



ZMO-Kolloquium 2013

Thursday, April 25th, 2013, 6 pm

How to Study a Global Market at its Locales: The Empirical Case of the World Price

Venue:

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin

Lecture by Dr. Koray Çalışkan

What is a global price? Studying the making of prices in spot, options and futures markets, the article ethnographically addresses this question by using world cotton trade as the empirical context. It argues that global market prices are not set by the mere coming together of demand and supply, but produced as mercantile tools. These tools or prosthetic prices are realized by a multiplicity of actors. The article shows that instead of focusing narrowly on price-setting, policy-makers and researchers should attend to the conditions of price realization. In world and regional markets, prices are realized in multiple forms. Drawing on contemporary economic anthropology and sociology, the article maps the rich world of prices in their multiple manifestations and processes of realization. Price realization in world cotton market is performed and maintained by constant interventions to the making of the markets and their prices through different forms of perceptions, scientific assumptions, standardizations of the object of exchange, various calculative tools, rumors and indexes. In conclusion, the article hints at the political implications and social scientific consequences of seeing the world price as a mercantile prosthesis.

Koray Çalışkan holds a BA in political science from Bogazici University Istanbul (1995), an MA in political science from New York University (1999) and a PhD from Columbia University (2005). He is the author of *Market Threads: How Farmers and Traders Create a Global Commodity* (Princeton University Press, 2010) as well as numerous academic articles in Turkish and English. Koray Çalışkan currently teaches at Boğazici University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations. His current academic project, pursued in cooperation with Michel Callon, concerns new approaches to the study of markets.

He is also a political activist and engaged participant in public debates in Turkey, in which he participates through numerous articles and essays and as author of newspaper columns. Finally, the film *esma* for which Çalışkan has written the scenario was screened at the Cannes film festival in 2009.

GEFÖRDERT VOM



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