Audio Technology in Humanities Research* (AVATech). Taking into account the increasing amount of available audio and video corpora in different disciplines, the project aims to promote the development and application of technology for the semi-automatic annotation of digital audio and video recordings.

Kinship and Social Security (KASS)

Patrick Heady

One of the Institute's leading network projects in the last few years has been the EU-funded project 'Kinship and Social Security' (KASS) – which was both an example of (academic) networking and a study of (kinship) networks. The project's three report volumes were sent to the EU in July 2008 and are due to be published in 2010 by Campus Verlag, in cooperation with the University of Chicago Press, under the title "Family, Kinship and State in Contemporary Europe".

The networking has continued over the last two years, with conference papers in anthropological, demographic, economic, and historical venues. Notable amongst the latter were papers by two KASS team members at a conference held in Cambridge to mark the 25th anniversary of the path-breaking volume "Family Forms in Historic Europe". A volume of *Ethnologie Française* on kinship and fatherhood in Europe, half of which will consist of papers based on KASS material, is planned for early 2012.

The KASS team has been encouraged by enquiries from other researchers wishing to carry out their own independent analyses of the kinship network data set or to use the kinship network questionnaire to undertake comparable studies in other field sites. We are preparing to lodge a fully documented but anonymised version of the kinship network data with a survey archive, where it can be made available for secondary analysis – subject to the usual conditions of informant confidentiality. We will also be making the Kinship Network Questionnaire Programmes (KNQ), together with the subsequent analysis programmes, available on a website for downloading and adaptation by other researchers.

Finally, the Institute's experience with KASS is one of the streams that flowed into the kinship computing work now being undertaken as part of the HarVe project.

Library Report

Anja Neuner

The library has its core tasks in providing literature and information services to the researchers and guests of the Institute. These services include acquisition, systematisation, provision, and library usage of the classified physical and electronic collection. The social anthropological stock is growing in tandem with the research fields and projects and reflects the broad international research in social sciences. In the past year, the library developed new core collections related to the new focus groups “Historical Anthropology” and “Economic Anthropology”. In addition, the collection contains relevant publications from neighbouring disciplines such as sociology, history, philosophy, political science, and economy. The collection focuses on the regions Africa, Europe – in particular Eastern Europe –, Central Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Siberia.

A library committee of researchers from each department provides support in subject-related matters and is primarily responsible for the continuous stock building. The holdings currently comprise approximately 28,000 monographs, 3,000 journal volumes, and 168 subscribed printed journals. The collection is growing by about 2,500 volumes annually. The complete stock is accessible worldwide via the library’s online catalogue. The catalogue is supplemented with important bibliographic descriptions of articles out of collected works for all new acquisitions. Additionally needed literature is processed through document delivery and interlibrary loan services.

In close cooperation with the Max Planck Digital Library (MPDL), the central scientific service unit of the Max Planck Society – established in 2007 –, the library provides a wide variety of relevant electronic information resources such as electronic journals and full text and reference databases via the Max Planck Virtual Library (vLib). An increasing number of licences of e-books and e-references can be searched by way of the MPG e-book catalogue. The library aims to determine the local needs for information resources and to have such resources added to the Institute’s overall electronic content provided by the Max Planck Society. Furthermore, the Institute has free access to several digital collections and databases provided in the framework of the project “National licences” of the German Research Foundation (DFG). We are also an active partner of the Virtual Library of Social Anthropology (EVIFA) located at the Humboldt University, Berlin.

With its specialised collection and access to various electronic resources, the library not only provides ideal facilities to the researchers of the MPI for Social Anthropology; its extensive resources also attract academic guests on an international level. During the public opening hours, external users with a scientific interest are welcome to use the MPI library as a reference library. In cooperation with the Seminar for Social Anthropology of the Martin Luther University, we regularly

offer introduction seminars to students. In the last two years, we welcomed around 1,200 external users.

In 2009, the library acquired new library shelves in the open-access area financed by the *Konjunkturprogramm II* of the federal state Saxony-Anhalt.

IT Report

Stefan Bordag

In order to accommodate the increased demands on IT with respect to organisational as well as technical aspects, the IT department has seen restructuring and modernisation. This allowed the IT to take an active part in several projects, both inside the Institute and with external partners.

The goal of these additional activities was to come closer to meeting the general requirements for the archiving of scientific data. For this, the infrastructure of the Institute had to be brought up to modern standards. An application was successfully submitted to the BAR (*Beratender Ausschuss für EDV-Anlagen*) to cover the expenses for the necessary hardware in the form of a Hierarchical Storage Management system, which was then acquired and installed. Together with the Language Archiving Technology, developed at the MPI for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, the new technological set-up enables the Institute to archive any primary and secondary research data collected by the researchers in a long-term and secure manner. This infrastructure allows the Institute to share metadata and carefully selected pieces of data with other research institutions – and also enables access to such data by automatic data aggregation services. This is in line with the newest trends in making data more persistent, more available, and more interconnected.

Several new developments took place at or through the IT, most notably the following:

- In accordance to the requirements of a middle-sized organisation, the website of the Institute has been moved into an open-source content management system (CMS). This was enhanced with institute-specific modules, which also technologically support a proper editorial process (with differentiated roles such as editing and publishing etc.). This also included developing an XML Model of the content as well as fully ensuring interoperability with the in-house administrative system of the Institute, enabling automatic updates of certain parts of the website. One of the future requirements is compatibility with the publication-management system (Pubman) of the Max Planck Society, which can be included in the newly developed set-up in a next step.
- Another step of making the work at the IT more efficient was to introduce a modern and automatic operating system and software deployment framework. This also allowed the IT to increase the service quality.

- The server-side hardware for userdata storage, backup, and Internet access has been replaced entirely with much more efficient modern hard- and software.
- The entire IT equipment of the Institute's library has been equipped with new hardware.

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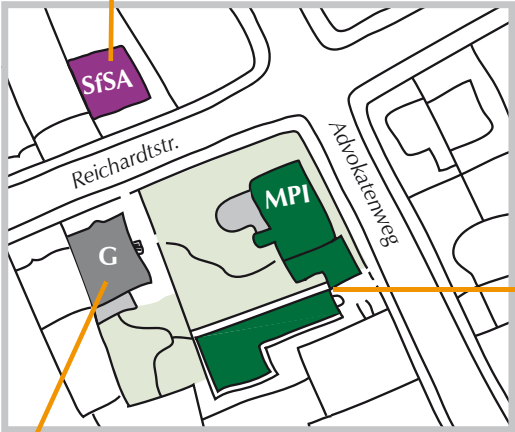
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