

## Call for Abstracts

### Ad Hoc Group on Asset Economy

#### **at the Congress of the German Sociological Association (GSA) and the Austrian Sociological Association (ASA) 2021 in Vienna**

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In recent years, assets – valuables that allow their owners to capitalise on recurrent streams of income – have moved to the centre of attention of research in economic sociology, political economy, science & technology studies and related fields. In contrast to older research traditions, which understand valuation through the concepts of commodification and the market, assetisation theory explicitly looks at complex economic objects and infrastructures that allow to circumvent the market.

Assets – e.g. intellectual property, technological platforms, infrastructure – are held on to rather than being sold, producing rent instead of sales profits. Aided by new technologies like blockchain and digital media, the supersession of market transactions by licensing models goes hand in hand with an altered relation between producers and consumers: we no longer own what we pay for but are subjected to ever-changing terms of use. Through technological control of assets, the power of companies systematically increases, as assetisation allows tech companies to withdraw our purchases or render them defunct by discontinuing maintenance.

Assetisation has, therefore, profound implications for the economy and beyond, from the complex valuation of company assets to the financialisation of home ownership. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has further highlighted the trend towards assets in the economy, underscoring the importance of patents on vaccines, quasi-monopolies in video call software, the rise of the platform economy in food delivery or the sudden devaluation of office complexes and hotel chains.

This ad-hoc group seeks contributions that investigate, conceptualise and analyse the emerging field of assetisation. Possible topics include:

- The asset and its others: how do assets relate to other goods such as commodities or singularities? Is there a contradiction between the asset form and others or can the movement of economic things between such forms be made productive?
- Materiality of assets: how can we understand the technological configuration of assets? How do the materialities of certain infrastructures – aggregation of data on online platforms, tokenisation through blockchain in the financial sector, interactions between gig workers and apps – channel and distribute value?
- Varieties of assetisation: how does assetisation in the US, the UK or Australia differ from assetisation in coordinated economies like Germany or Japan? Which industries are particularly predisposed towards assetisation?
- Methods and concepts: How can assetisation be studied and theorised? How does the concept connect to established approaches?

Please send your abstract (no more than 2,400 characters incl. spaces) until March 17th to Veit Braun ([braun@soz.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:braun@soz.uni-frankfurt.de)), Barbara Brandl ([brandl@soz.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:brandl@soz.uni-frankfurt.de)) and Ute Tellmann ([tellmann@ifs.tu-darmstadt.de](mailto:tellmann@ifs.tu-darmstadt.de)).