



Lecture Series in Social Anthropology

Full
Semester
2026

Tuesday, 3 November 2026 | 4.15 p.m. | Room AND-4-06

Middle-Class Aspiration, Financial Fraud, and the Cruel Necessities of Conviviality: Getting Your Money Back in the New Kenya

Dr. Peter Lockwood (University of Göttingen)

In 2018, the reported 53,000 members of Kenya's Ekeza savings and credit cooperative (SACCO) became victims of financial fraud on a mass scale. After becoming unable to access their savings accounts, a government investigation revealed that the SACCO's CEO, David Kariuki Ngari, had withdrawn millions of shillings of members' collected savings to fund his own private investments. Tracing the struggle of Ekeza savers to see their money returned, this article uses the incident as a window onto Kenya's contemporary political economy and the ways of being it demands. On Nairobi's urbanising frontier, middle-class aspirations for homeownership are harnessed by predatory elites to create new financial assets that enable them to compete and contend for power within a broader rentier economy. Drawing attention to victims' struggles for justice, it illustrates the way the scandal elicited new articulations about the workings of Kenya's political economy, theorised through the 'cunning' figure of Ngari. To have their cash returned, Ekeza members were forced to become convivial with the machinations and methods of 'a trickster'.

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Entrance free of charge.

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