Annual Conference

of the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) in Regensburg

Recentering the Margins of the World Economy in Past and Present: Natural Resources, Commodity Frontiers and Political Ecology in Eurasia

20-21 May 2027
Regensburg, Germany

Call for Papers

A global history of capitalism, resource extraction, and environmental transformation attuned to the present has a strong claim on our attention, in particular amid climate change and environmental degradation, as well as the social dislocations and inequalities they set in motion. A wealth of recent scholarship on the historical roots of global economic structures and their enduring planetary consequences attests to as much. Yet what if we shift the vantage point and decentre the global account of how the modern world was made – turning our attention from the metropolitan cores toward the margins they presuppose? What can we learn from the forgotten nodes of today's global commodity chains, the histories of exhausted resources and abandoned frontiers, and the ecological legacies of imperial geographies?

The 14th IOS Annual Conference takes up these questions. It approaches the making and unmaking of commodity frontiers from a peripheral vantage – one whose resources were often central to the world economy yet marginal to its history. It attends to the disturbed metabolism between society and nature, between labour and land; to the regimes of work, property, and expertise through which resources were rendered legible, governable, extractable and turned into commodities; and to the exhausted frontiers, ruined landscapes and marginalized communities left in their wake. It addresses these questions in a multidisciplinary manner inviting scholars from various disciplines such as history, economy, political sciences, sociology and social anthropology.

If recentering is the conference's guiding move, it is inseparable from a second commitment: to read local histories against global dynamics, and to keep in view the entanglement of social, economic, ecological, and cultural transformation. Its focus is Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia – regions that trouble the familiar opposition between colonized periphery and imperial core, and whose commodities, from Romanian oil to Chiatura manganese to Central Asian cotton, ran through the world economy while remaining at the edges of its written history. Bringing together perspectives from across the social sciences and humanities, the conference invites contributions addressing, though not limited to, the following themes:

- transformations of property regimes, labor relations and capital investments
- commodity histories and their economic and ecological dimensions
- new infrastructures, landscapes and spatial relations

- political repercussions of the rise and fall of commodity frontiers
- vernacular adaptations, resistances and counter-narratives
- local socioeconomic, institutional and ecological impact of commodity frontiers
- interrelationship between trade policy and commodity frontiers

Proposals on additional topics in line with the general conference theme and the call for papers are also welcome. We particularly encourage interdisciplinary approaches.

Submission Guidelines:

The working language of the conference is **English**. Applications must include the following:

- One-page long academic CV, including institutional affiliation, contact information, and a list of publications;
- An abstract of no more than 500 words, including the paper title and an indication of the relevant conference theme;
- A short bio of no more than 200 words, written in the third person.

Application should be sent as a single PDF file to annualconference@ios-regensburg.de by **15 December 2026**. Please include the author's name in the PDF filename.

Selection results will be communicated by 10 January 2027. For those who are invited, **accommodation for two nights and travel expenses** (economy class) will be covered and reimbursed by IOS. In cases of transatlantic or long-distance travel, a contribution toward travel costs will be provided.

For inquiries, please contact: annualconference@ios-regensburg.de

Conference Organizing and Selection Committee
Prof. Dr. Guido Hausmann, Prof. Dr. Arevik Gnutzmann-Mkrtchyan, Dr. Tamar Qeburia