

FALL 2014 COLLOQUIA SERIES

Date: Monday, November 3

Time: 3:30PM – 5:00PM

Location: Social Sciences 1, room 261

Dr. James Ferguson

A Rightful Share: Beyond Gift and Market in the Politics of Distribution

The paper develops an argument that new kinds of welfare states in the global South are opening up possibilities for new sorts of politics. Against an analysis of the limitations of traditional ideas of nationalization in Africa, it seeks to show that new forms of social assistance are allowing the question of national ownership of wealth to be reimagined in new ways -- ways that may allow the idea of a "rightful share" to take on a quite different significance than it does in traditional discussions of nationalization of natural resources. Taking recent campaigns for a "Basic Income Grant" (BIG) in South Africa and Namibia as a window onto these new political possibilities, it argues that a new politics of distribution is emerging, in which citizenship-based claims to a share of national wealth are beginning to be recognizable as an alternative to both the paradigm of the market (where goods are received in exchange for labor) and that of "the gift" (where social transfers to those excluded from wage labor have been conceived as aid, charity, or assistance). Beyond the binary of market and gift, the idea of "a rightful share", it is suggested, opens possibilities for radical political claims that could go far beyond the limited, technocratic aim of ameliorating poverty that dominates existing cash transfer programs.

James Ferguson is Susan S. and William H. Hindle Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University. He also holds honorary appointments at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University and the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town. He is the author or editor of several books, including *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (2006). His newest book, *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*, will be published by Duke University Press in April 2015.