



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE  
FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY



# HOUSEHOLD FINANCE IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD: SOCIAL APPROACHES

## CONFERENCE

5–6 December 2024

### ORGANISERS:

Marek Mikuš, Balázs Gosztonyi and Mathias Sosnowski Krabbe (Emmy Noether Group – Peripheral Debt: Money, Risk and Politics in Eastern Europe)

### VENUE:

Main Seminar Room, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Advokatenweg 36, 06114 Halle (Saale), Germany

## Call for Papers

While engagements of individuals and households with finance are as old as finance itself, interest in the subject in anthropology and other social sciences has surged in the past two decades. The obvious immediate impetus came from the Global Financial Crisis of 2007–2008 and its extended global aftermath, as both key causes and consequences of the crisis were located in the domain of household finance, especially in unprecedented booms and subsequent busts and repayment crises of household debt. New scholarship on myriad forms of household credit/debt (Saiag 2020), and to a more limited extent on household investments, has become one of the main areas of anthropological research on finance. Much of this work has employed the framework of financialization to make sense of the growing importance of household finance as part of a wider transformation of capitalism driven by the increasing scope, spread and power of finance (Weiss 2020). Some anthropologists proposed a “relational” approach to financialization centred on its social relations at multiple scales and associated forms of morality, ideology and governmentality (Kalb and Hann 2020). Others suggested to go beyond the assumption of financialization as a process affecting and transforming households and instead foreground households’ active, creative and un-predetermined engagements with finance (Zaloom and James 2023). Work



on this topic also contributed to the renewed interest in the household as a classical concept and unit of analysis in (economic) anthropology and other social sciences. The interdisciplinary scholarship on household finance employs a variety of frameworks, including, again, financialization (Bobek et al. 2023), further splitting into approaches focusing on institutions and macro-economic trends and those focusing on financial cultures and subjectivities (“financialization of the daily life”) (Gonzalez 2015), as well as governmentality (e.g. Lazzarato 2012), “social studies of finance” (e.g. Poon 2012) and “financial oikonomization” (Ossandon et al. 2021).

For this conference, we invite contributions studying household finance from all disciplines and perspectives that engage with its fundamentally social nature and study empirically the social relations, practices, processes, institutions, meanings and values implicated in individuals’ and households’ use of financial products, services and instruments for both credit and investment purposes (including small-scale speculation and entrepreneurship) in all geographic and social settings. This includes political mobilizations over financial products and services and the ways in which state regulations, welfare policies and public financial institutions shape both such products and mobilizations. While the primary focus is on current and recent experiences with household finance, we also invite historical contributions that draw out connections or make comparisons with the former. We are particularly interested in contributions that thematize the household as the object of analysis (rather than a mere unit of statistical measurement) and/or pay attention to the geographically unequal and uneven patterns of household finance, e.g. by employing the concepts of core and (semi-) periphery (Mikuš and Rodik 2021). The conference is aimed also at producing a subsequent joint publication (edited collection) with interested participants. Limited funding is available to support participants’ travel and accommodation costs.

### **Proposal Submission**

Potential participants are asked to kindly submit the titles and abstracts (up to 250 words) of their proposed contributions to [\*\*householdfinancehalle2024@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:householdfinancehalle2024@gmail.com) by **14 July 2024** at the latest. Please, indicate whether you are interested in participating in the joint publication project and whether you would require assistance with your travel and accommodation costs.