

Exploratory Workshop Scheme

Scientific Review Group for the Social Sciences

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Agencing Markets

Cargèse, 17-20 September 2013

Convened by: Franck Cochoy[®], Pascale Trompette[®]

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

1. Executive Summary

The ESF Explarotory Workshop "Agencing Markets" took place in Cargèse from 17-20 September at the Institut Scientifique de Cargèse, France. The workshop was convened by Professor Franck Cochoy and Research Director Pascale Trompette.

The workshop brought together a total of 16 participants from 9 European countries (France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK). The multidisciplinary background of participants gathered scholars from the following disciplines: economic sociology, management and marketing, philosophy, history.

The main topic of the workshop was at exploring new directions and going further into Michel Callon's anthropology of markets. Indeed, for 15 years now, Callon's contribution to the anthropology of calculation and the study of the performativity of economic knowledge (Callon, 1998) has greatly renewed the dominant paradigms in economic sociology. Though Callon's legacy has set the groundwork, some of the most original directions of Callon's writings have been less investigated and developed, and little discussed and extended. The workshop "Agencing Markets" gathered a group of scholars aimed at sketching out together a collective program about the 'agencing of markets', in order to address the dynamic process of market design and governance. A series of topics have been discussed, addressing issues such as new modalities in the "enacting" of consumers, the political engineering of markets, technical assemblages acting as political agencies, etc.

Workshop organization

The workshop was preceded by the circulation of the papers. The papers were made available to every participant three weeks before the workshop. The papers were assigned to discussants prior the workshop in order to provide prepared and constructive comments to stimulate thoughtful and constructive exchanges. The general atmosphere of the workshop was excellent. The discussions were positive and fruitful and stimulated the emergence of new ideas, which will enable us to move a step forward.

The workshop was held over three days.

Each participant benefitted from a 45 minutes track, with 20 minutes for the presentation, 10 minutes for the discussant and 15 minutes for the general discussion, a format which helped conducting rich, thoughtful and productive discussions.

The event was organized around six sessions:

The first two sessions, "Shaping markets through closing off schemes" (Wednesday 18 morning), and "Aligning interests through market devices and financial incentives" (Wednesday 18 afternoon), were focused on managerial and political approaches of social dynamics involved in the agencing markets and the formatting market behavior.

The third and fourth sessions, "Arranging new consumer configurations" and "Agencing mobile consumers" (Thursday 19 morning) focused on how agencing processes contribute to reshaping market environments but also consumers themselves.

The fifth and sixth sessions, "Mundane market devices" (Thursday 19 afternoon) and "Reflexive and interactive agencements" (Friday 20 morning) showed the pervasiveness of agencing patterns in mundane settings and reflected upon their possible extension and limits.

Wrap-up sessions were added at the end of each day, in order to relate what had been learned from the different papers and set out future research avenues and projects.

2. Scientific content of the event

Introduction and aims

The conveners presented the general argument and purpose of the workshop; then Franck Cochoy introduced the latest development in Michel Callon's thinking based on a forthcoming not yet published manuscript written by the author.

Session 1: "Shaping markets through closing off schemes"

Susi Geiger, University College Dublin, and John Finch, Glasgow University, presented a paper on Market Manipulations, Market Innovations and Pharma Patents, based on the discourse analysis of a body of data emanating from the 2008/9 EU Pharmaceutical Sector Inquiry. The questions considered are: what does it take to overcome the inertia created by a confluence of actors, materials and interests? What role does regulation have in market innovating? And in whose interest is market innovation (or not, as the case may be)? The authors suggested to adopt the perspective that markets are performed or 'agenced' (e.g. Çalişkan and Callon. 2010), that is that many different kinds of economic actors are involved in making, sustaining and undoing markets on a dynamic basis. They suggested that along such view, market innovation becomes a collective task of institutional innovation, so that the issue to be resolved is one of equipping market actors to shape the markets that they desire. Their contribution to the workshop's central issue of 'agencing markets' was thus to reflect on how such agencing can lead to 'better markets', or, in the words of Callon, Lascoumes and Barthes (2009), to markets that act as hybrid forums open to and inviting of diverse types of agencements.

Luis Araujo, Lancaster University, UK, and Hans Kjellberg, Stockholm School of economics, Sweden, presented a paper entitled "Seeding Loyalty and Reaping Commoditisation: the case of the FFP schemes in the US airline industry (1981-1991)." By FFPs, they address the creation of so-called Frequent Flyer Programs purported to increase customer loyalty and quickly became the standard tool for airline marketing. They analyze the introduction and subsequent development of these FFPs in terms of their agential consequences by combining the notions of agencement and investment in form. The success of the programs resulted from a series of complementary investments that contributed in several ways to modify the agencies involved. The authors show that it reshuffled capacities and responsibilities among airlines, travel agents, and corporate customers of air travel. Specifically, with respect to the customers of air travel, it gave birth to the Frequent Flyer, a new type of agent that was provided with the means through which to reflect itself as the fulcrum of that acting collective.

Session 2: "Aligning interests through market devices and financial incentives"

Véra Ehrenstein, Mines ParisTech, France, in her contribution on "Incentivizing tropical forests. The political qualities of carbon (market) agencements," proposed to consider the way tropical forests are dealt with by climate change negotiations as an empirical lens for the analysis of market agencing and global coordination. She examines three options for green-gas emission mitigation: the pantropical perspective where developing countries would reduce their deforestation by calculating their performance thanks to simple tools provided by remote sensing specialists in charge of supervising the rewards; the developmental approach that would tackle the political causes of deforestation by consolidating fragile governments through incentives associated to the means (reforms, programs, policies) and not to the end (emissions reductions), and finally the project-based carbon market where decreasing forest loss would be translated into a collection of conservation initiatives bypassing the states and used to offset emissions from northern industries. Véra Ehrenstein argues that these agencements display different political qualities: by distributing agency unevenly, they put some actors into motion while depriving others from the ability to intervene.

Liz McFall, Open University, UK, in her paper "Following the fire engine: the role of agents in sowing, prospecting and qualifying markets for low finance," reviews the history of sales prospection techniques used from the 1920s to sell insurance policy. These techniques were initially based on the motto "follow the fire engine," along the idea that "field men know... that an outbreak of fire is one of the most productive sources of new fire insurance" (*Prudential Bulletin*, 1935). A sales manual "How to Sell by the System" also suggested to

avoid words like insurance, policy and premium in the initial sales talk and advocated the selection from all possible policies only "the one which you think will appeal to the greatest number of prospects." These sales strategies pose question about their role in calculation and in the management of risk and uncertainty. Prospecting techniques are an illustration of both the "practical means" through which consumer imitation is made to work in market settings and the interplay of passion, affect and reason in economic calculation (Latour and Lepinay, 2009

Zsuzsanna Vargha, University of Leicester, UK, in her piece entitled "Preludes to the Principal-Agent relationship: aligning interests and making the motivated salesperson in banks," examines how the principal-agent relationship was used to motivate salespersons in the case of the marketization of Hungarian bank services. Instead of dismissing Agency Theory as simply wrong, as critics often do, she looks at how and under what circumstances financial incentives may in fact align behavior. Based on ethnographic fieldwork at two types of banks pre-crisis, she shows that having incentives to increase sales (as a strategy of gaining market share) required an iterative process of setting up a whole behavioral infrastructure. Incentivized Agents only came about once the banks could elicit "performance" from employees, that is, activities which could be measured ("number of offers made"). But the "performance measures" could not be actually measured, partly because employees' resistance to sales incentives was located in the information (gathering) systems. The banks constantly displaced their incentives to follow this resistance, to control increasingly technical aspects of their employees' work. She argues that this data-based measurability of work, and not money alone, is what is continuously agencing and reagencing behavior.

Joe Deville, Goldsmiths, University of London, in his presentation "A (de)faulty public? Tracking down a collective consumer credit politics," wonders how consumer credit markets might be politically 'agenced' by debtors (or not). To answer this question, he focuses on a space where the 'issue' of debt is actively felt by users. This is the experience of being in default, involving intimate, routine encounters between debtors unable or unwilling to repay, and debt collection organizations whose primary aim is to secure at least some part of that repayment. Joe Deville asks to what extent this kind of conditions contribute, like in other situations, towards the emergence of 'materially mediated concerned groups' (Marres 2012). By examining routine interactions between debtors on an online forum in the UK, Joe Deville argues that an emergent consumer credit public can be detected—however, these are organizing less around the issue of (consumer credit) lending than the issue of (consumer credit) collection.

Session 3: "Arranging new consumer configurations"

Jornod, Joël, University of Neufchâtel, Switezrland, focuses on "'Agencing' the home-shopper. The competition between direct mail order retailing and shopkeepers (Switzerland, 1900-1950)." He addresses the competition between independent shopkeepers and direct mail order retailing (DMO). This relationship is studied within the framework of Switzerland, during the first half of the 20th century, at that time DMO was developing in this country. In order to perform the agencing of their markets, these businesses attempted to untie existing relationships between consumers and other firms, and to establish new "agencements" by combining their own devices (catalogues, text, images) with consumers' dispositions. Joël Jornod provides a detailed account of the agencements of DMO companies. Then, he focuses on the shopkeepers' political actions against these competitors: their representatives tried to impose laws against mail order firms. This paper shows that the continuous and dynamic process of agencing markets also consists in "outacting" competitors, that is: putting them out of action.

Alexandre Mallard, Mines ParisTech, France, in his presentation on "Agencing commercial diversity" proposes to use the perspective of market agencing for the investigation of the initiatives taken by public authorities to support "commercial diversity" in the urban environments. City centers face diverse threats: the coming back of large retail operators, the uncontrolled emergence of commercial districts changing former neighborhood identity, the rise of real estate prices forcing small entrepreneurs to move out their activity, the fight again car circulation in city center changing consumer provision routines, etc. Various public actors (government, city councils, boards of trade) fight against the decrease in commercial diversity through a series of policy initiatives: labeling suppliers, controlling the opening up of new trades through legal authorizations, inscribing commercial activity into urban planning patterns, intervening in the market of business take-over through preemption... The market agencing approach provides useful conceptual tools and perspectives to qualify these initiatives and to underline their specific dynamic at the frontier of the economic and political spheres

Johan Hagberg, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, proposed to focus on "Agencing mobile consumers: An exploration of the shopping bag and the shaping of consumer agencies in retailing." The idea was to explore the dynamic process of market agencing through an historical analysis of the evolution of shopping bags and their contribution to the arranging of new consumer configurations. Based on an archive study in the form of the collection of a national trade magazine in packaging, Johan Hagberg describes the evolution of shopping bags starting from the early development when shopping bags were introduced as alternative to the wrapping of individual items. He accounts for innovations in materials and techniques (new materials, increased sizes, handles...) and studies how shopping bags became contested e.g. concerning problems with waste, safety and pollution. He then contributes to the theme of agencing markets by showing how the shopping bag contributed to the agencing of the self-service consumer. This case may be helpful in understanding contemporary processes of agencing, e.g. concerning the proliferation of smartphones, which similar to the shopping bag also participates in shaping multiple consumer configurations simultaneously.

Franck Cochoy and Cédric Calvignac, both from the University of Toulouse, France, in their contribution on "hybrid clusters" observe that most research on market agencement starts from the idea that agencing markets is a matter of market shaping (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2010), framing (Callon, 1998), organizing (Czarniawska, 2008). They note that less attention is paid to the individual microscopic entities (consumers, but also market devices, and possibly some combinations of the two) that are also contributing to the agencing of markets. Thus, they propose to explore this latter "individually" and "bottom-up" view on agencing markets, by focusing on a new kind of "acting entity", i.e. the hybrid entity formed by the composite assembly of a person and her "accessories." They propose to conduct the study of clusters from the analysis of the very mundane social practice of consumer logistics, i.e. how people and their bags travel together in the urban space. Their study shows show that the attention to clusters has the potential to help us better understand what animates contemporary economic action, beyond the human subjects and material objects that were too long opposed and separated.

Session 5: "Mundane market devices"

Céline Cholez and Pascale Trompette, from the University of Grenoble, France, presented a paper entitled: "The basket of fish or the mobile phone? 'Socio-technical agencement' as a temporal setting of market exchanges." The conceptualization of markets as sociotechnical agencements (STA's) (Caliskan & Callon, 2010; Hardie & MacKenzie, 2007) has been first and foremost interested in market arenas built on complex technologies and rational "agencies" like financial markets. Céline Cholez and Pascale Trompette propose to move to a long way off this area, in focusing on the (micro) economic circuits in the informal economy of emerging countries, where technologies are much less proliferate and sophisticated. The inquiry traces the socio-technical agencements of small production and trading micro-networks on the East Coast of Madagascar; it focuses on the examples of the second-hand car battery (sale, reparation, recharge); and the fish (game and sea fish) circuit. Focusing on the everyday workings of these markets, the authors study the process of agencing that supports their fluidity, which is performed by a multitude of agencies: kinship networks, key intermediaries, material artefacts (notebooks and baskets). They highlight the many re-framing actions called for by the everyday disruptions to economic life, bringing us closer to an understanding of how market reliability is established and how people deal with the risk of indeterminate economic exchanges.

Claes-Fredrik Helgesson, Linköping university, Sweden, in his paper "Agencing in tangled situations," reflected on the mundane practice of bill splitting in restaurants. There are many ways to settle a tab after sharing a meal: Splitting in equal shares, "going Dutch" (dividing along lines of consumption) or having one party picking up the whole tab are three broad ways to go about it. CF Helgesson aims to identify the repertoire of mundane forms of shaping of agency at play in tab splitting. Three sets of notions are proposed. First is the notion of socio-material agency, that is, that actors are compound and shifting agencements made up of human bodies, tools, devices, etc. (Callon 2005: Muniesa et al. 2007). Second are the notions of connected lives and relational work from Viviana Zelizer (2005) that highlights the ongoing work in social relations to reconcile close social relations with economic transactions. Third is the pragmatic notion of values as being enacted in activities of valuation (Muniesa 2012). This pragmatic stance vis-à-vis values is used for investigating the diverse registers of value enacted in the precarious agencing in tangled situations.

Mika Pantzar and Minna Ruckenstein, both from the National Consumer Research Center, Helsinki, Finland, delivered a presentation entitled "From transparency to biohacking – The disciplinary matrix of the Wired-self in the emerging era of dataism." They first observe that the birth of the "calculating self" intertwines with the emerging market economy (Callon 1998b), suggesting that without an economic subject, capable of calculating, the whole system of market economy would become unmanageable. Following this insight, the authors explore the Quantified Self (QS) movement and the ways the characteristic of healthy body is newly explicated, defined and established. Their analysis is based on the analysis of primarily Wired -magazine articles from 2008 to 2013. Because of the new emphasis on the value of data, they introduce the idea of dataism, suggesting that at the heart of the QS-movement is a belief in the significance of a data-led everyday life. Data are seen as suggestive and even agentive or agencing, in the sense that they push forward new modes to relate, represent and analyze; in short, the data call for managing the personal in a manner that has not existed before.

Elena Esposito, University of Bologna, Italy, closed the series of presentations in asking: "Do we need an "open man"? The anthropology of agencements." She recalls that Callon's program has the purpose to develop a particular "anthropology" in order to take account of the multiple roles involved in social action. But then she wonders: if the assumption is to abandon the centrality of "human beings", it looks singular to look for an anthropology, i.e. for a science of the human – a renewed version of the discipline centered on human beings. For Elean Esposito, the abandonment of "ontological asymmetry" between human and non-human agencies is certainly a necessary step in social sciences, but she also thinks that this program can become more radical and at the same time simpler if it abandons not only asymmetry but also anthropology, i.e. if it gives up the assumption that the shortcomings of the reference to individuals can be overcome by extending the anthropological reference to hybrid entities that integrate human competence with a number of other performance needed for social action.

Conclusions

In the final wrap-up, the participants and the conveners concluded that the shift from agencement to agencing, which might seem very modest at first sight, proved to have the potential to carry significant and fruitful advances in the booming field of market studies. Moreover, they had the strong and positive feeling that the event, far from bringing a collection of separate individual papers, helped identify several convergent themes of inquiry.

The various papers all contributed, each one in its own respect, to showing that market functioning does not depend on the performing of large frameworks (laws, regulations, institutions)or local devices only, as the existing literature tends to say, but on moving dynamic processes that the notion of "agencing" captures best. This notion helps to move further than the mere focus on "market devices"; it gives the means to address both the agent and the material arrangement as an agency and also to open actor-network theory to the study of institutional and organizational processes and entities.

In addition, several papers showed that agencing is also about producing new types of market agencies, like the frequent flyer (Araujo and Kjellberg), the shopping bag shopper (Hagberg), the quantified-self person (Pantzar and Ruckenstein), and so on.

The papers also revealed a tension between 1) "agencing" as an emergent process, where various actors and resources combine to shape the economic environment (Cholez and Trompette), or where actors mobilize or reinvent the rules and techniques which help them to solve practical problems (Helgesson) and 2) "agencing" as a purposeful political and managerial action, aimed at shaping the agents' behavior (Vargha) as well as the market settings (Ehrenstein, Jornod, Mallard, Geiger and Finch). Such findings have several theoretical and political implications.

On the political side, the main issue is that of controlling and correcting the asymmetries created by the messy coordination of actors, as if a first decentralized "agencing" movement needed the design of a second, reflexive and organized type of "agencing" rationale. Such rationale may take the form either of a classic political scheme (Ehrenstein, Mallard) or of the development of actors' self-agencement (agencing as empowering, (Deville). Monitoring initiatives from major players in market regulation as bottom up social dynamics can also

be described as performative and counter-performative forces in agencing markets (Vargha, Geiger and Finch, Jornod).

On the theoretical side, several contributors showed that the study of agencing practices calls for a redefinition of market actors and market agencies: we have to take into account the technical prosthesis which redefines their cognition (Pantzar and Ruckenstein), their hybrid character (Cochoy), the prominent role of their effects (Deville, McFall) and even the possibility of abandoning any reference to anthropology and simply studying social processes as they unfold (Esposito).

Given these emerging contributions the conveners concluded that it will be possible to turn these papers into relevant publications. Several possible outlets where evoked: peer-reviewed journals like *Consumption, markets and culture,* the *Journal of Cultural Economy, Marketing Theory* or the *International Journal of Actor-Network Theory* which hosted similar types of contributions in former issues, or book publishers, like Emerald, Oxford University Press, Mattering Press or the Sociological Review Monographs series. The idea of organizing a "follow-up" of the event in the form of a track at the EGOS 2015 conference was also evoked.

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field, outcome

The workshop successfully benefitted from the shared knowledge of the participants in actor-network inspired market studies, as well as their varied differences in terms of fields, countries and disciplines. The theme of "agencing markets" proved a fruitful route to contribute to extending and developing market studies at the European level. Building on the workshop, a series of publications and other scientific events will be proposed and supported.

4. Final programme

Tuesday 17 September 2013

Afternoon	Arrival
19.30	Welcome Aperitif
20.30	Dinner at the Village

Wednesday 18 September 2013

09.15-09.45	Welcome by Convenor Franck Cochoy (CERTOP, University of Toulouse), Pascale Trompette (PACTE, University of Grenoble)
09.45-10.15	Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF) Marie Fleck (Scientific Review Group for the Social Sciences)
10.15-10.30	Coffee / Tea Break
10:3012:00	Morning Session: Shaping markets through closing off schemes
10.30 - 11.15	"Market Manipulations, Market Innovations and Pharma Patents" Susi Geiger (University College Dublin) and John Finch (Glasgow University) Discussant: Claes-Fredrik Helgesson
11.15-12:00	"Seeding Loyalty and Reaping Commoditisation: the Case of the FFP schemes in the US airline industry" Luis Araujo (Lancaster University Management School) and Hans Kjellberg (Stockholm School of Economics)
	Discussant: Joe Deville

12.00-13.30	Lunch
13.30-15:00	Afternoon Session: Aligning interests through market devices and financial incentives
13.30-14.15	"International Agencement: how a Congolese acacia tree goes global" Véra Ehrenstein (Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation) Discussant: Luis Araujo
14.15-15.00	"Following the fire engine: the role of agents in sowing, prospecting and qualifying markets for low finance" Liz Mc Fall (Open University, Milton Keynes) Discussant: Pascale Trompette
15.00-15.30	Coffee / tea break
15.00-16.15	"Preludes to the Principal-Agent relationship": aligning interests and making the motivated salesperson in banks Zsuzsanna Vargha (University of Leicester) Discussant: Susi Geiger
16.15-17.00	"A (de)faulty public? Tracking down a collective consumer credit politics" Joe Deville (Centre for the Study of Invention and Social Process, University of London) Discussant: Hans Kjellberg
17:00-17:30	Discussion
19.00	Dinner

Thursday 19 September 2013

09.00-10.30	Morning Session 1: Arranging new consumer configurations
09.00-09.45	"Agencing" the home-shopper: The case of the mail order firm Girard & Co, 1926-1942" Joel Jornod (University of Neuchâtel) Discussant: Johan Hagberg
09.45-10.30	"Agencing commercial diversity: an exploration of the urban politics of small retail trade care" Alexandre Mallard (Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation) Discussant: Liz McFall
10.30-11.00	Coffee / Tea Break
11.00-11.45	Morning Session 2: Agencing mobile consumers "Agencing mobile consumers: An exploration of the shopping bag and the smartphone and the shaping of consumer agencies in retailing" John Hagberg (University of Gothenburg) Discussant: Joël Jornod
11.45-12.30	"How clusters (i.e. hybrid consumer-things assemblages), contribute to the (re)agencing of market action. Lessons from a mundane consumer practice" Franck Cochoy and Cédric Calvignac (University of Toulouse) Discussant: Mika Pantzar
12.30-14.00	Lunch

Afternoon Session: Mundane market devices

14.00-14.45	"The basket of fish, the notebook and the mobile phone: socio-technical agencement as a temporal setting of market exchanges" Céline Cholez and Pascale Trompette (Pacte, University of Grenoble) Discussant: Zsuzsanna Vargha
14.45-15:30	"Agencing in tangled situations" Claes-Fredrik Helgesson (Linköping University) Discussant: Franck Cochoy
15:30-16:00	Discussion

Friday 20 September 2013

09.00-11.30	Morning Session: Reflexive and interactive agencements
09.00-09.45	"Communicating with the things: agent and system in the market and in society" Elena Esposito (Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia) Discussant: Alexandre Mallard
09.45-10.30	Personal Analytics: Tracing the political and ideological roots and futures the engineered body" M. Pantzar and M. Ruckenstein (National Consumer Research Center, Helsinki) Discussant: Elena Esposito
10.30-11.00	Coffee / Tea Break
11.00-11.30	Discussion (wrap-up and future plans)
11.30	End of Workshop and departure

4. Final list of participants

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5. Statistical information on participants

Age structure:

No details collected, but around 40% was younger than 40 years.

Gender repartition:

Participants: 6 female (38%), 10 male (62%)

Countries of origin:

France: 4
Finland: 1
Ireland: 1
Italy: 1

Switzerland: 1 Sweden : 2

United Kingdom: 4 (England: 3 / Scotland: 1)

United States: 1

Scientific specialities: Historical sciences, Management, Marketing, Sociology