

Call for Submissions:

3rd Interdisciplinary Market Studies Workshop, France, 5-6 June 2014

We are calling for abstract proposals to the third Interdisciplinary Market Studies Workshop, to be held in Saint Maximin la Sainte Baume, near Aix en Provence, France, on June 5 and 6 2014. Like its two predecessors, this workshop aims to represent an opportunity for scholars, practitioners and activists from any disciplinary background interested in market functioning and design, market actors, market interactions, exchange orders, values and morals, socio-technical market arrangements, ordering devices, objects, models, representations and tools. The workshop will provide a space for forming connections between disciplines and for discussing possible future avenues for an interdisciplinary market studies approach. Invited guest speakers will be Jane Guyer (Professor of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins, US) and Don Slater (Reader of Sociology, London School of Economics, UK).

Where previous workshops focussed more centrally on marketization processes in various empirical contexts (1st IMSW Sigtuna, Sweden 2010) and orders and values in markets (2nd IMSW Dublin, Ireland 2012), this year we would like to foreground the actors who often 'hide' behind such processes but who form an integral part in performing markets. While papers considering any market phenomena empirically or conceptually are welcome, we particularly invite contributions that address one of the following three interrelated themes:

1. The role of creativity and narratives in shaping markets

Much of the recent work in markets has emphasised the materiality of markets, most notably, the role of market devices and metrics in enacting market forms. How these devices are actually deployed by market actors has received much less attention. Exploring the role of creativity and the forms of narrative construction that actors undertake to make sense of social and material reality is integral to an examination of market behaviour and decision-making. Psychologists have long argued the centrality of narratives for understanding how humans apprehend the socio-material world. And scholars working in fields as diverse as sociology, anthropology, organisation, literary studies and economic history have examined the role of fictionality, imagination and story-telling in making what we know as "the economic" (e.g. Beckert 2013, Czarniawska 1998, Maurer 2006, McCloskey 1998, Poovey 1998, Tuckett 2011). Further research into how (local) narratives and other interpretative tools and mechanisms are incorporated into processes of organising, qualification and exchange – e.g. the cognitive schemes, emotional frames and repertoires of action that provide meaning and coherence – is much needed.

2. Personhood and market subjects

The critique of economic man has been made, and repeatedly. And yet the homogenous economic agent and the corollary assumption of utility maximisation under known outcomes persist in economics, underpinning models of behaviour, notably incentives (e.g. principal-agent theory), which fail to adequately describe the complexity of human action. Furthermore economic theories have failed to explain how agents come into being, and they have not acknowledged the production of multiple, heterogeneous, agents in markets. Elsewhere, the role of subject-making and personhood in markets has gained increasing traction, for instance in mundane market settings (e.g. how market actors are configured in online stores or supermarkets) and contexts where markets are still being consciously constructed and are considered in their “infancy” (e.g. in markets in transition economies) (Guyer 2004). Possible research avenues may concern the intersection of performativity and subjectivity, the making of economic subjects in market agencements (Caliskan and Callon, 2010) – including consumers, producers, regulators and collective persons such as firms – and the role of cultural values and ethics in defining desired forms of personhood in markets (Entwistle and Slater 2013).

3. Market empowerment

This theme focusses on how actors – economic or otherwise, always with special interests, imaginations, and personhoods – come to attain positions of power in and through markets. Power is a classic issue in relation to markets. Some understandings of markets suggest markets are tantamount to the absence of power relations – the opposite of hierarchies (e.g. Williamson 1976) – whereas others suggest markets are arenas for political struggles (e.g. Fligstein 1996). The recent attention to the material dimension of markets has added another layer of complexity to this, where arguably access to or control over certain market devices empowers some actors, whilst disempowering others. A similar debate can be found in consumption studies, where markets alternatively have been put forward as vehicles of consumer emancipation and consumer governance/discipline (e.g. Cova and Cova 2012). We welcome proposals that explore issues of power, empowerment and disempowerment in markets and regarding market actors, for instance in relation to materiality, political processes, or everyday market encounters.

The workshop will be organized in collaboration with the Centre de Sociologie de l’Innovation, Ecole des Mines ParisTech. It will take place in the *Convent Royal* at Saint Maximin La Sainte Baume. (<http://www.historic-hotels.fr/hotel/le-couvent-royal-de-saint-maximin>)

We invite contributors to submit a 3-page abstract proposal by Jan 31st 2014. Abstracts should be sent to Alexandre Mallard at the following address: imsw.2014@gmail.com. Inquiries about the workshop can be made to any of the workshop organisers. We will notify contributors about acceptance by early March, and full papers will be due early May.

The Organising Committee
Alexandre Mallard, Ecole des Mines ParisTech.
Kimberly Chong, University College London.
Susi Geiger, University College Dublin.
Hans Kjellberg, Stockholm School of Economics.

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