

Wirtschaften. Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven

The 41st *Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv)* Congress
from 20th to 23th September 2017, Marburg (Germany)

Call for Papers

"*Wirtschaften*" is a key topic of cultural anthropology. The German concept of *Wirtschaften* is broader than possible direct translations, e.g. "to keep house", "to economize" or "to make a living." The German Dictionary from the Brothers Grimm defines "*Wirtschaften*" as an activity that, as a rule, provides and maintains order and whose goal is to satisfy material and immaterial needs by means of existing resources or created ones ["*von haus aus eine ordnungstiftende und ordnungserhaltende tätigkeit*" bezeichnet wird, die das Ziel hat, mit den vorhandenen oder zu schaffenden Mitteln materielle und immaterielle Bedürfnisse zu befriedigen]. The "caring administration of property" [*fürsorglichen besitzverwaltung*] stands in contrast to the "cheerful good life" [*fröhliches wohlleben*].

From today's perspective, the concept of "*Wirtschaften*" encompasses more than that defined by the Brothers Grimm. In addition to the practices of making a living, economic activities [*wirtschaftlichen Handelns*] also include managing and budgeting for the household, organizing and calculating, bargaining and trading, giving, sharing, wishing and the search of a better life. They range from socially organized cultural practices and secondary economies to private familial realizations. Economic activities [*Wirtschaften*] are always determined by the existing resources, the conditions formed by social rules, and the necessity to consider alternatives.

Economic activities constitute the creation of wealth on one side and the exploitation of humans and nature on the other. It is embedded in power structures facilitating exclusion and inclusion. It is prone to crisis and can fail. However, it can also help safeguard the social system, promote innovations and satisfy basic needs. It displays a "Janus face" phenomenon of functional and dysfunctional elements.

The 41st *Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv)* Congress aims to look at this complex topic in detail from a cultural anthropological perspective. The details to be examined include the experiences individuals gain in specified social structures and economic conditions, the strategies and methods they develop in the process, and the forms of community action and group solidarity they constitute. The variety of possible topics can be divided into three main groups:

1. Practices, Technologies and Materialities

Domestic forms of economic activity and managing include, for example, negotiated or traditional responsibilities and divisions of labor, methods of economizing in times of shortage, provident stockpiling of supplies, and the handling of finances. In addition to the areas of consumption, the mechanization and standardization of private households and economies of the body [*Körperökonomie*], the secondary and ethic economies play a significant role in this group: cultural and creative industries, practices of subsistence and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the dynamic technological context of the economy needs to be considered, such as the increasing use of algorithms for economic logics and strategies in a globally networked trade of goods with specific modes of added value, local production and exploitation.

2. Discourses, Meanings and Concepts

Economic practices are constantly subjected to specific discourses in which their guiding logic and meaning can gradually develop. On the level of the alternative economy that is currently widely debated, a discourse on sustainability, for example, can be identified that gives prominence to aspects of raising awareness to save precious resources and social sustainability. Here a criticism towards consumption is expressed that questions

economic forms, such as the discourses on adequate basic incomes, environmental standards and global equity. In addition to attributing value as innovation or technological development, Utopian structures and nostalgic, romanticized projections of traditional economic activity can be observed.

3. Knowledge, Representation and Exchange

Specific knowledge about economic forms is made publicly accessible by being introduced into and modified by advertisement, marketing, and market and innovation research. Also the representation of economic actions in museums that are either concretely based on local and historic conditions or that have developed transnationally play a role in the articulation and the transfer of economic knowledge, as well as the popular cultural field that creates the aesthetics and sensuality of *Wirtschaften*.

The *dgv* congresses have always considered themselves as forums in which various research approaches are reflected on theoretically and methodically, with an empirical profoundness and political engagement, and which welcomes unconventional perspectives. Accordingly, this congress aims to be a site for the discussion and debate of the historical as well as the contemporary, the urban and the rural, the individual and the communal, the hegemonic/sovereign and the emancipatory, the normative and the irrational, as well as the moral, the typical, and the alternative.

Organizational Information

As with previous congresses, the congress in Marburg will feature plenary and section lectures along with panel discussions. The papers for the plenary lectures will be selected from the submitted abstracts. Section lectures will be formed based on the contents of the individual submissions. Panel discussions will be allocated two hours, the same as a section. The head of the panels drafts the topic and sends this suggestion to the *dgv* as an abstract. Lecturers and a short abstract of their papers are to be included (maximal 4-5 individual papers). The exact form of the panel (structure, order, format of the papers) will be determined by the respective organizers. Students and exam candidates are encouraged to submit their suggestions, especially the presentation of one's own research results and empirical findings. Ideally, the suggestion will have a direct connection to the congress topic, but may deviate on a case-by-case basis. When possible, separate student sections will be formed. All submitters are requested to use formats that are open to discussion and are innovative.

Please note the following guidelines when submitting abstracts:

- In addition to a short summary, the abstracts are to include information on the thesis and the empirical basis, such as the context in which the paper originated. If available, include related papers that have already been published, the status of your own research and the first results.
- The papers for the congress have to be new and unpublished research presentations. It is required to be ready to publish the paper after the congress.
- The lecturers and publications can be in either German or English.
- The abstracts have to include the details of the applicant's professional career and current position.
- Please include a valid mailing address and e-mail address. Include the responsible organizers and participants for panel suggestions.
- The abstracts for individual lectures are to be less than one DIN A4 page with a maximum of 2,500 characters with spaces; for panels two pages with a maximum of 5,000 characters with spaces.
- Use .doc or .rft formats for submission by e-mail (no PDFs). Please put all of the parts into a single document and use the following naming convention: "Last_Name_Abstract_dgv2017.doc", or "Name_of_panel_head_panel_suggestion_dgv2017.rft".
- Send submissions to: geschaefsstelle@d-g-v.de
- The deadline for submissions is **1 September 2016**.

Please follow these requirements to facilitate the selection process and to keep it transparent. The executive board and main committees will select the papers and determine the program with the representatives of the local organizer in the fall of 2016.