



## Through the lens of work:

### Capitalism, development, and social change in the global South

APAD international conference  
Liège, 22-24 may 2024

#### Call for panels

Every second or third year, the Association for the Anthropology of social change and Development (APAD) organises an international conference, alternatively in Africa or in Europe. The last APAD conferences were held in Lomé, Togo, in December 2021 (“Circulations in the global South: Ethnographic explorations of globalized exchanges”) and in Roskilde, Denmark, in May 2018 (“Migrations, development, and citizenships”). Organised in partnership with universities and research centres, these conferences are dedicated to an emerging issue in the field; they provide members and other participants an opportunity to meet in a convivial atmosphere, and a unique space for dialogue and debate on their research. APAD conferences are generally followed by the publication of a special issue in *Anthropology & development*, the APAD journal, as well as edited volumes.

The next APAD conference will be held in Liège, Belgium, from Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> to Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 proposes to analyse the dynamics of capitalism, development, and social change in the Global South through the lens of work. Work can be defined here as any activity contributing for the livelihood of individuals and groups. Far from being limited to salaried employment, it encompasses all economic practices, whether they participate to the sphere of production, exchange, or care. Using work as an analytical lens opens up **a wide range of questions** that touch upon – among others – the materiality of work and the use of technologies; the ethics of work and professional aspirations; work-related family configurations; social relations inside and outside work; careers and social mobility trajectories; gender, generational, class, and racial inequalities on the labour market; the forms of labour-value capture and processes of capital accumulation; or labour policies, and the dynamics of workers’ mobilization and representation.

**The aim of the conference is twofold.** On the one hand, it is to take a fresh look, from a work-centered perspective, at key themes in the tradition of APAD such as brokerage, political arenas, the functioning of state administrations, and the implementation of public policies. On the other hand, it is to open new avenues for studying development in its relationship with political economy and social change. These two aims can be broken down into **several sets of questions**:

**Set 1: work and the worlds of development and humanitarian aid.** This first set of questions deals with the ways in which work in the development and aid sectors has changed in the past three decades: *to what extent employment in these has undergone a casualization/flexibilization process? How far have they witnessed a sociological change in their staff, especially between expatriate and*

*national workers? How the gender, national, generational, or racial inequalities in these sectors have evolved? How the work of development and aid workers have been affected by the growing use of management techniques? How is the work of development and aid workers related to the logics of development? What development and human rights experts working for companies, religious organizations, or the state, do? What are the forms of unpaid or underpaid work involved in contemporary development and aid programmes?*

**Set 2: Work and capitalism.** The second set of questions comes back to an old issue in development studies, the interrelationship between capital and labour in the global South: *how can we analyse entrepreneurial work? What are the capital accumulation processes at work, both in the 'formal' and 'informal' sectors? What forms of work regulation do they involve? What are effects of new workforce management practices (digitalization, outsourcing, etc.)? To what forms of mediation and resistance are these practices confronted? How workers express their collective identities? What material, social, and cultural resources do they use? How can we study the intersectionality of work relations (gender, race, etc.) and their sectorial dimension? Is it possible to identify, beyond specific sectors, cities, or countries, broader regional dynamics? What are the new labour migration routes and patterns, including to Europe and North America? What have been the consequences of the Covid19 crisis on work relations?*

**Set 3: Work and politics.** This third set of questions focuses on state labour policies and forms of workers' politization – two understudied issues in the anthropology of development: *what is the place of labour in states' and international organisations' development strategies? What has been the effect of the 'neoliberal' turn in this field of intervention? How has labour legislation evolved? How are labour policies implemented and negotiated? To what extent is labour an important matter for political leaders? How workers defend their interests in the political arena? What is the role of unions, cooperatives, and other professional associations? How do they influence labour policies, and the political game more generally? What is the place of law in labour disputes? How far the labour question plays a role in changes of political regime? How can analyse the transformations of work in state administrations?*

**Set 4: Power relations at work.** Cross-cutting the other sets, this last set of questions aims to examine the ways in which power relations in the workplace are negotiated and experienced from intersectional perspective including gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, disability, and other categories of difference. *What are the most salient criteria of social stratification involved in work relations? How can we account for the work experience of minorities, racialized and other subaltern groups? How do workers make sense of the international and/or sexual division of labour, and global processes of exploitation, trafficking, and discrimination? What is the weight of wage work, especially for women, in power structural dynamics? How can we analyse the work/non-work boundary when the two are intertwined, or completely overlap? What kinds of arrangement women and men find to articulate their different social times while earning their livelihood? What are the modes of organization, resistance, compromise, claim, or contestation involved in the face of the different power relations in the labour process?*

These sets of questions are of course not exhaustive. All panel proposals that deal with the question of work in relation to capitalism, development policies and social change in the Global South are welcome. The conference is open to all the regions of the world covered by the call and to all the disciplines of the social sciences. Finally, following a practice established in previous conferences,

it is possible to submit panel proposals on other themes than those covered by this call if they fit in the broader area of expertise of APAD.

**Timeline:**

Panel proposals must be submitted by the **15<sup>th</sup> July 2023** on the APAD website (<https://apad-association.org/>). The dedicated webpage – currently under construction – will be accessible from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2023 onwards. For further information, please contact the organising committee at [colloque@apad-association.org](mailto:colloque@apad-association.org)

Each panel proposal will include a title, a short abstract (100 words), and a brief presentation (300 words) in French or English. It should problematise the topic and include a call for papers.

Those who have proposed a panel will receive an answer by the **1<sup>st</sup> of September 2023**. The call for papers will be launched by the organising committee and the panel convenors on the **15<sup>th</sup> September 2023**.

The paper abstracts for the panels are expected for the **15<sup>th</sup> November 2023**. The panel convenors will be responsible for selecting the paper abstracts and proposing a full panel programme by the **1<sup>st</sup> of December 2023**. The final list of panels will be published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2023.

Paper abstracts will have to be submitted in the language of the call for papers for the panel (English or French). The panels will last 3 hours and include from 4 to 5 papers of 20 minutes each. The opportunity to ask participants to send their full paper in advance will be left to the discretion of the panel convenors.

It is expected that a certain number of conference papers will be turned included into one or several collective publications. Panel convenors will therefore be asked in due course if they plan to edit a special issue of the APAD journal, *Anthropology & Development*, or if they have another publication project in mind. If not, they will be asked to give their opinion on the papers presented in their panel, in view to publication in *Anthropology & Development* by the organising committee.

**Practical information:**

The conference will be held at the University of Liege from Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> to Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. The nearest international airport is Brussels-Zaventem. For participants coming from Europe, Liège is easily accessible by train as well as by plane (through Brussels-Zaventem or Brussels-Charleroi).

A **webpage** dedicated to the conference will soon be published on the APAD website. It will give details the registration fees and the latest information about the conference.

A limited number of scholarships will be available for doctoral students and young researchers from the South whose paper proposal has been accepted in a panel. Those wishing to apply for a scholarship will be asked to tick the corresponding box when submitting their paper, provide their professional details, and justify their request in a box.

The conference is **bilingual**. The working languages are French and English.

**Scientific committee:**

Absi, Pascale, IRD, CESSMA, Université Paris Cité (France)  
Allal Amin, CNRS, CERAPS, Université de Lille (France)  
Cissokho, Sidy, CNRS, CLERSE, Université de Lille (France)  
Cuvi, Jacinto, CECID, Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgique)  
Dougnon, Isaïe, Université de Bamako (Mali) et Fordham University (USA)  
Fresia, Marion, Université de Neuchâtel (Suisse)  
Guérin, Isabelle, IRD, CESSMA, Université Paris Cité (France)  
Ndiayi, Alfred, Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis (Sénégal)  
Poncelet, Marc, Université de Liège (Belgique)  
Selim, Monique, IRD, CESSMA, Université Paris Cité (France)

**Organising committee:**

Sophie Andreetta  
Sylvie Ayimpam  
Isabelle Borsus  
Elieth Eyebiyi  
Philippe Lavigne-Delville  
Alexis Roy  
Benjamin Rubbers  
Marie Schnitzler  
Ngn Traoré  
Lorena Ulloa  
Charlotte Vampo