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## Article

# Note from the editor

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## Note from the editors

Dear reader,

During the last fifteen years, several studies have assessed markets through their organizational, cognitive and material dimensions. These studies have emphasized, for example, the role of market devices (Callon et al., 2007), technologies and knowledge (MacKenzie and Millo, 2003), institutions (François, 2011) and organizations (Healy, 2006) in the making of markets. These new insights on the functioning of markets also reveal the role of specific activities that both shape and regulate markets.

This new issue of ESEEN will focus on activities which **“work on the market”**, activities that create the conditions for economic exchange: such activities shape demand and consumers' preferences as well as features of supply (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2013a; Zwick and Cayla, 2011), but also organize the encounters between suppliers and demanders, producers and customers, products and consumers. These activities, which remained in under-analysed for a long time, are indeed central for the formation of value on market: they make brands, prices, and reputations, and produce judgement devices (Beckert and Aspers, 2010; Karpik, 2011). They may be performed by specific actors and departments within firms whose marketing activities are directly dedicated to producing markets (Araujo and al., 2010), but they may also be performed outside of these suppliers, by other companies, or by single actors who play the role of market intermediaries, and make their profit directly from these working market activities. One may also consider the role of social movement organizations in making markets through specific activities that work on the market (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2013b).

The first paper of this issue, by Franck Cochoy and Sophie Dubuisson-Quellier, provides theoretical insights that may help to systematically analyse these activities. It emphasizes the necessity of considering them to be “work activities” performed by professionals, equipped with specific skills, who intervene in the shaping of markets. The paper suggests exploring the conditions of coordination of these activities, as some of them may be performed by the supplying firms, while others come from subcontractors

among whom interventions could be sequential. As a result, this “market work” consists of a variety of activities, based on specific competencies, which are more or less coordinated and which produce a diversity of representations of the demand, as well as devices for the valuating of products.

The three following papers are dedicated to case studies that provide examples of these activities. In his paper on the market for Bordeaux wines, Pierre-Marie Chauvin, explores the formation of prices. He demonstrates that prices do not only come out of institutional mechanisms that shape reputation (such as classification and critics), but can also be directly result from the activities of producers and brokers who “work the market” by negotiating these classifications and critics' judgements.

The third paper, by Ashley Mears, focuses on the market for models. She describes an important contrast between the discourse of models who like to emphasize the important dimension of chance in their profession, by stating that they were lucky to be « at the right place at the right time », and an analysis of their activity that establishes the degree to which they work the market. Indeed, models work at identifying this “right place and time” by repeatedly performing activities that may end up forcing chance: observing the market, discussing with agents, following the zeitgeist styles and trends. Their agents are market intermediaries who also are deeply involved in these activities of working on market.

Agents are also at the core of the fourth paper, by Didier Demazière and Morgan Jouvenet, on the market for football players. The paper suggests the central role of agents, as market intermediaries or middlemen, within an activity, football playing, which is strongly market regulated. Agents contribute to building each player as a singularity, in order to better control commercial exchanges and make money from the exchange of highly valuable players. As a result, agents work on the football job market by trying to modify its functioning, for the benefit of their own ability to control it. Far from being simple transparent intermedia-

ries organizing the matching of players and clubs, they directly influence the market, by shaping players' qualities.

The interview, which ends this issue, goes back to more theoretical issues. It has been conducted with Lucien Karpik, who has emphasized since the end of the 1990s the role of these devices and activities that contribute to shaping markets and organizing the coordination of supply and demand. Karpik's 2010 book, *Valuing the unique* (Princeton University Press), constitutes one of the main milestones on these topics. He returns to his own origins as a sociologist, having been from the beginning of his career very much involved in the discussion between economics and sociology and in the negotiation of the boundaries of the theoretical insights of each discipline. The economy of singularities that he recently proposed appears today as a particularly convincing component of what economic sociology has produced in the search for the explanation of how markets work.

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