

Description of the planned dissertation project – Claudius Ströhle

Remittances and Exchange within Austria and Turkey. Objectivations of Economic Practices and their Impact on Transnational Participation and Belonging.

In the course of the bilateral agreement of labour recruitment between Austria and Turkey in 1964, young men and women from the region of Uşak (Turkey) came to the rural area of Stubai Valley (Austria). Most of the migrants worked in the iron processing industry, which is characteristic for the region since the 15th century. Today, about 15 per cent of the inhabitants of Stubai Valley have family ties to Uşak. The two areas build a dynamic transnational social space (Faist/Fauser/Reisenauer 2014) due to family reunion, summer visits, marriages, communication, media and a vivid exchange of remittances, e.g. the sending and receiving of money, presents, daily objects, but also ideas, norms, values and social capital (Levitt/Lamba-Nieves 2011, Nowicka/Šerbedžija 2016).

This **study aims to investigate** the function and meaning of remittances in the history and present of worker's migration, and analyse their social impact and effect on migrants' everyday lives, participation strategies and the politics of transnational identity. By combining theoretical approaches of economic anthropology, transnational migration and material culture, the research focuses on the materiality, form and function of remittances. Thus, the houses most of the pioneer migrants build in the region of Uşak appear as transnational materializations of habits, expectations, dreams and ideas of home. Once reasonable investments into the family's future in Turkey, most of the second generation youngsters grew up in Austria and reject the intended plans of their parental generation. How are the houses used now? And who will inherit them?

To gain a deepened insight into the various practices and to avoid the jeopardy of ethnicisation and methodological nationalism (Glick Schiller/Wimmer 2002), an ethnographic approach, which includes a long presence in the field, is applied. By accompanying the actors in their everyday lives in different social and geographical places in Austria and Turkey, the study aims to contribute to a multi-layered and multi-placed understanding of remittance practices as a transnational form of participation and belonging.

The **ethnographic research** took place from autumn 2016 until spring 2019. It eventuated in saturated data like observation protocols, interview transcripts, photos and newspaper articles. The analysis, which seeks to reach a deep understanding of remittance practices, functions and meanings, will take place from spring 2019 onwards. **The thesis** will be finished in summer 2020.

The study is embedded in the FWF research project "Follow the Money. Remittances as Social Practice" at the Department of History and European Ethnology under the supervision of Prof. Silke Meyer.