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NEWSLETTER 2024/1 MARCH

IN FOCUS

Convenor Election Ahead: Call for Expressions of Interest

In May, members of the network will cast their votes to elect a new team of convenors, bringing fresh perspectives to our network.

The Anthropology of Economy Network within EASA has consistently been at the forefront of interdisciplinary discussions, bridging traditional anthropological approaches with contemporary economic theories. Over the years, it has organized numerous workshops, conferences, and seminars, offering its members invaluable opportunities to share research, collaborate on projects, and shape the future trajectory of anthropological studies on economic phenomena.

The Anthropology of Economy Network's election is not just a routine administrative shift but a reflection of EASA's commitment to ensuring that its networks remain relevant, dynamic, and member-driven. For many anthropologists, this network has been a home, a place of intellectual growth, and a platform to influence wider academic and policy debates.

We invite you to express your interest in the convenor positions.

The convenors will remain in office for two years with the possibility of serving for an additional term in the subsequent biennium.

The incoming team of convenors will undoubtedly shape the network's direction, making it imperative for members to participate, voice their presences, preferences, and vote.

The election will take place in May, during a virtual meeting. During the meeting, members are encouraged to engage actively in this renewal process. The date and link to the meeting will be announced through a dedicated email.

EASA 2024: The Anthropology of Economy Network Panels

Join us between the 23rd and 26th of July in Barcelona for the 18th Biennial Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), themed "Doing and Undoing with Anthropology." This exciting event will feature a diverse program that explores the cutting edge of anthropological research and practice.

One of the highlights of the conference is the series of panels sponsored by the EASA Anthropology of Economy Network. These panels delve into key issues shaping our world today and offer unique insights from leading scholars in the field. Here are four panels that we invite you to attend:

1. ****Illegitimacy and informality in the digital economy:****
2. ****Unveiling inequality and (un)doing ethnography of datafied capitalism:****
3. ****Black hands, green jobs: unpacking decarbonization through green labour:****
4. ****Doing and undoing (with) the anthropology of infrastructure:****

To view the full program of the conference and learn more about these panels, please visit the official conference website at: <https://www.easaonline.org/conferences/easa2024/programme>.

Don't miss this opportunity to engage with cutting-edge anthropological research and connect with scholars from around the world. We look forward to seeing you in Barcelona!

PERSPECTIVES, NOTES AND QUERIES

East Asian White-Collar Work and Economic Anthropology

On 6 October, the University of Sheffield hosted a virtual symposium bringing together three anthropologists on the topic of white-collar work: Xinyan Peng from Sun-Yat Sen University and author of *Corporate Women in Contemporary China* (Routledge 2022); Nana Gagné from The Chinese University of Hong Kong and author of *Reworking Japan* (Cornell IRL 2021); and me, author of *Supercorporate: Distinction and Participation in Post-Hierarchy South Korea* (Stanford 2022). Each book addresses the dynamics that corporate workers wrestle with across the region in light of state projects, neoliberal reforms, social norms and corporate power that have marked each country's recent history.

One broad question the books point to is how understanding East Asian white-collar work and workers can contribute to broader theorising within economic anthropology. If we can posit that economic anthropology is often situated at the interface between capitalist wage labour and non-capitalist or traditional forms of work and sociality, East Asian white-collar office work does not always occupy a clear position.

In the region, white-collar work remains a prestige end-point of educational trajectories, professional aspirations and middle-class desires. While certain neoliberal reforms have affected white-collar work, they have not had the more dramatic effects that they have had in the West; in some cases, desires for corporate or white-collar work have in fact increased. Looking at the ethnographic details, it is also clear that white-collar work can not be understood simply in terms of patterns in the US or Europe. For instance, the common Western distinction between 'work' and 'life' does not always hold across East Asia. This ambiguity might explain why East Asian white-collar work has not garnered significant attention in anthropology recently, despite its relative ubiquity in nationalist projects and popular media across the region.

Each of the books shows how white-collar work can be a productive site for theorising. In *Reworking Japan*, Gagné notes that those who are understood to be in the dominant gender or labour categories (male office workers and managers) are nevertheless subjects who are acted upon and affected by broader hegemonic forces; amidst broader macro-economic dislocations they nevertheless maintain their own subjectivity and forms of sociality. In *Corporate Women*, Peng makes a different point, showing why the concept of work must be treated anthropologically: it is a historically rooted category (linked to Chinese women's labour histories) but also a flexible category that can appear in other domains, like exercise and reproduction. My own work on South Korea shows that corporate organisations are not simply legal devices or fixed structures, but can be understood as a complex infrastructure of signs that are actively managed and sensitive to subtle shifts.

Each of the monographs goes beyond updating research on areas that social scientists may feel are already familiar, perhaps even unchanging. Instead, they point to novel ways that white-collar work in East Asia can and should occupy an important place in theory-building in economic anthropology.

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If you want to reply to this column, or if you want to write a column or have an idea for one, please communicate with James G. Carrier: jgc.carrier@gmail.com

EVENTS

The Anthropological Dialogues on Capitalisms and Fascisms Series Continues

The Anthropological Dialogues on Capitalisms and Fascisms continue this spring, with three sessions planned.

This collaboration is organised by the Anthropology of Economy Network and the Anthropology of Fascisms Network, the European Network for Queer Anthropology and the Anthropology of Labour Network. We grouped together to investigate the current conjuncture of fascist tendencies and their relation to capitalist social reproduction.

The 2024 Spring Sessions

Zoom-Link for all sessions: <https://unisg.zoom.us/j/68791540724?pwd=TiJp.XVzhVj3hpeGINSWRza09zM11HOT09>

Meeting-ID: 687 9154 0724, Passcode: 090718

Wed, March 27th 15.30 - 17.00 CEST

Challenging Far-Right Anti-Capitalism? Imaginaries, Practices, Critique

A conversation with Agnieszka Pasieka
Organized by Andreas Streinzer (AOE)

Thu, Apr 18th 16.00 - 17.30 CEST

Violent Borders: Deterrence, Detention, and Deportation in Times of Extremes

Organized by Sabine Strasser

Mon, May 20th 16.30 - 18.00 CEST

Concluding Discussion: Considering New Avenues Researching Capitalism and Fascism for Critical Anthropology

Chaired by Maddalena Gretel Cammelli (ANTHROFA)

More Info: <https://easaonline.org/networks/economy/events>

CALL FOR PAPERS

Research in Economic Anthropology

Research in Economic Anthropology is planning to publish a volume on internal and international migration. Papers are welcome on internal migration within and international migration from developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, the Pacific Islands and Eastern Europe. Push factors such as political repression and/or gang violence; climate change challenges; the ravages of Green Revolution technology; economic, political and environmental pressures on the peasantry; and globally induced economic upheavals as well as pull and other factors that induce migration flows including network-mediation and return migration, are open for examination from an anthropological point of view.

The articles should be double-spaced in Times New Roman script and comprise 6,200 to 8,000 words including bibliography. Format and references should be in APA style. An abstract of 100-200 words is necessary, and all works cited should be included in a references section. Self-identification should be avoided if possible. Please send submissions prior to the deadline date of April 1, 2024 to issue editors Tamar Diana Wilson (tamardianawilson@yahoo.com) and Christian Zlotniski (chrisz@uta.edu).

Research in Economic Anthropology (IREA) is a peer-reviewed academic journal/book series that focuses on the anthropological investigation of economy and culture/society. Launched by JAI press in 1978, it was first edited by George Dalton, then by Barry Isaac who managed the series from 1984 until its acquisition by Elsevier at the turn of the current century. Donald Wood has served as editor since 2005 and the series has been published by Emerald Group Publishing Ltd. (Bingley, UK) since 2007.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS



Don Kalb (ed.). 2024. Insidious Capital: Frontlines of Value at the End of a Global Cycle. New York: Berghahn Books.

In *Insidious Capital*, Don Kalb and his University of Bergen team of anthropologists and geographers, explore "value and values" in the last phase of capitalist globalization. In a global perspective of fast-transforming social spaces that move from East to West (rather than the other way around), the book studies struggles around the exploitation and valuation of labor, environmental politics, expansion of the ground rent, new hierarchies, the contradictions of higher education, the offshoring of "immaterial" labor, the illiberal right, and the mobilizations against it. This is a book about the variegated frontlines of value within an uneven, but not random, geography of capitalist expansion. The book also offers an extensive and original discussion about the concept of value, setting up a conversation between 'anthropological value theories' and Marxist political economy, in particular David Graeber and David Harvey.

The volume is freely available from the publisher's website.

ISBN 978-1-80539-155-5
<https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/KalbInsidious>



Juliane Müller. 2024. Embodying Exchange: Materiality, Morality and Global Commodity Chains in Andean Commerce. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Addressing the infrastructural, social and legal complexities of a global commodity chain, this book uses an ethnographic analysis of the encounter between multinational electronics manufacturers and popular traders in the Bolivian Andes. It offers a situated account of the everyday work of chain (un)making, and practices of translation, accommodation and contention. It highlights traders' economic action, understanding of economic concepts and regulatory principles, and traces commercial dynamics beyond market exchange. All in all, it aims to comprehend the reproduction of the native trading system amid global connections, and to humanize our understanding of the contemporary economy by grounding it in everyday life, bottom-up socio-material infrastructures and morality.

ISBN 978-1-80539-263-7
<https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/MullerEmbodying>

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Fontefrancesco, Michele Filippo. 2023. "A Local Cheese: The Affective Economy of Food Embeddedness in the Italian Western Alps." *Humans* 3 (4): 271-282. DOI: [10.3390/humans3040021](https://doi.org/10.3390/humans3040021).

Knapp, Max, Julia Litofcenko, Silva Maringele, Andreas Streinzer, Lina Schmid, and Mario Taschan. 2024. "Current Policy Initiatives in Green Finance in the EU: The Green Taxonomy in the Global Context." In *Understanding Green Finance: A Critical Assessment and Alternative Perspectives*, edited by Johannes Jäger and Ewa Dziwok, 73-87. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. DOI: [10.4337/9781803927558_00014](https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803927558_00014).

Kojanić, Ognjen. 2024. "Estimations of Value in 'Belgrade's Amazonia.'" *Economic Anthropology* 11 (1): 112-21. DOI: [10.1002/sea2.12305](https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12305).

The Anthropology of Economy network was launched at the 2012 conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists. The Network unites EASA members who share an interest in the anthropology of economy. Further information on the AoE Network: <https://www.easaonline.org/networks/economy/>

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AoE Network Newsletter 2024/1 was set by Ognjen Kojanić.

