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## NEWSLETTER 2021/1 MARCH

### IN FOCUS

#### **Anthropology of Economy in Europe**

We would like to showcase the diversity of Anthropology of Economy in Europe - for an example see below!

As a network, we are keen to shed light on the different scholarly traditions developed in Europe with regard to economic anthropology and bring diverse approaches to Anthropology of the Economy to light. We invite all members of the network to share stories and information about anthropological research on economic issues and the economy in their countries with us. This is key to pluralizing and enriching debates in the sub-discipline by showing different approaches, themes and findings. The space offered in this newsletter cannot be comprehensive, but is intended to offer a selection and represent some of the different perspectives of our members in the field of economic anthropology. Thus, we very much welcome your contributions.

Please send your articles, comments and feedbacks for the newsletter (around 350 words) to: [m.fontefrancesco@unisg.it](mailto:m.fontefrancesco@unisg.it)

Studies of economic relations and phenomena from an anthropological perspective started to burgeon in Serbia in the early 2000s.

In the beginning, they were mainly concentrated on the changes in the economy through the prism of contacts between the capitalist “West” and the post-socialist “East”. Research activities were grouped around two major international projects, through which the changing economic and social landscapes were mapped. The aim of the research was also to collect data for the creation of applicative, research-informed, policies. The first project, "After the Accession... The Socio-Economic Culture of Eastern Europe in the Enlarged Union: An Asset or a Liability?" (2002-2003), was a pilot project that later evolved into "Dioskuri: Eastern Enlargement – Western Enlargement Cultural Encounters in the European Economy and Society after the Accession" (2004-2008). Both projects were designed to explore - in the comparative perspective of several countries of CEE and the Balkans – how “packages” containing liberal economic and social policies were unfolded, interpreted and employed in different national/local communities. Several case studies came out as a result of this research, which has been turned into a number of papers, edited volumes and thematic journal issues. The case studies were methodologically based on fieldwork, interviews, observation and have used available written sources. The members of the Serbian research team were coordinated by Vesna Vučinić-Nešković.

In the past years, studies in economic anthropology explored new fields of research. In particular, studies were conducted on:

- the socio-cultural dimensions of consumption, traditional models of exchange (“pozajmanje”) and cultural conceptualizations of entrepreneurship among working migrants (“gastarbajteri”);
- the effects of increasing neo-liberalization of the economy on the processes of social remembering and forgetting and commoditization of empathy and care;
- the storytelling of stories of material success or failure, explored through their contextualization in urban legends and folklore;
- the functioning of the grey economy in the centre of Belgrade, by describing informal practices and arrangements that makes the grey economy today functions as a safety net in times when both economic stability and political legitimacy are in crisis.

the international debate.

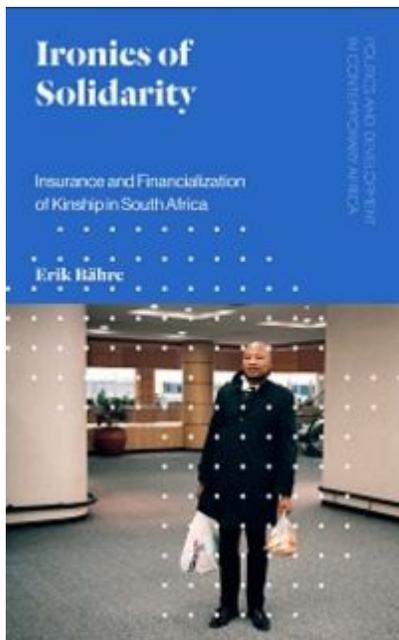
Ildiko Erdei

Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Belgrade

A longer version of the article with a detailed bibliography can be downloaded [here](#).

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### BOOKS, EDITED VOLUMES, AND SPECIAL ISSUES



Bähre, Erik (2020). *Ironies of Solidarity. Insurance and Financialization of Kinship in South Africa*. London: Zed Books  
Paperback ISBN: 9781786998583  
Hardback ISBN: 9781786998576  
eBook ePub ISBN: 9781786998545  
eBook Kindle ISBN: 9781786998552

Set in one of the world's most unequal and violent places, this ethnographic study reveals how insurance companies discovered a vast market of predominantly poor African clients. After apartheid ended in 1994, South Africa became a 'testing ground' for new insurance products, new marketing techniques and pioneering administrative models with a potentially global market.

By examining financialization in the townships of Cape Town, this book considers both how South Africans enjoy the financial freedoms they gained and how the onset of democracy affected the risks they

monograph offers a detailed analysis of South Africa's insurance sector, the organizations and networks that sell policies and handle claims, and the attraction of insurance that promises prosperity and liberation from mutual obligations. The book carefully examines how insurance realigns social relations among kin, within neighbourhoods and communities, and how insurance technologies give rise to specific moral concerns.

<https://www.zedbooks.net/shop/book/ironies-of-solidarity/>



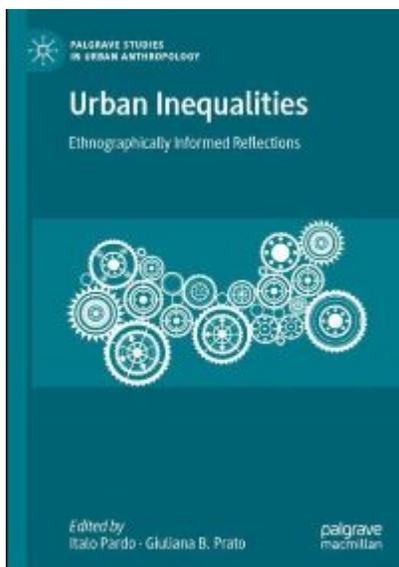
Fontefrancesco, Michele F. (2020) *Food Festivals and Local Development in Italy. A Viewpoint from Economic Anthropology*. London: Palgrave. Hardcover ISBN: 978-3-030-53320-5 eBook ISBN 978-3-030-53321-2

What does the proliferation of food festivals tell us about rural areas? How can these celebrations pave the way to a better future for the local communities? This book is addressing these questions contributing to the ongoing debate about the future of rural peripheries in Europe.

The volume is based on the ethnographic research conducted in Italy, a country internationally known for its food tradition and one of the European countries where the gap between rural and urban space is

festivals, exploring the transformational role they have to change and develop rural communities. Although the festivals aim mostly at tourism, they contribute in a wider way to the life of the rural communities, acting as devices through which a community redefines itself, reinforces its sociality, reshapes the perception and use of the surrounding environment. In so doing, thus, the book suggests reading the festivals not just as celebrations driven by food fashion, but rather fundamental grassroots instruments to contrast the effects of rural marginalization and pave the way to a possible better future for the community.

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030533205>



Pardo, Italo, and Prato, Giuliana B. (eds.). (2021) *Urban Inequalities. Ethnographically Informed Reflections*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hardcover ISBN: 978-3-030-51723-6

eBook ISBN: 978-3-030-51724-3

This collection brings together leading thinkers on human beings in urban spaces and inequalities therein. The contributors eschew conceptual confusion between equality — of opportunity, of access, of the right to compete for whatever goal one chooses to pursue — and

forms of inequality in urban settings need to be understood in depth, as does the machinery that, as masterfully elucidated by Hannah Arendt, operates behind oppression to sustain power and inequality. Anthropologists and fellow ethnographically-committed social scientists examine socio-economic, cultural and political forms of urban inequality in different settings, helping to address comparatively these dynamics.

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030517236>

## ARTICLES

Bruckermann, Charlotte. 2021. "Network Marketing and State Legitimacy in China: Regulating Trust from Physical Workplaces to Virtual Spaces." *Economic Anthropology* 8: 86-101. DOI: [10.1002/sea2.12201](https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12201)

Eckhardt, Dennis, May, Sarah, Röthl, Martina, and Tischberger Roman (2020). "Digitale Arbeitskulturen. Transformationen erforschen." *Berliner Blätter: ethnographische und ethnologische Beiträge*, 82: 3-15. <https://www2.hu-berlin.de/ifeeojs/index.php/blaetter/article/view/1068>

Huigen, Brandaan (2021) "Beyond Confinement: Cape Gangsters and the Sub-Saharan Trade of Stolen Electronics." *Ethnos*, Online first. DOI: [10.1080/00141844.2021.1887914](https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2021.1887914)

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## PERSPECTIVES, NOTES AND QUERIES

### Understanding the domestic realm of the economy

For decades anthropologists have challenged the common assumption that

changes in the productive realm of the economy have contributed to the loosening of the connections between it and domestic life. Currently we are experiencing lockdowns that confirm that the two are interdependent, as complex ties between domestic organisation and the economy are coming to the fore. The French Minister of the Economy and Finance, for instance, complained how difficult it was for some of his employees working from home to concentrate during online meetings, as their children were running around. The efficiency and productivity of his Ministry had come to depend on domestic re-organisation.

More generally, lockdowns have made apparent the ways in which inequalities along such lines as wealth, gender, race, housing and identity have affected the operation of the economy. There is a clear division between those who can do their jobs working from home, thus limiting their physical and potentially infectious contacts with others, and those who have to leave home to work and so must expose themselves, and indirectly their households, to infection. Obvious among these are international labour migrants.

In the Spring of 2020, for instance, workers from Eastern Europe arrived in Germany on special flights to harvest asparagus and strawberries. These temporary jobs in extraordinary times are inscribed in a longstanding relation between Eastern Europe and Germany, in which the former provides part of the workforce necessary to the economic prosperity of the latter.

Among people working from home, we can distinguish those with housing spacious enough to allow them to isolate themselves from domestic noise and distraction, and those whose homes are too small for that. In this way, working from home has become a catalyst for (re)connections between the domestic realm, with its rhythms, spaces, duties and chores, and the economy.

Moves to halt the pandemic while keeping the economy going have made clear what anthropologists have long argued, that in contemporary societies the household or domestic unit is not simply a unit of consumption that otherwise is outside the capitalist economic realm. Feminist and Marxist anthropologists have argued that the household subsidises the market, which extracts value from it. In Stephen Gudeman's terms, what he calls the house is the base of the economy, even in highly developed market economies.

Is the pandemic changing the forms of interdependency between household and market by making the domestic sphere instrumental to the continuation of

perhaps more tolerable as they are seen to allow the economy to keep going? While searching for answers to these and other questions, we can hope that anthropological understandings of the place of the household in the economy are now becoming part of common wisdom.

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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:

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## **CALLS FOR PAPERS, APPLICATIONS AND SIMILAR**

**Call for the new issue of *History of World Anthropologies* edited by  
Eduardo Dullo, Patrícia Ferraz de Matos, Frederico Delgado Rosa**

This thematic issue intends to contribute towards a reassessment of the past of anthropology in a broad sense, by understanding the knowledge and ethnographic practices that precede or complement scientific institutionalization, also including features of amateurism and experimentalism in varied and interconnected contexts. We do not seek only a post-colonial criticism of the attempts to survey and analyse human variability, but rather to examine the contributions in their own time and place, in the historical dynamics of anthropology. This issue is open to case studies focused on peripheral, external or off-centre anthropological traditions as compared to the so-called “major traditions”: we seek to pay special attention to the lusophone and Ibero-American contexts (including all Latin America), considering not only their intersections, but also the fact that they are often excluded from hegemonic historiographic narratives. It is a comparative reflection on the historical antecedents of the current paradigm of world anthropologies in the 19th and 20th centuries (up to the 1970s) and dissemination of anthropological praxis. The sub-disciplinary field is that of the history of anthropology, while it invites interdisciplinarity between anthropology, history, history of science and historical anthropology, and encourages dialogue through a re-reading of

Full details about the special issue can be found on the website of Horizontes Antropológicos, or obtained via e-mail at [horizontes@ufrgs.br](mailto:horizontes@ufrgs.br).

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/>

**Contact for Newsletter inquiries and submissions:**

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AoE Network Newsletter 2021/1 was set by Ognjen Kojanić.



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