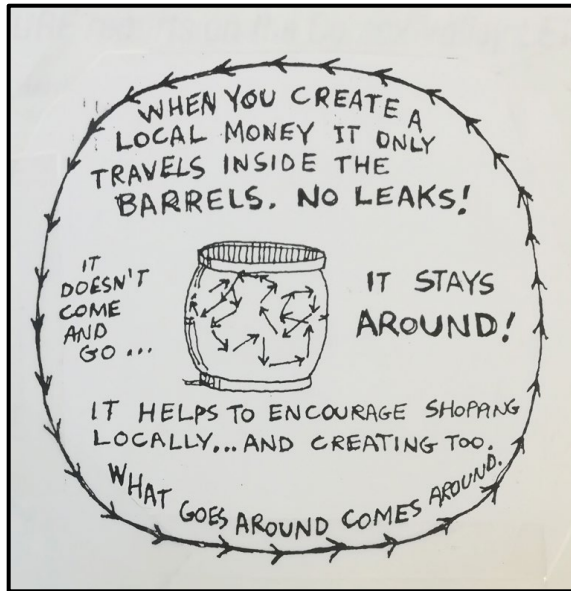




University  
of Victoria

# GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

## DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY



### Money or a Gift? A Comparative Study on Social Money

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This event is co-sponsored by the Counter Currency Lab

Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021

11:30 am – 12:50 pm

CLE A207

Option to view the talk via Zoom for those unable to come in person will be available – you will be limited to viewing only and quality will differ depending on connection. See [website](#) for details.

*Wymiennik* [Exchange] is a Polish social movement that has created its own money, *alterka*. This presentation examines the structural properties of *alterka*, a community currency in Warsaw. It explores how the creators and users of Exchange conceptualize *alterka*.

Community currencies (also known as complementary currencies or local currencies) refer to privately issued means of payment used within a specific region or community. Community currency systems are often niche projects, typically with between several dozen and several hundreds users. However, there are examples of initiatives that have gone from small grassroots community projects to large-scale systems. These include the Swiss *WIR*, in circulation since 1934 and involving 60,000 users and the Argentinian *crédito*, which were used by 7% of the population during the financial crisis of the 1990s. Today there are a total of approximately 6,000 community currencies in the world.

Although the *alterka* fulfills the classic functions of money, it is not recognized by the leaders and users of Exchange as such, rather they conceptualize *alterka* is a tool for establishing fairer economic and social relationships and, often, as a gift. These conceptualizations points to the differing moral meanings ascribed to official money and local currency.

The paper concludes by comparing the *alterka* with other community currencies, such as the Comox Valley Green Dollar, the archives of which are housed at UVic's Counter Currency Laboratory.

**EVERYONE WELCOME**