A Research Agenda for Economic Anthropology

Elgar Research Agendas

Edited by James G. Carrier, Academic researcher and author in the field of anthropology

The financial crisis and its economic and political aftermath have changed the ways that many anthropologists approach economic activities, institutions and systems. This insightful volume presents important elements of this change. With topics ranging from the relationship of states and markets to the ways that anthropologists’ political preferences and assumptions harm their work, the book presents cogent statements by younger and established scholars of how existing research areas can be extended and the new avenues that ought to be pursued.

‘This excellent collection of essays by junior and senior scholars is an appeal to rejuvenate economic anthropology and it does so brilliantly. Setting a research agenda requires engagement, focus, and the courage to point at ongoing inadequacies while highlighting future avenues of research. Through theoretical debates that address legal fictions, nature and value, debt and politics, mobilization and ethics, the chapters provide new scope for understanding the economy at multiple scales. Often neglected in social anthropology, corporations, management and the deplorable are spotlighted as objects of study in a remarkable volume that drives us to explore the economic frontiers of the twenty-first century.’
– Susana Narotzky, University of Barcelona, Spain

‘This book is the best possible sign that economic anthropology is having a true renaissance, forging important connections with a whole array of contemporary issues. This Research Agenda is truly a blueprint for the future of the field.’
– Richard Wilk, Open Anthropology Institute, US

‘James Carrier’s A Research Agenda for Economic Anthropology offers anthropology the makings of a new canvas for understanding the role of economy as it unfolds before us. An important new volume.’
– Michael Blim, City University of New York, Graduate Center, US

‘The chapters in James Carrier’s provocative new collection give us stimulating ideas that set us well on the way to a new kind of economic anthropology. Anybody who finds themselves simultaneously fascinated and yet puzzled by what seems to be the ever more “economized” kind of society we live in will find much to attract them in these wide-ranging pages. And this won’t just be anthropologists (or broad-minded economists), but students old and young, some seeking a new take on an old issue – markets and the state, inequality, or ethical action; others instead urged to reach toward new challenges – expanding our ideas of “management”, thinking about resources along a time dimension, or reflecting on how politics is expressed in the language of finance. And there is much more. The opposite of a comprehensive “wrapping-up” exercise, this lively collection provides us with a distinct set of starting points that take us into exciting new fields within, and well beyond, economic anthropology. Lively, challenging and rewarding reading.’
– Gavin Smith, University of Toronto, Canada and the National University of Ireland

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