

INTIMATE AND HUMAN.

Economies and Religions in Times of Crisis

7th May 2019

Dipartimento di Storia Culture Religioni Arte Spettacolo, Sapienza Università di Roma

If we investigate human relationships in the light of recent contributions within the field of economic anthropology -such as the Convivialist Manifesto, the Manifesto for a Human Economy, David Graeber's theory on 'everyday communism', Stephen Gudeman's perspectives on sharing, and finally Michael Taussig's rediscovery of George Bataille - the gift, sharing, and the occult strongly emerge as constitutive aspects of the present.

Paying attention to so-called intimate and human economies, the workshop aims to look at people's coexistence in the forms, spaces, dynamics and processes that see economy and religion interacting and playing a role in how communities and groups develop, re-form or settle apart. In doing so, we want to emphasize the need for a broader understanding of these two fields, beyond the common assumptions usually reiterated in public but also scholarly debates. Indeed, for long time, a narrow understanding of economy as the rational utilitarian frame within which people express and experience social life has reduced people's choices to 'economic reason'. At the same time, a secular conception of religion has meant a stigmatized approach towards the material role of religious experiences in structuring and negotiating human condition, often dismissing some of its manifestations - notoriously magic, witchcraft and the spiritual - as irrational. Assuming the centrality of gift and sharing in sustaining human relationship, and valuing the magic/spiritual as a constitutive force in people's modes of dealing with the everyday, we propose to bridge recent proposals in the field of economic anthropology with the long-term anthropological reflection on magic and religious experiences.

During the last decades, the theorized neutrality of the market has been questioned by anthropological endeavor that focused on the role and meaning of personal ties in activities such as consuming, producing, money-spending and gift-giving. While economists led us to believe that the economic and the social sphere should be kept apart, encouraging on the other hand the disjunction between the public and the private, ethnography shows us that in practice it is impossible to disentangle economic and non-economic factors. Especially in the current times of crisis characterised by rampant racism, violence and identity closures, looking at conditions of intimacy, relationality and sociality built upon the material actions, motivations, and needs of people can prompt us to realize that far from disappearing, social life is actually stronger than what we may think. Specularly, an even stronger presence of religion in public life on a global scale shows how the spiritual is deeply constituted by, and entangled with, the materiality of the world. Despite secular expectations of religion's retreat into the private and the inner self, the transformative power of religious life asks for a renewed account of its entanglements with the material and the mundane.

In the reflection on this kind of activities, we argue, it is particularly important to acknowledge and analyse their collective and convivial dimension as a central aspect in the making and remaking of communities. This is why, the need to bridge the religious and the economic, in the plural, is more and more urgent if we want to understand a world which is basically unique, but appears to be unquestionably diverse.

SEMINAR PROGRAMME - Tuesday, 7th May 2019

Location: Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Aula A Storia Moderna e Contemporanea (2nd floor), 9-13;
Aula A Storia Medievale (2nd floor) 14-19

Morning session

Chair: Antonino Colajanni (Sapienza University of Rome)

9 am – Welcome and opening address: Alessandro Saggiaro (Sapienza University of Rome)

9, 15 am - Matteo Aria (Sapienza University of Rome): *Dono, condivisione e cultura popolare (Gift, Sharing, and popular culture)*

9, 35 am - Joe Trapido (SOAS University of London): *Love and Money. The figure of the 'true boss' in Kinshasa*

9, 55 am – Marta Gentilucci (University of Milano - Bicocca): *Dalla montagna alla miniera. La sacralizzazione del nichel nel nord della Nuova Caledonia (From the mountain to the mine. The sacralization of nickel in the North of New Caledonia)*

10,15 am - *Q&A and discussion*

10, 35 am – Keynote - Keith Hart (Goldsmiths University of London and University of Pretoria):
Human economy as a religious project

11, 15 am: *Q&A and discussion*

11, 40 am - break

12 pm - Cecilia Draicchio (Sapienza University of Rome): 'C'est l'argent qui parle!'. Money, drugs, and the (in)formal economy of mental health in a Ghanaian prayer camp

12, 20 pm - Gianmarco Salvati (Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II): Le regole dell'amici-
zia. Giovani, dono e reciprocità a Mekelle (*The rules of friendship. Youth, gift and reciprocity in
Mekelle*)

12, 40 pm: *Q&A and discussion*

1 pm – Lunch break (Aula Buonaiuti, 2nd floor)

Afternoon session

Chair: Alessandro Lupo (Sapienza University of Rome)

2, 15 pm - Mariano Pavanello (Sapienza University of Rome): Wealth, Slavery and Witchcraft in
the Akan World

2, 35 pm - Angelantonio Grossi (Utrecht University): Tricky money, spiritual ties. Immediacy and
material gain in Ghanaian shrines

2, 55 pm - Osvaldo Costantini (Sapienza University of Rome): Possessione e accesso al reddito. Al-
cune pratiche spirituali di una chiesa eritrea a Roma (*Possession and access to income. Some prac-
tices of an Eritrean church in Rome*)

3, 15 pm - *Q&A and discussion*

3, 35 pm - Keynote - Peter Geschiere (University of Amsterdam): Capitalism and Witchcraft - Everyday Convergences in Africa and Elsewhere

4, 20 pm - *Q&A and discussion*

4, 50 pm - break

5,10 pm - Pino Schirripa (Sapienza University of Rome): Brandizzare la medicina tradizionale in Ghana: farmaci, merci e musei (*Branding Traditional Medicine in Ghana: drugs, commodities, and museums*)

5, 30 pm - Aurora Massa (University of Trento): Making home on the move. The circulation of holy pictures among Eritrean refugees across Europe (Fare casa. La circolazione delle immagini religiose tra i rifugiati eritrei)

5, 50 pm - Giovanni Pizza (University of Perugia): Intimate and Human from prison. The five senses of Gramsci's Anthropology

6, 10 pm - *Q&A and discussion*

6, 40 pm - Closing remarks

Speakers will discuss with Birgit Meyer (Utrecht University), Annalisa Butticci (Utrecht University), and Fabio Dei (University of Pisa).