

Call for Papers

EASA 2024

We welcome paper submissions to our panel '**Dilemmas of Upward Mobility: The Need for Vigilance in the Making of Better Lives**' at EASA's Biennial Conference in Barcelona, 23-26 July 2024. You can propose papers

here: <https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/easa2024/p/14495>

The panel will be online and the deadline for paper proposals is **22 January 2024**.

Short Abstract:

This panel explores social mobility by stressing how 'moving up' depends on individual vigilance. Addressing the dilemmas of actors who attentively balance their aspirations with their inner states and social networks, we invite papers that engage with watchfulness in different global contexts.

Long Abstract:

The chronic uncertainty and recurrent crises of the contemporary moment shape the way people do and undo social mobility. This panel argues that 'moving up' in challenging conditions creates a range of intersubjective problems and intimate troubles for upwardly mobile actors. Individual aspirants have to navigate communal tensions, envious accusations, or requests for support by kith and kin. Anthropologists have studied these processes by stressing, for example, predicaments of cultural identity in racialized settings, or the pressure exerted through kinship networks. Focusing on how individuals cope with such ambiguities, we suggest that a key aspect of upward mobility, whether realised via education, migration, economic accumulation, or marriage strategies, lies in a heightened watchfulness of actors towards the dilemmas their ascent generates. In other words, to translate material success into lasting status, people in various locales need to carefully monitor and attend to their social environments as well as to their own conduct and attitudes. Exploring upward mobility through the conceptual lens of vigilance, which we define as a focused attentiveness of non-state actors towards specific goals, we ask: What role does individual alertness play in projects of 'moving up'? What are people watchful about and why? Which imaginaries of opponents fuel vigilance and which problems arise from such imaginaries? To what extent do institutional contexts (educational systems, state initiatives etc.) structure the ways in which people watchfully try to attain better lives? How do practices of vigilance enable, complicate, 'do' and 'undo' personal success in ambivalent or even hostile settings?

Convenors:

Tim Burger (University of Cambridge and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich)

Eveline Dürr (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich)

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Also, make sure you familiarise yourself with EASA's guidelines for paper

submissions: <https://easaonline.org/conferences/easa2024/cfp>

We are looking forward to receiving your proposals!