

### **Momentum of its own. Inherent Dynamism in Pre-Modern Societies**

**Veranstalter:** Franz-Josef Arlinghaus / Andreas Rüther, Geschichte des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit, Universität Bielefeld

**Datum, Ort:** 12.02.2020–14.02.2020, Bielefeld

**Bericht von:** Marc Grünewald / Christine Gerwin, Historische Wissenschaftsforschung / Geschichte des Hoch- und Spätmittelalters, Universität Bielefeld

The conference at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research explored the question of the extent to which inherent dynamics can explain social change in pre-modern society. The two organizers, Franz-Josef Arlinghaus and Andreas Rüther, defined self-dynamics as a change from within society itself, which arose from the interaction of elements belonging to it and reproducing them. They saw this form of dynamics already in place in the basic structures of pre-modern society, such as segmental group formation, the estate-hierarchical social order and, finally, the culture of presence and consensus orientation. In pointing out these basic elements, they wanted to discuss the extent to which there were structural similarities worldwide that unfold a dynamic of change from within itself. However, linking this specific form of inherent dynamism to pre-modern societal structures means that this did not pave a way to modernity. Rather, these processes led to enhanced structures of medieval and early modern societies.

RUDOLF STICHWEH (Bonn) linked the concept of pre-modern self-dynamics with the attractivity that already existing structures have for new phenomena brought about by changes („preferential attachment“). While pre-modern and modern society differ regarding their basic structures – segments, hierarchical structure on the one hand, functional differentiation on the other – both types of society have in common that new elements tend to be attached to already existing structures. This can be called momentum of self-structure, which arises from the necessity of social systems to continuously reproduce their inherent but unstable elements (communication, expectations, etc.), whereby

already existing structures are strengthened. Change in self-structures disambiguated by self-dynamics is only possible by models of discontinuities, such as a value discontinuity in the context of an exchange of preference codes (i.e. inequality/equality), anomalies emerging out of their niches or technological escalation.

ULLA KYPTA (Hamburg) traced processes of institutionalization with their own dynamics on the basis of the foundation of the Exchequer in the 12th century and the emergence of merchant norms in the late Middle Ages. In both cases, she clearly dissociated her results from research positions that assume intentional planning or a normative authority. Kypsta thus attributes the establishment of the Exchequer to the regular repetition of settlements that were recorded on pipe rolls. Open items were transferred to new parchment after completion of a pipe roll, whereby each pipe roll prepared the next one. From this repetition of accounts alone, they gained legitimacy and then became a matter of routine that nobody outside and inside the Treasury doubted. In the second case study, Kypsta used the example of proxies to illustrate that the exchange was not due to a norm-setting central authority that would have predetermined corresponding contract formulas, but rather arose – similar to her first example – from self-dynamics that, while merchants interact, combine repetition, changes and new routines.

Comparing the charter of 1149, where a great number of *meliores* granted statues to a guild, with that of 1183/84, where guilt statutes were only legitimized by the officials (*officiati*) of the Richerzeche, FRANZ-JOSEF ARLINGHAUS (Bielefeld) suggested that an amorphous group of „the best“ was replaced by the well-defined *officiate* of the Richerzeche. Details of how this „institution“ developed out of a spongy-like gathering are not yet clear, but the use of well-established forms of community-building and reciprocal legitimation of the communities (while the Richerzeche confirmed the guilds, who in turn, by asking for conformation, legitimized the „fraternity of the rich“) make self-propelled processes as main „actors“ of the development plausible. Here, the inter-

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nal structure of the Richerzeche comes into play, which is characterized by estate-like inner differentiation: The task of the *officiati* was, among other things, to elect the mayors, who themselves became members of the *officiati* after the end of their term of office. This resulted in an estate-like division within the group that fostered its outstanding role in town and led to quasi-disappearance of gatherings of *meliores*.

BARBARA STOLLBERG-RILINGER (Berlin) traced an involutional dynamic of change in the development of the Reichstag (Imperial Diet) of the Roman-German Empire. With the Peace of Westphalia, the Imperial Diet had been assigned a central role, since the Emperor was expressly dependent on its consent and it was to become the central body for collective decisions, but it required an autonomy of procedure that never existed. The contributor referred to the increasing ranking and ceremonial disputes between the prince's envoys and the resulting continuing influence from the environment on the proceedings. Disputes of rank, which resulted above all from the status representation of the princes by envoys, led in part to total blockades and increasingly complex voting and procedural rules. This dynamic, which was strongly influenced by external factors – Stollberg-Rilinger distinguished this from inherent dynamics – led ever deeper into the old structural problems and made it impossible for the Imperial Diet to fulfil the function caused by the Peace Treaty of Westphalia.

FRANK REXROTH (Göttingen) discussed whether the expansion of universities (12th-15th centuries) was specifically pre-modern and self-dynamic. He pleaded for a modification of the basic structures proposed by the organizers by adding the cooperative principle, since in view of the internal disciplinary differentiation of the universities, one cannot speak of segmental group formation. Rather, they formed a niche within segmentally-stratified societies, some of which were themselves stratified and above all showed a large degree of functional differentiation. The amalgamation of several scientific disciplines in Paris around 1200 to form a *universitas* initially slowed down the very dynamic devel-

opment of the sciences in the 12th century, but also created a first order of its own complexity. External influences, such as the attempt to apply non-university jurisdiction or the Pope's attempt to steer discourse within the sciences, justified the need for autonomous self-administration. The *libertas scholastica* which marked the legal autonomy from the city and the development of the language of science are only two examples which show this development.

MASAKI TAGUCHI (Tokyo) examined the group formation of the Japanese warrior nobility in the *Ryōsu-ikki* by comparing them with German aristocratic associations. The various forms of *Ryōsu-ikki* were initially military associations of warrior nobles based on common family or regional backgrounds. However, Taguchi differentiated the ritualized *ikki*-membership in many areas from the German aristocratic associations. It was not possible for members of the *ikki* to become part of other communities. They also had to give up their own claims in legal disputes in order to preserve internal peace and not to endanger the *ikki*'s political-military purposes. In contrast to the aristocratic associations, they did not have the means of a legal settlement at their disposal. Taguchi saw the reasons for the emergence and structure of these communities, in which politico-military actions were in the foreground, in the existential risks which the Japanese warrior nobility faced in the late Middle Ages in the face of warfare that wiped out entire families.

DANIEL SCHLEY (Bonn) examined the basic political structures of Japanese court society in the 10th and 11th centuries with a view to the constitution of the public sphere during the Fujiwara reign, which was characterized by a withdrawal of the monarch's presence. A decisive prerequisite for the regency of the Fujiwara, who established themselves as regents for the mostly underage rulers, was the change of public at court. Schley illustrated the withdrawal of the monarch's presence in the 10th century by means of the palace structure, which clarified the separation of governmental action and monarch's homage, and by ritual acts. Demonstrations of sovereign actions in front of the assembled court public in the form of court banquets be-

came the exception, and the close-knit family, in which the natural parents and the Fujiwara uncles formed a dynamic network of relationships around the acting monarch, determined the access to the latter. The presence of the monarch was further restricted by cultic ideas such as ritual staining (*kegare*).

JULIA BURKHARDT (Heidelberg) dealt with the discursive dynastic changes in Poland, Hungary and Bohemia between 1300 and 1550. She asked about the patterns of argumentation in the disputes between kings and representatives of the elite, who not only demanded but also consolidated their participation in the elevation and coronation of rulers during this period of political upheaval. Burkhardt showed that gender, physical disposition, and membership of a particular group of people emerged as argumentation complexes in discussions about legitimacy. Accusations of „foreign rule“ or „favouritism of foreigners“ allowed the elite to programmatically separate the new king and his entourage from the interests of the realm, and thus marking claims to participation by the estates, but also forming a political identity. Burkhardt made it clear that the influence of the aristocratic estates around 1500 was not based on modernization, but on earlier developments and configurations.

ANDREAS RÜTHER (Bielefeld) discussed the social drives for the differentiation of dynasties and orders in Mecklenburg and Pomerania in the 12th and 13th centuries. Thereby, state expansion and religious foundations by families of the nobility offered him the possibility of analytical access to the internal structures of associated units. The dynastic competition, rank conflicts or social advancement that resulted from these provided dynamics for the formation of new associations of persons. Starting out from a segmental social structure, monasteries, just like towns or rural communities, would be distinct units which relied on a clear affiliation in an association of persons and thus created the prerequisites for their cultic-liturgical services. The embedding of the convents in an agrarian society of estates and their function as part of the nobility made it necessary to take a closer look at the motives of the dynasties as founders and benefactors. The dynam-

ics of change evident from this could be deduced from the interweaving of persons between segments and the forms of communication that arose from this, i.e. horizontally arranged segments gave rise to dynamics that evoked change.

Using the example of chain poetry (*renga*) in the transition from the Japanese Middle Ages to the early modern period (15th-17th centuries), JÖRG QUENZER (Hamburg) demonstrated inherent dynamics that arose and worked depending on the medium and the rules of play associated with it. Already in the chain poetry itself, in its structure and emergence in a *renga*-group under a master, Quenzer identified moments of self-dynamics. They arose from the attachment to performative forms, aesthetic challenge, i.e. the tension between the participants and the aesthetic principles, the foundation of communal poetry and the target product of a successful communal poem. The separation from the former patronage relationships between *renga*-masters and *daimyō* in the 17th century also tended to lead to independence through an expansion and social loosening of the master-disciple relationship. The development into a self-centred group meant that environmental influences were increasingly pushed back, and the group's own dynamics were given more space.

JOHANNES PAHLITZSCH (Mainz) discussed the legal practice of Melkite Christians after the Arab conquest of Syria and Palestine in the 7th century. He drew the picture of a hybrid society characterized by a constant cultural transfer in which Melkites felt themselves to be Romans and followed willingly Byzantine law but adapted simultaneously Islamic law. Despite prohibitions that only allowed Christians to appear before an ecclesiastical court, Syrian Christians often turned to Islamic courts, since in legal practice ecclesiastical courts hardly had the same power of enforcement as Islamic courts. Melkites at first did not seem to adapt, but rather turned to Byzantium in order to consciously place themselves in the legal tradition of the Roman Empire and thus indicate their membership of the orthodox Byzantine world. This stronger connection to Byzantium was also due to the church leadership

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from Constantinople, which reacted to the inherent dynamism of Islamic law as well as to the assimilation of Melkites. However, Pahlitzsch showed that Melkites continued to adopt forms of Islamic law in everyday business dealings.

The final discussion focused on the concept of self-dynamics. One of the main questions was how central environmental influences are to the dynamics of social change in order to trigger inherent dynamism and where the differences between modernity and pre-modernity lie.

### **Conference overview:**

*Welcome*

Britta Padberg (Bielefeld)

*Introduction*

Franz-Josef Arlinghaus (Bielefeld) / Andreas Rütter (Bielefeld)

*Session I – Theoretical und conceptual principles*

Chair: Elena Esposito (Bielefeld)

Rudolf Stichweh (Bonn): Eigendynamiken der Vormoderne und die Genese funktionaler Differenzierung

Ulla Kypka (Hamburg): Eigendynamische Institutionalisierungsprozesse. Überlegungen zur Entstehung von Organisationen und Normen

Franz-Josef Arlinghaus (Bielefeld): Kampf um Autonomie und Freiheit? Zur Identifikation eigendynamischer Prozesse bei der Ausformung hochmittelalterlicher Stadtgesellschaften

*Evening Lecture*

Chair: Willibald Steinmetz (Bielefeld)

Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Berlin): Verfahrensautonomie in der Vormoderne – von der Emergenz des Unwahrscheinlichen

*Session II – Dynamics in and between associations of persons*

Chair: Angelika Epple (Bielefeld)

Frank Rexroth (Göttingen): Die Verbreitung der Universitäten in Europa – agency und

Eigendynamik

Masaki Taguchi (Tokyo): *Ikki* als Gruppenbildung vom japanischen Kriegeradel im Vergleich mit den spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Adelsverbindungen

Daniel Schley (Bonn): Öffentlichkeit in Japan – Überlegungen zur Struktur politischen Handelns am Hof (10.–11. Jahrhundert)

*Session III – Hierarchy with implemented change? Estates and inherent dynamisms*

Chair: Antje Flüchter (Bielefeld)

Julia Burkhardt (Heidelberg): Fremde Könige im eigenen Land? Dynastische Umbrüche und gesellschaftliche (Eigen-)Dynamiken im vormodernen Ostmitteleuropa

Andreas Rütter (Bielefeld): Kloster verpflichtet. Adelige Eigendynamiken in Mecklenburg und Pommern vom 12. bis 13. Jahrhundert

*Session IV – New forms of communication and new legal relationships as a result of inherent dynamic processes?*

Chair: Wolfgang Braungart (Bielefeld)

Jörg Quenzer (Hamburg): Dichten in Gemeinschaft: Anmerkungen zu literatursoziologischen Dynamiken in Japan am Übergang zur Frühen Neuzeit

Johannes Pahlitzsch (Mainz): Zur rechtlichen Stellung der melkitischen Christen unter islamischer Herrschaft. Zwischen Bewahrung der Tradition und Assimilation (8.-13. Jahrhundert)

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