

ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

# DISJUNCT MORAL ECONOMIES AT THE RUSSIA-CHINA-MONGOLIA BORDER

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Trust is usually regarded as a sine qua non of trade. However, in practice this is not the case: economic transactions may carry on in one form or another even when the participants are highly distrustful of one another. This lecture is based on the history and recent ethnography of business transactions at the Russia-China-Mongolia border. It will argue that mistrust, no less than trust, can be intrinsic to particular conceptualisations of moral economy. In a critique of certain approaches to global trade, it will provide an account of the different formulations of trust / mistrust held by state and local actors in the three countries and explore how these relate to practical interactions and socio-cultural separations..



**Caroline Humphrey** is a distinguished anthropologist of Inner Asia, with a particular focus on economic, political and cosmological forms. She has published extensively on these and other topics, with recent highlights including:

Humphrey, C. (ed.) 2018. *Trust and Mistrust in the Economies of the China-Russia Borderlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. This volume includes an Introduction 'Trust and Mistrusting Across Borders' and a chapter 'Trust, Chance and Disappointment: Real Estate Business in Russia's Far East,' by Caroline Humphrey.

Humphrey, C. 2018 'To smile and not to smile: mythic gesture at the Russia-China border'. *Social Analysis* 62(1):31-54.

Humphrey, C. (ed.) 2017. 'Loyalty and Disloyalty Along the Russian-Chinese Border'. *History and Anthropology* 28(4).

