

Vienna STS Talks

Valuations and its problems: How economists value the environment

Kristin Asdal

TIK Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture,
University of Oslo

WHEN:

03 May 2017, 18:00

WHERE:

STS Seminar room, NIG St II, 6th floor
Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien



In a series of noteworthy papers, the Berkeley scholar Marion Fourcade has analyzed the means by which economists and economics value the environment. In her analysis of various so called contingent valuation techniques she has not only traced these means, but also taken an interest in the relation between these techniques and the object, nature, upon which these techniques work. In related ways, this paper asks how economists value nature. But rather than analyzing contingent valuation techniques in relation to contemporary environmental issues, this paper is concerned with how such techniques emerged as the economist's response to environmental problems in the first place. That is, the paper is concerned with how economists, when engaging with environmental problems, turned to 'the market'. Whereas Fourcade takes the courtroom as her point of departure, the current paper explores 'valuation work' from within one distinct office, namely a Ministry of Finance. In doing so the paper is concerned with the setting in relation to which a profession works, and the little tools such settings work by. Hence, I am not only interested in the distinct tools of economics, but the little tools of bureaucracy more broadly. This is crucial I argue, if we are to understand how economics are enacted, or are performative, in practice – not the least if we are to understand how markets are made and modified from within bureaucratic offices. In pursuing this analysis, the objective is simultaneously to address, and contribute to solving, what I argue are a set of core problems or challenges in the increasingly rich field of valuation studies.

No registration required

<http://sts.univie.ac.at/events/>

