The role of fieldwork in advancing a greater understanding of social processes seems too obvious to merit any defense. But fieldwork is also controversial, for different reasons in different disciplines. In some disciplines, many question the relevance of fieldwork for advancing scientific knowledge. In other disciplines such as anthropology, the necessity of fieldwork is unquestioned, but there are discussions about the ethics and politics of fieldwork. Given the many different ways in which fieldwork is situated within the academia and the stronger need for interdisciplinary science approaches it is useful to state at the outset that the ensuing discussion approaches the relationship between fieldwork and ethics and moreover between fieldwork and experiments in the wild. How can we combine traditional field methods as well as more recent methodological developments, as behavioral economic experiments? How qualitative and quantitative methods merge with participant observation?

We aim discussions among the participants, and have scheduled time for questions and discussion after each talk.

13.00-14.00 Julia Nafziger, Associate Professor, School of Economics and Management

Title: A Brief Introduction to Behavioral Economics

Abstract

“Behavioural Economics increases the explanatory power of economics by providing it with more realistic psychological foundations.” (Camerer and Loewenstein, 2002). That is, models in Behavioural Economics modify the assumptions met in standard economic theory (on e.g. the preferences or the rationality of the economic actors) in the direction of greater psychological realism. I discuss some experimental evidence and show how standard models have been adjusted based on this. Hereby, I touch upon the three main behavioral models. First, preferences for fairness and reciprocity. Second, time-inconsistent preferences. Third, reference dependent preferences, and loss aversion.

14.00-14.15 coffee break

14.15-15.15 Cameron David Warner, Postdoctoral Fellow in Buddhism and Modernity, Section for Anthropology and Ethnography

Title: Research Ethics and the Ethnography of Uncivil Religion in Tibet

Abstract

How and when should we engage in participant-observation in a context in which our consultants’ activities are potentially illegal? What if the very nature of "consulting" could result in that person's imprisonment or loss of livelihood? These are perennial questions that face scholars who engage in field research in totalitarian states, even more so if that research is conducted among religious minorities. In this presentation I will use my recent fieldwork in Tibetan areas of China as a case study to explore these questions, especially in
relation to the performance of uncivil religion and the use social media among Tibetans. In the context of the modern Chinese nation-state, Tibetan uncivil religion is a form of religious nationalism, but in the inverse of Rousseau and Bellah's classical theory of civil religion. Social media has transformed the speed of and access to communication in such a way that field researchers are now simultaneously less empowered to offer consultants secrecy and also compelled to make conscious interventions into evolving situations.

15.15-15.30 coffee break

15.30-16.30 Myriam Hadnes, Goethe University (Frankfurt)

Title: God is Watching - An Experimental approach to reveal hidden beliefs

Abstract

Traditional beliefs play an important role in many sub-Saharan African village societies. They imply a direct link between the living and the departed, the immediate punishment of any breach of the moral codes, and the possibility to influence life through the use of magic. Most of the traditional beliefs and practices are veiled from foreigners. This impedes any quantitative research on their impact on (economic) behavior.

I will discuss my experiences of a field research project in Burkina Faso where we primed informal entrepreneurs through semi-structured interviews on prevailing traditional beliefs before playing a simple trust game. In contrast to most priming strategies used for measuring the impact of religious beliefs we avoid to explicitly induce moral concepts and rules of conduct. By comparing the results of the treatment and the control group, we can identify the impact of traditional beliefs that have been made salient through the interviews.

16.30-18.00 Wine reception

(40 minutes for each presentation, 20 minutes for questions)