

CFP: Ethnographic and Historical Perspectives on Paid Childcare

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Longstanding feminist debates about the undervaluing and exploitation of caring labour came into focus in 2020, as the Covid pandemic closed schools and workplaces across the globe, and placed the lowest paid care workers on the frontlines of harm. This renewed and amplified interest in the politics, economics and social repercussions of care has moved beyond critique to alternatives conceptions of how care should be centred and interdependence celebrated.

This panel for the 2023 Association of Social Anthropologists Conference will focus in particular on the caring labour involved in looking after children, from the perspective of those providing the care. Looking at the recent and more distant past, we invite ethnographic and historical contributions that address the life-worlds agency and well-being of those who care for children. We are particularly interested in how shifting forms of remunerated childcare - domestic and institutional; informal and professionalised; for cash or in-kind payments - enact or produce different norms, relations and reciprocities. For example, if workers become autonomous commercial providers of care, rather than being incorporated into households as junior dependents, what effect does this have on gendered, racialised and class-based hierarchies? Do different types of attachments, interests and subjectivities become possible in different child caring arrangements, and are others curtailed?

In the spirit of the call for repair over critique, we are calling for papers that address future solutions and imagined alternatives, despite the challenges involved in formalising and organising this intimate form of work.

The conference will take place from 11-14 April 2023 at SOAS, University of London. The submission deadline for paper proposals is 7 January 2023. Paper proposals should be submitted to the panel organisers via the conference portal: <https://theasa.org/conferences/asa2023/cfp>

We are happy to answer any questions in advance of the formal submission

deadline.

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