

CALL FOR PAPERS

Launching of the European Network for Anthropology of Economy

The **EASA Anthropology of Economy Network** was recently created to interconnect those European anthropologists working on economic issues, and to provide a forum for sharing information and opportunities and fostering discussion. It is the time to organise an initial meeting in order to get to know each other and foresee future activities and initiatives. For this launching meeting we are not thinking of a big international gathering but rather a more reduced, familiar, meeting and workshop held in the Autonomous University of Barcelona the 4th and 5th of February 2014. We welcome anthropologists interested in economy to take part in the introductory meeting of the EASA Anthropology of Economy Network and to present a paper on the described topic. Selected papers will be published in the journal *ARS & HUMANITAS* (possibly in your respective language) in the year 2014.

Deadline for submission of proposals: 31th December 2013

Key theme for the workshop:

- **Solidarity, reciprocity, and economy in times of downturn: Understanding and articulating the logics of old and new values in late capitalism**

The current financial crisis and its impact on European societies highlight the shortcomings of the current economic system. In peripheral countries in particular, dramatic rates of unemployment, a general fall in consumption, labour casualization, forced labour migration, poverty, evictions for non-payment of mortgages, etc., are depicting a dramatic situation for a great part of the society. Neoliberal economies driven by most European governments offer little solution for most of the population directly affected by the crisis.

New and revived forms of production, supply, distribution and consumption are emerging as a way to overcome economic difficulties, particularly within small communities. Processes of reciprocity and solidarity are taking place in households, unions, fraternities, villages, religious communities, cooperatives, universities and factories, family or enterprises. Even though we might theoretically question the dominant position of the state in the field of political economy (GDP, production, consumption, solidarity, educational and legal systems), such diversified, active and self-evolving economic activities among European inhabitants could strengthen, not jeopardise, EU institutions and the role of the state, giving place to new types of “social contracts”. Nonetheless, as anthropologists we have got to point out and analyse the relations, disconnections and dependencies established between grassroots responses to the current global situation and the models and structures that might be influencing and even shaping those responses. In such process, it becomes clear that all forms of community (human, social) economy should be analysed in relation to their historical conditions and potentials. It is the principle of *mutual aid and cooperation* that strengthens society, and one can find this principle almost everywhere. The question is, what form are these values acquiring in the present time, and how are they confronting or appropriating already-existing ones?

At the beginning of the 20th century anthropologists reported about internal connections, reciprocity and “social safety” among non-European communities, overthrowing and at the same type enriching social, cultural and legal knowledge of Western capitalist societies. Some of these economic processes and institutions are being reincorporated under a new light and are being applied in new contexts. Are those old economic strategies creating new economic problems? What’s the role of the state?

On the one hand we find solidarity mechanisms fighting poverty in marginal areas, urban survival strategies, informal and/or counteractive “alternative” movements, cooperative and associative business models, community empowerment groups, local currencies and exchange systems, etc., and on the other, the growth of the Third Sector and new institutional discourses claiming for justice and ethics to be re-inserted into the economy and society, where social innovation is increasingly valued. Similarly, as other scholars have pointed out in the past few years, it might be the time to reassess the analytical categories and concepts used in ethnography in order to stretch far beyond local interactions and to enrich theoretical debates, in an attempt to also reflect critically upon our own assumptions. In highly connected and complex societies where the development of technology is speeding up interaction and transformation, it is vital to develop methods that will allow us to engage fully with everyday livelihood projects and their connection with the social and economic structure in which they operate.

We welcome proposals for presentations addressing these issues (these may be based on more polished papers or may be more informal explorations of work in progress). Please send your proposals to: **Marta Lobato: martamarialr(at)gmail.com**

Feel free to contact any of the coordinators:

Patty Gray: patty.gray(at)nuim.ie (National U. of Ireland Maynooth)

Peter Simonic: peter.simonic(at)guest.arnes.si (U. Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Hugo Valenzuela: hugo.valenzuela(at)uab.es (U. Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)

Local assistant: Marta Lobato: martamarialr(at)gmail.com (U. Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)