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## **SOVEREIGNTY, CONTESTATION AND 'THE ECONOMY'**

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### **CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS**

#### **PANEL: SHARING ECONOMIES & THE COMMONS**

##### **MAKING MARKETS MORAL: TIME AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID**

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Of late, the morphology of capitalism appears to be shifting. Its seemingly unassailable logic --- predatory extraction, wealth maximisation, self interested calculation and the like --- is giving way to a 'capitalism of the good', as corporate actors seek to assert 'moral' stewardship over a broad spectrum of societal concerns, from climate change and poverty to hunger and disease. A distinctly moral vision has become a measure of legitimacy for the resignified corporate form, with a plethora of well-intentioned programmes, from CSR to inclusive business, now standard fare.

This paper focuses on corporate attempts to 'humanize' the economy through bottom of the pyramid (BoP) initiatives. The BoP model seek to bridge a corporate logic of profit maximization with a moral commitment to sustainable development by bringing much-needed products and services to the poor and by generating employment opportunities for informal workers as 'micro-entrepreneurs.' In this paper, I draw on ethnographic research of BoP schemes in East Africa to examine how market values, embodied in corporate managerial techniques, calculative strategies and representations, come to be constructed and diffused as moral framework for interpretation and action. This framework is premised upon temporal registers, ethics of work, and relational models that seek to displace 'under-productive' vernacular meanings and values; the habits and dispositions of African entrepreneurs seen to obstruct the path to financial accumulation and moral virtue. The paper suggests that though BoP initiatives can enable the semblance of an ethical and principled corporation, their capacity to 'make markets work for the poor', hinges upon a process of recomposition, and often decomposition, of previous modes of being and doing; its moral currency borne from the values and virtues of maximisation that render the poor fit for global markets.

##### **FROM SHARECROPPING TO EQUITABLE SHARES: CONVERSIONS OF LAND, COMMONS, AND THE SHARING ECONOMY IN NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL**

Jonathan DeVore, Ph.D.

The concepts of sharing and the commons are normatively and historically ambivalent. Some configurations of sharing, such as sharecropping or alms-giving, proceed from and sustain asymmetrical relations of access

and ownership. Access to commons, in other historical contexts, served to make unequal forms of life more bearable. In some respects, then, both sharing and the commons were functional within hierarchical and unequal social systems. In other ways, however, internal transformations of such social arrangements have brought about unanticipated conversions in the sharing economy.

This paper traces transformations in the logic of sharing, and apportioned shares of land, from Brazil's slave period through contemporary land rights movements in the northeastern state of Bahia. Both before and after the abolition of slavery, access to land was essential to rural families seeking to escape the hardships of slavery or to overcome its enduring legacies. In the post-emancipation period, however, Brazil's unequal distribution of land undermined the promise of legal freedom by making it difficult for ex-slaves to realize fuller visions of life. For many former slaves and their descendants, "freedom" often meant sharecropping on the same plantations from which they had been released.

The author examines unexpected ways in rural Brazilians have succeeded in converting such shares into more equitable distributions. The author begins by examining the phenomenon of slave gardens in 19<sup>th</sup> century Brazil. While some historians viewed such gardens as functional within the slave system, others suggested that apportioning common land to slaves opened up a "peasant breach" that brought about unanticipated reconfigurations in patterns of property and social recognition. The author traces parallel developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—including unexpected breaches in sharecropping relations, and sharing and exchange relations between squatters and plantation managers—that have helped landless workers undermine asymmetrical patterns of land ownership and reconfigure the sharing economy.

#### **INSTITUTING CITIZENSHIP: ON THE FORMALISATION OF MONETARY MULTIPLICITY IN THE NETHERLANDS**

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Attempts to recalibrate the relationship between state and market towards a more socially equitable and economically viable model are increasingly taking shape at an institutional level. This paper examines how institutionalised collective action gives rise to new civic ties and identities via the implementation of a complementary currency (CC): a non-state issued money circulating within the boundaries of a city or neighbourhood, which exists alongside the euro (Maurer 2005). Though often analysed as grassroots innovations to financial practice (Gibson-Graham 2006; North 1999), CCs are by and large designed and implemented by Dutch organisations and municipalities to achieve desired social outcomes in conjunction with the new governance paradigm of participatory citizenship (MBZK 2013). Through an ethnographic description of the institutionalisation of monetary multiplicity, this paper shows how re-appropriating money's purpose creates governance models based on decentralised collaboration with the public and private sector, as well as inspires citizenship agendas. By exploring such developing networks and cross-sectoral partnerships, it becomes evident that notions of desired civic behaviour emerge, and are understood, via institutional collaboration towards another economy.

#### **CONTESTING THE VALUE OF ALTERNATIVE FOOD AFTER THE CRISIS: THE ROLE OF LIVELIHOOD**

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Growing and eating food, as we have known it after World War II, is no longer possible. The post-WWII regime of productivism and mass consumption is breaking down, partly due to its replacement by elites with a more disembedded model of economy, partly due to its negative effects on people and nature, and the lack of social legitimacy this has caused. Numerous initiatives have developed to deal with such effects, including so-called alternative food networks (AFNs). As commodification increases, so does the movement to counter it. AFNs can be interpreted as trying to change the (re)production of value—economic, social, environmental—in a rapidly disembedding economy. Highlighting the importance of grassroots actions in the constitution and dissolution of regimes of value, AFNs (re)produce a set of relations that partially "transgress"

the politico-economic and cultural boundaries of commodified food. But what are the effects of the current European juncture of neoliberal austerity on AFNs? On the one hand, austerity may open the possibility for the rediscovery of economy as a moral project based on non-instrumental values like mutualism and ecological care. On the other, the fall in living standards that has affected most European countries, especially southern ones, may pose a threat to AFNs both in terms of retrenchment and appeal. This paper will seek answers to these complex questions through the use of materials from a multi-sited ethnography of AFNs in southern and northern Italy, spanning the course of ten years. The paper will focus on the tensions and contradictions that emerge within AFNs among diversely situated groups of people, especially those who consume and those who produce “alternative” foods and the services required to circulate them. It will thus highlight the material and symbolic rift that livelihood potentially creates in these initiatives, and in the discourse of consumer citizenship.

## **RECOVERING FOOD COMMONS IN POST INDUSTRIAL EUROPE: COOPERATION NETWORKS IN ORGANIC FOOD PROVISIONING IN CATALONIA AND NORWAY**

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Marianne Lien, Professor in Social Anthropology, Dep. Social Anthropology

In this paper we explore food commoning through comparison between Catalonia and Norway. The Catalanian case is our primary site while the Norwegian case is juxtaposed as a comparison. The ethnography from Catalonia analyses cooperation networks between organic food producers' and consumers' involving different nodes of producers' and consumers' self-managed cooperatives, urban gardening initiatives, self-employed growers, local farmers and all of them under a unique cooperative integrating a community economy. The result it is a myriad of exchange practices ranging from reciprocity and barter to market exchange without intermediaries through on-line platforms. Along these exchanges different options of currency intervene giving rise to novel social and cooperative relations. Similar initiatives in Norway show less variation and are less experimental regarding forms of payment, but articulate a similarly critical stance in relation to conventional commodity chains. Although these novel forms do not represent a complete break from the more standardized supply chains, and hence from the oppositions/contradictions of production and consumption, the participants still see themselves as contributing to a more general process of de-commodification of food. Their main goal is to reframe the moral economy in new cultural and social frameworks providing new meaning and values. The freedom of choice in foods is at the heart of this activism with a focus on the democratization of the right to decide on the goods we consume and how these are produced and distributed. These cooperation networks aim to dampen the polarization of food in market prices and express solidarity with and among small-scale organic food producers. Food, we suggest, is more than a commodity on the market that we may influence through our role as consumers; it is also a significant focal point connecting our lives to those of others that articulates one's relations to society in a political manner.

## **PANEL: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**

### **LIFE IN COMMON? TRADITION, SUSTAINABILITY AND ORGANICS IN ANDALUSIA, SPAIN**

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In Andalusia, large-scale production of organic fruit and vegetables for export to northern Europe is contested as a viable development trajectory by smaller farmers and activists. Their alternative to mainstream organics focuses on the *pueblo* (town) as both people and place, traditional agriculture, and peasant (*campesino*) economics. This paper traces this localized economic and organic model in Western Cadiz province. While the model carries ideological weight built around a common history and common cause in sustaining livelihoods, it problematically obscures tensions and contested practices in the *pueblos*.

The historical experiences of large-scale agriculture and the exploitation of a precarious labour force, exacerbated by increasing mechanization and the use of agro-chemicals since the 1970s, informs the discursive construction of organic agriculture in Andalusia. Insecure livelihoods under the dominant agricultural model necessitated local production to sustain food supplies. Towns aspired to food autonomy; production of fruit, vegetables and cereals by smaller *campesino* farmers for consumption in the *pueblo*, family run kitchen gardens (*huertas*), livestock grazing on peripheral and public land, and foraging in the countryside were means to this common end. Localised systems of provision sustained populations in times of extreme economic hardship and political repression. More recently, committed, smaller-scale organic producers and their supporters have evoked traditional practices associated with the peasant economic model. Yet small farmers still struggle to make a livelihood and remain reliant on subsidies. Consumers, for their part acknowledge the qualitative distinctions of local production, but still seek value for money, and are reluctant to pay premiums for certified organic products.

To document the problematic construction of organics and its entanglement with local economy, this paper will draw on interviews with producers, consumers, and activists, collected during fieldwork since 2003.

### **SCALES OF TRUST: A REFLECTION ON SOLIDARITY AND CRISIS ON MONGOLIA'S URBAN PERIPHERY**

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This paper draws on fieldwork based in the ger districts of Ulaanbaatar: low socio-economic areas that lack basic infrastructure and whose residents are currently experiencing a double-dose of austerity. During the economic storm brought on by the end of socialism, Mongolians faced a void left by the sudden withdrawal of state. After the brief mining boom around 2012, the economy is again stalling. Following the recent election, the new government has suspended a number of basic social programs including small monthly payments for children. For ger district residents who were eking out a survival based on these small tokens of state support, the current situation is nothing short of a crisis. In the general post-socialist vacuum and its sudden post-election intensification, ger district residents have been turning to other local and kin-based networks to make ends meet. This paper will argue that a focus on trust and reciprocity can elucidate not only on what these networks are based and how they operate, but indeed why they are being brought into being.

Although trust and social crises may be “presented as natural enemies” (Corsín Jimenez 2011:2), this paper will argue that trust is fundamentally implicated the current Mongolian reality in a number of complex and contradictory ways. Trust is key to the local and familial relationships that facilitate alternative ways of ensuring economic survival, sometimes termed economies of solidarity (Boulianne 2006). However, it also plays an integral part of capitalist systems and therefore in the very causes of the crisis (Dannshaeuser and Werner 2006:5). Drawing on ethnography and using the concept of trust as a scaled phenomenon as a heuristic device, this paper will demonstrate that the Mongolian situation is the result of layers of trust and mistrust that are nestled within one another, operating on distinct but interconnected scales.

### **CONSTRUCTING AUTONOMY AND ALTERITY IN CATALONIA.**

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In the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis and with increasing distrust in the Spanish state to solve structural socio-economic problems, more and more people across Spain are resorting to economic projects that present themselves as alternatives to the capitalist economy and state institutions in order to secure stable livelihoods. Catalonia in particular is a hotbed of such alternative economies. As such, this paper will key in on the Catalan Integral Cooperative (CIC), a particularly anti-systemic alternative economic project who facilitate the creation of autonomous, self-organizing nuclei throughout Catalonia. These nuclei use an alternative currency facilitated by the CIC to exchange goods and services, experiment with different ways of food provisioning, and engage in autonomist political practices (e.g. general assemblies). The ultimate aim is to create a locally

based, sustainable, 'humanized', but above all autonomous economy at 'the margins of capitalism' freed from private and state interests.

While the CIC ostensibly presents itself as alternative-oppositional, this paper will build on recent critical perspectives on alternative economies and on economic anthropology's longstanding sensitivity to the ambiguity of economic difference, to argue that in fact 'alternative' and 'autonomous' spaces are always borne out of a process of continuous negotiation with already existing societal structures (e.g. state and market). Drawing on participant observation and qualitative interviews, this paper will lay bare the messy process of the construction of alternative circuits of value on an everyday level. Specific attention will be paid to how people realize alternative livelihoods while remaining entangled in existing societal structures, thereby shedding light on shifting relations between the economy, state, society, and how the border between them is constituted.

## **ECONOMY, POLITICS, AND LIFE. AN APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FROM THE NETWORK OF SOLIDARITY ECONOMY OF THE ITALIAN SOUTH**

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In 2012 the Solidarity Economy Network of the Italian South (RESSUD) launched the Orange Landing Campaign to publicise non-utilitarian shopping practices based on trust and participation.

The Orange Landing was an itinerant market where farmers would directly meet consumers to inform them about the state of the politics of food production in Italy. By way of pre-figurative politics, these encounters advocated for non-utilitarian relations and fostered alternative economic practices in the fringes of the conventional supply chain.

The market took place in many market squares of the Italian centre-north in order to spread or strengthen networks of people practicing alternative economy.

In the making of the Orange landing, ideas of what "alternative" meant emerged within the hybrid spaces between ideas of politics, exhaustion, and economics. Discourses of solidarity were pitted together by the diverse actors composing RESSUD. The actors negotiated what values should define a livelihood outside the conventional channels of labour alienation.

A fragile compromise between different understandings of what the spheres of the economic and of the political entail characterised the efforts to include, or exclude, life projects within the network.

This internal struggle to define the limits of valuable 'otherness' was faced with every member's challenge to organise their lives in accordance to the logistics of a market that moved through Italy every other week.

Pace, moods, weather, distance and logistics entered the discursive formation of the network and its proposal of alternative lifestyles. Relational exhaustion and physical fatigue become fundamental to understand the unravelling of value negotiation and inclusion politics within the network's imagery.

## **PANEL: FINANCIALISATION**

### **FINANCIAL CITIZENSHIP IN GERMANY**

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Households in advanced economies have long relied for their security on publically buttressed work incomes. Then, as employment has become precarious and public support has been rolled back, financing filled in the gap. Germans are mostly spared the consequent indebtedness that is common elsewhere thanks to a strong economy, which has allowed them to accumulate savings. Yet the dynamic of financialization demands that they, too, put their resources into circulation. Financial education initiatives encourage them to do so by recreating households in the image of finance, as isolated units of saving and spending. Drawing on my

fieldwork in Germany, I will describe these initiatives and responses to them, as a way of introducing the novelty and predicament of financial citizenship.

### **LONGING FOR FINANCIALISATION: CLIENTS AND COMMERCIAL INSURANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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Financialisation has its oppressive sides in that it can strip away citizenship rights, or incorporate and simultaneously marginalise people in a global financial world. Anthropological studies offer a thorough analysis that scrutinises powerful economic discourses that assume that financialisation equals economic growth, poverty reduction, and freedom. But if financialisation is so oppressive, why do clients buy into it and purchase these financial products? Is this because they have no agency and can only go belly up when confronted with powerful global financial regimes?

Instead of being trapped in the old agency/structure debate again we need to examine financialisation through extended case studies of kinship dynamics and other socialites. In South Africa, an important reason for taking out insurance policies is that it offers a way out of tense kinship and neighbourhood relations. For many clients and potential clients, financialisation is equated with freedom from often unequal and sometimes oppressive mutual obligations. This study is based on a mixed methods approach that includes fieldwork in the townships of Cape Town, neighbourhood questionnaires in two townships in Cape Town, online questionnaires among actuaries, and fieldwork among people who are somehow involved in the insurance sector.

### **A TREASURE CHEST FOR THE SOVEREIGN? TURKEY'S SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND, THE POLITICS OF FINANCIALIZATION, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CONSENT**

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On August 26, 2016, the Turkish government created, in response to the July 15 coup attempt, a Sovereign Wealth Fund of Turkey: an investment fund run by a state company (Sovereign Wealth Fund Administration Company/ Türkiye Varlık Fonu Şirketi) that is tied to the President's office without control from the Parliament. The fund is to continue finance the large-scale construction projects that have been a hall-mark of the AK Party (AKP) government. The capital for the fund – an envisioned 200 billion dollars – is to derive mostly from privatizations. In this way, the government's dependency on both external and internal credit is to be overcome. This can be construed as an act of reconstituting "economic sovereignty" in response to a fear of a loss of foreign investment and withdrawal of capital in midst of political instability. At the same time, it continues the politics of financialization that has undergirded the AKP regime. The paper uses the case of the Varlık Fonu – its political economic logics and the discourses surrounding it – as an occasion to interrogate the junctures of neoliberalism and authoritarianism in the current moment of crisis in Turkey. It pays special attention here to the wider hegemonic struggles in Turkey and the "construction of consent", in a quite literal sense: the reliance of the AKP regime on its ties with capital in the construction sector as well as the use of destruction/ (re-)construction projects to both harness support and suppress dissent in the Turkish population. It interrogates here in particular the roles of experiences of symbolic and material dispossession as well as of a sense of modernization and improved economic well-being that is associated with the finance-driven construction boom – and increased debt-financed household consumption – in shaping people's stances in the ongoing politics of state transformation.

### **UNPACKING FINANCIALIZATION. COMMODITY DERIVATIVES, PRICES AND COMMERCIAL FAMILY FARMS IN ROMANIA'S BĂRĂGAN PLAIN**

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Debates on financialization usually tend to lump together its many facets. Anthropologists of finance though have often claimed that derivatives are at the center of the contemporary financialization process and can open a window on to the intertwined financial practices of capital. Nonetheless, the way in which these market

instruments have been incorporated into everyday life remains still rather opaque. This essay unpacks financialization by focusing on how derivatives have linked global financial investors with the commercial family farms of Romania's cash crop region of the Bărăgan Plain. According to political economists of food and financial experts, the global investors' increased interest in the markets of agricultural commodity derivatives has been partially responsible for the volatility of the food prices and the unprecedented rise of global grain prices in 2008. Following Koray Caliskan's anthropological insights into the political process of price making, the essay will present the different temporal and spatial settings of, as well as the different agencies involved in, wheat market price formation. It identifies three relevant price formation settings: the farm price, the port price and the derivative price and four different agencies: farmers, grain traders, states and financial investors. Moreover, employing what Jane Guyer calls an ethnography of price, this paper explores how derivative prices enter into the composite logic of the farm and port prices of wheat. Based on participant observation and interviews with farmers, grain traders and state bureaucrats, it will be argued that derivatives are conjured in two different ways in the Bărăgan Plain. First in the making of the farm price, where derivatives act as a risk premium and take the form of a financial cost. Second, during the making of the port price, where the derivatives' prices are considered to forecast the future market dynamics. The essay shows how the increased presence of investors in agro-derivatives markets made it harder for commercial family farms to make ends meet. The price hike caused by the investments in derivatives raised the financial cost associated with the risk premium, while the quasi monopoly of the grain traders on the grain storage facilities in the Bărăgan Plain and the export port of Constanța prevented a rise of the farm price in relation to the port and derivative price.

## **PANEL: Old and New Divisions of Labour**

### **WHOSE SOVEREIGNTY?: GLOBAL DIVISIONS OF LABOUR AND COMPENSATION FOR DEATH AND INJURY IN THE AFTERMATH OF RANA PLAZA**

Rebecca Prentice, University of Sussex

This paper examines compensation for the occupational injury and death of garment workers in Bangladesh as a window onto 21st century reconfigurations of labour, citizenship, and sovereignty in global production networks. The 2013 collapse of the Rana Plaza garment factory building in Dhaka resulted in the death of 1,136 workers and life-changing injuries to hundreds more (ILRF 2015). Although international standards for worker compensation make it the state's responsibility to ensure that local employers compensate affected workers, the enormity of the disaster and public pressure on multinational fashion brands resulted in the creation of a \$30 million fund for victims and their families, overseen by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Funded primarily by global brands and retailers that source from Bangladesh, the Rana Plaza Fund provides "humanitarian" assistance to workers and their families, rather than "compensation" as a moral and legal right. Although labour activists both inside and outside Bangladesh have emphasised the financial and moral necessity of compensation, the Rana Plaza Fund is a transnational financial mechanism that anticipates state failure (Redfield 2012) and reproduces the voluntaristic corporate self-regulation of garment supply chains that continues to erode labour standards around the world. Drawing upon fieldwork with labour activists in Bangladesh, Europe, and North America, this paper unpicks the North-South alliances that produced the Rana Plaza Fund, and explores how the privatisation and deterritorialisation of labour rights transforms national sovereignty and social citizenship in Bangladesh and beyond. As Bangladesh's export garment industry continues to expand, the supposedly "footloose" nature of global capitalism is called into question, and the global division of labour becomes entwined with a global division of justice.

### **BALANCING CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY CHAINS: A (HISTORICAL) COMPARISON OF MAURITIUS AND ZAMBIA**

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Mauritian history is shaped by the island's position in global commodity chains and related division of labour. The majority of Mauritians originates from slaves and indentured labourers that came to work the sugar plantations owned by the island's white elite, the Franco-Mauritians. For most of the colonial history, the British colonisers triumphed the interests of the latter over that of labour – though labour sometimes witnessed minor improvements. Yet, towards the end of the colonial period (1968) the balance started to shift. Due to the legacies of the past, the division of labour remains a rather sensitive issue, despite that nowadays the economic relevance of the sugar production has diminished considerably. It has also become a sovereign matter mainly, resulting from interactions between local actors (the sugar industry, the state and labour representatives).

In Zambia, the global division of labour in agriculture is of a different and more recent kind. Labourers are local/regional, while capital is increasingly located abroad (like in mining); in addition to white commercial farmers, yet contrary to Mauritius they reside in Zambia since three generations maximum, if at all. Interestingly, though, much of the production currently caters for local and regional markets rather than world markets. Contrary to present-day Mauritius, however, sovereignty plays a different role in the balance between capital and labour. Next to the Zambian state, the balance importantly results from interactions between investors and critics located elsewhere (e.g. in Europe), such as NGOs, social movements and international labour organisations.

Comparing the historical and contemporary trajectories of the two cases may provide additional insights about the extent to which balance between capital, i.e. Franco-Mauritians and foreign investors in Zambia, and labour results from national and/or international pressure. The comparison, accordingly, may help to get a better understanding of the international division of labour in (global) agricultural commodity chains and how sovereignty influences this.

#### **DESIRE FOR A STRANGER MASTER: FOREIGN PRIVATISATIONS, WORK ETHOS AND NATIONAL REDEMPTION IN SERBIA**

Ivan Rajković, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London

This paper is based on ethnography of Kragujevac, Serbia, where a formerly Yugoslav industrial icon, Zastava Cars factory, has been privatized by Italian FIAT. Recalling how the factory was managed in the past, workers made redundant appropriate its demise and privatisation into a local notion of the problematic national 'we': one that constantly threatens its own existence. In contrast, they speak of the Western Europe as a place of cohesion and economic longevity. Simultaneously, they criticise the Italian management by questioning their foreignness - as "bigger comen than we are".

I suggest that, within the lived local history of repeated destructions, such desires for 'proper capitalism' develop as internal moral commentaries. They call out for a Western proprietor as a strict, yet necessary external regulator of 'our own' mishandling of collective good. This is predicated on an image of a foreign capitalist who is more successful in economic sovereignty and social reproduction – in local language, more of a 'domaćin' (folk household head) than 'us'. I argue that this is not simply an effect of neoliberal ideology, but of a historically contingent articulation of what Sahlins called 'humiliation stage' - a point in which an actor starts to see his old way of life as flawed, and starts to debase it. Allowing new market institutions to settle in, humiliation shapes them in continuity with previous cultural materials - of agricultural economy and Yugoslav self-managed socialism – while ensuring the further reign of state-led market liberalisation. Akin to Polynesian institution of 'stranger kings', here a foreign proprietor becomes someone who saves 'our own' property, by becoming the definite *owner* of such property. Similarly, precarious work arrangements get understood as redemptive acts of building a more lasting Serbian polity. Exploring how such connections are made and contested, I trace new conjunctures of transnational dependency, work ethos, and national sovereignty in a European semi-periphery.

#### **“COMMUNITY-OWNED COMPANIES”: AN EXPERIMENT IN SOVEREIGNTY, SHAREHOLDING, AND INCLUSIVE CAPITALISM**

Jane Lynch, University of Michigan

This paper begins with the history of Fabindia—the largest private retailer of craft in India—and the broader political economic transformations it reveals, calling for a world historical perspective on the corporate form, which decenters not only the national frame but also conventional accounts of multi-national corporations. This analysis draws attention to the transnational networks, connections, and entanglements that characterize both the industry and bureaucracy of textile and craft production in India. In particular, this paper examines a project initiated by executives at the headquarters of Fabindia in Delhi to create a network of regional supply companies in which tens of thousands of artisans were able to purchase shares. These companies, which received funding in the form of equity investment from a Fabindia subsidiary, were an experiment in what the company’s managing director, William Bissell, calls “inclusive capitalism.” Drawing on ethnographic and historical material collected in diverse regions of India and in sites that range from shareholder meetings and annual reports to company warehouses and artisan workspaces, this paper highlights one “community owned company” (COC), in particular, called DAH Chanderi. While claims about the value—and values—of handloom weaving made by the management of Fabindia and DAH Chanderi as well as by the weavers, middlemen, and traders who live and work in the historic town of Chanderi were often incommensurable, these individuals and collectivities nevertheless found ways to work together. In order to explain how and on what terms, this paper locates the COCs project within a history of efforts to collectivize weavers in India and explores the visions of “community” this project both presupposes and seeks to inspire.

#### **CROWDS, COURTS & CORPORATIONS: CAPITALIZING ON VARIETIES OF SOVEREIGNTY IN BANGLADESH’S EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES**

Paul Robert Gilbert, University of Brighton

Anthropologists working on sovereignty – understood as authority grounded in violence – have rejected accounts of modern sovereignty that are rooted in readings of Western political theology (e.g. Brown 2010), calling instead for historical inquiries into the ‘de facto configurations’ of sovereignty that have emerged via colonial encounters (Hansen & Stepputat 2006; Wachspress 2009). In this paper, I draw on ethnographic work carried out among bureaucrats, lawyers, geologists and engineers concerned with enabling (and at times, disrupting) foreign investment in Bangladesh’s oil, gas and coal sectors. I frame my analysis in terms of postcolonial approaches to international law, which emphasize that non-Western state sovereignty has *always* been conditional upon the ‘foreigner’s right to trade’ (Anghie 2007). Specifically, I show how foreign investors in Bangladesh’s extractive industries are able to bypass the authority of domestic courts by taking disputes to extraterritorial investor-state arbitration forums. In this way, extractive industry corporations reproduce the conditionalities of postcolonial sovereignty, and are able to extract from the state compensation for revenue ‘lost’ when projects are disrupted by discontented host communities. By emphasizing the subordination of *state* sovereignty to the transnational corporation’s right to trade, postcolonial legal theorists do risk overlooking the distribution of authority grounded in violence *within* the postcolonial state. Indeed, attempts that mine-area residents and professional activists have made to articulate alternative ‘resource sovereignties’ (McNeish & Logan 2012) have been subject to violent response from the Bangladeshi state. However, I argue that this only *further*s extractive industry corporations’ ability to capitalize upon representations of Bangladesh as a ‘risky’ investment climate. Justifying an escape upwards and outwards – from the jurisdiction of domestic courts to the realm of investor-state arbitration – effectively enables the profitable subordination of state sovereignty to the imperatives of the financialized corporation, whose value is always a function of *expected* future earnings.