

Workshop “Calls for Protecting *the Weak* in East Asia - Empirical Findings and New Theoretical Insights”

June 2, 2017, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Campus Westend, Seminar House, SH 5.104

Collection of Abstracts

PANEL 1 “Human-Animal Studies”

Prof. Dr. Mieke Roscher, University of Kassel, LOEWE-Schwerpunkt “Tier – Mensch – Gesellschaft: Ansätze einer interdisziplinären Tierforschung”

„Conceptualizing Animal Actors – multi-species entanglements and relational agency”

Animals are often said to be the latest beneficiaries of a trend for democratizing history. Human-Animal Studies in particular has laid claim to integrating them into what has been dubbed an anthropocentric history and to thereby take into account their influences, their agency. Focusing the historical account on humans alone fails to recognize the important role of animals in the making and the doing of history as animal historians point out. Animals are thus declared to be “weak” in a conceptual sense by a traditional historiographic approach which only takes into account human agency. Their “othering” has made them invisible as potential historical actors.

This weakening is the result of both an ideological value set that clearly divides the human from the animal world as well as methodical problems that emerge when trying to integrate animals into human history and thus to recognize them as historical actors. It is the latter that has been at the core of recent debates within historiography. “Protecting the weak” in this sense could be seen as a way to conceptualize new ways of freeing animals from the status of being ontological “others.” It is thus to be understood as a negotiation process of different actors in its own right that historians need to be aware of.

The presentation will thus focus on theoretically framing interactions between humans and other animals as relational agency and entangled agency respectively as a way to overcome their essential “othering”. This can also be regarded as a move to redeem animals from the fixed status of the weak and their being marked by alleged deficiencies. Relational agency can therefore be defined as co-constitutionality of the interacting partners inside and outside of close social circles. Putting relational agency in a historical perspective enables us, as will be argued, to alleviate classical dichotomies between action and reaction and to frame animals as active partners in the making of specific histories.

Dr. Yoriko Otomo, University of London, SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies)

“The Role of Law in Structuring Human-Animal Relations”

Discourses of protection (of weaker beings or social groups) shift over time and are 'entangled' in more ways than one; a significant blind spot - at least in texts I have encountered - is the historical movement of ideas between East and West, influencing the evolution of each culture. 'Protecting the weak' in Japan, for example, might take on the valences of animal welfare discourse developed in Victorian England; nationalist throwbacks to feudal society; Christian/Buddhist theologies, or

imperialist rhetoric common to colonial cultures. Notably, in international law, the emerging principle of a 'Responsibility to Protect' references a particular strand of Western political philosophy that itself is interpreted by, and transforms, the discourses of states that are negotiating globalised governance.

My talk will look at the role of law in structuring human-animal relations. By 'structuring' I mean the ways in which specific laws regulate human and animal lives. I also mean how the separation of different aspects of life into distinct governance regimes shapes the very fabric of our metaphysical thinking. To show law's impact on human-animal relations in East and West, I will compare my readings of Japanese and European welfare laws.

Alisha Gao / Matthias Schumann, Goethe-University, Frankfurt

“Animals and the Intricacies of Modernization: The Emergence of Animal Protection Movements in Chinese Past and Present”

One of the most intriguing questions in the context of human-animal studies concerns the factors which shape emerging animal protection movements worldwide. Scholarship has directed attention to the changing economic and social roles of animals, which accompany processes of modernization, as well as to the symbolical implications of the human treatment of animals. Thus, factors such as an emerging middle class and a growing popularity of companion animals contributed to an awareness for animal protection in 19th century Europe. At the same time, animal protection emerged as a global marker of civilization, which inspired activists to form societies devoted to this issue. However, the relation between these different factors and their implications for non-European contexts such as China have received scant attention.

In the 1930s, a number of lay Buddhist activists formed the China Society for the Protection of Animals (Zhongguo Baohu Dongwuhui) in Shanghai. The Society, which adopted new models of activism from the international realm, used Buddhist imagery and concepts to successfully argue against cruelty to animals. However, there is little indication that the roles of animals in industry and urban space changed substantially during that time. Instead, this early movement seems to have emerged due to a perceived link between animal protection and civilization which Chinese activists could use to bolster both their own claims as well as China's international standing.

These early Buddhist precursors have only been followed by a contemporary animal protection movement since the 1990s. The establishment of this movement has been correlated with the country's rapid modernization process, visible through a growing urban middle class, increasing companion animal ownership and international entanglements (both in terms of economic trade and NGOs). In addition, the negative consequences of modernization such as environmental degradation and animal exploitation also influence an increased consciousness of human-animal relations in China. The importance of these factors can be seen in the recent debate about animal welfare legislation within the Chinese animal protection movement.

This presentation will look at these two movements together to shed some light on shifting factors contributing to an awareness of animal protection in the Chinese context.

PANEL 2 “Cultural Heritage in Transition”

Dr. Oleg Benesch, University of York, Department of History

“Masculinity, Regionalism, and Recovery in Japan’s Modern Castles”

The surrender and subsequent occupation of Japan after the Second World War was an unprecedented shock to Japanese society. This was exacerbated by the unbroken official message of strength and certain victory before August 1945. The military was given much of the responsibility for the defeat, and this was reflected in the personal experiences of former soldiers returning to Japan, where many veterans suffered serious discrimination. The US occupation oversaw an erasure of the military from society, and this process was most prominently visible in the castle sites at the heart of Japan’s largest cities. Before 1945, Japan’s most important castles hosted major military garrisons that dominated the urban space and contributed decisively to the militarization of society in the imperial period.

After the war, along with the decommissioning of the military, castle sites were stripped of their associations with the Imperial Army, and converted to host parks, universities, schools, museums, and other cultural institutions. In this way, castles played a key role in the physical and symbolic demilitarization of Japanese society in the postwar period. The thorough removal and denigration of the military through defeat and occupation also resulted in a nationwide crisis of identity and masculinity, and many of Japan’s regions turned to their premodern past to regain lost pride. Dozens of castles were rebuilt from ferro-concrete across Japan in the 1950s and 1960s, as part of a narrative of regional recovery and often opposition to the authority of “Tokyo” that had led the nation down the path to destruction. This focus on “feudal” symbols such as samurai and castles was not without controversy, but dissenting voices were soon overwhelmed by the power of injured local pride.

Christina Maags, University of Oxford

“Protecting the Weak through Narratives of Threat: The Case of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage”

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) discourses in the international and national realm have played a major role in disseminating narratives on the need to protect “threatened” and “disappearing” traditional culture. Originating from within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), narratives on “the need for ICH protection” tell the story of how and why traditional cultural practices are disappearing, why they constitute a valuable and integral part of society and how they can be protected from “destruction”. The UNESCO as well as national governmental actors and scholars appropriate these narratives to “problematize” the protection of ICH in their conventions, laws and policies (i.e. 2003 UNESCO Convention of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage). These official narratives subsequently, have an impact on local actors as they create a source of local meaning-making and identity formation. In addition, local actors frequently adopt and potentially reframe these narratives in an attempt to enhance their agency and pursue their interests. Focusing on the empirical case of PR China, this paper employs the method of framing analysis to identify narratives on “the need for ICH protection” as employed by various international and domestic actors: (1) the UNESCO, (2) the Chinese party-state, (3) academics as well as (4) local cultural practitioners and associations. It argues that policy-related narratives are used as a political tool to legitimize policy choices, evoke public emotions (i.e. pride, patriotism, sense of identity) and trigger action among a particular audience. In the construction of narratives, actors frequently incorporate elements of previously existing narratives which have been officially legitimized in order to equally legitimize their own claim. Ultimately, legitimization of some narratives in contrast to others, however, leads to a hierarchy between official and unofficial narratives which reflect pre-existing power relations.

Dr. Ioan Trifu, Goethe-University, Frankfurt

“Promoting Cultural Heritage Protection from East to West: A Comparison of Cultural Governance Systems”

For decades the international heritage regime has increasingly been criticized as following a Western notion of and approach to cultural heritage safeguarding, leading to Western hegemony over how heritage is internationally discussed and safeguarded in practice. Following substantial criticism, especially East Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea, pushed for a change in international heritage safeguarding promoting their own safeguarding models, leading to a significant diversification concerning the categories of cultural remains to be protected.

Particularly since the 1990s, UNESCO has integrated the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), cultural landscapes, cultural spaces and underwater cultural heritage – to name a few – into its regime. Against the background of a growing globalization and international interdependence, nation states around the world have followed this trend by adapting their national heritage regimes - including Western and Asian countries. The particular national impact of these trends on the individual member states, such as the emergence of new cultural policies or institutional change, however remain under-researched. This is especially the case when considering the impact on the two dominant approaches mentioned above: the Western and the Asian approach to heritage safeguarding. Did the changes inside UNESCO’s international heritage regime have an impact on heritage safeguarding in the West? And if so, has it made the “Western approach” more open to alternative (potentially Asian) forms of heritage safeguarding? And how have international trends affected Asian countries?

By retracing the 2003 *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage’s* influence on four different cases studies, namely Germany, France, PR China and Japan, the authors inquire into whether and/or how the heritage regimes of these Asian and Western UNESCO member states have changed through the introduction of the new ICH concept. The study not only sheds light onto the effects of the ICH convention in two different camps within the UNESCO, the “West” which had been rather skeptical about the adoption of an ICH convention, and “East Asia”, role model and supporter of the ICH convention. It will also highlight the ICH convention’s effects on different multi-level governance systems behind national cultural governance. In retracing the changes the study will thus also inquire *how* the regimes changed, meaning whether the change followed a certain path dependence or whether it demonstrated a critical juncture in the domestic heritage systems.

Ultimately, the study will show that there isn’t and never has been a single “Western” or “Asian” approach to heritage safeguarding, but rather that each country’s approach reflects a unique and historically embedded approach which demonstrates a blend of international, historical-indigenous as well as newly developing safeguarding measures. On the contrary, the international heritage regime has actually led to growing similarities among the individual approaches as a result of international dissemination of “best practices” as well as domestic identity politics and strive for cultural soft power.

PANEL 3 “Labor Market and Employee Well-Being”

Dr. Nora Kottmann, Heinrich-Heine-University Duesseldorf, Department of Modern Japanese Studies

“Work-Life-Balance in Times of Precarization – the Case of Japan”

In a country, widely known for its long working hours, unpaid overtime and even deaths from overwork (*karōshi*), ‘work’ and ‘life’ seem to be highly imbalanced. Nevertheless, in the context of the demographic change, the (looming) labor shortage and the rapid growth of the non-regular work force, the Japanese government is striving intensively to achieve an overall social improvement of work-life-balance. Even though the term ‘work-life-balance’ has only been officially used since 2005, the corresponding policy measures go back to the early 1990s. Based on a review of the literature, recent publications of the government as well as findings from a field study in Tokyo from 2010 onwards, I will describe the context as well as the development of the corresponding policies from ‘reconciliation’ to ‘work-life-balance’ to ‘womenomics’. A focus will be on the political use and the instrumentalisation of the concept by the Japanese government. Finally, I will discuss and critically evaluate the measures from a gender perspective and in the context of the emergence of a ‘precarious society’ (Köhn 2016; Marchart 2013) in Japan.

Dr. Florence Lévy, EHESS Paris, CECMC (Centre d’Études de la Chine Moderne et Contemporaine)

“Counter Framings of Migration Experiences by Northern Chinese Migrants in France”

Northern Chinese Migrants experience a harsh downward social mobility when they arrive in France. These men and women who used to belong to a lower middle class in China are undocumented migrants and have to work in unskilled, gendered, ethnicized and often stigmatized jobs. Their migration’s evaluations are ambivalent as they both have a positive view and look down on their activities and social positionings at the same time.

**Dr. Markus Heckel, Goethe-University, Frankfurt
(with Yuji Genda and Ryo Kambayashi)**

“Who Does not Know Their Labor Contract Term? Implications for Working Conditions: Evidence from Japanese and Spanish Micro Data”

Assuming that the usual distinction between regular and non-regular employees comes short of explaining recent developments in the labor market, we argue that contract duration – the distinction between permanent and fixed-term employment – is probably a more accurate method to understand current developments. The Japanese Labor Standards Act and the Spanish Labor Law are unambiguous in this regard, requiring the employer to provide a labor contract with a clear defined duration and information whether the contract can be renewed in case of a fixed-term contract. However, Japanese data reveal that 8 percent of the employees do not know (DNK) the duration of the labor contract with 2 percent in the Spanish case.

To understand developments in both countries we apply data from the Employment Status Survey (Japan) and the Labor Force Survey (Spain) for the year 2012. Statistical associations between variables are similar between Japan and Spain. We found that whether a worker does not know the contract term may depend on his/her human capital. Thus, females and single persons are more likely not to know the labor contract duration. The same goes for younger and elderly workers as well as for less-educated workers in comparison to well-educated workers. Most findings hold after controlling for job characteristics. Regarding job satisfaction, DNK employees are more likely to search for another job. A different data set further suggest that Japanese DNK employees suffer from a wage penalty effect and have less access to company training. For Spain, we find different results for Spanish citizens and migrant workers. Related to male employees and occupation (construction sector) DNK is higher among migrant workers than among Spanish citizens.