

Alternatives to Austerity?

A public conversation and workshop

Anthropology of Economy Programme,
Department of Anthropology, LSE
Inclusive Economies Seminar,
Department of International Development, LSE



Public conversation

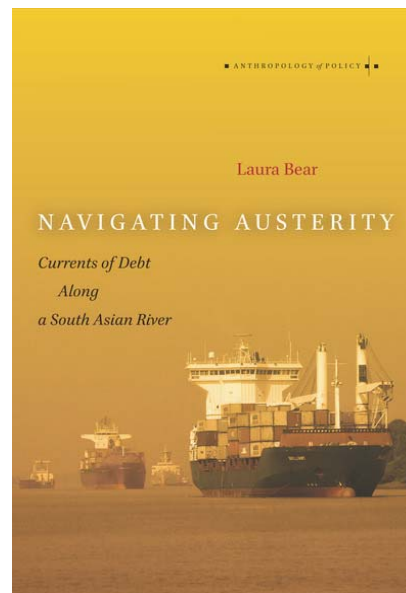
Time: 6.30pm
Date: 9 June 2016
Venue: Old Theatre
LSE, Houghton Street,
London WC2A 2AE

This panel discussion will look beyond the present into a future without austerity. Participants will discuss the proposals for a social calculus to be applied to government policy and sovereign debt relations as proposed in Laura Bear's recent book, *Navigating Austerity: currents of debt along a South Asian River* (Stanford University Press 2015).

How can we develop new forms of policy and politics that prioritise social rather than financial aims for government spending? How might we reform financial institutions so as to give precedence to longer-term goals than those set by market? What can be done to reduce the inequality generated by austerity policies in the UK and across the world? Can we imagine utopian institutions and social movements that could generate abundance, mutual and environmental protection?

Participants

Laura Bear	LSE
Anna Coote	NEF
Nigel Dodd	LSE
Andrea Muehlebach	University of Toronto



Navigating Austerity: currents of debt along a South Asian River

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/anthropology/people/bear.aspx>
Navigating Austerity addresses a key question of our era: What happens to society and the environment when austerity dominates political and economic life? Laura Bear traces the hidden currents of state debt crises and their often devastating effects through the stories of boatmen, shipyard workers, hydrographers, port bureaucrats and river pilots on the Hooghly River, a tributary of the Ganges that flows into the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. The setting is one where state debt has led to permanent crisis and austerity measures, revealed by the voyages along the river on which the book takes us. Showing how Bengali idioms and ethics - such as courage, trust, love and friendship - interrelate with cut-backs and speculative planning, the book is a departure from those studies which assume that capitalism is a rational, calculative ethic. It provides an account of austerity capitalism, showing how it arises from local social forms as well as affecting them. It contributes to an emerging literature on public infrastructure and ends with a challenging and utopian agenda that forces us to rethink fiscal policy proposes that we restore just social obligations, and suggests new practices of state debt. Ultimately she aims to transform sovereign debt from a financial question into a widely debated ethical and political issue.

Workshop

Time: 12.30pm – 6pm
Date: 10 June 2016
Venue: tbc
LSE, Houghton Street,
London WC2A 2AE

Format tbc.

Participants include:

Laura Bear, Sohini Kar, Carly Shuster, Daniel Knight, Charles Stewart, Deborah James, Matt Wilde, Anna Tuckett, Insa Koch, Ryan Davey