

Oberseminar

VORTRAGSREIHE DES INSTITUTS FÜR ETHNOLOGIE

Leitung: Martin Sökefeld

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Prof. Dr. Janina Kehr (Universität Wien)

Baroque Austerity. Neoliberal Healthcare between Political Spectacle and Informal Praxis

Abstract

Austerity is one of the economic rationales of how governments run public healthcare in post-pandemic, ageing welfare states today. It has been used to describe fiscal policies implemented by nation-states to cut public spending. In Spain, the ethnographic location from where I speak, austerity comes in the form of the baroque. While austerity is most usually associated with strictness, plainness, darkness, severity and modesty, the baroque indexes ornament and grandeur, as well as awe, drama and extravagance. By putting the baroque and austerity in conversation, I wish to complete a narrow anthropological reading of austerity as a politics of fiscal discipline and saving, and draw a fuller picture of the multiple and contrasting economic, medical and political interdependencies that shape healthcare in neoliberal welfare states today. Baroque austerity, so I contend, is the operative function of neoliberal healthcare in post-pandemic times, well beyond the Iberian Peninsula.

OBERSEMINAR



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