

**CALL FOR PAPERS: American Anthropological Association annual meeting.
Washington, DC, December 3-7, 2014**

**Impacts, interpretations and setbacks of Cash Transfer Programs:
An Anthropology of Development Approach**

This panel will bring together researchers working on Cash Transfer programs from the perspective of the anthropology of development.

These programs, put in place within the last 20 years, are now present in more than 30 countries (in Africa, Latin America, Asia, but also New York City). They have become the privileged formula of development assistance, and mark how the fight against poverty and welfare are being thought about in the early 21st century (Lavinas, 2013). These programs transfer a sum of money directly to the beneficiary, identified as amongst the poorest of the poor, sometimes in a conditional manner (notably, tied to the procurement of identity papers, school enrolment or health center visits) and sometimes unconditionally. Cash transfers might be instituted in emergency situations (humanitarian aid), or alternatively on a routine basis (the fight against poverty). They are typical of top-down development (also characterized as the 'blueprint approach').

As opposed to macroeconomic analyses or randomized control trials, the presenters on this panel are invited to present research using qualitative methods that bring to light the predicted and unpredicted results of these programs on the target populations. Such methods may also highlight the gaps between systems of standardized norms, imposed by these programs, as opposed to local norms and their diversity. It may also capture how cash transfers are interpreted and made use of (sometimes in innovative ways) by local populations, who adapt the conditionalities set by the programs to local realities.

Normally, quantitative measures of impacts focus on purchasing power, food security, or access to public services (health and education). However, field studies also reveal the unexpected effects in terms of gender relations, as aid is generally allocated to women, who are seen as the best managers of the household (Nagels, 2011; Molyneux, 2006). Other research notes that, in certain cases, conditionality enables greater control of target populations by a panoply of actors (the State, local promoters, authorities) who use this conditionality for their own purposes, notably political, hygienist or assimilationist ends. Lastly, some work demonstrates the capture strategies adopted by local elites, or other opportunist usages of these programs.

Anthropological analysis demonstrate how cash transfer programs are perceived and transformed by the populations they intend to help. Mythical or millenarian interpretations can also be used to make sense of this aid, whose perverse effects include endangering local social equilibria and generating new tensions (Piccoli, 2014). Finally, trickery, diversion and adaptation strategies show local creativity in the face of vertical politics (Olivier de Sardan, 2013).

This panel seeks, therefore, to update ongoing research on cash transfer programs in anthropology and qualitative social sciences, and to generate systematic and rigorous comparative analysis between different countries where these programs are in place.

If you are interested in participating, please contact both Emmanuelle Piccoli (Emmanuelle.piccoli@uclouvain.be) and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan (jeanpierre.olivierdesardan@ird.fr) with an abstract.

The deadline for submitting abstracts to the AAA is April 15 (both for sessions and individual papers). Once we have gauged the level of interest and range of topics, we will contact potential participants to let them know if their paper fits.

Participants should be prepared to provide a rough draft of an abstract to us by April 7th so we can organize the session and provide instructions for submitting abstracts to the AAA. Details are also available on the AAA website: <http://www.aaanet.org/meetings/Call-for-Papers.cfm>

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions.

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