

Bazaar and pawnshop: ethnography at the interface of formal and informal economy

Abstract:

In this paper I deal with the issue, regarding what actually constitutes bazaar-pawnshop and what this facility means for different groups of customers. Basic research method is auto-ethnography, because best suits in the situation, where I am myself the owner of such shop and during field research I use my own memories and perform both as a direct participant-owner as well as an anthropologist, examining the environment of bazaar. In the empirical part, I offer a brief characterization of different types of customers, depending on the way how they use the bazaar-pawnshop. By describing and analyzing relationships and interactions occurring in the course of business negotiations in the bazaar-pawnshop, I try to show what this type of economy, often referred to as informal or marginal, means for different groups of customers. In particular, I focus on the question how marginalized groups perceive bazaar-pawnshop and how they incorporate it into their lifestyle. On the basis of collected data I infer that they regard the bazaar-pawnshop as a standard economic facility and as an almost necessary part of their everyday life.

Keywords: bazaar-pawnshop, purchase, sale, pawn, loan, used goods, customers, marginalized groups