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Content

Note from the editors

Markets, market dynamics and market creation in Latin America

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Our first issue devoted to economic sociology in Latin America was dedicated to three relevant and interrelated topics among economic sociologists and anthropologists in the region: money, finance, and debt. As an introduction, we asked ourselves whether we can talk of a Latin American economic sociology. The current volume is a continuation of this search but follows a different strategy and has a different locus. It aims at capturing a diversity of approaches and subjects through which social scientists in Latin America have sought to grasp the social life of the economy: markets. Markets are without doubt one of the key economic phenomena to study from a sociological point of view, and are certainly an area which economic sociology has developed into one of its strengths. Economic sociologists have typically studied the diverse social processes that constitute markets and help to create market dynamics and devices, such as institutions, competition, coordination, fields, and valuation (Helgesson and Muniesa 2013, Beckert 2010). Economic sociologists have also been interested in the art of crafting markets and the actors involved, particularly economists and the way they have imagined the operation of free markets and attempted to create them (MacKenzie and Millo 2008, Çalışkan and Callon 2009).

Latin America offers a locus where market dynamics and market creation are "overflowed" by their cultural, social, and political embeddedness. The contrast between traditional and modern values, between western and non-western cultures in a context of weak overall formal institutions, relative economic deprivation, and stark social, political, and economic inequalities, implies that marketplaces and market dynamics acquire a particular form. The social experience of inflation, the struggle over "public numbers", and the boundaries between marketization and indigenous cultures, to mention but a few secondary issues in mainstream economic sociology, are thus brought to the center of attention of scholars studying how markets operate in Latin America. Conversely, the free reign that economists were given to infuse domestic markets and institutions with their own visions of the economy under extraordinary conditions of low citizen participation and insulated democratic politics – or even outright military repression and dictatorship – allows investigating more precisely how the pre-conditions for the operation of modern markets are met, and how diverse social practices and devices emerge from the underlying processes of translation and interpretation by local economic agents making sense of these overarching transformations. This is perhaps one of the reasons why economic anthropology and its methods have acquired a particular importance in the context of research on Latin American economic sociology. In other words, the articles gathered here establish a direct dialogue with mainstream economic sociology, but their subjects of inquiry and major concerns relate to historical problems that are regionally bounded and the practices of research are themselves tailored to understanding these particular phenomena.

As editors, we would like to provide a very brief contextualization of the articles in this issue. We suggest locating the attempts to unveil the social life of the economy and markets in Latin America in the intersections between at least four coordinates: the role of the state, historical legacies, the rise of markets after the "lost" decade following the debt crisis of the 1980s, and the conflicts surrounding markets in the context of extractivist economies and indigenous populations.

The state and the market

Economic sociologists working on Latin America try to understand the disputes over creating, controlling, and governing official economic statistics in the public sphere ("public numbers"). This is true for countries like Argentina, with a long history of market instability, hyperinflationary crises and institutional weaknesses destabilizing the operation of markets – as the article in this issue by Heredia and Daniel shows – but it is also a reality that is present in other seemingly more economically and politically stable countries like Chile (see Ramos Zincke 2015). To a great extent, the dispute over "public numbers" reflects a broader issue that represents a key coordinate for locating economic sociology in the region: the extent to which the state can provide the institutional conditions for markets to operate, or the fact that Latin American states cannot always guarantee the enforcement of the law, let alone control those who are supposed to make it function. The capacity of the state to produce and communicate statistical data and to provide basic services, property rights, or sovereignty over territory has been a major concern of scholars beyond the field of economic sociology, and it certainly represents a cornerstone of the reflection about, among others, the emergence of markets in contexts of informality (Dewey 2018), the institutionalization of competition (see the article by Onto in this issue), or the issue of bureaucratic capacity and economic development (Soifer 2015). To make things more complicated, institutional weakness (or strength) differs even within states: as certain authors have underscored, there are variations in institutional strength that make institutions and markets work more or less effectively depending on the country and institutional domain we are talking about (Levitsky and Murillo 2012; Altman & Luna, 2012). This often implies that processes of institutional change are more punctuated and tend towards "serial replacement" rather than path dependency, reducing the certainty with which market actors act and conduct their businesses, and therefore generating a range of defensive responses from them.

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Institutional legacies and markets

The institutional context in which enterprises create, expand, and seek to monopolize markets is characteristic of the region. The overall institutional weaknesses are compounded by characteristic traits in terms of the structure of property, wealth concentration, and models of corporate governance to name but a few, representing key historical legacies that continue to shape the social foundations of markets in Latin America (Schneider 2013). Latin America has been historically characterized by income inequality and wealth concentration in the hands of a closed elite and economic networks constituted around kinship (North and Clark 2018). Barriers to entry into conventional markets and privatized public utilities are also enforced by a model of corporate governance that tends to organize around diversified and family-controlled business groups and the presence of large multinationals. Weak states tend to be lenient to these large business groups that represent the lion's share of enterprise profit and the countries' export production. This model, known as "hierarchical capitalism", reduces the incentives for innovation and reproduces inequality by prompting a sharp dualization in labour markets, a trend that European countries are only now beginning to experience. The consequences in terms of the operation of markets is the presence of large players controlling production and distribution, hierarchical rather than horizontal or cooperative relations between large and small companies and between employers and employees, and a large informal sector where a number of novel economic practices emerge.

The art of crafting markets

The history of Latin America is full of experiences of economic engineering and "money doctors" aiming to stabilize the economy (e.g. Centeno and Silva 1996; Drake 1989). This acquired a new significance in the context of authoritarian regimes and/or democratic ones that insulated policymakers from the pressure from their populations and from electoral considerations in the 1980s and 1990s. Two related processes of reform were said to be key to putting Latin American economies on the right footing: stabilization and structural reform. In this context, what economists tried was not only doing policy, but more importantly, crafting and creating markets from scratch, following their own theories and imaginaries about how they should function (see Ossandon in this issue). With regards to the first, the process of stabilizing the economy implied creating the conditions for markets to operate as the economists' theories predicted. Essentially this meant looking after the stability of prices to enable economic actors to take their maximizing decisions in full, putting inflation at the core of the efforts of different governments. Conversely, structural reform referred to the institutional pre-conditions of markets. Most importantly, economists saw the need to reform and redistribute property rights in order to create entrepreneurs eager to participate and invest in market dynamics. An important part of this process was the privatization of social services and the creation of what were called "quasi-markets," that is, institutional spaces mimicking the operation of markets in domains where market relations and dynamics were typically prohibited or reduced (see Maillet 2015). Various authors have narrated this process as part of the rise of economists and the way they came to hegemonize not only the discussion about public policy but even the very policymaking decisions at the highest echelons of government (see Dezalay and Garth 2002; Montecinos and Markoff, 2009). At the same time, economic sociologists and anthropologists devoted themselves to understanding the responses of different economic actors to these overarching processes of stabilization and structural reform.

Social conflict surrounding markets

Finally, Latin America is still a region where the economy is based on extractive economies that rely on the exploitation of natural resources. This was strengthened after the demise of import-substituting industrialization and the reconsideration of the idea of comparative advantage. In this context, the market logics of profit-making and land grabbing collide with both environmental concerns and indigenous populations that claim rights over territories that belonged to their ancestries. Alongside the resistance to trade openness and the privatization of social security and land (Wilson and Crowder-Taraborrelli, 2013; Cupples and Larios, 2010), social movements and organized communities in Latin America have sought to restrain the commodification of cultural goods such as indigenous spirituality and indigenous culture (Gómez-Barris 2012, Wilson 2003, see also Vereta-Nahoum in this issue).

Overall, resistance against market logics during the last two decades in Latin America need to be contextualized in a broader historical trend that scholars termed a "post-neoliberal turn" (Yates and Bakker 2014). The twenty-first century in Latin America witnessed a turn to the left that brought into question the role of markets in society as a whole. Leftist candidates won elections by hoisting the flags of wealth distribution in a continent historically shaped by the concentration of income and land (North and Clark 2018;

Levitsky and Roberts 2011). In this context, the international commodity boom of the early 2000s not only deepened the extractivist logic but also provided these governments with sufficient revenues to carry on their progressive programs, expanding the provision of public goods, and in some cases changing the institutional setting in which markets operate (namely, the countries' political constitution). In this context, the conflict over natural resources, the deepening of extractivism, and the enclosure of the commons have been pivotal to the configuration of the relationship between markets, the state, and society (Arsel, Hogenboom, and Pellegrini 2016).

The articles in this issue may be located in the intersections between these four coordinates, and they represent different approaches to the operations of capitalist markets in the region. Heredia and Daniel offer a historical approach to the establishment of one of the most important pre-conditions for the functioning of markets in Argentina: the taming of inflation and the consolidation of public economic statistics to process market signals in the public sphere. Vereta-Nahoum explores the tense relationship between indigenous culture and markets, contrasting experiences of the commodification of cultural elements of Amazonian natives in Brazil. Drawing on both ethnographic fieldwork and a systematic study of media articles, he tackles "the potential, dilemmas, tensions, and challenges of selling cultures." Onto, on the other hand, offers a micro-approach to anti-trust regulation in Brazil. Analysing the interaction between analysts and "anti-trust artifacts" (maps, indexes, photographs, charts, and visual representation of statistics), Onto explores the role of materiality in the conceptualization and regulation of market competition. In this way, he opens the black box of anti-trust bodies and develops an alternative angle to classical institutional approaches to anti-trust regulations in economic sociology. Finally, Ossandón develops a broader reflection on the "crafting of markets" and economic experimentation, which became common practice among economists in contexts of authoritarian governments in the region and has now become a well-established field worldwide. In particular, Ossandón pays special attention to cases in which markets are conceived as policy-instruments that aim at solving public problems and the specific expertise required to undertake such task. In the light of empirical developments in the economics profession, the question that Ossandón raises is whether "a new type of economics that conceives of itself in terms of 'market design' calls for a new type of economic sociology."

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The taming of prices

Framing and fighting inflation in the second half of the twentieth century in Argentina

Mariana Heredia and Claudia Daniel

Introduction

Historians agree that bringing inflation under control became a crucial challenge for western governments in the 1970s and opened a space for experimentation to neoliberal policy. But inflation did not appear out of the blue with the oil crises. Widespread price rises were a current and persistent phenomenon since the postwar years. The difference was that interventionist states had managed to keep it contained and considered inflation to be a minor problem compared to growth, employment, and distribution. In contrast, from the 1970s price increases climbed and the battle against inflation became one of the main public and political concerns.

Studies on inflation have been more or less monopolized by economists. As their primary purpose was to treat and eradicate inflation on the basis of a quantitative method and a general theory of action, little was done to understand how individuals, families, enterprises, retailers, and associations experienced, understood, and acted upon it. Although scarce, the contribution of other social sciences can be divided into four groups. Political scientists researched the impact of inflation on governments' legitimacy and stability, usually from a comparative perspective (Paldam 1987; Smith, Dua, and Taylor 1994). They also revealed how inflation became a weighting factor for the adoption of market reforms (Biglaiser and DeRouen 2004). Cultural and media studies analysed the place of experts, media coverage and event framing (Mata and Lemercier 2010; Harrington 1989). For macro-sociologists, inflation was associated with distributive conflicts, stressing its social and political causes (Baumgartner and Burns 1980). In addition, they studied the relevance attributed to inflation by different social groups (Hibbs 1979; Mora and Araujo 1988; Araujo 1993). Finally, historians, ethnographers, and qualitative sociologists considered the experience of drastic price increase in daily life (for inflation from 1945–1955, see Elena 2012; for hyperinflation in the 1980s, Neiburg 2006; Sigal and Kessler 1996–1997).

As pieces of a complex puzzle, these contributions indicate the multifaceted nature of inflation but they still respect a clear distinction between economy, politics, and society. By setting these disciplinary boundaries aside, a long-term socio-history of inflation could reveal how societies experienced, framed, and fought price disorder in the second half of the twentieth century.

From an economist's perspective, inflation is considered a problem because it disrupts currency value and pricing schemes. Both mediate in establishing equivalence among goods and services, indicate costs and rewards, enable decentralized calculation, and therefore permit the coordination of economic transactions and the planning of mid-term investments. In short, prices are crucial sources of information for market economies. Nevertheless, as Polanyi (1957 [1944]) has stressed, the economy, as a self-regulating domain, is a historical invention. As Callon (1998) has pointed out, its existence requires a series of operations of disentanglement of goods and services in which economic science plays an active role. While this process has been observed in several specific markets, inflation offers a prime field to study a macro-social process of distinction and separation that marked the passage between welfare to neoliberal states.

Our argument is that, if we suspend disciplinary distinctions, inflation reveals two contrasting modes of

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representing the economy. At least in Argentina, the growing concern about inflation is related to the consolidation of price indexes and the rise of economists as primary actors in public and political life.[1] Numbers and experts did not just add new terminology and interpreters to inflation analyses, they completely changed the way societies and authorities act to tame price rises.

Transcending the debate about the political and economic significance of this phenomenon, Michel Foucault helps us to understand inflation as a problem of government (McCormack 2015). The French philosopher showed how public and physical punishment was gradually replaced by more sophisticated, private and disembodied strategies of control and management. In his lectures of 1978–1979 at the *College de France,* Foucault affirms that, in neoliberal regimes, to govern will increasingly mean to conduct individual behaviours "under the way and model of the economy" (Foucault 2008 and [1978–1979] 2012, 121). Instead of making use of physical violence, surveillance and moral judgments, governments stimulate "economic agents" to freely calculate their costs and benefits in order to align social conduct with socio-political objectives (Miller and Rose 2008). Some critics have pointed out (Harvey 2005) that repressive forces have not been abandoned to the same degree in all social domains. What interests us here is how the economy emerged as a sphere within which individual selfish actions were not only permitted but also encouraged to be coordinated "at a distance" (Latour, 1987). While economists contributed to "make [their] world" (Mitchell 2005), numbers provided an "objectivation of equivalences", enabling calculations for "multiple decision centres" (Desrosières 2008, 12).

Argentina is a country unmatched globally in terms of its history of inflation. Even for a continent that has suffered high and persistent levels of price increase, Argentina constitutes an extreme example of an inflationist society: no other country has presented such high levels of inflation and for so long (Schvarzer 1998). Since the 1940s, Argentinian inflation has been consistently above the international average (by 28% a year from 1940–1970), reaching 400% in 1976 and 3000% in 1989, with no recorded levels under 90% until the last decade of the twentieth century. Even today, Argentina is fifth in the global ranking of inflationist countries IMF 2019).

Mass media provides an ideal platform to observe social practices and their publicization. According to McCormack (2015, 135), mass-media intermediations "are particularly important with respects to efforts to govern prices." The public dissemination of information is fundamental to channel moral condemnation and disciplinary sanctions, as well as to spread public numbers and coordinate social practices at distance. Based on a systematic archival analysis of the two major national newspapers – *La Nación* (LN) and *Clarín* (CL) – during four decades (1950–1990)[2], this article presents the preliminary results of a long-term history of inflation. We focus on how it was experienced, framed, and fought in the second half of the twentieth century in Argentina. The paper is organized in two sections that reveal contrasting modes in the attempts to tame prices and disentangle the economy. Each section focuses on three main aspects: the way inflation was experienced and presented in the public sphere, the actors that participated in complaints and interpretations about it, and the political strategies followed to stabilize prices.

Collective actions and coercive strategies against a confusing problem

A vague experience embedded in other socio-political concerns

Leafing through the pages of Argentinian newspapers, it is clear that inflation was neither the most important public concern nor a discernible problem for contemporaries in the post-war years. Of course, the sudden rise of prices in 1959 (reaching the unprecedented level of 114% a year) was portrayed in the media as a source of worry and uncertainty. Nevertheless, it was difficult to separate this anxiety from others that were closely linked to socio-political issues.

On the one hand, social conflict was expected because, for most observers, the increase in prices hit the working classes especially hard. In a generalized disruption to relative price stability, there was no doubt about the focus of public attention: foodstuffs, medicines and public services. The prices of bread, milk, sugar, meat, transportation, and electricity were among those most frequently mentioned by the press. For both newspapers, inflation had to be addressed to protect people's wellbeing:

> "The spiral of high inflation, far from stopping is getting worse. (…) So flour, tea, vegetables, powder milk, soda and others like meat and coffee became unaffordable. The high cost of living has become extremely alarming" (*CL,* 01/27/1959: 9)[3].

> "Lower classes representing the majority of our social structure only know everyday life, manifested in their salaries and incomes that are insufficient. Even civil servants, retired people feel the same. People have already dramatically tightened their belts" (*CL*, 05/09/1962: 8).

On the other hand, the crucial question was that inflation complicated governability: rising prices made it harder to calm down the lower classes' belligerence in a very instable political regime. After the overthrow of Peronist government (1945–1955) by a military coup, the mobilizing capacity of unionized workers and popular associations allied to this movement became a threat to national authorities. For civilian governments elected under the proscription of Peronists, inflation encouraged military interventions. While easier for military officials, social repression was not without its costs.

In this tense social climate, inflation was far from being a defined phenomenon. Several names were used to refer to this vague and disturbing experience: *"carestía de la vida", "alza del nivel de precios", "círculo vicioso del encarecimiento recíproco", "erosión del poder adquisitivo" o "aumento del costo de la vida"*. Newspaper sections were not yet as clearly defined as they are today, but inflation could appear anywhere: on the front page and next to economic information, as well as in the union, trade, politics, sports and culture sections!

Lacking a name, there was not a widely recognized index to give an accurate representation of the extent of inflation. Cost of living indexes had existed in Argentina since 1918 (Fernández López 1994) and different public agencies monitored price evolution, however none of them had been able to impose their measurements in the public sphere (Daniel 2013). Some indexes were used by trade unions to claim wage updates during the 1930s and 1940s (Daniel 2011). It was not until 1962 that most popular newspapers, like *Clarín* and *La Nación,* started to publish them regularly. Such numbers only became significant in the press in the 1970s. Before, when mentioned, they were frequently criticized and distrusted (cf. *LN*, 12/26/1965: 22).

As official numbers were surrounded by suspicion, participants in public debates about inflation did not need to draw on any quantitative support to claim to have an authoritative voice on the subject. Statistical language was complementary and could appear in actors' speeches without reference to the source or with no comment about the reliability of the numbers invoked.

Damaged interests, social protests, and opposing interpretations

As the experience of inflation remained a confusing socio-political problem, with periods of rampant price increase and others where inflation stayed within moderate limits, a variety of social groups complained about it. Representatives of trade unions and employers' associations had a leading role in advocating for an adjustment of salaries or for the authorization of new prices. Housewives, taxi drivers, consumers of public services, local governments, and meat exporters all appeared mixed up on the streets or in newspaper articles and "open letters" explaining how their activities were hampered or even threatened by inflation.

Social protests were as diverse as these claimants. Those led by the unions and expressed in strikes are the most studied. While the *Confederación General del Trabajo* was important in coordinating workers' demands in the national scene during critical circumstances, smaller trade unions led most of the local complaints registered daily in the press. There are many examples of the vivid and creative organization of local communities, from neighbours' revolts to organized movements. In La Plata city, neighbours rejected a rise in prices by posting the phrase "closed because of speculation" on every electricity meter (*LN*, 03/22/1959: 3). In Corrientes, the *Comisión Pro Defensa del Contribuyente* invited shopkeepers to turn off the lights in their showcases and a brigade of volunteer electricians was organized to reconnect electricity in case of a cut (*CL*, 03/16/1959: 19).

Besides social protests, consumers developed three other forms of collective action: they grouped together to obtain better prices, boycotted retailers and products, and organized new distribution channels to avoid middlemen. In 1962, for example, the Housewives League called on "every housewife to express its solidarity with the campaign and to not buy potatoes until they experience a 'fair reduction'" (*LN*, 10/7/1962: 8). Some of these initiatives were conducted in collaboration with public officials. The city of Buenos Aires, like many others, provided "sugar directly to street kiosks in order to offer lower prices than shops" (LN, 02/1/1959: 4). Businessmen, producers and merchants, frequently pointed to as responsible for price increases, were not passive observers of the disruption. Collective demonstrations and lockouts became their own strategies to protest against maximum price restrictions.

How was the price disorder understood and what were the recommended treatments? There was not a dominant interpretation of rising prices during the post-war years. After a period of generalized perplexity, in the 1960s two different interpretations began to consolidate in parallel with the circulation of economic theories and the organization of public conferences with prestigious scholars and intellectuals. *La Nación* and *Clarín* became the expressions of a deep and wide ideological divide in Argentinian society.[4]

For liberals such as *La Nación*, inflation was much more important than for "desarrollistas" like

Clarín. In the former publication, the volume of articles dedicated to the subject was higher and the number of editorials double that of its competitor. From a liberal perspective, the state should be blamed for monetary disorder and its main responsibility was to restore the value of the national currency. From very early on, the editorial line was against price control (*LN*, 01/13/1962: 6) and any state intervention in markets and individual enterprise. Particularly worried about inflation, *La Nación* stressed its consequences for investments and private companies and, according to an editorial (01/24/1959: 4), the solution was "to withdraw politics from the economy … money will have value once it can be supported in everybody's productive labor. The rest is just an alchemy of paper and ink, an alchemy as fictitious as medieval magicians". Public expenditure was pointed to as the main cause of inflation and public austerity was demanded daily.

On the contrary, for *Clarín,* the rise of prices was related to the underdevelopment of the country and should be solved, in the long term, by a national take-off, associated with industrialization and economic autarchy. *Clarín* underlined the consequences of inflation for people's wellbeing and asked for patience while persisting in the efforts for development. In a 1966 editorial, the journal expressed the opinion that " … printing money is not always something bad. When it gives companies the required conditions to produce, it can certainly be good." (*CL*, 02/23/1966: 8)

High-ranking public officials were everyday characters in the press, while there was little space for experts. Newspapers articles quoted the explanations of the former very respectfully, reserving the editorial section only for their interpretations. But, when economists did appear, far from showing a unique and original interpretation, they simply reproduced the opposing perspectives previously presented.

Moral judgments and physical violence as a stabilizing strategy

Faced with the instability of prices and the belligerence of social groups, authorities switched between two main strategies. Interventionist governments called "price commissions" and studied prices and productive chains in order to fix the "real" value of goods and services. Liberal ministries preferred to set prices free and re-establish the laws of supply and demand.

The two orientations faced critics, opposing both the "fair" and "unfair" determination of prices. People expected "socially fair behavior" from their providers and accused them of making arbitrary decisions. Producers and merchants denounced the "lack of reality" of state standards. Intense debates about "maximum prices" or "liberalized prices" illustrate the hybrid nature of inflation. As price disorder concerned private providers and public authorities at the same time, responsibility was hard to define.

This troublesome phenomenon not only confronted citizens. The authorities also accused speculators and invoked the possibility of severe punishment. The idea that rising prices were caused by or at least propagated by opportunists lay behind this public prosecution and social belligerence. The allegations against speculative selling maneuvers – through prices, hiding of goods and merchandise stockpiling – were frequent in 1959 and 1962. Public repression of "speculators and loan sharks" was demanded, while denouncing an "abusive regime created by those who take advantage of people starvation." (*CL,* 02/25/1959: 15) Those who adopted these kind of practices were considered unscrupulous salesmen or "dishonest and antisocial" businessmen (*CL,* 07/16/1959: 10) and strong disapproval was expressed of those "playing with inflation." (*LN,* 05/16/1962: 1) References to common good were also evoked, particularly when competition over distribution seemed to slip into selfish sector disputes.

As speculative practices and speculators received clear and strong public denunciation, severe intervention and even the recourse to physical violence was permitted. On the one hand, there was a state of intense social revolt: consumers protested against merchants, families refused to pay certain bills, unions asked their bases to stay "alert and mobilized," authorities from different municipalities declared the suspension of payments to resist the adjustments. On the other hand, many volunteer inspectors offered to monitor the price of selected goods. Producers and merchants were horrified by this civil control of their activities and denounced the arbitrariness of the inspections. Merchants claimed that repressive state acts against inflation should not include small shops. From their point of view, controls should focus on "big fishes": wholesalers and distribution companies. *The Federación de Centros de Almaceneros* (grouping of grocers), deplored that "we are sending grocers to Villa Devoto (a prison)." They assured the public that "an omnipotent State is violating the basic rights of honest citizens." (*CL*, 07/13/1959: 19)

Physical intimidation was not the prerogative of any political regime: civil as well as military governments adopted different strategies to threaten speculators and control prices. Exceptional procedures were admitted in the context of the "State of Siege" declared by president Frondizi (1958–1962): in 1959, authorities could force sellers to offer their stocks at fixed prices. In other measures, under stabilizing strategies based on direct or indirect control of prices, producers were required to communicate their prices in advance to the authorities and to obtain authorization for possible adjustments. Price controls became so frequent[5] that they led to a learning process of adaptive behaviors for businessmen, public officials, and consumers (FIEL 1990, 8) In 1972, newspapers published a list of companies that had not respected the fixed prices as a method of public calling to account (*CL,* 05/19/1972: 16 and *LN,* 05/19/1972: 1).

Despite the predominance of coercive strategies to fight inflation, there was still no agreement about their efficiency. The repressive interventions in coffee houses, shops, hotels, restaurants were disseminated by newspapers, even if suspicion about the measures persisted. The success of these actions was questioned (especially by liberal observers who insisted on the pursuance of fiscal deficit), thereby weakening public support for the authorities. As an alternative, liberals promoted "economic freedom" and "competition".

Experts and numbers to re-establish "economic" stability

A long illness with measurable symptoms and individual antibodies

For many years, authorities managed to keep inflation rates relatively contained and the presentation of rising prices remained confusing, wide open to interpretations and complaint by laypeople. Things changed in 1975. The austerity plan of the Peronist Economic Minister Rodrigo provoked an unprecedented quantitative leap: the annual price increase climbed and stayed in three digits. As a result, stabilization objectives concentrated the attention and actions of public authorities, leaving other concerns such as development or distribution in the background. Inflation was considered a threat to the bases of the economic and social order and, once the military were back in government in 1976, its eradication became an absolute priority (Fridman 2010; Heredia 2015). Biological metaphors proliferated and newspaper editorials emphasized that inflation was long an Argentinian illness that had deeply affected the institutional body of the Republic (*LN*, 08/17/81: 6). Under the new authoritarian regime, social protests, labour conflict, and guerrilla actions were subject to censorship and lost the attention of journalists, being replaced by accounts of economic policies and the difficulty of curbing prices. After the democratic transition of 1983, inflation remained a top priority for authorities until 1991.

The most popular Argentinian price index (Consumer Price Index, CPI) had to wait until 1975 for its celebrity. Since then, *La Nación,* like *Clarín,* started to publish it every month, drawing attention to controversies around the index (*CL*, 04/16/78: 1) and informing readers about its construction criteria (*LN*, 01/24/82: 1). The relevance of numbers became unchallenged, beyond doubt, and journalists considered their usefulness in calculating other values, taking into account their accuracy. As indexes succeeded in being considered as the "thermometers" of inflation, they quickly began to nourish social expectancy. On the one hand, newspapers competed for the scoop by trying to anticipate the results before the official calculation was finished (*CL,* 06/26/1975: 10) or publicly estimating its probable value (*LN*, 2/1/1972: 13). On the other hand, public polls revealed and nourished growing social anxiety about the topic. Regardless of their ideological orientation, both newspapers celebrated the attention given to inflation, considering that rising prices were "the number one enemy" to be fought (*CL*, 04/21/85: 1).

But social anxiety was now related to a new repertory of actions, associated with lessons learned *from* inflation and the development of "antibodies" *to* inflation. Compared to the collective actions showed by newspapers in the late 1950s, what is astonishing – especially since the 1970s – is the growing importance of individual strategies to confront inflation. From the mid-1970s, moral and imperative judgments were progressively replaced by "neutral" descriptions and later on by the provision of information used by readers to protect themselves or take advantage of the price disorder.

Journals were given new tasks. Since 1978, *La Nación* had a section called "rent office" to teach owners and tenants how to agree their rental contracts and another one called "City beats" to provide daily financial information to their readers. Advertising also reinforced strategies that had already been adopted, but now appealed to atomized individuals and rational private actions rather than collective forces). The Chamber of Supermarkets and Consumers, for example, published price lists in newspapers. According to them, "Consumers can do more than complain about inflation. … Every Thursday we will provide a weekly guide. You will be able to compare and buy at fair prices. With higher participation, inflation will be reduced." (*CL*, 05/30/85: 14).

Collective strategies of defense were gradually replaced by a generalized search for "microeconomic salvation" (Juan Llach quoted in Botana and Waldman 1988, 96). The press portrayed individual behaviours that show that protection and speculation were no longer distinguished: butchers avoided popular meat cuts because they provided no real gain (*CL*, 5/8/1972: 15), merchants adopted "preventive price rises" for popular goods that barely reached shop shelves (*CL*, 09/15/1972: 11); long queues were organized to buy food (*CL*, 7/6/1975: 20) or to anticipate rises in the price of petrol (*LN*, 6/1/1975: 14). In more technical terms, journalists described the preventive real-estate investments as an option for discouraged savers (*CL*, 11/8/1975: 30). As suggested by an editorial of *La Nación*, "with inflation everybody ends up speculating, each one within his or her possibilities." (*LN*, 2/3/1972: 6)

Some skilled and ambitious Argentines had also learnt to play highly sophisticated and short-term financial games. Responding to government stimuli, savers placed their money at very high rates to obtain profits (*LN*, 3/6/82; *LN*, 1/14/85, *CL*, 1/19/85). Nevertheless, sooner or later, Argentines placed more reliance in the US Dollar than in the Argentinian currency and local banks. Newspapers showed repeatedly the "desperate search of the parallel dollar that values the double of the official price … as well as the existence of a black market that enriches speculators." (*LN*, 4/28/75: 4) "From the less important economic agent to the biggest businessman, we all consider that the free dollar is the lighthouse indicating advantages and risks." (*CL*, 4/20/89: 3) The humorous sections of the newspapers illustrated many individual strategies to take advantage of inflation. In 1981 (*LN*, 7/9/1981: 12), a little man in a cartoon affirmed:

– "As I am Argentine, I will sign the contract in national currency.
– And what will you do with your salary?
– I will buy dollars."

The appearance of new actors and the authority of experts

Trade unions and social movements did not disappear from newspaper pages, but shared their importance with actors of a very different nature. As Fridman (2010) has shown, much energy was devoted to creating associations of consumers and to promoting pedagogic campaigns to shape a new economic mentality and try to discipline prices. Compared to previous consumer organization, the new consumers had no repressive powers but decided, through their individual and independent "economic" actions (purchase, information publishing, boycotts), how to punish or reward their providers.

Newspapers show the growing importance of this consumer figure: "The opinion of consumers organically established could become one of the most important to face efficiently this hard economic problem." (*CL*, 9/5/1972: 14) When the Consumers Council of the Metropolitan Area was created in 1972, the Commerce Secretary gave an active role in price fixing to consumers: the Council had the remit of "watching out for the production, marketing and distribution of goods and services satisfying common peoples' needs as well as any negative practice against fair competition." (*LN*, 7/13/72: 1) Advertisements and open letters from the Secretary of Commerce reveal the importance attributed to the consumer: "Buy better: plan your purchases + compare prices + note good shops + calculate = you will have an additional salary." (*LN*, 7/7/1972: 11)

As another expression of the dilution of collective actors, a new type of expert emerged. By the 1980s, both newspapers started to include contributions from younger experts belonging to a different generation of economist than the ones who had regularly expressed opposing ideological perspectives. They informed the public about economic variables and forecasts and judged the economic situation. From a historical perspective, the growing importance of media professionals and academic economists was concomitant to the retreat of social representatives and ideologues. In 1959, a businessman participating in a discussion organized by *La Nación* could regret the "lack of scientific rigour to investigate [the] issues [of economy]" asking for "technical criteria for effective conclusions." (*LN*, 7/19/1959: 10) Thirty years later, his wish had been granted. Discussions of inflation were practically monopolized by economists, most of them with no organic relation to specific businesses, trade unions or the state. In the 1970s these economists introduced technical terms that went hand in hand with a new rhetoric: numbers appeared as an instrument that could provide neutral (non ideologically-driven) bases for public discussions and experts affirmed their participation in public debate as impartial analysts of national reality.

The rise of experts is also clear in the role of public policy-makers. While during the dictatorship the first young consultants were called upon to assist authorities and gained a certain public interest, "independent" experts (external to political parties) were considered to be in the best position to understand and solve instability in the civil administrations of the 1980s. *La Nación* asked several times that professionals should be recruited for main governmental positions (*LN*, 7/6/1985: 14). References to "technocrats", "professionals", "experts" appeared when discussing economic policy making (see for example: *CL*, 2/24/1985: 12). The rise of experts was strongly associated with the growing importance of foreign advisors and creditors. "International opinion" about the nomination of economic authorities or the orientation of domestic economic policy was therefore also mentioned (*CL*, 2/20/1985: 7 y 2/21/1985: 20).

The strict respecting of expert authority, even among lay citizens, became the way opposing social perspectives were disqualified. With the dominance of liberal perspectives, journalists, entrepreneurs, and governments could ask social leaders to accept specialists' diagnoses and treatments, even if they required deep sacrifices.

The coordination of expectations as a solution from a distance

The long experience of inflation, as *Clarín, La Nación* and their columnists reminded readers, was now presented as a sign of governments' inefficiency. From the 1970s on, instead of referring to social conflict or underdevelopment constraints as causes of inflation, journalists of both newspapers started to focus on the state's faults and the inability of public officials to explain (and manage) the rise of prices. As shapers of public opinion, newspapers began to use the CPI as a test for public policies. Having illustrated the rise of several prices, an editorial of *Clarín* concluded, "controls and so-called voluntary bilateral agreements have been revealed to be totally inefficient because they do not attack the powerhouses of inflation." (*CL*, 4/17/1972: 10)

Compared to the public debates in the 1950s that had pointed out several causes, public discourse in the 1970s and 1980s assumed that the state was directly or indirectly responsible for the disarray, installing the liberal perspective as common sense. In an editorial, *La Nación* insisted on "…lack of proficiency [of authorities] to conduct economic issues in a serious and efficient way." (*LN*, 1/8/1972: 8) *Clarín*, which had always supported interventionist policies, accorded with part of the diagnosis. In an editorial titled "The problem of prices", it affirmed: "the measures adopted by the government are insufficient and inefficient because they do not face the problem deeply … They want to solve an economic problem with legal laws. Government had no authority over markets. With legal laws, it is impossible to correct the problem of disinvestment and production insufficiency." (*CL*, 7/3/1972: 10)

If physical violence seemed to be acceptable in the 1950s and 1960s to control prices, since the mid-1970s authorities had concluded that the challenge was to coordinate expectations. Neither the officials of the 1976 dictatorship nor the civil governments after 1983 considered the possibility of punishing producers, merchants, or financial speculators. Instead of monitoring and discouraging selfish practices, authorities decided to coordinate them. As can be seen in Economic Ministers' speeches, authorities looked for a "convergence of efforts between the public and the private sector to achieve the outcomes and results we are exposing." (Martínez de Hoz in *LN*, 12/21/78: 1).

Therefore, newspaper articles not only informed their readership about developments in the prices of basic goods but also regularly included accounts of the sophisticated discourses of Economic Ministers and financial information (in particular the exchange rate and the interest rate) in their pages. In addition to the examination of the consequences of economic public policy for the country and its different social groups, there were financial analysts teaching readers how to understand economic information and, especially, how to act rationally using it. Their intention was not to judge the virtues of public decisions but to instruct economic agents in the maximization of their incomes and saving.

After decades of moral judgment (now limited to public interventions by the Catholic Church), speculative practices could be recognised and even defended in the public sphere:

> When someone had the possibility of making huge economic gains with low risk is too much to ask not to envoy this profit with the argument that it is bad for the country because he is becoming a parasite speculator (…) the devil speculators just enjoy what is given to them on the platter for mistaken policies (…) It is essential then … to finish once for all with fiscal imbalance. Once this done, we will also finish with the *patria financiera*. (Roberto Bullrich, *LN,* 3/24/90: 12)

Final remarks

Socio-historical analysis of inflation allowed us to show a transition between two ways of fighting social problems and managing population. Our main conclusion is that, since 1970s, inflation not only rose as measured by its annual rates, it also became an increasingly precise public concern, framed and treated in a brand new way with the help of numbers and experts. From the 1950s to the 1970s, inflation was presented as a social and political phenomenon, intermingled with other sources of popular contention. There were a plurality of actors (social leaders, politicians, newspapers) vying for interpretations and solutions to price increases, rooted in diverse and conflicting representations of the economy. In this regime, we find public interventions led to physical and even violent expressions in the public sphere. From the mid-1970s, when inflation skyrocketed to three digits per year, its framing changed. Inflation was now linked to a unified statistic (CPI) and considered an economic problem. At the same time, it became the domain of economic expertise, involving all members of society with no further distinctions, requiring an aseptic intervention from a distance based on the recognition of individual freedom and the management of decentralized calculations.

The diffusion and acceptance of the national index CPI enabled people to have a common measure to follow and adjust local and singular prices. This number allowed abstraction (in the sense of disentanglement for singular goods and agents), generalization (in the sense of creating a common experience across different national population and territories), as well as de-territorialisation of control and coordination (in the sense of fixing expectations to govern them at a distance). At the same time, with mathematical tools on hand, economists could participate in the public sphere with an accuracy and authority unreached by other actors. Thanks to numbers, they could appear as impartial and efficient mediators even if members of the professional community were involved in the decision-making process behind very unpopular and even ineffective policies.

Most studies about inflation are focused on the later period; the in-depth analyses of the post-war years provide a contrasting point of reference to highlight Foucault's argument that the rise of neoliberalism was linked to a new pattern of government. At least for the economy, from then on, moral judgments and physical violence were replaced by the respect for and coordination of selfish individual practices.

Endnotes

1 Eyal and Levy (2013) stressed that the design and diffusion of economic indicators constitute the most important mode of economists' intervention in the public sphere.

2 We built our corpus on a sample of newspaper articles selected according to the following criteria. We collected articles for those years registering the highest levels of annual inflation as well as those in which the curve of prices increase was once again rising. We also selected them in order to assure a certain distribution over time: 1959 (with 114% annual rate of inflation), 1962 (26%), 1965/66 (28.9%–31.9%), 1972 (58.5%), 1975 (182%), 1978 (175%), 1983 (343%), 1985 (672%) and 1989 (3079%). With the exception of 1965–1966 (analysed from July 1st to June 30) and 1981–1982 (from July 1st to June 30), the other years were taken from January the 1st to December the 31st.

3 The authors have translated quotations from newspaper articles and from Spanish references.

4 As *La Nación* has always been considered the journal preferred by big businessmen from concentrated urban and rural activities (in particular the exporters of grains and meat) from both national and foreign origins (Sidicaro 1993), *Clarín* has been associated with medium and large national industrial concerns nourished by tax incentives, state subsidies, and commercial protection (Ramos 1993). For decades, both were strongly related to political movements: *Clarín* was leaded by "desarrollistas" and "liberals" drove *La Nación*.

5 Unlike most western countries, from 1945 to the mid-1980s, Argentina adopted price controls almost permanently. There were only a few, brief periods in which companies could freely fix their prices. Even governments with opposing economic orientations adopted these types of measures (FIEL 1990, 7).

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Cultures in the market: cultures for sale?

Some words of hope and caution illustrated by Amazonian cases

André Vereta-Nahoum

There has been an increasing circulation of cultures via markets, reflecting a growing interest in what cultural elements of populations at the fringes of global capitalist fluxes can offer in a variety of areas from the promotion of biodiversity to healing services. Westerners have been approaching these populations to gather and consume their culture in various forms. The consumption of cultures is not new. Yet new cultural rights and protections require negotiation and compensation for the use of cultural elements and many colonized populations around the world are seizing the opportunities that arise from this interest to promote the circulation of such elements in a variety of ways, with different goals and varying degrees of success. They have actively promoted the commodification of cultural elements in order to generate income and use their exposure to formulate political and existential claims.

Since a general overview of these undertakings is impossible and, given their specificities, likely useless, this article presents a broad overview of contrasting experiences of commodification of cultural elements of Brazilian Amazonian natives, based on my own ethnography of one case, and secondary analysis of media articles and academic discussions of three other cases. There are important ethnological aspects that play a role in understanding the engagement of such groups in forms of monetary exchange involving cultural traits and practices. Their eagerness to enter into relations with and introduce others and their things into the group is the most important aspect (Viveiros de Castro 1992) – although the production and exercise of political power in the region is equally connected to the promotion of exchange. These aspects clarify not only Indigenous agency, but also mediate the effects of exchange, as I have shown elsewhere (Vereta-Nahoum 2016; 2017). But I will not delve into such aspects in the present article. Here I focus on the entanglements of such groups – through and regarding culture – with global markets, analyzing them to explore questions at the core of economic sociology: the potential, dilemmas, tensions, and challenges of selling cultures.

This should be of broader interest, because it returns to classical questions about the effects of the monetary valuation of cultures and addresses the challenges faced by many minorities around the world that need to balance income generation and identity claims. I use the cases to highlight different forms of engagement, distinct tensions, and to dialogue with the recent literature dealing with the commodification of cultures. By comparing successful and failed engagements, I want to highlight some conditions under which selling cultures might actually increase the vitality of local cultures, achieve political goals, and secure material resources through the establishment of new alliances, the reproduction of cultural practices, and the promotion of internal social bonds. I intend to show these results are directly related to the internal control of the process by the communities whose culture is being circulated and, to some extent, to their ability to indigenize such endeavors, making them work for their own defined purposes. Defining such purposes is equally a common source of conflict, both internal and with their commercial partners.

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What culture? What circulation?

Culture is an equivocal term with many analytical and vernacular connotations. Here and among the groups dealing in culture, it means objects and practices related to local forms of organizing all observable things – live and inanimate, natural and supernatural, human and non-human – and creating symbolic associations to generate a coherent system in which each element has a place. Culture is also a set of traits (practices, relations, artifacts) held to be distinctive of an ethnic group. These are exactly the two uses of the term "culture" that fell out of grace as an analytical concept among social scientists at the same time as they were appropriated and mobilized by multiple groups across the globe (Clifford & Marcus 1986; Sahlins 2009; Strathern 1995). They now talk about the signs of what make them distinctive as their "culture", their "customs" and their "traditions". Many subjects of colonization are now committed to the reinvention of their cultures, just as Europeans turned to their traditions in exuberant and exaggerated forms to imagine national identities.

This realization was the result of their perception of foreign gazes into their realities, the protection of cultural rights, and the assetization of cultural elements by national governments and international organizations. These processes turned distinctive cultures within nation states into a ground for political battles, but also created opportunities to generate income, for persons and companies keen to explore what culture can offer – knowledge, artifacts and practices – and turn them into profitable goods and services. For those attracted to these cultures, they might offer a ticket to a lost past, the knowledge of how to cure illness and disease, the way into an alternative lifestyle or the environmental conservation associated with it.

Throughout the history of cultural encounters, cultural representations have circulated in several ways. There is a long history of European consumption of distant cultures and their knowledge through postcards, collections of artifacts, botanical gardens, cabinets of curiosities, museum displays of artifacts regarded as art from distant lands, travel writing, and anthropological accounts. Knowledge and the riches produced by cultures were appropriated and employed for European goals. Anthropology has provided authoritative accounts of other ways of life, based on the contribution of natives who are purported to possess sufficient authority to represent their culture (Clifford 1997). All those instruments of circulation contributed to the construction of the great divides that structured much of the social sciences, between modernity and tradition, history and myth. They promoted a play with mirrors, fed by the nostalgia for a lost past and the myth of a unidirectional pattern of modernity: looking into distant cultures was regarded as means of travelling in time and seeking the origins of modern populations. This circulation involved very limited native agency: the peoples whose cultures were circulated and consumed were silent others who gained life only through their representation.

At the same time, these representations by dominant cultures create a sense of cultural distinctiveness among those who are their subjects and make them attractive to consumers and commercial partners (Greene 2004). The forceful appropriation of cultural elements continues with the smuggling of cultural artifacts and biopiracy. Yet there are also products and services that involve the circulation of cultural elements of peoples with their consent and, in some cases, on their initiative. This is the form of cultural circulation analyzed here: with the active involvement of Indigenous populations and with a pecuniary compensation that might be locally framed in a number of ways, but can be analytically defined as commodity exchange. The tensions that arise from this form of circulation are related to expectations generated by commodity exchange, but also to conflicting views surrounding the assetization and protection of Indigenous cultures, their knowledge and practices. By focusing on these engagements, the findings dialogue with perennial debates about the effects of commodification on culture and provide a glimpse into the related tensions.

The challenges of Amazonian natives and the promises of selling cultures: between market and politics

The Brazilian Amazon has been the stage for many negotiations and exchanges of culture. Natives face the challenge of generating income and gathering support to protect their territorial rights and modes of existence. The representations of the region as the repository of a unique biodiversity and environmental practices known and promoted by their natives have also been attracting the attention of researchers, firms, and enthusiasts. Despite the constitutional protection of Indigenous populations and the recognition of their territorial and cultural rights, Amazonian populations find themselves in different situations of cultural and existential risk, which traditionally increased with their proximity to infrastructural projects and the expansion of cities. At the most basic level, their ability to sustain community life is dependent upon full implementation of their land rights. However, these land rights are not always granted and their recognition has been further hampered in recent years by the influence of agribusiness over the Federal government. There are populations living in three different situations: groups struggling for territorial rights associated with their special ethnic rights; populations living outside their community, in farms or towns; and groups living in demarcated Indigenous lands. Without the implementation of such basic land rights, it is very difficult for these populations to promote forms of exchange based on culture.

The importance of such rights to the social and cultural reproduction of Indigenous groups cannot be overemphasized. Territorial rights ensure the unimpeded access to and use of areas where they develop cultural, sacred, social activities and secure their material means of living through extraction and production. However, keeping the community within their traditional territory and the reproduction of their cultural and social relations also requires material and symbolic resources. Along decades of interethnic relationships and internal change, these communities introduced an array of consumer goods and now rely on services provided by the state and private allies, mainly health and social services. Scarcity of income and the absence of basic services are common reasons for natives choosing to live outside their community. It should come as no surprise that all the engagements analyzed here involve populations with demarcated Indigenous territories. In this sense, market exchange and other alliances do not replace the implementation of basic rights.

It is against this background that some natives perceive the exchange of cultural elements as an opportunity to acquire much needed resources and, by increasing their visibility, gather external support to secure their cultural practices and other political claims. These activities are also understood by natives and their allies as an alternative to the predatory economic model that has been promoted in the region, at least since the policies of "occupation" and "development" devised by the authoritarian military regime in the 1970s, based on extractive industries (wood and minerals) and cattle raising.

Four concrete cultural elements that are traded can be distinguished for analytical purposes: knowledge about biodiversity, or more precisely about properties and uses of natural species that Western science can turn into resources for new applications; material artifacts produced as part of cultural practices, for functional or ritual uses; therapeutic techniques and the associated symbolic language; and the public display of games and rituals that provide a glimpse into their lifestyle and cosmogony, which can take place either in urban settings or in their villages, attracting tourism to regions often regarded as exotic. Indigenous groups in Brazil have long employed this strategy of using their image across several media, in displays that may or may not be marketized, and in order to attract public attention to their past and present challenges, gather external support, and secure material resources (Conklin 1997; Graham 2005).

It is important to notice that the Brazilian Constitution and a number of laws and international agreements support the self-determination of Indigenous populations and their free use of land resources. There is equally a legal framework dealing with collective rights involving material and, since the last decade, immaterial cultural goods, including knowledge, places and celebrations, and forms of expression, which has been analyzed elsewhere (Drummond 2017). Yet the appropriate protection regime for culture and the means to ensure fair compensation for its producers remains a legal imbroglio between traditional (individual) intellectual property and national heritage (Cunha 2009). These are common causes of conflicts and failure in the exchange of cultural elements. Albeit consciously employing Western categories such as intellectual property or cultural rights as part of their reproduction strategies, their engagements are not without conflicts and misunderstandings. Different expectations and conceptions of authorship and cultural creation frequently stand at the centre of exchange. The "resourcist" approach to the traditional knowledge, especially associated with therapeutic uses of biodiversity, is another reason for misunderstanding and failure. I now turn to two cases in which these conflicts surfaced.

Who owns a culture? What is culture good for?

The implementation of a legal framework to protect immaterial culture requires common understandings that are difficult to obtain in practical terms. Two cases involving Brazilian natives exemplify these difficulties: the controversial use, by Havaianas, a famous Brazilian plastic flip flop brand, of Yawalapiti graphisms, and the failed attempt by a leading team of psychobiology researchers to partner with Kraho shamans to research known uses of native plants with psychoactive properties that could be turned into patented pharmaceutical medicines.

The former highlights the challenges of defining the extent of collective property of cultural elements and who can sell culture. For the Euro-American culture, artifacts from others commonly fall under the category of art and their creators are conceived as artists. There is a specifically European and modernist conception of individual authorship (Elias 1993; Hauser 1999) that is associated with artists and is sometimes at odds with other regimes of production and inspiration for crafts and objects. In some cases, the transition from common expressions of culture that take place within the life of a community to artistic objects for display and sale is successful in preserving the original meaning, securing the continuation of such practices within the community and preventing the desecration of the objects. A well-known example is the creation for a market for and multiple museum exhibitions featuring Australian Aboriginal dreamings, one of their sacred expressions. While still considered to be sacred messages, by retaining the keys to their interpretation and asking audiences to respect their sacred nature, the circulation of these paintings does not erase the original meanings or their social value for the community (Myers 2002).

In other cases, however, the ritual use and collective origin of cultural elements clashes with their individual expression by members of the group. In 2015, a large advertising company created a campaign for *Havaianas*, the world-famous Brazilian flip flops brand named *Tribes of Havaianas*, suggesting that all "tribes" wear the flip flops[1]. They produced ten thousand pairs of flip flops incorporating a drawing made by a Yawalapiti[2], one of the many ethnic groups that inhabit the Xingu Indigenous Park. This special series was gifted to celebrities and commercial partners. They paid the author of the drawings for the right to use and reproduce these images. After the launch of the campaign, with a video featuring the flip flops, representatives of many groups that shared the territory complained publicly to the author of the drawings, in social networks, and to the press. They claimed that these patterns belonged to the Xinguan collectivity, they were not consulted, and the groups received no compensation for their use. The drawing used on the flip flops corresponds to patterns painted on burial poles and the bodies of mourning relatives in the context of large inter-village funerary ceremonies known as *Kwarup*. Yet the Yawalapiti claimed he was the sole author of the drawings on the flip flops and the company further claimed that it had negotiated with a legally capable representative of the group (Novaes 2015). The case was thoroughly covered in the press and widely debated, but the flip flops had already been gifted and no further action was taken.

The second case not only highlights problems of representative authority in the market for cultural elements but also draws attention to issues that derive from different expectations and understandings generated by the uses of cultural knowledge, and their translation into biomedical science. Since colonial times, it has been known that natives possess significant knowledge of the uses of plant species, many of which they employ in their healing and spiritual practices. In fact, these plant species, together with local nuts, constituted the main regional output until galvanization turned the rubber that is native to the region into a globally essential product.

The imagination that portrays the region as a unique repository of knowledge creates many opportunities for natives, attracting interest ranging from pharmaceutical companies to New-age, esoteric groups seeking alternative therapies to Western biomedicine. Among the former group, bioprospecting is an established practice in the region and multiple substances isolated from local species have had their medical uses patented, neither with recognition of the role of traditional knowledge nor compensation. To remedy this situation and as an attempt to frame this knowledge within the broader Western category of intellectual property, new international agreements on the protection of traditional knowledge, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Nagoya Protocol, created a new legal framework, recognizing this knowledge as the collective property of its community and introducing the requirement for authorization by local communities and agreement on benefit-sharing prior to testing, extracting, exploiting, and publishing traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity[3]. The Council of Management of Genetic Patrimony (CGEN in the Brazilian acronym) was created by the federal government in 2001 to deliberate on conditions of access to traditional knowledge.

Yet even when earnestly observed along with all other legal precautions, this framework does not ensure a smooth exchange, as many questions and challenges remain unresolved. Research into therapeutic uses of plant and animal substances that are part of the cultural practices of a population always involves questions about who can negotiate and trade knowledge shared by many members of a community – in some cases multiple communities – for commercial exploitation, as well as the status of the local knowledge and its original therapeutic practices. These complexities are well illustrated by the failed attempt of a research team from one of the most prestigious universities in Brazil, the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP), to partner with Kraho[4] shamans to identify plant substances with actions in the central nervous system that could be used to develop pharmaceutical drugs. Although developed when the legal framework was being formulated, the project met all of its requirements, authorizations and criteria, but still could not avoid legal challenges and public outcry.

Following doctoral research conducted by one of its researchers, the Department of Psychobiology of UNIFESP decided to develop a R&D project with the financial assistance of the State of Sao Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) and a private pharmaceutical firm. The researcher had conducted her doctoral research in Kraho villages, working with local healers (named *wajaca*) to identify plants used in healing. These healers possess a wide knowledge of the uses of medicines they produce using local plants, which they employ to cure patients with the aid of spiritual guides (*pahis*). She obtained authorization from chiefs and *wajacas* from three of the sixteen Kraho villages[5]. This research revealed a trove of knowledge: 286 recipes and 50 therapeutic indications with actions in the nervous central system. In the cases of species that had been the subject of previous pharmacological studies, the indications provided by the Kraho and by Western scientists corresponded (Rodrigues; Assimakopoulos & Carlini 2005).

Given the results, the institution decided to seek partners to continue the research on the indicated species to evaluate their pharmacological potential in 2001. Their scope reveals the priorities (and malaises) of contemporary urban societies: the aim was to research plants with positive effects on memory and learning, weight control, anxiety control, stress resilience, and pain relief. The *wajacas* would participate in identifying plants to be investigated. Negotiations were conducted with Vyty-Caty, an Indigenous association representing some Kraho and other neighboring native villages, resulting in a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The research was approved for funding by FAPESP, who stressed the innovativeness of the proposal, and by ethical bodies. UNIFESP also contacted the Brazilian Federal Government agency for the support of Indigenous Populations (FUNAI) and obtained authorization from CGEN. As part of this agreement, the Kraho were offered the construction of gardens in two villages for the cultivation of plants for research, equipment, training, and wages for gardeners to maintain these gardens. The *wajacas* would receive a wage for assisting the researcher in collecting plants and interviews. Three of them would also receive travel funds to allow them to follow tests of the substances in UNIFESP's laboratories in São Paulo, and financial compensation for all of the village teachers involved in the translation of terms from the local language and guidance on the correct spelling of these names. In several meetings, the UNIFESP researchers clarified the nature of the research and the unpredictability of its material results. The MOU signed with Vyty-Cati stated that should any patent be filed based on plants indicated by the Kraho, royalties would be paid (Rodrigues; Assimakopoulos & Carlini 2005).

Soon after the start of the project in 2002, however, a series of meetings in the Kraho indigenous territory with representatives of UNIFESP, villages and FUNAI brought the project to a standstill. Other Kraho representative associations complained about their exclusion and disputed the validity of the agreement. New meetings were held, now involving other two associations (Macrare and Kapey), in the attempt to reach a new agreement that recognized the rights of all Kraho associations, which included the associated Apinaye and Gaviao peoples, to the co-ownership of any patent and the corresponding distribution of royalties. The clashes between associations made further negotiations difficult (Rodrigues; Assimakopoulos & Carlini 2005).

In June of the same year, one of the national daily newspapers, *O Globo* (Carvalho 2002), featured a piece on the agreement and accused UNIFESP of involvement in the bio-piracy of traditional knowledge. The article suggested that the research team obtained authorization from a single Kraho representative entity, ignoring the others, giving away precious Kraho knowledge to pharmaceutical companies involved in the project. Other papers followed up on the story, stating that the opposing association (Kapey) was suing UNIFESP for damages (Rodrigues; Assimakopoulos & Carlini 2005). In reality, the pharmaceutical companies had acquired no knowledge and the research on pharmaceutical applications had not even begun. Only the research team itself possessed information about plant substances and their uses known to the Kraho. This information was shared only with the CGEN, after it summoned the team to provide all of the knowledge gathered from the work with the Kraho. Despite these inaccuracies, the articles generated public outcry. The pharmaceutical company abandoned the project, FUNAI cancelled the permission to access Indigenous land and a local agency officer took a more prominent and cautious intermediary role.

At that point, the conflict actually involved a power struggle between two associations claiming to represent the Kraho and, thus, have the final say on sharing their traditional knowledge. UNIFESP and five Kraho associations continued to negotiate, committed to solving the problems the latter perceived in the agreement. They recognized that the research could actually benefit their communities, generating knowledge on new applications of their plants, which could be employed by *wajacas* to heal "white people's" diseases that their traditional medicine was unable to solve. UNIFESP offered to provide biomedical health services in the area, an activity it had developed on other Indigenous lands. However, the claim was then formulated in different terms by the Kraho. Through the mediation of a FUNAI officer, the associations presented a project for the creation of a fund to finance research conducted by the *wajacas* in their land, to which they subordinated the continuation of any collaboration with UNIFESP. The *Kraho Mehcaric Fund* was intended to promote the traditional medical system based on their own conception of health, creating facilities to serve both natives and non-natives interested in their healing practices. These conditions could not be met by UNIFESP, who asserted that it could not fund or assume liability for research and treatment practices that were not recognized as valid by Western biomedicine, leading to the demise of the project in 2004 (Rodrigues; Assimakopoulos & Carlini 2005).

In general, these conflicts are understood as the result of a heavily bureaucratic framework (see, for example, Rodrigues Jr. 2012). In this case, however, this misses the point: the essential cause of the failure of this project was the inability of a scientific organization to recognize the claims of native researchers to participate in the research project employing their own methods and language, and to define their own goals. This attempt to use and recognize traditional knowledge to develop new drugs collided with issues of representation and the difficult relationship between biomedical science and local therapeutic practices as two different regimes of knowledge. In the end, it showed that the knowledge of others is useful for our biomedical scientific practices, abstracted and taken out of its original practical context, to cure the malaises of our contemporary world, but it does not have the same worth and cannot be supported through scientific grants. Partnerships between locals and researchers for the economic exploitation of biopharmaceutic uses of native species remain a good opportunity to generate revenues for communities whose cultural practices have been generating fundamental knowledge incorporated in Western products for centuries. However, misunderstandings abound and visitors from outside continue to establish spurious relations with local healers to obtain valuable knowledge and generate new patents. Cases like the UNIFESP-Kraho show that when the commodification of culture is controlled by outside partners and oriented towards purely external goals, with limited agency and voice from the original practitioners, the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts increases.

Some words of hope: selling the "true selves"

The cases discussed hitherto raise some notes of caution involving disputes over who are the legitimate representatives to negotiate culture and, when these disputes are over, the challenges involving different expectations, purposes and values of culture. Yet there is also hope that comes from cases in which selling cultures increased the vitality of local cultures and attracted material and symbolic resources to Amazonian communities.

Among the factors attracting commercial partners to Amazonian villages is the strong association that has been constructed between their populations and the knowledge and promotion of biodiversity. Satellite images of the region with superimposed boundaries of Indigenous lands suffice to show that this association indeed holds: more forest coverage is preserved in territories controlled by Indigenous groups. This association has been recognized by international organizations since the Brundtland Report (UN 1987), which first recognized the importance of implementing Indigenous land rights for conservation efforts. This association becomes an asset that adds value to products responsibly produced in the region, because their purchase can be framed as a means of supporting the populations who retain the forest. Some firms source natural ingredients in the region, offering above market prices as a means of supporting conservation and cultural survival efforts. In such cases, cultural expressions of their sourcing communities are often part of the product, together with tales of conservation and cultural survival, even if in diluted and very synthetic forms. The global circulation of their images and stories have, in some cases, helped Indigenous populations to protect cultural practices, attract attention to their toils, and create new alliances to promote their rights and secure resources.

Commercial partnerships of this type are not exempt from conflict and not all cases are successful. In the region, two partnerships involving the British cosmetic firm the Body Shop and indigenous populations in the production of Brazil nut oil are probably the most discussed examples. Turner (1995) and Ribeiro (2009) share a common view that such projects neglect cultural patterns of indigenous societies, fail to empower and to offer financial independence to populations, and reproduce the old forms of indigenous involvement with the extractive industries in the Amazon. They decry such partnerships for creating a wage labor relationship in which the product is actually the image of the natives.

These cases were indeed hindered by distributive conflicts and claims to image rights, but these views place too high demands on market exchange. As previously said, markets do not replace rights and special policies. Furthermore, another case, the focus of my research, provides a different picture: albeit plagued by distributive conflicts, trading *annatto* seeds and images of their use in body paintings did increase the vitality of the Yawanawa culture and brought them new international and regional allies[6]. Since 1992, different groups of the Yawanawa have partnered with Aveda, another firm of hair and skin care manufacturers, providing *annatto* seeds, from which a red pigment employed in lipsticks is extracted. They also provide images and licensed the use of some patterns they employ in these body paintings representing spirits of nature. The Yawanawa traditionally employed the pigment to make body paintings they use for protection, as well as for aesthetic purposes during games and feasts. Some of the advertising material featured the past struggles of the Yawanawa to keep their rights to use land resources and practice their cultural rituals, especially against illegal land holders and Christian missionaries. Their role in the conservation of the Amazon forest is also mentioned (Vereta-Nahoum 2016).

In contrast to the cases discussed by Turner (1995) and Ribeiro (2009), image rights were recognized and represent the largest share of income from the project (Vereta-Nahoum 2016). Acknowledging the economic value placed on purchasing *annatto* from them and for obtaining the right to use the narrated version of their history and images of members of the population with painted bodies was essential to creating awareness among community leaders of the worth of their culture. Their cultural practices, including body paintings, games, and rituals, usually generated mockery or indifference from their non-indigenous neighbors. Through the demand for images featuring these practices from Aveda, they realized that they were appreciated and resumed such practices.

This activity took place after a long period of lack of income from their land and, thus, initially generated very high expectations of income, reuniting the previously scattered population in a single village. However, these expectations were not met. As a way of maintaining their role as an intermediary of material resources, their leader managed the project in ways that rewarded political loyalty. Many Yawanawa, likening the new project to the rubber tapping activities they had performed before, expected to receive amounts related to their actual output, but distribution followed different criteria and the overall income was not always sufficient due to difficulties in managing resources. This led to a clash of expectations and increasing disinterest among cultivators, indicating that indigenous populations do accept wage labor relations as long as they serve the purpose of obtaining income and goods. The project continues on smaller scale and under the management of a different leader.

The central conflict in this case was not due to neglect of the cultural pattern of the Yawanawa. On the contrary, it was caused by leaders attempting to replicate the traditional pattern in which they acted as intermediaries, as a bridge between the community and markets and state agencies, while the local workers had in mind the framework already developed over decades of extractive and agricultural activities for outsiders.

Multiple cases of the promotion of ritual and therapeutic services might also offer a word of hope and indicate that selling cultures may actually increase the vitality of local cultures. Many Amazonian populations promote cultural festivals and other forms of commodified display of cultural practices. Here again, I will focus on the Yawanawa case. The praise for the beauty of their cultural practices inspired them to revive several of them and to dedicate more community efforts to researching their traditions and forms. They also revived an annual feast to celebrate the community unity and forge alliances with neighbors. At first, this seemed like an opportunity to gather together for a week to practice games and rituals, and teach the crafts used during them to younger generations. Soon they started to receive visitors to these feasts, which then turned into a major festival, receiving hundreds of tourists from all over the world. Although bringing limited monetary income, many benefits derive from these festivals. Knowing that they attract tourists to a remote area of the country and a poor state, the state government provides financial aid and uses the events to provide new facilities or services to the Yawanawa, to highlight their commitment to the indigenous population. The festivals are also used to forge new alliances: the Yawanawa showcase their practices, narrate their history of challenges, and invite visitors to support them, sometimes formulating specific claims to material resources. The vast network of allies thus created can then be called upon in case of need. Finally, the interest in and appreciation of external audiences for their ritual practices further fosters internal interest. The Yawanawa stop all work for a week to dedicate themselves to the games and rituals, dressed in headdresses, palm skirts and with ornate body paintings. This is not "a commodified persona," as described in other cases of commodified cultural performance, in which essential aspects of the ritual are hidden from the audiences (Bunten 2008). On the contrary, some of them told this researcher that it is during this week that they are the "true" Yawanawa, fully revealing themselves (Vereta-Nahoum 2016).

Their use of ayahuasca, a hallucinogenic concoction made from the *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine and leaves of *Psychotria viridis*, both native to the region, is a fundamental aspect of their rituals that attracts audiences. This interest generates a further opportunity for the Yawanawa and other natives of the region who share the knowledge of how to prepare ayahuasca and employ it in healing practices and spiritual rituals to present these practices and offer healing services outside their villages. Many New-Age groups invite shamans from these groups to cities in Brazil, the United States and Europe. They have established multiple alliances with urban cults organized around the visions provided by the collective and ritual consumption of ayahuasca (Labate 2004). This renewed interest promoted the shamanic career itself: knowing that it offers opportunities to circulate globally and bring income to the community, but also recognizing the need to ensure the survival of the knowledge of elderly shamans, many Yawanawa are engaging in the strenuous initiation process of becoming a shaman. There is once more research on native plants and therapeutic techniques and the population are not afraid to take part in spiritual rituals, which were once prohibited by Christian missionaries.

For the Yawanawa, selling their cultural rituals has been a positive example in which the commodification of culture led to its increased vitality. The allies forged through the commodified circulation of culture put them in a better position to secure their rights. They now devote more time and effort to recreating cultural traditions. Three aspects of their engagement seem to be fundamental for these results: they have been able to define the goals associated with the exchange of cultural elements, which is a cause of internal clashes with groups that prefer direct individual income over symbolic resources that can be translated into material benefits; with the commodified version of rituals and healing practices, they entirely control the process, even if the practices are shaped by the expectations and demands of their consumers; and finally, as an alternative to intellectual property rights, they have appropriated the notion of authenticity, associated with their rituals and the native uses of ayahuasca and healing practices. Normally understood as a requirement imposed by consumers (Wherry 2008), in this case it is the producers that employ the notion of authenticity to protect their cultural practices and secure their exclusivity. For the Yawanawa, as other local native groups that have engaged in the market for rituals and healing practices involving ayahuasca and other substances, offering the authentic native ritual is a means of creating an exclusive experience of healing that no urban healer, nor a patented drug can offer. In this unique conception, drugs and the ayahuasca employed in urban cults can also heal, but the spirits they use to cure inhabit their forest and can only be invoked through the right words of their own healers. Thus, they stress the uniqueness of the authentic and traditional services offered. Authenticity, rather than intellectual property, is employed to produce scarcity and, consequently, value.

Conclusion

Almost three decades ago, Appadurai opened an article by stating that "the central problem of global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization" (1990: 1). The debate was pervasive in anthropology and sociology in those days, amid a convergence of political efforts oriented toward international integration and academic analyses emphasizing an increased global interdependence. At opposite extremes, some would describe trends of homogenization that would spread nothingness (Ritzer/Ryan 2002), whereas others emphasized the indigenization promoting *glocalization* (Miller 1998; Sahlins 2009). This debate concerned the effects of globalization on cultures.

The debate of culture and markets currently resurface in ways that resemble the romantic nationalist sentiments of the nineteenth century and the angst surrounding the destruction of local traditions. Economic nationalism and illiberal regimes are considered instrumental in the defense of national economies and traditions that many perceive as their culture. These views neglect an important point that was made by this literature in the 1990s: the global fluxes of capital might also give rise to the increased circulation of local cultures, their representations, forms of knowledge, and material elements. Moreover, in countries like Brazil, it is renewed defense of nationalist economic ideals, expressed in the promotion of the extraction of natural resources in the territories of native populations, that threatens their culture.

Faced with the challenges of generating income, the expansion of agribusiness, and the pressure to contribute to the regional economy, the colonized populations are actively promoting the circulation of their cultures in market forms. The global commodified circulation of cultures has been a way to raise awareness of their existence. It has been employed to secure resources, forge new alliances, claim rights, and promote interest in cultural practices among community members. The cases I analyzed here indicate that cultural diversity is not weakened through exchange, but they offer some notes of caution: negotiating who can deal in cultural elements on behalf of an entire group (or groups) and what constitutes fair compensation for their commercial use remains a delicate issue and a source of conflict. Moreover, retaining control over the process and the freedom to define their own goals are fundamental to making commodification work for the producers of culture. New rights generated a new attitude toward the commercial uses of their culture and the knowledge it produces in products from flip flops to drugs. They now demand fair compensation and participation in the transformation processes through which culture becomes a commodity. They are claiming control over commodification and recognition and support of their own research practices, even if this challenges Western concepts of science.

Endnotes

1 The campaign ad can be seen here: https://youtu.be/njKL0ob1JYc
2 For more ethnological information on the Yawalapiti, see their entry in the virtual Encyclopedia of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil. Available at: https://pib.socioambiental.org/en/Povo:Yawalapiti.
3 Brazil has signed and ratified the CBD. National law (MP 2.186-16/2001) equally protects traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity.
4 For more information on the Kraho (self-denominated Mehin), see see their entry in the virtual Encyclopedia of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil. Available at: https://pib.socioambiental.org/en/Povo:Krah%C3%B4. Decades before, the Mehin (as the Kraho call themselves) became known to Brazilians with an action, in the 1980s, that involved the assertion of their cultural rights, namely the right of ownership over their cultural artifacts: they decided to demand the return of an axehead displayed at the Paulista Museum, which was granted.
5 The Kraho inhabit an Indigenous land covered by a savanna. Although not located in the Amazonian biome, it is included in the administrative area of the Amazon, justifying the inclusion of this case here.
6 More information and additional sources about the Yawanawa can be found in Vereta-Nahoum (2016).

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Competition on paper: artifacts of visualization in antitrust policy

Gustavo Onto

"No concept in economics – or elsewhere – is ever defined fully, in the sense that its meaning under every conceivable circumstance is clear. […] And of course a word like 'competition' which is shared with the whole population, is even less likely to be loaded with restrictions or elaborations to forestall unfelt ambiguities."

George Stigler (1957, p. 1)

In April 2013, while I was undertaking fieldwork at the Brazilian antitrust authority – the Administrative Council for Economic Defense (CADE) – I had lunch with one of the advisors who was responsible for analyzing corporate requests for authorization of mergers and acquisitions. The reports she prepared were used as the basis for the final ruling by a member of the panel of the six CADE commissioners who decide whether or not the merger can go ahead.

Just before entering the restaurant, the advisor excused herself for a few minutes to go and photograph shelves in a nearby pharmacy. The photographs were for a report she was drafting for a case involving the potential merger of two major producers of condoms. The report was favorable to the merger. She told me that she was also asking friends and family located in various states in Brazil to take similar photos of pharmacy stands, which she then intended to use in support of her line of argument.

While she was searching for the correct shelf she explained that condom production required a very low level of investment – in other words it was inexpensive for a company to build a factory and start production. In her view, even if the proposed merger were to create a competitor with a high market concentration, the antitrust agency should not restrict the acquisition. The low "entry barriers" in this market, or in other words the strong possibility of new entrants, prevented this company with a high market share from sharply increasing the price of its products. She concluded that the "operation" (merger) was unlikely to be prejudicial to other competitors or consumers. Noting that I was somewhat puzzled by the inclusion of photographs in the report, she showed me some of the images she had taken on the cellphone and said: "Look! This is competition!" Her point was that there was competition in the market, and that market conditions would remain sufficiently competitive notwithstanding the merger.

The photographs were a means of clearly expressing her practical view of competition and, for her, constituted clear evidence with which to persuade other commissioners that the market truly was competitive.[1] In fact, photographs are a constant feature of the various procedures before the antitrust body, particularly in merger review cases, in which an analysis of competition calls for self-explanatory visual and graphic artifacts and techniques that are easily assimilated and shared and make it possible to identify the differences and similarities between competitors, products, and services. The photographs she used in this particular case included images of six shelves at pharmacies in different locations, each shelf bearing five types of items. Each of the brands in question had the same line of products. The fact that there was such a broad range of products, easily perceptible from the variety of packaging colors and styles, indicated to the antitrust analyst that consumers had choice on that market.

The above episode is an illustration of the theme of this paper. Based on an ethnography conducted at the Brazilian antitrust agency, this article considers the role that certain techniques and graphic artifacts, i.e., documents and the forms/images embedded in them, play in the conceptualization and regulation of market competition.[2] Antitrust regulation involves several administrative and investigative practices aimed at producing knowledge about specific markets, sectors, companies, and consumers. This knowledge is fundamental for the regulators to be able to decide whether or not to authorize a merger between two companies or to enable them to identify and penalize an anticompetitive practice such as a cartel. In the first case, the information gathered enables the analysts to draw conclusions as to the probability of the merger altering competitive conditions in a market or causing a future "competition problem" to the detriment of other participants.

"Competition problem" is a phrase that is very commonly used by antitrust analysts. It is therefore important to consider how a competition "problem" or "issue" is actually identified during an investigation. How are complex mergers analyzed and evaluated in practice, based on the very wide range of information that is usually available? In this paper, I describe how particular artifacts used in antitrust regulatory contexts, such as photographs, maps, indexes, charts and visual representation of statistical findings such as numerical percentages, which are included in the legal and administrative documents that make up the case files, assist analysts in identifying and substantiating competition problems in order to evaluate mergers. In the following section, I introduce the specific ethnographic perspective I draw on to describe antitrust regulation. I then analyze the use made of market share charts, which are an essential artifact in merger review practices, to depict present and future competition in a market. Finally, I conclude with some considerations regarding the notion of competition in bureaucratic knowledge practices.

From formal expertise to everyday antitrust artifacts

In most countries, antitrust, or competition policy, consists mainly in repressing anticompetitive conduct by companies and controlling the risks of corporate mergers. This policy has been addressed only infrequently in sociological literature, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Berman 2017; Davies 2010; Dobbin and Dowd 2000; Fligstein 1990). Taking (in almost all instances) a historical and institutional approach, these studies have demonstrated the strong influence of specific political economy paradigms on antitrust regulation during the twentieth century in the Global North. By focusing on the relationship between fields of professionals – economists and lawyers – and policy fields, sociological research has been able to explain relevant variations in antitrust enforcement: from the social emergence of trust-busting activity in the United States to the influence of Harvard economists and, more recently, the predominance of Chicago economics and game theory in shaping governmental antitrust decisions.

Social scientists who are committed to understanding "how politics is structured by expertise" (Berman 2017) have also begun to examine antitrust bodies in emerging economies (Miola 2014; Türem 2010). They describe the manner in which legal doctrines and economic theories are transplanted to national contexts with very different policy and regulatory traditions. While making an essential contribution to the understanding of the recent transformations in antitrust policy, including the increasing influence of neoliberal economic expertise and the consequent standardization of policies between nations, social studies on antitrust have been somewhat limited in scope. They have focused almost entirely on the role and decisions of high-ranking officials at national level, or on the arguments employed by legal and economic experts in high-profile cases, as reported in official communications. In many ways, antitrust bodies are still a "black box" to social scientists, who have little contact with the day-to-day work of the considerable number of public employees responsible for analyzing and investigating cases or writing reports.

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From an ethnographic perspective, the emphasis on formal expertise – economics and legal knowledge – and the way it is embedded in policy decisions through rationalized written arguments gives the false impression that antitrust analysis is undertaken by relatively few individuals who base their decisions on purely esoteric concepts and knowledge. While that may be true of certain antitrust enforcement agencies, it is highly unlikely to be the case for most of the world's competition bodies. In Brazil, the antitrust authority, which is renowned for its technical expertise, is staffed by over three hundred individuals from various professional backgrounds. These individuals draw on federal competition law, organizational rules, accounting practices, bureaucratic procedures, economic theories, legal doctrine, graphic artifacts, mapping software, case law databases, and many other forms of knowledge in their conduct of the dozens of cases that are analyzed every month.

Regulators must be able to make sense of stacks of documents on market characteristics, industry trends, and corporate activities and deal with them attentively but rapidly, leaving enough time to grasp the most complex cases. In order to be able to visualize, infer, and assess market competition when faced with a merger review, for example, they meet with lawyers and corporate representatives, make telephone calls, research internet websites, and usually draw on personal life experiences as a way of assessing how markets work or how consumers behave (Onto 2014). During the investigations, analysts, interns, advisors, or commissioners normally visit establishments they are investigating. These local visits help to identify competitors and the manner in which the products are sold, distributed, and consumed. Hence the analyst's evidence-gathering visit to a pharmacy in Brasilia.

Antitrust regulators also rely heavily on common artifacts of visualization that can be understood and accepted both by formal experts in competition law or antitrust economics and also by less experienced civil servants as a means of distinguishing complex mergers from unproblematic ones. Many of these standardized artifacts relate to transnational legal and economic forms of expertise known to the antitrust community worldwide. They are nevertheless to a certain extent part of local institutional or organizational historical trajectories that define more or less common working practices and procedures. In other words, the abovementioned schools of economics establish a framework for antitrust analytical procedures. However, they should also be understood as particular modes of justification (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991) that can be added *a posteriori* in official communications, when the decision to approve or reject a corporate merger has already been taken using other forms of practical knowledge.

The focus on types of bureaucratic artifacts such as documents, tables, forms, graphs, charts, and the practices associated with them has been a productive source of inquiry in anthropological literature.[3] More than mere instruments of rationalization, ethnographies emphasize how material forms of documentation or communication, and the related practices, constitute relations, subjectivities, hierarchies, emotions, and meanings, as well as the objects and subjects the organizations aim to administer or govern (Hull 2012b; Riles 2006). Artifacts (or graphic artifacts) such as documents are relevant because they shape the perception of the limits of regulatory action as well as the boundaries of the objects of regulation.[4] They are built-in decision-making processes, acting as mediators between ideological perspectives, political conflicts and interests that pervade any organization.

In economic anthropology and sociology, some works have recorded the way in which documental practices are essential to the construction of economic objects, subjects, and organizations such as markets. Recent research has described, for example, how central bank technical reports and communications are able to generate stability in markets (Holmes 2014), how evaluation questionnaires produce certain services and consumers (Callon 2002), and how scorecards constitute a consumer credit risk (Poon 2007). According to Annelise Riles, who studied legal documents in the financial markets, these artifacts "are crucial technologies to […] format or standardize the market because of their unique ability to travel across boundaries – cultural boundaries, forms of expertise, institutions, physical distances by virtue of their material or aesthetic form. […] standardization, in this understanding, is both a conceptual project and a material project" (Riles 2011, p. 59).

Antitrust regulation is a particularly interesting field in terms of understanding the various modes of engagement with documental artifacts and their role in economic governance. From an ethnographic perspective, antitrust consists of several practices involving document production, circulation, and distribution among and between governmental agencies, companies, and their legal representatives. It is through these documents and charts, forms, graphs, photos, maps and the indexes inscribed in them that companies try to defend their practices or develop an argument for merging with another entity. It is also mainly through these artifacts – or "inscription devices" (Latour 1999) – that regulators build the necessary knowledge and legal evidence to decide their cases, and shape certain practical understandings about the competitive context in different markets.

Solving through shares

Under the Brazilian competition legislation that was enacted in 2012, all requests for mergers and acquisitions are to be referred to the Superintendent-General's office at CADE. The analysts in this area perform a triage of the proceedings and draft reports. They forward the more complex cases to the "Administrative Tribunal for Economic Defense" for more detailed analysis. These more complex cases are examined by six experienced commissioners and by the president of the agency, all of whom have a background in law or economics. These are the merger cases that run a greater risk of being rejected or restricted by the antitrust body. Approximately 30% of the total number of cases that arose during my research were referred to the Tribunal. The remainder were usually dealt with more quickly at the Superintendent's office, in that they did not represent a risk to market competition.

In early 2013, while I was accompanying the work of analysts from this sector, one of the team coordinators approached a member of staff and asked: "So, this shopping mall case, is it possible to 'solve' it on the basis of *share*?" *(Então, esse processo sobre os shoppings, será que dá pra sair pelo share?)*. The analyst replied: "I think so, I'll just pick up the table presented by the applicants and include that other company we found, then I'll drop by your office so we can talk about it" (*Acho que sim, vou pegar aqui a tabela apresentada pelas requerentes e incluir aquela outra empresa que encontramos, e já passo na sua sala para conversarmos*). This brief exchange demonstrates a simple analytical procedure that is commonly applied to all merger reviews at the antitrust agency. These merger reviews follow on from the filing of a petition by companies requesting approval for the merger or acquisition. The initial petition, which is usually drafted by lawyers, is accompanied by detailed information on the companies involved in the proposed operation and the markets in which they are active. CADE employees use this information as the basis for their investigation and start by assembling a specific graphic representation of the issue.

The graphic artifact they produce (or reproduce) is the market share chart or table, which includes a percentage calculation of the participation of each competitor in relevant (affected) markets, estimated through the quantity of products sold by each company in a market or through their revenues. Frequently, the regulators gather this information from the first document (initial petition) sent by the company requesting approval for the merger. They then confirm the data by checking with estimates made by the market competitors that are identified in the investigation. The representation of market share is usually set out in a very simple table similar to the one below, which was presented by commissioner Antônio Fonseca (CADE 1995, p. 2945) when examining the takeover of the Brazilian company Kolynos by the North American corporation Colgate in 1996:

	Toothpaste	Toothbrush	Dental Floss	Mouthwash
Kolynos	50.9%	26.7%	7.9%	–
Colgate	26.6%	8.4%	2.3%	14.5%
Kolynos + Colgate	77.5%	35.1%	10.2%	14.5%
Gessy-Lever	22.4%	2.6%	–	–
Johnson & Johnson	–	25.8%	56.3%	5.4%
Augusto Klimmek	–	16.9%	–	–
Merrel Lepetit	–	–	–	39.4%
Oral B (Gillette)	–	9.5%	12.8%	2.5%

Chart 1: Market shares of competitors in relevant markets defined for the Kolynos-Colgate merger case (in terms of physical volume sold in the previous year)

In this Kolynos-Colgate case, which was analyzed and approved in 1996, the antitrust authority concluded that four product markets would be affected by the merger – toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss, and mouthwash. Each product is indicated in a column in the chart above. In the fourth line, marked "Kolynos + Colgate," the table indicates the market share the new company would have if the acquisition were to be approved, shown as the sum of the shares of the two companies requesting approval to unify their operations. According to the Brazilian administrative criteria as defined in the Horizontal Merger Guidelines published by antitrust agencies in 2001, if the market share of the future company is higher than 20%, this might indicate a possible competition problem in the future. Since the toothpaste and toothbrush markets were clearly above this threshold, they received more analytical attention in the following steps of the investigation (Salgado 2003). In these markets, the reporting commissioner assigned to the case decided to prohibit the use of the brand Kolynos, ensuring that other companies could enter those markets, thereby maintaining a certain degree of competition. Analysis of the market share of the competitors in a market enabled the analysts to identify which markets would be most affected by the merger, thus prompting the antitrust body to take preventive measures.

A table such as this is quite useful for analysts in that it clearly represents certain legal and economic units of observation that might otherwise be difficult for the regulators to assimilate. It also sets out a relatively straightforward decision-making criterion, based on consolidated perspectives of economic theory. The percentage figures also relate to a particular fairness ethic. Firstly, the market share chart presupposes (and advances) a definition of the competitors in the markets as well as identifying the markets in which these two companies simultaneously operate. These definitions are an arduous task that frequently takes up most of the investigative time allocated to the regulators. The competitors are represented here as separate economic units, not simply distinct corporate legal entities, that, by definition, act independently of one another. Being listed in the table means that the companies in question do not have close ties of ownership or administrative control that could amount to their being members of the same economic group. If they were members of a group, it would be even more difficult to assess and account for their market share.

The markets under scrutiny in cases such as this are also considered to be completely separate even though the connections between products like those listed above are known to be strong. The absence of any geographic reference to the market in this table indicates that the markets listed cover the entire Brazilian national territory.[5]

Apart from facilitating comprehension of the case under investigation, the market share table also adds a new layer of assumptions and effects that are related to the way it represents competition as a structural phenomenon and a quantifiable matter. As economists and social scientists that have studied antitrust know, the market share perspective is reminiscent of the influence the Harvard School of Industrial Organization had on North American antitrust policy from the 1930s onwards (Hovenkamp, 2005). For this particular school, the notion of "market concentration," that is, the number of companies operating in a market, is an effective indication of the probability that any company in a market has the potential to alter competition and harm other companies and consumers. The more concentrated a market is, the more "power" companies have to impose abusive prices. This perspective emphasizes the so-called structural conditions of competition, leading to antitrust decisions that favor maintaining or increasing the number of participants in a market. Even though the Chicago School in the 1970s questioned this notion, arguing that fewer companies in a market may lead to more efficient outcomes for the economy, the representation of "competition" as being a substantial number of participants is embedded in charts like the one above and has a very straightforward appeal to regulators in different branches of the agency.

It is worth noting that the guidelines for merger reviews adopted by the Brazilian antitrust agency are based on the U.S. Federal Trade Commission model. They stipulate estimation of market shares as a fundamental step in merger analysis, permitting regulators to construct indices of market concentration (such as the C4 Index or the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index) that provide a quantitative forecast of future market scenarios. The guidelines also recommend other procedures, such as estimating present and future "entry barriers" to a market, evaluation of the potential gains and losses for consumers and competitors, or assessment of the "economic efficiencies" that can be generated by the operation. In practice, however, simple market share charts provide a straightforward means of filtering out the more complex cases and eliminating the need for more sophisticated and complex calculation in cases that are relatively unproblematic.

Representation as numerical percentages also brings to the market share chart a very traditional (pre-modern) way of comprehending realities. As the anthropologist Jane Guyer (2016) explains, the use of percentages is particularly interesting if we accept that they are not simply regular numbers that impose a form of counting from "one to many," but rather represent a "part to whole" system. In this sense, the market is considered a whole that can be divided into preferably equal parts. As she puts it, the percentage always involves a very specific form of ethics, which in the case of Brazilian antitrust is represented by the 20% threshold: more a quality than a quantity, it indicates a possible risk or elevated "market power" in the future.[6] Furthermore, the percentage "is one mathematical formulation whose mechanics anyone with a basic education can understand, and it carries the potential of converting transparency in the public domain, persuasive ethical and philosophical allusions (…)" (Guyer 2016, p. 156; see also Ballestero 2014). Consequently, the market share chart incorporates a very straightforward and easily grasped means of visualizing competition and also a means of connecting ideas about how competition should be organized and in which possible markets problems might emerge. Several cases at the Brazilian antitrust authority are approved ("solved" or "resolved," as regulators say) on the basis that the merger will not cross the 20% threshold, and this is always visualized in a chart like that above.

Final considerations

Graphic artifacts like the one described above permeate the antitrust knowledge practices used to ascertain which products or services are the object of competition, as well as who is competing, and where competition is being affected. Produced in circulation between the antitrust authority and the companies facing regulation, these artifacts are devices used to facilitate the work of the analysts. They are commonly shared and employed within the agency. They assist the analysis because they standardize and fix the meaning of the categories and information needed to make a decision. It is no accident that the regulators I observed spent a lot of time reflecting on the best way to format new charts and tables, which categories to include, and how to pose questions with fewer ambiguities. For regulators, the precision of the information or data received is no more important than the need for the data to be readily comparable and organized in a single frame. Otherwise, it is impossible to effectively put together data from different sources.

The artifacts mentioned here are also important because they enable the exchange of data with people from different educational backgrounds and experience, who may be required to reply to requests for information by the analyst. Even though most companies that deal with the antitrust authority have lawyers and economic consultants who can easily answer questions and fill out forms produced by CADE, many small companies, especially third parties involved in the case, rarely engage legal or economic advisors to assist them with antitrust issues. General managers inside a company may be assigned to deal with CADE's inquiries, even if they do not know precisely what a "barrier of entry" or a "relevant market" is. For this reason, forms, charts, and other graphic means of displaying information are designed to be more readily understood and self-explanatory.

Above all, graphic artifacts are, to use economist George Stigler's expression, capable of "forestalling ambiguities," allowing for certain perceptions of competition that are recognized by regulators and companies as legitimate. Curiously enough, antitrust regulators hardly ever formulate clearly what they mean by the notion of competition. It is usually referred to by its opposites or negatives: "non-competitive," "lack of competition," or "competition problem." Nonetheless, from the point of view of daily bureaucratic practices, competition meanings are made explicit through documents, charts, maps, forms, numbers, percentages, and photographs that are circulated among regulators and companies. These regulatory visualization artifacts foreground a particular notion of competition, which cannot simply be subsumed under theoretical notions (i.e., those familiar to economists), and they bring distinct cultures of calculation (Guyer 2016) to antitrust decision-making processes.

Endnotes

1 Unlike in the United States, antitrust regulation in Brazil is not dealt with by the judiciary. A single body, CADE, which is an executive body operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, analyzes, investigates, and judges administrative proceedings and may prohibit corporate mergers and acquisitions. It also has powers to impose heavy fines for cartel practices and other anti-competitive conduct.

2 This article is based on ethnographic research carried out between March 2012 and August 2013 at the Brazilian antitrust agency and focusing on its knowledge practices and bureaucratic artifacts. The research resulted in a PhD dissertation, defended in February 2016, on the Graduate Program in Social Anthropology at the National Museum, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I would like to thank Tomás Undurraga, André Vereta-Nahoum, Eugênia Motta, Tomás Ariztia, Mariana Heredia, Federico Neiburg, and Benoît de L'Estoile for comments on a previous version of this article.

3 The role of documents in bureaucracies has a long trajectory of reflection in the social sciences. See Hull (2012a).

4 Matthew Hull (2012b, p. 259) uses the term graphic artifacts for the following reasons: "First, many of the ongoing semiotic processes that involve artifacts are not well enough defined to be characterized as 'texts'. Second, I wish to define a certain class of artifacts, written materials, and to emphasize the non- and para-linguistic semiotic functions of this type of artifact. One last point about this term: the word 'artifact' sometimes has the connotation of a second byproduct of some prior or primary process […] I don't use it in this sense."

5 The photograph of the product shelf taken by the advisor can also be compared to a market share chart that made clear the distinction between competitors by showing the difference between the various shelves. In this case, the merger affected only one product, and photographs from other pharmacies in other regions of Brazil, assuming they were of the same products of the same companies and brands, would lead to the conclusion that the market for the products was nationwide.

6 "This part/whole logic, then, invokes and provokes the idea of shares, which in ethics and politics moves into the increasingly invoked domain of 'fairness'" (Guyer 2016, p. 154).

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Notes on market design and economic sociology

José Ossandón

Consider the following two examples: Inspired by Milton Friedman's proposal that demand-side subsidies and consumer choice would enhance school competition, which in turn should improve learning and the efficiency of the system as a whole, policymakers radically reformed school education in Chile in the early 1980s. After several regulatory modifications, education in Chile is still heavily market-based. However, since the massive student revolt of 2011, the area has been hugely controversial. One of the main issues has been that, in the current system, not only are parents trying to choose the best schools for their children, schools, in order to maintain or improve their positions in the national test that ranks them, are actively excluding students with learning difficulties or families that seem to them to be more complicated. In order to find a way out of the impasse, policymakers are currently implementing a particular technical solution, namely centralized clearing-house mechanisms, such as the one implemented in Boston and developed by economists such as Alvin E. Roth. The work of market designers, Roth explains, "is to know the workings and requirements of particular markets well enough to fix them when they're broken or to build markets from scratch when they're missing" (Roth 2007: 1). Policymakers in Chile intend to re-design the existing school education market in order to reduce discrimination.

EcoGrid 2.0 is a large-scale demonstration project run by a conglomerate of Danish universities, the Danish Energy Association, and IT and appliances firms. EcoGrid 2.0 is an ongoing policy experiment set on the Danish island of Bornholm and with the aim of testing a response to what has been identified as a key challenge to making the future energy infrastructure more sustainable. In order to increase the use of renewable sources such as wind, the electricity grid of the future must be more "flexible." This project tests a way of creating flexibility by means of a complicated intervention that integrates activities at three levels. At household level, the project tests ways of making use of domestic appliances to react to the needs of the electricity grid – electric heating systems that are turned on when the wind is blowing, for instance. At a second level, the project tests the introduction of new commercial actors, called aggregators, which are firms that are expected to make a business model based on pooling and selling the *flexibility* of large groups of households. And, finally, the project tests a new trading platform on which the flexibility collected by aggregators will be bought by firms involved in energy distribution or network maintenance.[1]

The cases of school education in Chile and EcoGrid in Denmark are not isolated examples. As the papers in a special issue I am co-editing that is about to appear in *Economy & Society*[2] show, these are cases of a broader transition. It is a movement from a type of policy-making which assumed that markets, or some of the features attributed to markets (i.e., competition, choice, property rights, or price), will solve the most diverse collective problems and, once in place, will work on their own, to situations in which policy-making is understood as continuous *market organization*. Policy-making becomes evaluation, diagnosis, design, and repair of markets. Markets are increasingly seen both as solutions and as technical conundrums. Markets have become socio-technical objects that need expert design and repair in order to work properly and solve the most diverse matters of collective concern. Markets do not simply work; they have to be *put to work*.

In our small research group on Markets and Valuation[3] in Copenhagen Business School's Department of Organization, we have made *the work to put markets to work* our main object of research. We coined the term "markets for collective concerns" to describe markets that are also policy instruments, and we call the new type of expertise oriented towards putting markets to work the "organization of markets for collective concerns and their failures" (Frankel el al. 2017). In this piece, I share some of the discussions

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and questions we have been struggling with in the last few years. I share these discussions because, I believe, they open up questions that are not only relevant to us but also to the readers of this newsletter. The point is that the recent transition towards market design in economics is also an invitation – to us, economic sociologists – to think about economic sociology and some of the assumptions of our particular approach to the economy.

As we know, economic sociology is affected by developments in economics. It is not that economic sociology is economics; it is a different discipline, with its own concepts, methods, and traditions. However, at least in the last few decades, the main movements in economic sociology have responded to developments in economics. Notably, the New Economic Sociology developed in the 1980s in the US, as exemplified in Granovetter's (1985) programmatic statement, was a reaction to the imperial expansion of economics in academia. Sociologists needed to prove that their jurisdiction was not limited to studying those aspects of social life that economists cannot explain (i.e., non-logical action), but that sociology starts with an altogether different approach (embeddedness), which, like rational choice, can be applied to everything, including the study of economic issues. Similarly, the new *new* economic sociology (McFall & Ossandón 2014), the influential European movement initiated with Callon's 1998 *The Laws of The Market*, was also a reaction to economics. This time, however, the reaction was not against the colonization of academia by economics but against the increasing impact of economics in the economy. What Callon and others (Çalışkan and Callon 2010) provide are concepts and methods to analyze how the economy is "economized." The question that bothers me, and that I want to share in this contribution, is whether a new type of economics that conceives of itself in terms of "market design" calls for a new type of economic sociology. I believe that recent developments in economics trigger new challenges that push us, as economic sociologists, to think again. It is not that I have the definitive answer that will initiate a *new* new new economic sociology; what I have is more like a set of impressions that need further thought. In this piece, I try to formulate some of these impressions.

What follows, it should be made clear, is not a finished paper or essay. These are notes, or work-in-progress ideas I have been writing over the last few years. The three notes are attempts to process some of the questions opened up by market design. The first note is titled "The birth of the market,"[4] the second "Are markets matching Callon and Roth?,"[5] and the third "The distinction between market and organization after 'market design.'"[6]

Note 1. The birth of the market

Timothy Mitchell (2011) has made an important suggestion: "the economy" was not born until the mid-twentieth century. With this, he does not deny, as shown by Foucault in his *Security, Territory and Population*, for instance, that economists and a distinct realm of government called political economy existed well before that time but suggests that it was only in the mid-twentieth century that the economy started to be seen as a whole that could be counted and referred to that way. Playing with Michel Callon's terms, Mitchell suggests that with the amazing growth of economic statistics that enabled the millions of transactions carried out in a given country to be counted, summarized, and inscribed, economists for the first time performed a calculable "economy". The economy represented a new type of technical expectation. It was understood as a system that could be quantitatively modeled and steered by economists turned manager-engineers that became experts in balancing things like inflation, unemployment, or exchange rates. In the terms used in *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence (Latour 2013)*, the economy became an act of organizing.

The apogee of the economy, however, did not last very long. It is here that Mitchell's remarkable story in *Carbon Democracy* ends. The conception of the economy as a machine that can be expertly steered by an educated technocracy became contested, especially by the very influential "thought collective" united around the Mont Pèlerin Society (Mirowski & Plehwe, 2009). The most radical version was developed by the group of Austrian economists led by Hayek and continued by the likes of Buchanan and the Public Choice School. The type of criticism initiated by this group is summarized well in the following quotation:

> The confusion that prevails here can be ascribed above all to the false idea that the order which the market brings about can be regarded as an *economy* in the strict sense of the word, and that the outcome must therefore be judged according to criteria that in reality are appropriate only for such an individual economy. But these criteria, which hold for a true economy in which all effort is directed toward a uniform order of objectives, are to an extent completely irrelevant for the complex structure consisting of the many individual economies that we unfortunately designate with the same word "economy." An economy in the strong sense of the word is an organization or an arrangement in which someone consciously uses means in the service of a uniform hierarchy of ends. The spontaneous order brought about by the market is something entirely different. But the fact that this market

order does not in many ways behave like an economy in the proper sense of the word – in particular, the fact that it does not in general ensure that what most people regard as more important ends are always satisfied before less important ones – is one of the major reasons people rebel against it. It can be said, indeed, that all socialism has no other aim than to transform catallaxy (as I am pleased to call market order, to avoid using the expression "economy") into a true economy in which a uniform scale of values determines which needs are satisfied and which are not. (Hayek 2002 [1968], 13–14)

In Hayek's view, the economy would be far too complex to be summed up or modeled with the help of aggregated statistics of trade, demand, or inflation. This limitation would not only be a matter of lacking the right tools or methods to deal with complex systems, but more fundamentally it would be about the nature of the market itself (Cooper 2011). What economists such as Hayek initiated was not simply a critique of the planning expectations set by mid-twentieth century economists. They also started to produce an altogether different type of object of expertise and economic intervention. They initiated a transition from the Economy to the Market. Markets would be complex systems that are not only able to simultaneously process more information than any aggregate statistic could ever collect, they would also be a sort of distributed cognition mechanism able to find new innovative solutions to existing problems (see also Buchanan & Vanberg 1991). The logical and radical consequence of this type of reasoning is that it is not economic planning – the wise economists – but the market itself that should be left to come up with solutions to complex problems.[7]

All this is not only important for the history of economic thought. It is relevant also because, as Mitchell explains for the economy, these notions are not only ideas. As Foucault (2008) realized early on, in the work of Chicago economists and also members of the Mont Pèlerin group, like Gary Becker or Milton Friedman, there was not only a new type of economics. Neoliberalism represented a complete new way of governing, where the market is actively mobilized as a *model* to evaluate and organize areas such as education, immigration, or criminal justice. As more recent work shows (for instance, Mirowski 2013), with neoliberalism markets started to be used as instruments implemented by policymakers to solve complex collective problems. Even the problems created by other markets – as the case of emission trading exemplifies (Lohmann 2009) – could be solved with new markets.

Recent research conducted at the intersection of economic sociology and science and technology studies is starting to pay attention to these types of market-policy hybrids. This work shows intriguing results. As markets that are policy instruments unfold over time, many problems have started to appear. The market simply does not work as expected. However, these problems have not necessarily paved the way for developing non-market policies, but the problems have been framed as "market failures" (Neyland & Simakova 2012, Ureta 2014, Breslau 2013, Ossandón 2012). Seen from this angle, it is not that the market does not work, but that each case presents specific failures that have to be remediated so that the market can work properly. Accordingly, a new industry of experts in repairing and designing markets is starting to blossom. To use the terms of *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, we see a transition from markets understood as self-regulated meta-dispatchers to practical arrangements organized by economists. Maybe it is that, similarly to the mid-twentieth-century rise of the economist as the manager of the economy described by Mitchell, today we are witnessing the consolidation of a new type of economist-engineer, but now one that is in charge of steering the market. The paradox is that neoliberalism, which began as a criticism of expert decision-making in relation to the economy, has produced the conditions for the development of this new type of economic expert.

Note 2. Are markets matching Callon and Roth?

The last meeting of our Market and Valuation group was a reading group devoted to an increasingly influential stream within current economics, namely "market design." The discussion left me with the somehow perplexing puzzle I am trying to unravel in this note: Is this type of economics not almost too close to the "markets as calculative collective devices" approach developed by Michel Callon and colleagues (Callon and Muniesa 2005) that has been so influential among us – in the social studies of markets- in recent years?

We discussed two articles written by the winner of the 2012 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Memory of Alfred Nobel, Alvin Roth (2002, 2007). As Roth explains,[8] his and his colleagues' work has been dedicated to very practical problems. A favorite situation is this: on the one side are medical students looking for the best hospital to do their specialism, on the other are hospitals wanting to hire the best young doctors. Problem: hospital officers were pushing so much that they were selecting students years before they finished their undergraduate studies and even started thinking about their possible specialism. The problem was solved with the introduction of a centralized clearing mechanism equipped with an algorithm – that is, a chain of formalized decisions – which paired young doctors' and hospitals' lists of priorities. The problem started again some years later when couples were introduced into the equation. As Roth (humorosly?) explains:

> In a simple match, without couples or other complications, all of the applicants would have preferred the applicant proposing match, and no applicants who were matched or unmatched at the outcome of one algorithm would change employment status at the outcome of the other. (Roth 2003, 1360)

Roth has not only worked pairing medical students and hospitals, but also children and schools, and even kidney donors and recipients. These are the types of challenges tackled by market designers. Equipped with the tools provided by game theory (where the key name seems to be Roth's co-Nobel winner Lloyd Shapley) and experimental economics, economists are working to find the best "matching" mechanisms to solve these types of dilemmas.

This is, no doubt, a quite particular type of economics. Calling to mind some ideas of an earlier Nobel Prize winner, Herbert Simon (1996), market designers see economics as a "science of the artificial" (see also King 2011) that is closer to engineering, design, or medical knowledge than natural sciences. Here markets are no more a quasi-natural phenomenon that is in search of its mathematical laws, but rather practical situations that need to be carefully designed and Hayek's heroes – prices – are left to play a somewhat secondary role. In fact, market design seems to work in both traditional auctions and also in moneyless exchange, such as the already mentioned kidney donation, school choice (or who knows, tables and guests at a wedding party?). Of course, here we could ask what we have called – in honour of our colleague that keeps asking this again and again – the "Frankel question": Can these situations be called markets at all? Are these matching problems instead not a more general case of operational research or even central planning? As far as I can see, the difference seems to be that, unlike with matching containers and ships or other forms of planning, market designers focus their attention on situations where both sides of the equation are *choosing* maximizing agents (but not necessarily buyers and sellers) that, accordingly, can be modelled with the tools provided by game theory.

In other words, in this increasingly influential branch within economics, markets are not natural but artificial encounters, they are not necessarily about price but about calculation, economists are not external observers but active agents in making these carefully designed encounters possible, and these encounters need, now and then, to be reframed or redesigned. Does this not sound familiar? It does. In fact, Roth has seen the resemblance himself, and, in a recent post on his quite active blog, he says:

> Yesterday's prize to Paul Milgrom for his work in market design (among other things) brings to mind a curious critique (and criticism) of economics in the economic sociology literature, namely that economics is "performative", in the sense that economic theories influence the real economy to become more like economic theory […] As far as I am aware, the term originated in linguistics to distinguish those cases in which saying is also doing. Thus saying "it will rain tomorrow" is not performative, but saying "I apologize" is: when you say it, you have done it, saying it makes it happen. So the basic idea applied to economics is that e.g. creating an option pricing formula might change the way options are priced. Designing a kidney exchange might change the number of patients who get kidney transplants. Or in Paul's case, designing auctions might change the way the FCC sells radio spectrum licenses.[9]

So far so good. There are, though, a couple of misunderstandings. Roth continues:

> The criticism, such as it is, seems to take two forms. The first is that, since economics is performative, it isn't a 'real' science which describes things as they are. The second, often more between the lines, is that this is just part of the way that economics has been sucking the meaning out of life ever since the invention of agriculture and trade […] Of course, that economics is performative is a criticism that economists, especially market designers, might take as a compliment. (It's a little like criticizing body builders for working hard to have big muscles, and not just settling for the ones they could get without cheating by exercising).

Anyone who has spent some time reading Callon and colleagues knows this is not the case. To say that economics is performative is not a criticism of economics not being a real science, but, if anything, a call to assume and not deny the practical and situated character of economic knowledge. And as for "sucking the meaning out of life…" This is more what people say about Callon et al. than what Callon et al. say about the poor economists. But even if we leave these misunderstandings aside, some important questions remain.

Are new *new* economic sociology (McFall & Ossandón 2014) and market design the same? Avoiding the obvious methodological splits that separate a highly formalized and a rather descriptive-reflexive ethnographic approach, there are still important conceptual differences. The ideal situation for Roth's designers seems to be "give me people and their preferences and I will make a technologically equipped market", while for Callon – especially in his work connecting his thoughts on technical democracy, hybrid forums, and markets (Callon 2009) – the ideal situation is where what is traded, who can participate in the exchange, and who and what is equipping the market encounter are collectively and heterogeneously defined. *Civilizing* (Callon) and *engineering* (Roth) markets are therefore two different programs of market design. More practically, for instance, in school choice, for Roth et al. what a good school is or who can choose or what is chosen while matching school places is defined before the market. In the view of Callon et al., such an arrangement would not only match pre-calculating families and schools but would also be a mechanism that make agents able to calculate. In Callon's (2007) view what markets do is 'performation', they transform the involved actors and things.

But despite these differences it seems that engineer economists and engineer sociologists are finally finding a common starting point. Is that not worrying? I think not. This is a much better place to start and try a dialogue that is not so limited by pre-existing disciplinary boundaries (see also Callon 2010). We can agree: markets are not pre-social metaphysical forces that need to be left alone, but they are practical arrangements that can be more or less, better or worse, designed.[10] In those cases where there is already a functioning market or quasi-market mechanisms (for instance: school choice or carbon trade), let us try to make them work the best we can. In other words, social researchers should not only criticize marketization but also spend time, energy, and knowledge on *engineering* and/or *civilizing* these complex arrangements. This is, I think, a pragmatic starting point for market researchers at large.

But is this all good? No, it is not. There is also a serious flaw. These two streams of market research seem to share a somewhat excessive optimism about markets as devices that can solve social and environmental issues. As a product of neoliberal Chile, I would happily pay for not having to make choices in areas like health insurance, pension funds, schools, or long-distance phone carriers. And certainly many people have argued that these and other sectors (have you heard about trains in the UK?) are not necessarily working better years after features such as competition, choice, and providers that can select or exclude their potential users have been introduced. Market design risks becoming the face of the latest round of social and environmental reforms (for instance: emissions trading or the announced Job Match interface in the UK[11]). And the new reformers seem to believe something like: it is not that markets were necessarily a bad social policy but that they were not properly designed. But should we not also be experimenting with other ways of doing things? I am not saying that markets are always bad, but the same brilliant ideas currently oriented at designing better markets could also be put into devising other ways of solving our common problems. In my opinion, market civilizers and engineers will become fully respectable technicians the day they are also able to advise something like: "Thank you for contacting me, but you don't need a market here."

Note 3. "The distinction between market and organization after 'market design'"

The following quotation is taken from a talk given by Alvin Roth, the winner of the 2012 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Memory of Alfred Nobel and renowned market designer:

> So, first of all think about market design, because market design is an ancient human activity. But because markets are so pervasive we think them a little bit like language. Languages and markets are both human artefacts. But we don't think of language as something we can change, but as something we get. I speak to you in English and I have to speak in the same kind of English that you speak, otherwise it wouldn't work. Often we think of markets in that way too: markets just happen. But, of course, markets are human artefacts and market design is that engineering part of microeconomics, that part that fixes markets when they are broken or makes new ones sometimes.[12]

Roth presents a constructivist position. He emphasizes that markets are both, like language, a social product and, like other artefacts, the outcome of purposely applied technical knowledge. This description would easily fit recent sociological accounts of markets, but it would appear strange in the context of traditional conceptualizations of markets in economics.

A dominant position in the economic sciences of the second half of the twentieth century conceived of markets *in opposition* to organization. While organizations were associated with features such as planning, hierarchy, or centralized decision-making, markets were seen as decentralized, spontaneous, and even inherently non-designable entities. This view was clearly stated by Hayek. In his words:

> There are several terms available for describing each kind of order. The made order which we have already referred to as an exogenous order or an arrangement may again be described as a construction, an artificial order or, especially

where we have to deal with a directed social order, as an *organization*. The grown order, on the other hand, which we have referred to as a self-generating or endogenous order, is in English most conveniently described as a *spontaneous order* […] What in fact we find in all free societies is that, although group of men will join in organizations for the achievement of some particular ends, the coordination of the activities of all these separate organizations, as well as of the separate individuals, is brought by the forces making for a spontaneous order. (Hayek 1991; pp. 294–295)

Certainly, Hayek presents an extreme version. But it would not be at all too controversial if it is claimed that economists – and social researchers from other disciplines too (see for instance Williamson 1973, and Powell 1990) – accepted the overall distinction that separates markets and organizations into two opposed ideal types.

The approach that analyzes markets as an alternative to organizations has started to be challenged in the last few decades, as sociologists and organization theorists began developing their own alternative conceptualizations of markets. Markets are, not unlike James March's classic description of organizations (March 1962), institutionalized fields where actors compete and forge alliances in struggles for power and control (Fligstein 1996). Markets are not spontaneous, but an achievement of organizing, the outcome of the practical work put into making agents calculative and goods calculable (Callon & Muniesa 2005). Markets are like formal organizations, markets require decisions on memberships, rules, monitoring, and sanctions (Ahrne et al 2015).

While economists have conceptualized markets *in opposition to* organization, sociologists and organizational theorists inspect markets *as* organizational entities. The Roth quotation above shows that market design is part of a movement that disrupts this particular balance. The new position is clearly illustrated in the following quotation taken from a book by the economist and market designer John McMillan, who says:

When markets are well designed – but only then – we can rely on Adam Smith's invisible hand to work, harnessing dispersed information, coordinating the economy, and creating gains from trade. (McMillan, 2002, p. 228)

McMillan's quote summarizes, and anticipates, an important modification in recent economics and economic practices more widely. As recent research covering different countries and various policy sectors is starting to show (Doganova and Laurent forthcoming, Ossandón and Ureta forthcoming, Reverdy and Breslau forthcoming, Neyland et al. forthcoming, Pallesen & Jenle 2017), policymakers today do not conceive their alternative scenarios simply in terms of market *versus* planning. They see as their tasks the development, implementation, and repair of markets purposely designed to solve matters of collective concerns (Frankel et al. forthcoming). Similarly, the strategies of an increasingly relevant number of firms are understood as market design. Companies like Uber, Amazon, Google, or Tinder do not simply *participate* in markets, their core business is understood in terms of the development and management of platforms designed to strategically mediate and organize the match between suppliers and consumers (Langley & Leyshon 2016, Kornberger et al. 2017).

Market design introduces a new position in economics in relation to markets. As the historians of economic thought Edward Nik-Khah and Philip Mirowski explain:

Plainly, prior to the 1970s, no one in the history of neoclassical economics claimed an ability for markets to bring about salutary results […] Yet something changed in the 1980s, such that by now it has become commonplace for orthodox economists to assume carte blanche to concoct markets in a smorgasbord of shapes and flavours, for all manner of patrons. (Nik-Khah & Mirowski, forthcoming)

The new position, it could be argued, is closer to sociology and organization studies than to previous economics (Frankel et al. forthcoming). From this perspective, markets are not, like in Hayek's view, a type of spontaneous order which has to be nurtured but once in action must be left to work alone. From the new perspective, markets do not simply work; they have to be *put to work*. Markets need the work of experts (sometimes referred to as "designers" (Roth 2007), but also as "engineers" (Roth 2002), "architects" (Wilson 1999), or even "plumbers" (Duflo 2017)), whose task, like a control mechanism in system engineering (Jenle 2015), is to react to deviations and steer markets in the right direction. Markets are an object of organization.

The concept of market after market design

Market designers, like sociologists and organization scholars, approach markets as organization. But do market designers' concepts of markets simply match conceptualizations of markets in sociology and organization studies? The following extract is taken from the same talk by Roth quoted before.

Let me tell you about why economists are interested in school choice and is that a natural kind of thing. Because you might not think of school choice and how we allocate places in public schools as a market place, because we don't use money to decide who gets what school places. But it turns out that markets are a wider class of thing that you might ordinarily consider […] Just as there are lots of different natural languages -there is English, and French, and Portuguese- there are also different kinds of markets. And, in not all of them money plays the central role it plays in commodity markets. […] When you buy shares in the stock market you don't care who you're dealing with. You don't care whether they took good care of those shares while they have them. They don't care whether you will take care of those shares. The only thing you have to do is to find an agreeable price and the job of the stock exchange is to find that price. The job of the stock exchange is price discovery, to find a price in which supply equals demand. But lots of markets don't work that way […] Matching markets are markets where you cannot choose what you want, even if you can afford it, you also have to be chosen. You cannot just decide on coming to Stanford, you have to be admitted, you cannot decide to work for Google, you have to be hired […] So, matching markets have a lot of other institutions than just institutions to find price.

The quotation is from a presentation Roth delivered to a group of school teachers to explain a form of market design that affects them directly. In cities like Boston and New York, market designers have collaborated with policymakers in implementing market design to maximize matching between applicants' choices and schools.[13] Roth uses the occasion also to make explicit the concept of market at play in this type of intervention. School choice, he explains, represents a case of "matching markets," markets where money does not necessarily play an essential part. The effort Roth puts into explaining the situation makes clear his awareness that it is not obvious that the allocation of school places should be considered as a market. The fact that he explicitly attempts to clarify this issue also shows that he realizes that the term used to label the situation is relevant. As sociologists of professions would put it (Fourcade 2009), the way in which a policy situation is labelled can have consequences for the delimitation of claims of technical and professional jurisdiction.

The definition of school allocation as a market can be also seen as a provocation with important consequences for social research more broadly. The following quotation is taken from a paper by a group of distinguished scholars published recently in *Organization Studies*:

A market is a social structure for the exchange of owners' rights, in which offers are evaluated and priced, and in which individuals or organizations compete with one another via offers (Aspers 2011). The social structure comprises two roles of exchange -sellers and buyers- both of whom have owners' rights […] (Ahrne et al. 2015; p. 9).

You will face a dilemma if you happen to be a social scientist of the same disciplinary area of Ahrne et al. and you are also interested in an empirical situation like the school system in Boston. Should you approach this situation like a market? If you follow Roth, the answer is yes: school choice represents a case of a particular type of market. If you take the Ahrne et al. definition, the answer is no. A case like this, with no clear ownership claims and not even price or money, does not fit their definition. Who will you follow? The economist or the sociologists? Perhaps this situation is not a clash between two technical definitions (the definition provided by the sociologists versus that of the economists) but a bifurcation within sociology and organization studies about how to approach the concept of market. Can we develop an approach to markets in which sociologists do not take it as their task to provide their own concepts of markets, but instead include the technical definitions of markets by experts in the field as part of the object of study?

Endnotes

1 For a sociological analysis of this case see Jenle and Pallesen (2017) and Pallesen and Jacobsen (2018).

2 The issue includes six contributions. Four of them are case studies: Ossandón and Ureta (forthcoming) on markets for health insurance and public transport in Chile; Reverdy and Breslau (forthcoming) on the market for wholesale electricity in France; Doganova and Laurent (forthcoming) on markets for emissions, sustainable biofuel and clean technologies in Europe; and Neyland, Ehrenstein and Milyaeva (forthcoming) on markets for electronic waste and child care in the UK. The fifth paper, by Nik-Khah and Mirowski, traces the transformation in economics, from a professional consensus that assumed that markets were the opposite of planning to the current context in which economists claim to be experts in the design of markets. In the sixth paper, the editors (Frankel, Ossandón and Pallesen forthcoming) attempt to conceptualize and explore the conceptual challenge opened up by the new type of market expertise identified in the issue.

3 https://www.cbs.dk/en/research/departments-and-centres/department-of-organization/centres-and-groups/markets-and-valuation-cluster

4 This text was originally prepared for the workshop "The modes of

economies," which was conducted in the context of the series of seminars organized by Bruno Latour to debate the propositions of his *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*. The workshop was hosted at Copenhagen Business School on February 24 and 26, 2013.

5 This note appeared originally as a blog post in April 2013 on www.charisma-network.net and on https://estudiosdelaeconomia.com.

6 This note is a section of a paper I am currently working on. I presented a previous version of the full paper (which is titled "The Concept of Market") at the *5th Interdisciplinary Market Studies Workshop* held at Copenhagen Business School in June 2018.

7 Of course, people like Hayek or Buchanan represent an extreme here. But different strands of what is today known as neoliberal thought seem to share the centrality of the market. The next quotation by Arnold Harberger, an influential economist at the University of Chicago in the second half of the twentieth century, summarizes a less romantic and slightly more technocratic conception of the market: "The forces of the market are just that: They are forces; they are like the wind and the tides; they are things that if you want to try to ignore them, you ignore them at your peril, and if you understand that they are there, working their way, if you find a way of ordering your life that is compatible with these forces, indeed which harnesses these forces to the benefit of your society, that's the way to go." (Harberger, A. 2002).

8 See also Roth's very clear Nobel Prize lecture https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2012/roth/lecture/

9 http://marketdesigner.blogspot.com/2013/02/performativity-as-critique-of-economics.html

10 For a much less optimistic view see Mirowski and Nik-Khah (2007), who polemically suggest that actor network theory and market design share a common ancestry in operational research. In an article written in a less confrontational tone, Mirowski explains that the movement toward engineering markets is a much broader turn within economic thought of the last couple of decades (Mirowski 2007).

11 https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/mar/31/liberal-conservative-coalition-conservatives

12 The two quotations by Roth included in this section are my transcriptions of a lecture Roth gave that is available in the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNeK8mOWudA#t=170

13 School allocation, one of the most recognized examples of market design (Cantillon 2017), is a policy instrument in which policymakers implement algorithms to match the priorities of families' searching for schools and schools' available places.

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Book reviews

Beat Weber · 2018

Democratizing Money? Debating Legitimacy in Monetary Reform Proposals

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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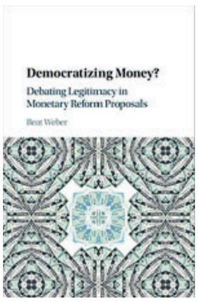

The worldwide financial crisis in 2007/2008 has triggered a vast debate on the roots of the crisis, and on the legitimacy of large-scale state interventions and government support that were deemed "necessary" to rescue the ailing financial sector. This debate not only focused on the regulatory deficits of the banking system and of the financial sector as a whole, but tended to enlarge itself into a general critique of the institutional system of monetary governance. For not a few observers, the root of the crisis seemed to lie in money "as such", and in the complexities of the existing system of money creation and governance; hence, calls for diverse kinds of monetary reforms became influential. This is the point where Beat Weber's analysis (the book is based on a PhD Dissertation defended at the University of Kassel) comes in. The author's key aim is to clarify what monetary governance can contribute to safeguarding the legitimacy of the financial system, as well as what it cannot do. Weber's answer will be sobering for monetary reform enthusiasts; basically, the author argues that the monetary system cannot be more democratic than the underlying social distribution of private property rights and political power itself. This is not a plea against reforms; however, to become effective for crisis prevention, reforms have to go beyond monetary governance and to focus directly on the institutional order and the political regulation of the private economy.

Facing a variety of simplifying theories of money, the author first insists on the need to give an accurate description of the monetary system as it exists. Weber characterizes it as a "hybrid" system, which must be hybrid and complex in order to meet the requirements of a complex, dynamic and transnational environment. Thus, there is no simple answer to the question of what gives monetary governance its "legitimacy". The book starts with an exposition of basic analytical concepts: commodity and credit concepts of money; input and output legitimacy; hierarchical, market based and community based modes of governance. The author then recapitulates how the existing system of monetary governance emerged historically from the integration of sovereign money and private credit money "under a common unit account and a common governance architecture with the central bank and commercial banks as key actors" (p. 42). Consequently not only the mechanisms to issue money, but even the nature of money itself must be characterized as "hybrid", since a plurality of heterogeneous issuers is involved, giving money its character as a "hybrid of a claim on the issuer and a pure asset" (p. 50). Beyond states, central banks, commercial banks and private customers as key actors, the international monetary regime plays a key role. The "legitimacy" of the system depends on its "input" structure as well as on its "output" effects. "Output legitimacy" includes the general currency acceptance vis à vis competing international currencies, the stability of money value, and the reliability of debt repayment. "Input legitimacy" is provided so long as central banks and commercial banks play their proper roles as creditors and debtors, serving the money users as the "stakeholders" of the system.

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, calls for monetary reforms as a means to prevent future crises became popular. In Weber's view, this reflects a thorough misunderstanding of the role of monetary governance; it means to prescribe the wrong cure against the disease. The author does not endeavor to provide a systematic analysis of the causes of the crisis. He only briefly points to the regulatory failures that have led to the spread of dubious "securitization" practices, to the rise of shadow banking, to the rising attractiveness of "financialization" – all problems that still have to be resolved and are awaiting effective policy responses. Though monetary policy was not a key factor causing the crisis, the public debate nevertheless tends to center on money and monetary reforms.

In Weber's view, this is due to a widespread ignorance of the public on money, which partially goes back to the neglect of money in mainstream neoclassic economics. The knowledge vacuum on money created by neoclassic economics was filled by "folk theories", all of them failing in diverse ways to grasp the complexity of the existing monetary system.

Weber discusses four of these "folk theories": Bitcoin, Regional Money, Sovereign Money, and Modern Monetary Theory (MMT). None of these conceptions are deemed a convincing alternative to the existing system. All of them are following, as the author shows, a simplified version of social contract, as they tend to absolutize the role of one of the actors in the complex network of monetary governance, while neglecting the others. The Bitcoin system prioritizes the speculative interest of the individual money user, while neglecting social concerns about a stable and functioning currency. Regional Money is based on the support of local and regional communities; given the national and transnational interconnectedness of the economy, its role can only be a supplementary one, at best. Sovereign money conceptions aim to eliminate the money creation function of private banks, either by prescribing a 100 percent reserve of central bank money for banks, or by erasing privately issued means of payment altogether, replacing private money by a complete reliance on central bank money. These conceptions not only neglect, as Weber argues, the complexity of the interactions between banks, private enterprises and customers in the process of value creation, but also the dependency of sovereign money creation on international currency markets. The same applies to MMT approaches – Weber here refers largely to the writings of Hyman Minsky and Randall L. Wray – which attribute the power to create and circulate money even more exclusively to the national state.

To sum up: This is a well written, informative book, which presents a clear argument about a highly relevant and actual topic. One may object that Weber, while taking a very critical stance on alternative monetary concepts, has little to say about the deficiencies of the existing system, in particular in the field of international monetary governance. However, his point that alternative monetary concepts have to at least match the complexity level of the existing system in order to be taken seriously certainly holds true. Moreover, the book can be read as a warning of overstated expectations concerning the role of money and the options of monetary policy. Certainly the author would not deny the unstable, crisis-ridden character of capitalism. But – and this is his point – it is not money and monetary governance, where the primary sources of crises have to be sought.

David Henig and Nicolette Makovicky (eds.) 2016

Economies of Favour after Socialism

Oxford: Oxford University Press

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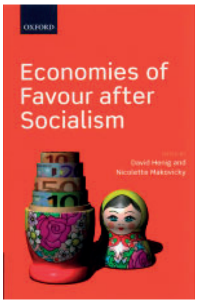

The social complexity surrounding "favors" is presented here under conditions that make them particularly intriguing – namely, in societies with a socialist past. Those interested in the topic can be sure that *Economies of Favour after Socialism* offers more than a window through which we can observe cosmologies of favors in Bosnia, ways of fulfilling obligations in South China, or modes of reciprocity among Polish artisans and merchants: it opens a window that allows us to form an anthropological appreciation of the complexity of an *act* that a large number of those concerned with the "economy" tend to see as falling outside of the economic domain. The main argument in this edited volume is that favors are *modes of acting*, components of the rhetoric of friendship and mutuality, and not simply actions "which appear to mix instrumental and affective relations, goal-oriented and gift exchanges, and 'formal' and 'informal' institutional ties," as the editors clarify in the introduction.

This extremely stimulating book, whose reflections should engage scholars interested in post-socialist societies as well as a broader audience, is the result of a conference entitled *Economies of Favour after Socialism: A Comparative Perspective,* held in January 2012 in Oxford. The theoretical discussions and the presentation of the cases follow the guidelines of that conference, which in general terms is a broad discussion of Alena Ledeneva's well-known notion of "economies of favour". The title of the book could be misleading and cause occasional readers to believe that the impressive discussion offered by the eleven contributions is only relevant for those interested in ex-socialist societies. This is simply not the case, because the "economy of favours", as Caroline Humphrey points out, is a way of conceptualizing a series of informal economic activities that merge favors with well-known practices in many other regions of the globe: gifts, bribes, patronage, clientelism, kickbacks, illicit benefits, and different forms of "compensation."

After an introduction in which the editors delineate the theoretical contribution of the book and show how the chapters contribute to the overall project, the book continues with two contributions that resonate through the rest of the contributions. Alena Ledeneva again presents a theorization of the *blat*, which serves her to explore the *sistema*, the network-based system of informal governance under Putin. This fascinating chapter incorporates the final recommendation to conduct an ethnographic study of the world of informality: in her contribution, the reader can find conceptual innovation and methodological experimentation. Caroline Humphrey's contribution, meanwhile, poses the question concerning the significance and persistence of favors and proposes a differentiated perspective of these practices. Her answer is that favors always leave something open and uncertain; that is, they are ambiguous as to what we can expect from the givers of the favor. The final answer is that the favors, due to this ambiguity, facilitate lasting social relationships and feelings of self-worth in the context of certain social networks. It is also worth mentioning Chris Hann's attempt in his article to argue against exaggerating the existence of a "socialist personhood." Hann's contribution focuses on *pálinka*, the name of an alcoholic beverage that also refers to a way to understand a series of exchanges in the economy of favors and a particularly important sector within the illegal or shadow economy. However, the emphasis is on the need to avoid falling into nostalgic sentiment, to avoid exaggerating the past of strong ties under socialism and drawing stark contrasts with the extreme atomization of individuals typical of market societies.

The above contributions are a testimony to the book's depth, but they also suggest that scholars of the economy and markets have yet to fully comprehend the entirety of the world of informal practices that are part of the economy and are, as the editors clarify, constitutive of sociality. Finally, despite the unstructured organization of the book and occasional missed opportunities, I recommend *Economies of Favour after Socialism* to those interested in what happens behind the façade of the state: informality, illegality, and economic practices that go unregistered. This innovative and inspiring edited volume provides a reflection on social phenomena that are certainly to be found beyond the boundaries of ex-socialist societies. In that sense, the book should also provide a source of inspiration for scholars conducting research in other regions of the world.

Werner Reichmann · 2018

Wirtschaftsprognosen. Eine Soziologie des Wissens über die ökonomische Zukunft

Frankfurt/New York: Campus

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How do experts produce and communicate knowledge about the economic future? This question lies at the center of Werner Reichmann's comprehensive German-language book about the economic forecasts produced and promulgated by German, Austrian, and Swiss institutes for economic research. In order to unravel the mysteries and intricacies of economic forecasting, the author conducted interviews with members of economic research institutions in the abovementioned countries, analyzed the documents they produce, and studied the ways forecasters present their conclusions and inferences to the public. A central goal of Reichmann's book is to apply the analytical stance of the social studies of science to the discipline of economics. With this approach, he aims to contribute to the establishment and consolidation of a research program that he calls "*social studies of economics*." According to Reichmann (p. 19), the application of the social studies of science perspective to the discipline of economics should be appreciated as one of the book's main innovations.

Reichmann's idea is certainly an interesting one, which can be properly understood as an *incremental* innovation because it, first, applies the fairly well-known social studies of science perspective to a quite specific empirical field. Second, there is already a substantial literature on the realm of economic knowledge, which is influenced by ideas from social studies of science. One could for instance point to the contributions assembled in *Die Innenwelt der Ökonomie* edited by Jens Maeße, Hanno Pahl, and Jan Sparsam (2017) to show that Reichmann's work is inscribed in a broader stream of research that shares the interest of reconstructing the construction of knowledge by economists (Reichmann himself is a contributor to this edited volume). Additionally, Robert Evans' research on British econometrical modelers comes very close to Reichmann's perspective (as the latter points out himself).

From the social studies of science literature, Reichmann selects three established concepts, which serve as analytical keys for his study of economic forecasts. The first analytical concept is "symmetry," introduced to the social studies of science by David Bloor. The latter recommended that researchers use the same type of sociological explanation to account for "true" as well as "false" knowledge. The main idea here is that true knowledge is also a product of social processes and not the result of the successful suppression of social influences. As a second analytical key, Reichmann uses the idea of economics-in-action, which he derives from authors such as Fleck, Knorr Cetina, Latour, and Woolgar. According to this concept, science should be viewed as a phenomenon constantly in the making. As a social scientist interested in economics one should consequently investigate the processes in which economists produce knowledge and should refrain from merely looking at the results of these knowledge-creating activities. The third analytical key is the concept of social interaction. Reichmann derives this concept from Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge and, at least partially, from Goffman's dramatism. He specifically departs from Goffman, however, in that he does not reduce interaction to face-to-face encounters (p. 18).

The analytical decisions Reichmann took with these three key concepts place him quite firmly in a general cultural and micro-sociological perspective. While the concepts stem from specific contributions in the field of social studies of science, they generally sensitize the user to the constructed, processual, and interaction-based character of the social world. Given this general perspective, Reichmann chooses Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory as method of analysis.

Reichmann's analysis is grounded in interview data he collected, published economic forecasts, and audio-visual data from press conferences. Considering the author's long-lasting preoccupation with the field of economic forecasting, it comes as no surprise that the book is very rich in instructive empirical observations and theoretical interpretations. A key theme that emerges in the course of Reichmann's discussion is the way economic forecasts represent the economy. He also pays close attention to the social processes through which economic forecasters produce knowledge about the future. Another central line of argument relates to the way economic forecasters communicate about the economic future. These key themes are complemented by an interest in the relationship of economic forecasters to non-scientific social environments, such as media audiences, the state, and markets. The abovementioned themes are intertwined throughout the book. Usually, however, each chapter emphasizes one of them. In order to depict the book's content in a convenient way, I will regroup the chapters according to the emphasis they put on one of the abovementioned themes.

In the first chapter, Reichmann offers an insightful account of how economic forecasts need to follow a *"relevant trace"* (Latour) in order to represent the realm of the economy. The main theme here is how economic forecasts relate to the "world out there" and translate things into words (p. 49). Reichmann argues that the "relevant trace" allows economists to translate the complex and opaque empirical reality of economic activities into a more or less clear-cut symbolical representation of the economic world. From the constructionist standpoint Reichmann assumes, the argument that economic forecasts do not refer directly to the "world out there" but to a contingent symbolical representation is certainly not very controversial. He does an excellent job of comparing their "relevant trace" with other disciplines such as soil science, archaeology, and quantitative social research, however. By comparing different "relevant traces" he shows the contingent way in which different disciplines represent their subjects of research. Chapter 9 complements the interest in how economic forecasts refer to the reality of the economy by discussing whether it is possible for economic prognostications to be clearly wrong (or clearly correct). Reichmann shows that they can never be false (or true) in a non-ambiguous way because there are different reference frames in which to judge their adequacy. The question whether forecasts predict a future present correctly is not that important anyway because their social function lies mainly in informing and defining present situations, as

Reichmann convincingly points out in Chapter 4.

In the second chapter, another central theme of the book comes to the fore. Here, Reichmann focuses on the *social production* of economic prognostications. He shows how economists rely on the "*epistemic participation*" of actors from the field of the economy itself. In contrast to other scientific endeavors, the subject matter itself is expected and allowed to partake in the production of knowledge, not only by contributing data but also by offering interpretations of (future) economic reality. Later, in Chapter 5, he extends this point and shows in a detailed analysis that state actors are also involved in the social production of economic forecasts. This central participation of non-academic actors in the production of knowledge is an interesting observation, which can probably be explained by the applied nature of the research that produces economic forecasts. One would probably find similar forms of epistemic participation in other strands of applied research, for example in the fields of social work or policy advice.

Chapter 3 introduces another central interest of the book. Here, Reichmann investigates how economic forecasters *communicate* their prognostications to relevant audiences. Making the economy visible and conferring trust on economic forecasts emerge as key themes of the analysis. Concerning the first theme, Reichmann argues that the visual representation of the economy through *"dominant graphs*" ("*dominantes Schaubild*") is a central way of disseminating knowledge about the economy and its future. Building on Knorr Cetina's work, Reichmann argues that the "dominant graphs" should be conceived of as "*scopic media*," which confer visibility on an otherwise inaccessible realm of human action (p. 129). In Reichmann's account, these "dominant graphs" inform actors' behaviors and are therefore involved in the production of societal reality. In Chapter 7, the author picks up on the interest in the communication of economic forecasts by analyzing press conferences, in which experts present economic forecasts to a wider audience. Reichmann is mainly interested in the impression management of economic forecasters, whom he conceptualizes as "*ambassadors of the economic future*." According to Reichmann's analysis, the socially attributable aim of the self-representation of those ambassadors consists mainly in gaining and reproducing societal trust for the abstract expert system of economic forecasting.

Another key theme of Reichmann's analysis is the relationship of economic forecasters with their social environment. While Reichmann analyses their self-representation in front of a media audience in Chapter 7, he investigates forecasters' interrelations with states and with markets in Chapters 5 and 8, respectively. In Chapter 5, Reichmann describes the relationship between the state and economic forecasters as *permanent, consolidated, and successful* ("*dauerhaft, gefestigt und erfolgreich*"). As he points out, this relationship is a way for the state to secure a certain control over the production of knowledge pertaining to the future of the economy. According to Reichmann's interpretation, the fairly strong relationship between the state and economic forecasters is partly founded in a shared grammar: Both communicate about the economy in the language of numbers. In Chapter 8, Reichmann investigates how economic forecasts interact with markets. Building on Beckert, he argues that economic forecasts help to reduce uncertainty for market participants and that they help to solve coordination problems in markets.

Reichmann's book is a valuable contribution to the sociological study of economics in that it offers deep insights into a specific field of economists' work. The main analytical move to investigate this field through key concepts from the social studies of science literature is in itself very convincing. As the author himself points out, however, it would have been desirable to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in institutes of economic research in order to study economics-in-action adequately (p. 42). Because the production of economic forecasts is a politically charged process, it is understandable that those institutes have not granted him ethnographic access (at least so far). For this reason, Reichmann had to make do with the insights into the process of the production of economic forecasts he could glean from interviews with economic forecasters. Considering the book's claim that two of its contributions involve the study of *economics-in-action* and *social interaction*, it is hard to overlook this lack of ethnographic observation. Interviews are arguably not the optimal means for accomplishing the author's purposes because they probably reveal more about economic forecasters' accounts of their actions than about their actual activities. Ethnographic access to sites where economic forecasts are being produced would certainly expand the possibilities of the social studies of economics the author proposes.

In the introduction of the book, Reichmann explains that his main ambition is to apply key notions derived from social science studies to knowledge production in the field of economic forecasts. Consequently, as a reader one could think that he is mainly interested in economic forecasts as one type of economic knowledge among others. If one looks at the subtitle of the book, however, one could assume instead that Reichmann wants to contribute specifically to the sociological study of the future. If this were the case, economic forecasts would serve not just as an exchangeable example from the realm of economics, which made it possible to demonstrate the fruitfulness of the social studies of economics approach. Instead, economic forecasts would be conceived of primarily as a type of knowledge that deals with the general problem of an unknowable future. Of certain passages, a reader could ask therefore, whether they should understand this book primarily as a study of *economic knowledge* or as a study that analyses the problem of the production and dissemination of *knowledge about the future*. Now, of course these two foci do not exclude each other in any way. The book might, however, have gained additional argumentative power if these two foci had been addressed and accentuated more clearly. Readers who pick up the book because they are interested in the social construction of the future might not get as much out of it as they had hoped after skimming through its pages. Especially the analyses related to the communication of economic forecasts do not use the full analytical potential of the sociology of the future, at least in my opinion. This is somewhat astonishing if one considers that Reichmann refers repeatedly to seminal contributions to this emerging field. That said, it is certainly an inspiring book for sociologists interested in the application of social studies of science perspectives to the field of economics or readers interested in economic forecasting in German-speaking countries.

PhD projects

Paranoid economy: A valuation studies approach to the contemporary visual art scene of Buenos Aires, Argentina

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Art critics, historians, and sociologists agree that the Argentinian visual art scene, especially that of Buenos Aires, has undergone fundamental changes during the last two decades as a result of educational, institutional, market, and generational renewal. It has been said, either with optimism, pessimism or skepticism, that these changes have already (or will eventually) helped to develop the Argentinean art scene to the standard of international contemporary art.

The central dichotomy in the debates around this period of time is one of *professionalized* against *unprofessionalized*, which has both heuristical and normative connotations. This – sometimes imprecise, sometimes contradictory – pair of concepts, on the one hand, supposedly define two contradictory socialization models that recall the traditional sociological opposition between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. On the other hand, the opposition is used to consider the relation between economic and aesthetic value, specifically the autonomy or heteronomy of the later.

This research project aims to examine valuation in the contemporary visual art scene of Buenos Aires. I chose three relevant institutions as case studies, each of which have specific evaluation and valuation profiles that will allow me to explore classical lines of discussion about value and art.

To summarize my research: (a) Artistic competitions have traditionally been seen as devices that set the aesthetic value of an artwork and, therefore, assign social hierarchies to artists (and their reputations) within the art field. (b) The art market, on the other hand, was traditionally considered to be the device that assigned economic value and hierarchized positions in relation to the social system. The classic opposition, absolutely central to modern art, between autonomy and heteronomy can be problematized when analyzing the distinction between these two forms of value. (c) The pension bill projects presented by artists' associations in the National Congress will allow me to explore the inherent problems of art as labor and artists as workers.

Three core ideas are fundamental to my research. First, valuation is a social practice (Helgesson and Muniesa 2013). Second, valuation implies evaluating and valorizing (Vatin 2013). Finally, the kind of approach to valuation in the art scene that I am advocating should be concerned with the relationship between economization (Caliskan and Callon 2009) and artification (Shapiro and Heinich 2012).

The scope of my work is not only driven by attention to the inner processes (practices, devices, discourses, etc.) that define each of these institutions, but, taken as "moments of valuation" (Antal, Hutter, and Stark 2015), is also concerned with the significant connections that exist between them; i.e., the specific "translations" that link and produce the relation between art galleries, artistic competitions, and pension systems for artists.

This research makes three main contributions:

First, orientated on "methodological situationism" (Stark 2009), it produces what is in local sociology an unprecedentedly dense empirical study of some of the institutions on the local contemporary visual arts scene.

Second, it provides a theoretical analysis of the said institutions, fundamentally grounded in the recent valuation studies tradition.

Finally, I propose an original model to approach the problem of entangled or folded valuations (Helgesson 2016) that, as recently done by Hutter (2016), frames them as communication phenomena. I study valuation entanglements as sequential, unbalanced, and dynamic systems of (in)communication.

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Taking care of your financial health

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My research encompasses the role of public institutions and private agents in attempting to intervene in the ways individuals and families manage their own finances. It presents a set of Brazilian initiatives on policies and programs of financial education. Based on ethnographic observation, I follow the work of a number of experts who articulate, produce, and disseminate ideas and techniques with regard to personal finance in order to teach individuals how to use their money "more suitably". I focus on understanding the activities of these professionals, who seek to influence consumption behavior, saving, and investment practices by encouraging individuals to recognize "behavioral biases" and "financial mistakes".

During my four years of fieldwork, I was able to follow a range of initiatives that brought me to many different places – meeting rooms in universities, government offices, schools, training venues, convention centers, sports centers, churches, corporate headquarters, etc., – where I met and talked with a large number of experts from diverse backgrounds. All of the experts used different methodologies but with the same aim: the promotion and expansion of people's financial knowledge.

Since my interlocutors always tell me about the importance of being attentive to "financial health" or having a "healthy financial life", I organized the research to take into consideration this use of metaphorical medical language for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of financial problems. The thesis, therefore, has three axes:

a) The first focuses on the "ways of diagnosing": the creation of the problem together with the rise of awareness that there is a lack of financial education. I describe the work of a group of agents and agencies (on a national and international scale) responsible for the conception of financial education as a public policy as well as its implementation and measurement.

b) The second is related to the "treatment" procedures, i.e., how to cope with financial problems. Here I am interested in debts since they are considered to be one of the main consequences of the inability to manage financial resources. Observing the practices of a state institution in Rio de Janeiro – The Consumer Protection Committee (Nudecon) – I focus on activities carried out by the state to assist those who seek legal help in solving problems and conflicts with financial institutions.

c) Finally, I present the "work of prevention" against "financial lack of control". Inspired by the anthropology of economy and the anthropology of public policies, I follow the work of educators who disseminate techniques regarding money management and hence I can go further in considering (i) notions of control; (ii) constructions of what would constitute a "safe future" and "a planned life"; (iii) concepts of "financial well-being"; (iii) methodologies and calculations that would allow for the planning of important life events (such as marriage, retirement, the birth of children, etc.).

In dialogue with governmentality studies, I aim to demonstrate that this work of intervention in people's "financial lives" is not restricted to teaching them techniques to manage their finances. In addition, it encompasses an attempt to act on their behaviors and feelings about the future. Through financial education initiatives, experts aim to encourage individuals to be aware of what the future holds, making them reflect on their own behavior and their use of money in the present to manage risks and therefore avoid financial problems in the future.

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