

ABSTRACT

PRACTICING VALUES – VALUING PRACTICES

The project aims to understand the interplay, (re)production and transformation of values at the level of practices. It is based on a comparative process of analysis that combines three sub-projects, guided by the following umbrella questions: How do values influence and guide practices? How are they instrumentalized and how do they transform themselves through practices and historical processes? In doing so, the project also seeks to comprehend contemporary socio-historic events related to economic changes, which were so far interpreted through either economic or moral viewpoints, such as austerity measures, coping strategies of affected people, social movements demanding fair systems of distribution and political participation as well as the increased showcasing of corporate social responsibility.

The analytical framework of ‘moral economies’ conceptually combines the sphere of morality and the sphere of economics. Values’ meanings are challenged in a continuous practical process, not only expressed explicitly, but also implicitly. The empirical analysis of three ‘moral economies’ in an interdisciplinary approach between business and organization studies, political science as well as cultural and social anthropology addresses the need for an integrative perspective of values and valuing, enabling a complementary picture on their practical creation and (re)production.

The first sub-project by Deniz Seebacher focuses on values and valuing in the everyday work of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) inside business organizations and in CSR practitioners’ communities in Turkey. She concentrates on processes of identification with available values and norms at the individual as well as organizational level. The second sub-project, conducted by Barbara Stefan, aims at understanding strategies of the democratization movement in Austria and their interrelations with different meanings of significant values. The third sub-project by Andreas Streinzer studies the influence of systems of exchange on the practicing of values and valuing practices in Volos, Greece, and how austerity-ridden communities renegotiate their terms of recognition.

The methodological approach of three ethnographies is chosen to study values at the level of concrete practices. Such an approach allows for immersion into the contexts, where values are practiced and for a comparative view on different aspects of the practicing of values and valuing. The three empirical settings are characteristic and representative for contemporary European ‘moral economies’ negotiating meanings of colliding moral and economic values.

Overall, the main goal of this joint PhD project is to successfully write three PhD theses, supported by intensive supervision, international collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork.