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Resilience and Surveillance in Hann's Eurasia

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Published in:

Explorations in Economic Anthropology: Key Issues and Critical Reflections

2021

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version (aka post-print)

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Sampson, S. (2021). Resilience and Surveillance in Hann's Eurasia. In D. Kaneff, & K. Endres (Eds.), *Explorations in Economic Anthropology: Key Issues and Critical Reflections* (pp. 102-121). Berghahn Books.

Total number of authors:

1

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Resilience and Surveillance in Hann's Eurasia

Steven Sampson


The Visegrád Fascination

Chris Hann's field research has centred largely on Hungary and Poland. His project for an anthropology of socialism and postsocialism, and what we can now call post-postsocialism (Sampson 2002a), is shaped by both his research and his personal experiences in these two countries, especially in Hungary. Chris has followed developments in Hungary continuously for forty years, with several periods of ethnographic research and vacation visits to 'his village' of Tázlár. When he returned home, there was no respite. He could continue testing his observations by discussing them, in fluent Hungarian, with his wife Ildiko Béller-Hann, a scholar of Turkic Asia. Chris truly never left the field. And the result is that no foreign anthropologist knows Hungary like Chris does. Period.

Chris' understanding of the anthropology of socialism takes its point of departure in Hungary and Poland. This deserves comment. For it was these two countries where the regimes were least repressive and where the rural populations tended to be more autonomous. Hungarian and Polish farmers could control their household resources for various reasons: they had remained private farmers, they could manipulate their obligations to the local collective farm, and/or they could maximize their private labour and informal networks to sell produce on the private market. If we measured the level of state control in socialist Eastern Europe during the 1980s, Hungary and Poland were definitely on the liberal end of the continuum (along with Yugoslavia). Hungary and Poland


certainly suffered from the oft-cited weaknesses of stiff party autocracy and a perverted planned economy. However, the regimes in these two countries, certainly as a response to the popular revolts decades earlier, exercised less repression over people's everyday life. Their populations had more economic autonomy and more individual freedoms in terms of media access and travel. It was a form of social contract in which the population ceded political control to the Communist Party in exchange for economic and private autonomy. This social contract was encapsulated in the pre-1989 punchline, heard throughout Eastern Europe, of 'We pretend to work, they pretend to pay us a wage', and the dictum of Hungarian party chief Janos Kádár: 'He who is not against us is with us.'

The relative autonomy of these populations has been underscored by Chris Hann in several of his works, most recently in his *Repatriating Polanyi* (Hann 2019a). The Visegrád peasants made an accommodation with the socialist regimes of the time. This emphasis on accommodation is a kind of Visegrád fascination. In his work on socialist Hungary and Poland, Chris provides innumerable examples of how Visegrádians managed to cope successfully with regimes that were inefficient, paternalistic, corrupt but not necessarily brutal. Further south, however, things were different.

I did my original research down the road from Chris, in central Romania, and especially during the same decades of mid-1970s to mid-1980s (until being denied entry in 1985 (Sampson 2019a, 2020 and www.stevensampson.com). The village where I carried out fieldwork was neither isolated nor desperately poor by Romanian standards. Nevertheless, I could readily observe how people tried to cope with the shortages and pressures of life under the brutal Ceausescu regime and the local party and security apparatus. It was a regime with 90 per cent collectivization of agriculture, restricted private markets and harsh requisitioning of domestic produce. Chris' depictions of life in Tázlár and Wisłok  relatively benign compared to the everyday struggles of Romanian villagers and urban dwellers. Villagers were not permitted to slaughter their own animals, were pressured by party activists to fulfil mandatory work quotas on their household plots, suffered horrific prohibitions on abortion and even birth control, were subject to rationed eggs, meat, milk, sugar, cooking oil, petrol and propane, were extorted for bribes by ruthless bureaucrats, doctors and police, and suffered innumerable other indignities and threats, including penalties for even speaking to a foreigner, much less having one stay overnight in their home without police permission. Urban dwellers in Romania saw entire neighbourhoods razed to build monuments to Ceausescu, had basically no possibility of travelling abroad or obtaining access to Western media,

lived in ice-cold apartments during the winter months and were prohibited from using electric heaters or more than a single light bulb. Whatever progress had been made in the early 1970s in building an industrial urban Romania with basic state education and health services, Romanians had become so desperate by the mid-1980s that in 1989, they literally celebrated the brutal execution of their party leader and his wife by show trial and firing squad. I mention this in order to emphasize that the relationship between the Romanian socialist state and its rural or urban populations bore little resemblance to the kind of accommodation Chris describes for 'Visegrádia'. It was repression pure and simple. Romanians did not accommodate, they suffered. This repression was enabled by the constant continuing surveillance, control and intimidation by the state organs on society and by citizens on each other. The Romanian secret police kept an eye on all foreign researchers as well. They harassed and interrogated the people with whom we interacted, from peasants in the village to university professors in Bucharest. They made threats on our informants, bugged our phones, searched our rooms, opened our mail and filed hundreds of pages of reports about us. My own secret police file, which ended abruptly when I was declared *persona non grata* in 1985 (but re-activated when I applied for a tourist visa in early 1989), is 600 pages (far less than Katherine Verdery's 2,800 pages; see Verdery 2018). In sum, any description of life under Ceausescu's Romanian socialism in the 1980s would be far from the accommodation practices that Chris describes for Hungarian rural life. Basic shortages, brutal repression and ever-present surveillance were part of this difference. There was no kind of 'social contract' between society and the regime.

These remarks are not an accusation that Chris was using Hungary as an archetype socialist country. Rather, it is only to emphasize that the anthropology of socialism, and of the postsocialist era, requires emphasis on a wide range of social practices and life experiences that unfolded in these societies. This is why we need ethnography, and especially Chris Hann's ethnography.

In this context, I would like to propose that Chris' ethnographic career be viewed through two complementary lenses: that of resilience and that of surveillance. The resilience takes the form of how people accommodate changes in their lives, changes that may derive from local developments or from large-scale collapses, such as the 1989 collapse of socialism. The surveillance perspective, while not explicitly described in Hann's work, pervades it in the sense that state and market actors are constantly impinging  controlling the villagers and citizens whom Hann observes. In the second half of this chapter, I will try to show how state authoritarian surveillance and the more recent, truly scary market-based surveillance

are now creating a new kind of 'surveillance Eurasia'. Since surveillance is a form of intervention that causes people to cope with, adapt or transform their lifeways, I will propose that we view Chris Hann's work in this dual optic of resilience and surveillance.

Retooling after 1989

Like Chris, I also had to retool my research after 1989. From studying 'real socialism', we were now faced with the task of making sense of post-socialism and, later, what I called post-postsocialism (Sampson 2002a). Chris' interests turned in several directions: civil society, new kinds of property relations, the nature of religion, and the changing configuration of market, state and redistributive integration. He watched how the Visegrád states began to integrate with the European Union's political and economic regime and the global division of labour. His project here has been inspired by four eminent scholars: Ernest Gellner, Jack Goody, Keith Hart and Karl Polanyi. Each in their own way, these scholars provided signposts for Chris in his various works on civil society, property, economic anthropology, Eurasia,  redistribution, exchange and integration. Two of these scholars, Gellner and Polanyi, have Central European roots, although their political sympathies clearly differed. Chris, despite – or perhaps because of – his upbringing in a peripheral area, has rooted himself in Central Europe as well. He has made continuing trips to Tázlár, has carried out twenty years of 'institution building' at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in (the formerly East German) Halle, and has spent nearly two decades recruiting, teaching and supervising a talented pool of doctoral students and young researchers. Many of these researchers, born in the ex-socialist countries, ended up focusing their research on the post-postsocialist world. Put this all together and you realize that Chris has been able to cobble together a unique combination of long-term empirical field research, continuing publication, field excursions from one end of Eurasia to another (Hungary, Poland, Turkey and all the way to Xinjiang, China, with Ildikó Bellér-Hann), all while organizing seminars, reading dissertations and editing books about postsocialist life. Go no further: Chris is your all-round Visegrád anthropologist.

'So how does he keep up?' you may ask. I think Chris has been able to do this by returning and 'mining' his intellectual inspirations – Gellner, Goody, Hart and Polanyi. His long-term project in promoting Karl Polanyi (Hann 1992a) is an example. We anthropologists have been obsessed with showing how our informants' economic and material

lives are 'embedded' in social relations. How else could we differentiate ourselves from the economists? However, as Chris points out (most recently in *Repatriating Polanyi*), we also enjoy searching out those dramatic moments of disembedding. Since disembedding is always described as a bad thing, it becomes the point of departure for our 'critique'. Indeed, postsocialism has often been described as a massive disembedding project driven by the forces of a diabolical neoliberalism. The problem, however, is that such a critique of neoliberal-driven disembedding is often a cheap shot. What looks like 'disembedding' to us may actually be a new form of integration for the people we study. For example, Hungarians working in the United Kingdom may appear disembedded from their home communities and families, but a UK wage also gives them new income possibilities. Hence, it takes a bit more ethnographic nuance to determine whether what may on first sight look like disembedding – i.e. the loss of control, the insecurity, the uncertainty, the chaos – may in fact be a lead-up to a new kind of integration by the global market, in a mosaic of migrant labour, barter arrangements, import/export trade, cash remittances, loans, redistribution, reciprocity, plunder, theft and the creation of new fictitious commodities. Chris' fieldwork in the Visegrád zone shows us a postsocialist variant of what we in the West now call the 'gig economy'. Insofar as people exploited a range of material possibilities to subsist – wage labour, barter, self-exploitation, ripping off both materials and time from their state workplace – Eastern Europe was perhaps the original home of the gig economy. As Chris has never tired of pointing out (Hann 2019a, 2019b), there are innumerable continuities in social life from the socialist to the postsocialist era. Markets, for example, were not absent in socialism, they just operated differently in terms of what was sold and how prices were set. Similarly, state surveillance over people's everyday life did not disappear with the demise of socialism; it simply took on new forms, some more subtle, others more overt.

Postsocialism as Resilience

Anthropologists are often emotionally tied to their first fieldwork and their field settings. This is certainly true in my own case (Sampson 2020), and I suspect it is also the case with Chris. What happens, then, when the context of the fieldwork changes so abruptly, as happened in 1989? How does one become a 'scholar of postsocialism'? Do you insist on pointing out the many continuities between the two eras, as Chris has insisted on doing? Or do you emphasize the transformational nature of EU/neoliberal

intervention into these societies as they integrated into the global market, as so many anthropologists have?

Chris' project has been more nuanced. He has shown us how historical practices continued to play a role, while showing us how people tried to accommodate themselves to the truly massive changes and uncertainties that took hold of their lives after 1989. I will use the rest of this chapter to show how he did this, because I think this strategy of exposing the path dependence without using path dependence tautologically is something we can learn from. The organizing concept I will use here is 'resilience'.

Now 'resilience' is definitely a hot word in several circles. Chris' own research department at the Max Planck Institute is called 'Resilience and Transformation in Eurasia', and Chris himself has a recent article that begins with the title 'Resilience and Transformation ...' (2019b). So the term is there. But how precisely is it being used?

In trying to understand situations of rapid, unexpected change (which 1989 certainly was), anthropologists have often resorted to one of two strategies: either they identify stubborn continuities in practices, labeling them either 'tradition' or 'resistance'; or they emphasize the paralysis caused by all-encompassing changes and call it 'disembedding' or 'crisis'. During this postsocialist crisis period, 'social life had lost its mooring', 'once recognizable groupings and structural positions lost contour' and 'it is not yet clear ... what structures will ground social action' (Verdery 1996: 135). It was a time of agency without structure.

Chris was less dramatic in his assessment. In trying to grapple with the contradictions of the postsocialist period, he returned to his intellectual mentors. Using Gellner, Goody, Hart and Polanyi, he has highlighted how agency and structure mingled and clashed in the postsocialist period. In this effort to figure out what the hell was going on, his years 'under the socialist yoke' served him well. Let me explain, using two examples from areas that have been a special focus of Chris' work, as well as my own; namely, 'civil society' and 'the second economy'.

The Rise and Fall of 'Civil Society'

Twenty-five years ago, Chris coedited a collection of papers on the anthropology of civil society (Hann and Dunn 1996). Chris had cultivated a rather sceptical view of civil society for some years (Hann 1992b, 2003, 2004, 2019a: 167–86). In the early 1990s, most social scientists, and especially those working on Eastern Europe (including myself), saw civil society in an unequivocally positive light. In a postsocialist conjuncture of corrupt states, distorted markets, nasty racism and rampant plunder

disguised as privatization, we saw civil society activists and their non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as the vehicles for a successful transition, pushing the state to be honest, the people to be democratic, and ameliorating the gaps in the market by providing social services. Chris had little sympathy for 'democracy export' and 'civil society capacity building' (Hann 1992b, 2003, 2004, 2019a: 167–86), an enterprise in which I myself had participated, as I ran around the Balkans, counting up the number of NGOs, helping them write project applications and imploring government officials to see civil society as allies (Sampson 1996, 2002b, 2004, 2017). Earlier than most, Chris was able to observe that this assemblage of foreign consultants, donor funding, well-intended projects, local activists and empowerment rhetoric had some fundamental weaknesses: our aspirations were too grand, our local knowledge was too limited, and we failed to realize that even the most dedicated NGO activists and leaders had their own 'private projects' and career plans. Inspired by Gellner's views on civil society (Gellner 1994), Chris ended up describing a Polanyi-style 'double movement': for every civil society project or programme, there arises a resistance or even hostility toward what Chris called 'the church of civil society' (2004) or, as I often heard it called, the 'Soros mafia' who had appropriated the discourse of 'civil society' as theirs. Instead, Chris found other kinds of autonomous social action that lay far beyond, just beneath or right alongside the world of the donor-driven NGO capacity-building projects and training. Chris found civil society in the churches in Poland, in the cooperative arrangements in Hungary, and today, in the various populist 'uncivil' societies in Hungary as well (Hann 2019a: 167–86, 2019b). Hungarian and East European civil society did not need capacity building; it needed recognition. It did not need more training seminars or donor strategies or feasibility studies; it needed new theories of what civil society actually means in terms of everyday social life. Chris found this conceptual toolbox in Polanyi (Hann 2019a), in descriptions of what is today called 'sociality' and added to this Stephen Gudeman's (2008) concept of 'mutuality' (Hann 2019a: 18–20). It turns out, as the ethnography of Chris and others has shown, that there was plenty of civil society in Eastern Europe, including in the socialist era (Buchowski 1996). Civil society was all over the place in the everyday social interactions of ordinary people doing ordinary things – buying, selling, producing, cultivating land, networking, worshipping, accessing, complaining, bribing, migrating, reorganizing, reasserting old claims to former property and demanding rights to state services, in kinning and unkinning behaviour, in ripping off the state and, at times, ripping off each other. This kind of civil society existed in the socialist period in Poland (Buchowski 1996) and throughout Eastern Europe in different

forms. And it continued and re-adapted in the postsocialist period. We might call this 'agency'. Or we might call it 'accommodation'. Today we have another name for this kind of social reorientation and adaptation: resilience.

In social science terms, resilience is minimally defined as a positive response by individuals or communities to adversity or disaster. The origins of resilience lie in the recovery of ecological habitats after a cyclone and from personal recovery following psychic trauma or abuse. When applied to social groups, the resilience concept is viewed differently. Some theorists understand resilience simply as a form of coping, a 'bouncing back' to a former state. Others focus on resilience as a mode of adapting to a new situation. Finally, a resilience response can generate a profound transformation of community life quite different from the popular understanding of 'bouncing back' (for further discussions, see, for example, Barrios 2016; Béné et al. 2012; Olsson et al. 2015; and Prospero and Morgado 2011). The resilience concept is often invoked by anthropologists, but there are also doubts about whether it is useful. There are two reasons to be cautious about using the term; first, it is elastic in its definition, to the extent that any form of natural or social survival can be called 'resilience'; second, resilience seems always to be viewed in positive, desirable terms. Those who look for the neoliberal demon, for example, see neoliberalism deploying the resilience card as some kind of 'blaming the victim' tactic to hide structural violence. In this view, the real problem is not enhancing the resilience of a vulnerable group, but reducing the original structural vulnerability (Béné et al. 2012; Barrios 2016).

Is resilience a part of Chris' project? Not overtly. As mentioned, both Chris' MPI research group and his recent article (2019b) use the phrase 'Resilience and Transformation', as if they were opposites. But Chris does not theorize the word 'resilience' in his work. Certainly, he does not see today's postsocialist societies as recovering from some kind of earlier socialist catastrophe or collective trauma. In his optic, Visegrádian socialism was neither an unmitigated disaster nor a psychic trauma. Rather, his project has been to show how people manage to adapt to ever-changing conditions, some of which are as existentially dramatic as any kind of natural disaster. For some people, the period of postsocialism was indeed a situation where 'all that is solid melts into air', to invoke Marx. Socialism was a disaster for some, while for others it was postsocialism that was the disaster. But disaster research, including the disaster research by ethnographers, shows that people are resilient. They bounce back, they adapt and they transform their life conditions. Chris has in fact documented this resilience in his own studies and in his discussion of others' work. In line with recent trends in the resilience literature, where enhanced

resilience is viewed as a developmental imperative (especially Béné et al. 2012), Chris shows that the postsocialist societies did more than bounce back from the 1989 confusion. They also adapted to new conditions and even transformed themselves. I would call this combination of coping, adapting and transforming a 'tripartite resilience'. Now Chris does not use this kind of terminology, but who cares! Instead, he uses his ethnography and invokes his conceptual inspirations in Gellner, Goody, Hart and Polanyi. He integrates them by describing how local groups accommodate to these ever-changing conditions. Without acknowledging it, Chris Hann is a scholar of resilience.

This emphasis on resilience has a strange side-effect: it makes the ethnographic conclusions rather undramatic. Indeed, throughout Chris' work, there is an emphasis on the accommodating, the compromising, the nuanced, the low-key, the subtle responses of the people whom he describes and the way they go about solving their material and social problems. Describing how people cope, how they adapt to new conditions and how they transform their life-worlds requires intense ethnographic observation; these kinds of processes certainly cannot be ascertained via surveys or questionnaires. Chris' descriptions of the Lemko, or those of Hungary from the decades of socialism to the decades after, are replete with descriptions of how his people accommodate, adapt, make do, manage, get by and in some cases prosper. The village houses have gotten a bit bigger, but everyone still congregates in the kitchen. There are supermarkets nearby, but people still keep their own chickens and slaughter a pig at home. It requires some ethnographic nuance to describe how this resilient life, this life of accommodation, manages to reproduce itself. But what we end up with is an anthropology of resilience.

Now I admit that having done research in Romania, I have found this kind of theme – accommodation and resilience – difficult to deal with. While Ceausescu's Romania certainly raised living standards for some groups, such as peasant-workers and heavy industry workers (at least for some years), the human costs were brutal, especially towards the end of his regime. Ceausescu's legacy revealed itself after 1989 in the mob violence, ethnic tensions, the horrific conditions in orphanages, the administrative corruption and the political incompetence of the new Romanian governments. It was hardly a sign of resilience that millions of disillusioned Romanians have emigrated to northern Europe with no intention of returning. These emigres are both the best and the brightest, but also the most marginalized (Roma). Calling the Romanian situation 'resilient' would be a misnomer, since adaptation without structural change can make people even more vulnerable and therefore less resilient (as we are now seeing in the economic aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic). We

can all 'cope' ... until we can't. Romanians living abroad, for example, must balance their marginal position on European labour markets with the obligations of having to support aging relatives, many of whom are caring for the émigrés' children back home. This is not resilience; it is balancing on a very thin wire.

It thus appears that in focusing on Hungary and the Lemko, Chris has managed to locate and describe particularly resilient societies or resilient forms of sociality. His description of how these people accommodate is not an ideological pronouncement or a celebration of their coping skills. It is the result of ethnographic fieldwork and observation, watching people adjust over decades of socialism and postsocialism, and incorporating studies by students and colleagues, including otherwise overlooked native ethnographers. While the 'resilience' concept has often been invoked to understand societies coping with disaster, Chris' work stimulates us to think of tripartite resilience – coping, adaptation, transformation – as an organizing concept in the early postsocialist and subsequent neoliberal contexts. Does this mean that all forms of coping can be classified as 'resilience'? I don't think so. No one looking at the populist movements in Eastern Europe or the desperation of communities in the Balkans or in the Romanian provinces would want to call them 'resilient' in this larger, tripartite sense. They are barely surviving. At best, they are Polanyi-style double movements of barely coping, alternating with syndromes of anomie and moments of spontaneous resistance.

The Second Economy as Resilience

My second example of Chris' work that can contribute to his 'anthropology of resilience' is another theme close to my own heart: the 'second economy'. Hungarian social scientists and journalists such as Elemér Hankiss (1990a, 1990b) and Janos Kenedi (1981) were crucial in developing concepts of 'second society' or 'second economy' during the socialist era. These terms became paradigms for explaining how socialist citizens coped with shortages by channelling their time and labour into personal projects that often ended up exploiting or undermining formal institutions. Almost every anthropologist working in the socialist world produced vivid descriptions of the effectiveness of these informal networks, which enabled people to obtain access to scarce material or social resources (see, for example, Wedel (1986) and additional summaries in Sampson (1986, 1987, 1988)). The 'second economy' approach fell out of fashion following the demise of the socialist planned economy

and the increased role of market forces. However, it has been replaced by a larger emphasis on the informal sector, where 'informality' manifests itself as both quasi-market or illicit economic activities. Here Chris' work on property and new forms of exchange has added nuance to the informality approach launched five decades ago by Keith Hart's work on urban Ghana (1973) and now applied in the postsocialist world by scholars such as Ledeneva (2018), Polese (2016), Henig and Makovicky (2017), and many others. Chris demonstrates (1990, 2019a: 33–60) that all economies have their second economies and that the second economy is anything but secondary. In fact, in many ways, Hungarian households, and households elsewhere in the socialist and postsocialist world, have managed to get by as much from second economy transactions (domestic production, informal trade, barter and migrant remittances) as from the increasingly precarious forms of wage labour.

Here again, an approach that focuses not just on mere coping, survival and precarity, but also includes a tripartite resilience may be useful in showing us the variations in resilience. Polanyi's focus on integration may help us here. For without using the term 'resilient', Polanyi's work, now re-actualized by Chris Hann, shows us that 'coping' may not be that resilient at all. Resilience has its price in that it prevents or precludes social change. It is through ethnography that we can really discover the trade-offs that the different kinds of resilience entail. It is through ethnography that we can identify responses to adversity that go beyond mere coping and that might eventually strengthen people's ability to deal with their everyday challenges. Ethnography can show us that people's vulnerability (the opposite of resilience) can be diminished in certain areas of social life, under certain types of regimes and among certain social groups more than others. Deciphering what kinds of resilience appear when and where is precisely why we need the kind of ethnography that Chris pursues. For example, while 'civil society', formal associational life or NGO projects may be failing (or benefiting only the NGO project elites), other more viable forms of civil society resilience may be observed in the informal economy, in the way people reformulate their notions of property or in the way people reproduce what Polanyi called 'fictitious commodities': land, labour and money. When Chris discusses Polanyi, he often invokes new 'modes of integration'. Perhaps we could now speak of a 'resilient mode of integration'. Resilience as integration can perhaps be a useful anchor in reading Chris' work. A resilient mode of integration is not just tied to postsocialism, of course. It can extend further, to another one of Chris' obsessions: Eurasia.

Surveillance in Eurasia

Chris' work on Eurasia (2016), much inspired by Goody, has emphasized commonalities in forms of integration that encompass the Polanyi-style reciprocity, house-holding, redistribution and market. However, perhaps we need to identify another form of integration that spans the entire Eurasian continent: surveillance. Surveillance, as Bentham and Foucault remind us, has been with us for a very long time. The panopticon perspective has been most recently described in Shoshana Zuboff's monumental *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, which extends Polanyi's idea of fictitious commodities to the commodification of human experience itself (2019: 43–44). Zuboff's concept of 'surveillance capitalism' is centred on the role of high-tech firms such as Facebook and Google and the techniques and algorithms they use to turn the individual's life experiences into commodities. These technologies break down our tastes, our experiences and our very lives into bits and pieces that can be analysed, parsed and then sold.

What Chris' description of state socialism, welfare capitalism, neoliberalism and Eastern authoritarianism have in common are the ever-more sophisticated mechanisms of social and political monitoring and control over populations. This is biopolitics with a vengeance. From China's facial recognition to the United Kingdom's CCTV, from Bluetooth links to our refrigerators and by simply clicking our phones, we are now constantly being watched, classified and monitored – by government institutions looking for subversion and by marketing firms predicting our latest consumer urge. In parts of Eurasia, the government's surveillance of the population, the monitoring and assessing of what we do, say, read or write, is heavy-handed and repressive, resembling the surveillance of the high Stalinist/Maoist periods (today they include the surveillance of the Uyghurs in China and of refugee-support activists in Hungary). Even before the COVID-19 disaster, more insidious algorithms and facial recognition measures were being used, either to directly reward or punish the population, as in China's 'point system', or merely to intimidate, as in 'illiberal' Hungary.

Viewed as a whole, we can conclude that the combination of surveillance capitalism and state digital surveillance techniques have merged into a comprehensive 'Eurasian' syndrome, a way of life. Were Jack Goody still with us, this scholar of technology and chronicler of the exchange between the eastern and western ends of Eurasia would be avidly describing Eurasian surveillance technologies in the way he described the spread of literacy or of plough agriculture. Indeed, Hungarian surveillance of

Roma minorities or refugee-support activists has a lot in common with Chinese surveillance of Uyghurs and of the Wuhan doctors who were trying to call our attention to the coronavirus.

These surveillance regimes are disembedding us from our most fundamental life experiences in horrific ways. The facial recognition software and the Chinese point system for good citizenship are just the beginning. Increasing powers are being given to (or usurped by) the state to first monitor and then control our every movement in the name of security or, now, to prevent coronavirus contagion. It portends a new kind of Eurasia, a Eurasia where different kinds of surveillance regimes converge: some market-based, others state-based, both meshing with the surveillance we carry out on each other, from snitching to whistleblowing (Sampson 2019b).

In his work, Chris has often compared different kinds of welfare regimes – more market-based in the West, more authoritarian in the East, stressing elements of convergence between them. Overlaying these welfare regimes are regimes of surveillance. We now see a Eurasia that oscillates between market-based surveillance in the west and more state-repressive surveillance in Hungary and in the east of Eurasia. In these various regimes of surveillance, we have nothing less than a ‘Eurasia of surveillance’. Here we have the germ of future ethnographic projects that can identify the kinds of resilience this surveillance will generate. After all, like state regulations, state borders, state censorship and brutal neoliberal market forces, people also find ways to cope with, adapt and transform their lifeways.

Conclusion: Eurasia as Spheres of Resilience and Cultures of Surveillance

The surveillance technologies described above pose new challenges to how ordinary people will cope with states and markets trying to control the most intimate aspects of our lives. How will people accommodate to these changes? What patterns of resilience will emerge? What would Polanyi’s ‘double movement’ be like under these circumstances? Understanding how resilience operates, how vulnerability is threatened and how surveillance affects us, and how these social transformations can enhance, alter or undermine our sociality – these form the very essence of Chris Hann’s project. Without worrying about ‘what resilience really means’ (let the Cambridge people do that), Chris’ work forces us to avoid drawing any final verdicts until we have the data. All of it. Hence, Chris advocates more ethnography, more nuance. He keeps us honest.

However, the question arises as to whether we can ever reach a point where we can come to a conclusion and say 'Now we know'. Can the call for more research ever be a refusal to actually draw a judgement – to call a spade a spade? For the resilience crowd, is there not a point where 'survival' or 'coping' become but euphemisms for misery or repression? In observing how people behave under the most adverse of circumstances, do we solve anything by calling it 'agency'? Is there a line in the sand to be drawn here?

Comparing Chris Hann's work in Hungary with my own experiences in Romania made me think again about this line. The various ways in which Hungarians and other Eurasian peoples have adjusted to the systems that affected their lives – brutal state repression, cumbersome bureaucracy, overt surveillance, brutal market swings, wage labour precarity and remaking of the self – all this is what makes resilience. And people's resilience, however we define it, is the stuff of anthropology. Yes, 'further research is needed'. However, what is also needed are some hypotheses and conclusions about possible 'spheres of resilience' and 'cultures of surveillance'.

In highlighting the need to research spheres of resilience and cultures of surveillance, we can perhaps follow Chris Hann's example and add him to the four inspiring anthropologists from whom he took inspiration. Resilience and surveillance are the new research frontiers, not just for the Visegrád states, but for all of Eurasia. Chris can't retire. He has work to do.

Steven Sampson is Professor (Emeritus) of Social Anthropology at Lund University and lives in Copenhagen, Denmark. He has researched state socialism in Romania, NGOs, corruption, conspiracy theory and business ethics.

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