

Monetary practices in Greek medical context: corruption, generosity or humanism

Monetary practices in the Greek contemporary medical context are usually considered as an aspect of the Greek corrupted public health-care and the public sector in general and as the main implication of the labyrinthine bureaucratic services. The purpose of this intervention is firstly to discuss using ethnographic data the moralistic and solid binary opposition between the ‘unethical’ active doctor and the ‘ingenuous’ passive patient which is dominant in the customary interpretative frames of media and secondly to shed light on the other side of ‘receiving of *fakelakia* (bribes)’ which is ‘giving gifts’. We will then consider the ambivalent continuum of bribes/gifts as a strategic way of patients to rearrange power relations in the medical practice, to negotiate and shape the specific type and time of therapy and to temper the symbolic capital of medical profession in contemporary Greece. «In fact money is not guilty» M.Godelier (2003: 418) mentions «it’s only the evidence of specific, variant or even conflicting interests which are kept repressed on behalf of the illusion of a joint community». In what situations of illness and suffering patients decide to give money or other gifts to their doctor? What benefits agents draw from taking and giving money or gifts? And how class, gender and education diversify monetary practices of agents?