

Infrastructures of Europeanization

Workshop and Meeting of the Working Group
“Europeanization_Globalization: Ethnographies of Policies and Politics”
within the dgV (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde)

University of Bremen, Thursday, January 26th and Friday, January 27th, 2017

Venue:

Thursday

Haus der Wissenschaft, Sandstraße 4-5, 28195 Bremen

Friday

**University of Bremen, Akademie für Weiterbildung, Room B0660,
Bibliothekstraße 1 28359 Bremen**

From an anthropological angle, Europeanization is something that 'takes place' in daily practices of social actors and organisations (Welz/Lottermann 2009). When social anthropology first turned towards Europe, questions of identities and their relations to the politics of and with culture as well as the symbolic dimensions of European identity processes took centre stage. Already in the late 1980s, anthropological interest moved on to questioning how Europe is brought into being in everyday life practices and relations. Implicated in this move was a growing awareness of the role, that is played by regulation, as well as by formalization and juridification of procedures and scales – economically and socially – as important features of Europeanization processes. This is where the more recent perspective of STS becomes productive in Europeanization Studies. A major part of ethnographic work now focuses on the differences in implementation and performance of such features, figuring out the variety of actors, places and contexts. Ethnographic studies also address the European Union and its projects of standardization – especially with regard to their failures and unintended side effects (Dunn 2005/ Klotz & Knecht 2012). Europe as an artefact is best studied in what Gisela Welz calls 'European products', comprising a new 'category of things, practices and ideas that are infused with European Union regulatory mechanisms' (Welz 2015).

With regard to technologies of Europeanization, Andrew Barry developed the concept of 'technological zones' (Barry 2006) defined as 'a space within which differences between technical practices, procedures or forms have been reduced, or common standards have been established' (ibid.: 239). Importantly, such techno-zones are constituted beyond nation state defined territories, but create a space of their own right and means. This manner of constituting standards and infrastructures beyond the nation state is – as Barry claims – central to the history and the formation of the European Union as such.

However, infrastructures of Europeanization pose many questions beyond researching standards. They are equally connected to further core dimensions of Europeanization processes such as mobility and circulation. Moreover, researching infrastructures can shed new light on the role, status and relationship of objects and subjects, materials and practices (Niewöhner 2014, 2015). Consequently, dealing with infrastructures of Europeanization offers an ecological approach to the persistent work of (re-)connecting and (re-)building what is considered 'the European Union' but also taking into account what might be called 'infrastructures from below' (e.g. the conversion of infrastructures or the ongoing social struggles related to (access to) infrastructures). Being more of a perspective than an object of research, inquiries of European infrastructuring processes as well as of the Europeanization of infrastructures conflate standards, mobilities, materials and subject positions oscillating between anthropological Policy Research and Science and Technology Studies.

The upcoming event promotes the importance of infrastructures as a ground breaking moment in

'the formation of new spaces of government' (Barry 2015) because the European Union 'has placed such great stress on the need to ground European politics on the secure base of common standards' (ibid., see also Barry 2001). Furthermore, with Europe entangled in crises, infrastructuring is a potent place to investigate European politics of visibility and invisibility (Adam/Vonderau 2014) – or 'the imperceptible' – in the spirit of an anthropology of the contemporary. Focusing on the current condition of the European Union, trying to grasp the profound changes and challenges such as the ongoing 'financial crisis', the questionable migration politics, the refocusing on national interests along with the strengthening of right wing parties and movements as well as the growing inequalities among different member states and groups, a plethora of questions and topics come up concerning the role of infrastructures and processes and practices of infrastructuring:

- How can a relational approach to infrastructuring in areas such as waste, migration, digital cultures, energy, resources, data, finances, cultural policy and mobility make visible what otherwise often remains invisible – and (under)discussed?
- How can the ethnography of policy be enriched by approaches that take investigations about infrastructures serious?
- What methodological innovations are needed to bring together an 'ethnography of policies and politics' with a relational perspective on the practices of infrastructuring?
- How can research on infrastructures shed new light on the current condition of the EU?
- How can we better understand relations between infrastructures and forms of governance as they take shape and get modified in the current situation?
- How does a perspective on the practices of infrastructuring provide new understandings of social struggles in Europe today?
- How can we conceptualize and research the (potential) violence of infrastructures beyond the notion of active and passive violence and beyond the premise of intentionality?

The meeting will comprise a lecture with Gisela Welz (Goethe-University Frankfurt) and a panel discussion – which Andrew Barry (UCL) and Jens Adam (HU Berlin) are going to join – on Thursday evening, a workshop and a plenary discussion with Andrew Barry, Jörg Niewöhner (HU Berlin) and Andrew Barry (UCL) on Friday as well as a commission meeting the same day. We will decide on the detailed workshop format depending on the number of participants as well as on the number of 'Docs/Postdocs' participating.

The evening event on Thursday and the plenary discussion are open to the public. For the workshop on Friday, we ask you to please register in advance. For REGISTRATION please contact Franziska Klaas: fklaas@uni-bremen.de and Jens Adam: adamjens@cms.hu-berlin.de UNTIL 10th JANUARY and ADD A SHORT PARAGRAPH on your research field, your angle of and/or position on infrastructures of Europeanization and the workshop topic. These short texts are going to be forwarded to the workshop participants in advance. In case you would like to discuss your research or some of your material – especially PhD students and Postdocs are encouraged to use this possibility – please hand in a more detailed text on your project (max. one page).

Literature

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Welz, Gisela (2015): *European Products. Making and Unmaking Heritage in Cyprus*. New York: Berghahn Books.

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Program

Thursday, January 26th

(Haus der Wissenschaft/ Olbers-Saal)

18:00 Uhr Welcome and Introduction

18:15 Uhr 'European Products. Making and Unmaking Heritage in Cyprus': A Lecture by Gisela Welz

19:00 Uhr Q&A

19:15 Uhr 'Opening up a Dialogue: Current Perspectives on (Researching) Europeanization': A discussion between Andrew Barry, Gisela Welz and Jens Adam

20:15 Uhr Get together

21 Uhr Dinner

Friday, January 27th

(University of Bremen, Akademie für Weiterbildung/ Room B0660)

09:30 Uhr 'Approaching infrastructures from two different angles': A Workshop with Andrew Barry and Jörg Niewöhner

09:30 Uhr Input Jörg Niewöhner

09:45 Uhr Input Andrew Barry

10:00 Uhr Plenum discussion

10:30 Uhr Small group work

12:30 Uhr Lunch break

13:30 Uhr Open Forum: 'Methods and Politics of Researching Infrastructures of Europeanization': A Discussion with Andrew Barry and Jörg Niewöhner

15:00 Uhr Coffee break

15:15 Uhr Meeting of the Commission