

Making the Most of Disruption



Kath Weston
Professor, Anthropology

CURRENT RESEARCH

Unexpected effects of economic and environmental crisis

"Creative cultural shifts are possible, but they don't come out of nowhere," observes Dr. Kath Weston, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia. Dr. Weston's current research focuses on how people mobilize culture (and technology) to create new forms of connection in the face of severe social disruptions such as banking crises, environmental contamination, and the many kinds of dislocation associated with rising inequality.

"Disruption" has a positive ring for companies that actively seek it out in order to gain market share. But for most people, disruption arrives with a shock, as they find themselves newly unemployed, divorced, or transformed into refugees as the result of wars and environmental crises. Life simply can't go on as before. Yet people often manage to meet the challenges of disruption with grace and innovation. In addition to understanding how cultural legacies allow people to make creative connections under disruptive circumstances, Dr. Weston is interested in how those same legacies can shape perception in ways that limit imaginative responses to crisis.

With a wide range of areas of expertise that includes the anthropology of finance, ecology/environmental studies, kinship, and science and technology studies, Dr. Weston's research has lessons for business leaders, policymakers, community members, and scholars alike. Of particular interest are her insights into effects of the global economic crisis of 2008 that are still unfolding.

Dr. Weston's work has been celebrated for its innovation and excellence. In 2011 she received a Guggenheim Fellowship to complete the initial stage of archival research for a project entitled, *The Magic of Capital*. Her...

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AFFILIATION

 University of Virginia

EDUCATION

- Ph.D., 1988 , Stanford University
- M.A., 1984 , Stanford University
- M.A., 1981 , University of Chicago
- B.A., 1978 , University of Chicago

AWARDS

- Global Research Program of Distinction (team member, "Food, Fuel, and Forests: Effects of Climate Policy on the Whole Earth System," UVA, 2014-15)
- Guggenheim Fellowship (2011)
- Leverhulme Trust Grant to the University of Cambridge to fund Wyse Visiting Professorship (2011)
- International Studies Research Grant (UVA, 2011)
- Board Member, Society for Cultural Anthropology (2009-14)

RESEARCH AREAS

Humanities, Anthropology, Poverty & Equality, Global Policy

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the ongoing research of Dr. Kath Weston of the University of Virginia as she explores how cultural creativity can help people make the most of the disruptions associated with economic and ecological crises. \$250K in donations will cover personnel travel, and incidental expenses related to Dr. Weston's research. \$200K will fund production of a script and trailer for a film based on Dr. Weston's book, *Traveling Light*. Be part of research that makes a lasting impact!