

ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

## Formations of Violence: Reconsidering the Anthropology of Global Systems

Don Kalb

Thursday, 14<sup>h</sup> of October 2010, 10.30 am [s.t.]

ÖAW Building Wohllebengasse, Seminar room 1  
A-1040 Vienna, Wohllebengasse 12-14

I will take a deep look at Jonathan Friedman's anthropology of global systems (two volumes, 2008/2009) and its contribution to understanding violence and the state in the contemporary world and propose some crucial changes and additions in the framework. Friedman's anthropology of global systems stands out as anthropology's most ambitious effort at global and historical theorizing and deserves intensive discussion. It's analysis of cycles of hegemonic growth and decline in global systems, including in particular its theory of double polarization in periods of decline, seems intuitively valid and utterly important for our times, both for the global North, global South and "global east". My critique will focus on its lack of a strong analytic grasp of class, politics and the state and its consequent steady inclination toward the epochal (teleology, in other words) at the cost of contingency.



**Don Kalb** is University Professor of sociology and social anthropology at Central European University, Budapest, and Senior Researcher at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. He was a senior fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences – IWM, Vienna, and directed IWM's SOCO program (Social Consequences of Economic Transformation in East Central Europe). His books include *Expanding Class: Power and Everyday Politics in Industrial Communities, The Netherlands, 1850-1950* (Durham and London, Duke University Press), 1997; (ed.) *The Ends of Globalization. Bringing Society back in*, (Boulder and London, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers), 2000; (ed.) *Globalization and Development: Key Issues and Debates* (Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers), 2004; (ed.) *Critical Junctions: Anthropology and History beyond the Cultural Turn* (Oxford and New York; Berghahn publishers), 2005.

His **most recent publications** include "Conversations with a Polish Populist: tracing Hidden Histories of Class and Dispossession in Postsocialism (and beyond), *American Ethnologist*, 2009; Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class, *Antropologica*, 2009. A book (ed.) on Class and Neonationalism for the EASA Book Series is in press (Berghahn Books); a book on class and anthropology (together with James Carrier) and a collection of his research essays are in preparation. Don Kalb is the founding editor of *Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* (Berghahn).