

ETHNOGRAPHY TALKS

TRANSDISCIPLINARY CONVERSATIONS IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND BEYOND

This series is
organized by the
critical ethnography
collective at the
School of
Humanities and
Social Sciences
@HSG

April, 17th, 2023

Redistribution or Debt?

Rechannelling Financial Flows

Deborah James (London School of Economics)

Chair: Insa Koch

10:15-12:15 | The Square ARENA | hybrid event

(ZOOM MEETING ID: 66017856792 / Code: 671963)

Redistribution can range from high-profile examples such as the shake-up of land ownership in the wake of political change, through less visible/obvious ones like the expansion of welfare payments, to frankly counter-intuitive ones like the extending of credit to the poor. The resources disbursed can range from those collected through formal taxation to those assembled through less organised arrangements. It is no longer (if it ever was) just a matter for the state/society; where financialisation is accompanied by increased informalisation, redistribution can equally involve the market and it can mean funds moving 'upwards' as well as 'downwards'. The form of redistribution I will discuss is one in which state welfare payments have been diverted by financial companies to become loan collateral. My approach to this process challenges some prevalent approaches to financialisation, in which binary thinking about the stark separation of commodified and non-commodity relationships is prevalent; market 'logics' intrude into intimate family and social relations; and families are disciplined to act in ways that reproduce the formalized demands of financial contracts. I use material from South Africa to illustrate my argument, though my broader project encompasses other comparative cases. The extent to which some form of compensation or fair redress is accomplished varies depending on the perspective of participants.

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May 8th, 2023

**Feminist speculations and interventions:
Potentials to transgress prevailing epistemic regimes**

Kathrin Eitel (University of Zürich)

Chair: Tanja Schneider (HSG)

10:15-12:15^(CEST) | The Square ARENA | hybrid event

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Feminist speculations and interventions are not necessarily part of the canon of ethnographic methodology, but they are gaining importance in the wake of an increasing critique of postcolonial and hegemonic epistemic processes of knowledge production. What both ethnographic "methods" have in common is that they enable and are driven by a becoming-with in a more-than-human world. Feminist speculation is done from and with worlds; it is personal and situated writing that collaborates with affective states, experiences, and "others." Interventions, however, are situated experiments that produce epistemic effects that affect both research sites and epistemic regimes. In this talk, I will explore where the potentials (and pitfalls) lie for both epistemic methods as creative resistance.

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Zoom Meeting ID: 660 1785 6792
Code: 671963

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SPRING 2023

March 9th

Grounding Energy:

Materiality, Extraction, and the Allure of Potentiality in Bolivia

Mareike Winchell (University of Chicago) and Mark Goodale (University of Lausanne), Chair: Thomas Grisaffi

10:15-12:15 | The Square ARENA | hybrid event

This joint presentation by two anthropologists of Bolivia examines the fraught interrelationship between materiality, extraction, and contested futurities as a key analytical frame through which to understand both enduring and emergent sociopolitical and socioeconomic dynamics in contemporary Bolivia. Using two distinct forms of extraction as case studies—fire management and mismanagement (Winchell) and the production of “battery grade” lithium compounds from brine (Goodale)—the presentation explores the ways in which the materialities of energy processes crystallize legacies of racialized dispossession, local projects of auto-development, and competing visions of “productive sovereignty,” among others, all against a background of wider regional and global climate crisis.