

2. THE ASSOCIATIONAL POLITICS OF MARKETS

“To grasp the economy one has to look at that which is economic since all that is visible are the qualities of the object, its characteristics, and not the object itself. This shift from a noun to an adjective is the first step on the path to the study of economization.” (Callon, Çalışkan 2005: 5)

Markets usually stand by themselves, unquestioned and considered as naturally existing phenomena: The analysis of markets supersedes the investigation of how they come into existence. While such a perspective on markets is prevalent in neoclassical economics, critical political economics, economic sociology, and most chain and network approaches, it is rejected by scholars working in the social studies of markets or marketization (Çalışkan, Callon 2010, 2009). In this growing scholarly field, both the “performativity” lens (Fligstein, Dauter 2007: 120; Fourcade 2007: 1026) and Deleuzian-inspired assemblage thinking (Deleuze, Guattari 1987) have gained strong momentum as explanatory building blocks for the study of market emergence. From a performative vantage point, markets are practical accomplishments rather than abstract and stable entities that govern the dynamics of supply and demand (Callon 2007b; Mirowski, Nik-Khah 2007). They require manifold investments to temporarily stabilize them and they are (re-)produced by discourses, tools and practices of economists, policymakers, and various kinds of practitioners. Yet, the elements that compose markets can disintegrate. This is what policy mobility scholars have demonstrated in relation to various cases ranging from urban studies, economic geography to business studies on the contingent arrangements, modes, and effects of traveling policies (e.g. Henriksen 2013; Peck 2011; Temenos, McCann 2013). The mobilization of various bodies of knowledge including economic models, embodied expertise, and techniques must be investigated in their own right.

Inspired by the above-mentioned literatures, I outline the epistemological and conceptual claims of what I call the “associational politics of markets”. This approach aims at broadening our understanding of the construction of markets by ascribing not only an important role but also agency to material elements, traveling disources, and capacitations of (market) agents. Thereby, the approach can expand the theoretical repertoire for understanding how markets and market-models take shape. First, I contextualize this approach within the disciplinary developments of the social sciences, human geography, and geographies of marketization (Berndt, Boeckler 2011, 2009) more specifically. Consequently, I aim to provide answers to the following questions: Which features inhere in markets (in the making)? What is political about the circulation of value chain models and policies? The departure point of the research on the making of *markets*, and more precisely on the global circulation of market models and rationalities, starts with the claim that “the market” is all too often treated like a black box. Instead, I propose to examine how markets are constituted and *assembled* and how their components are (temporarily) held together. To do so, I discuss eight prisms for the study of markets. Thereby, the focus shifts from the study of a preconfigured and given economic reality – i.e. the assumption that economics and markets pre-exist the economy – to the study of economization and marketization, as the quote in the beginning of this chapter suggests. In this endeavor, I do not pursue a narrow political agenda, but understand *politics* as ontological politics, whereby the power of market models to create new identities and indeed new worlds comes to the fore.

Cultural turns and actor-networks

In the 1980s and early 1990s, which is also known as the era of postmodernist thought (Ley 1993), an unprecedented convergence of intellectual investments around a common project swept through the social sciences. A shift in theorizing, methodology and epistemology led to the collapse of metanarratives and a turn towards interpretative and constructivist approaches. What came to be known as the “cultural turn” in human geography (Barnes 2001; Cook 2000;

Crang 1998) and beyond started to “question the constitution of the discipline – what we know, how we know it and what difference this makes both to the type of research we do and who participates in it with us, as either colleagues or research subjects” (McDowell 1992: 399-400). Specifically, the new cultural geography attempts to de-stabilize structurally determinist accounts of economic change, in which “singular notions of ‘economy’ invariably trumped ‘culture’ in a predefined hierarchy of epistemic significance” (James et al. 2008: 3; Berndt, Pütz 2007). It accommodates concepts from Marxian political economy, regulation theory, and neoclassical economics which dominated the discipline since the early 1970s. Nuanced understandings of globalization and the construction of “the social” or “the economic” in specific places have come to substitute the conventional focus on space and place. Holding against accounts of globalization that argue for the erasure of geographic specificity, space is no longer considered as pre-given but rather produced through, and constitutive of, social relationships.

Certainly, the use of the term “culture” could erroneously lead to the assumption that the cultural turn is primarily about “culture”. However, as indicated above, the turn implied a radical shift to an openness towards pluralist modes of theorizing and a shift from epistemological to hermeneutic theorizing. Thereby, the very idea of theory is turned around. Theory is no longer considered to hold an exclusive truth or possess only one particular format (Woodward et al. 2009). Instead, theorizing is a profoundly subjective activity inherent in practices (Barnes 2001: 547). Methodologically, the cultural turn has led to the adoption of qualitative and interpretative methods which followed the quantitative turn of the 1950s and 1960s in the social sciences. At the epistemological level, the cultural turn called for sensitivity to the social construction of social and economic phenomena. In other words, the “cultural turn” has inspired a new sensitivity towards the contingency of economic and social phenomena by questioning pre-fixed scientific categories and social constructions of knowledge and power forms.

Cultural turns should be considered in the plural. Indeed, several turns have swept through the cultural and social sciences since the 1990s: the relational turn, the performative turn, the linguistic turn, the postcolonial turn, the spatial turn, the pragmatic turn and the practice turn (Barnett 1998; Cook 2000). These turns aim to withdraw from a mode of thinking using prefixed claims and categories that featured in the modernist body of thought. Instead, they are open towards more eclectic, modest, and experimental ways of theorizing the social world. Two broader claims can be distinguished therein: one is the call for more flexible, pluralistic and hybrid conceptions of “the economic” and “the social” that acknowledge the mutual constitution with, and its inseparability from, “the cultural” (Berndt, Glückler 2007). The second claim implies a focus on the practices that constitute everyday social interaction (Jones, Murphy 2011; Schatzki et al. 2001). A source of inspiration for both claims is found in ANT. Rather than constituting a “theory” per se (Latour 1996b), as the name suggests, it is an ontological project that departs from a radical assumption. Bruno Latour has audaciously argued that “the social” – and “the economic” – do not explain, but must be explained (Latour 2005b). As a consequence, any scholar can do social theory without being a social scientist, one can discuss a generic “science” without becoming committed to a generic scientific method, and “follow scientists around” without ever becoming subject to the disciplinary norms and codes that discipline the scientists (Mirowski, Nik-Khah 2007: 194). The questions posed in social and political theory, all of which presuppose the social as a sort of substance that explains rather than something that must be explained, should be replaced by accounts that shed light on the situatedness of “the economic” in a broader fabric of social relations and networks of cultural institutions. This de-essentialist approach emerged out of the social studies of science and technology (STS) (Callon 1986; Latour 1999, 1987, 1983; Latour, Callon 1981; Latour, Woolgar 1986) or science studies more briefly. Instead of researching “ready-made science”, scholars are interested in “science in the making” (Latour 1987: 1-17). The original interest was linked to understanding the construction of scientific knowledge as a social and collective product of manifold connections between scientific laboratories and the external environment, the rapid uptake of

ANT and STS approaches has led to a large body of research that traces how all kinds of things – whether of a scientific nature such as academic journals, academic presentations or skills embodied in a scientist or related to other fields of knowledge and practice – are brought together in different ways through a process of “heterogeneous engineering” (Law 1992).

The radicality of ANT lies in the fact that it does not differentiate between science (knowledge) and technology (artifact). It ascribes the capacity to act to any purposefully and effectively aligned entity: All kinds of documents, technologies, artifacts, symbols, and places become active players in the ordering process. It is what Latour calls an “actant”, which is “anything provided it is granted to be the source of action” (Latour 1996b: 373). Although it is through the associations that nonhumans acquire the capacity to act, nonhumans do not have identical agency as humans. As Latour rightly mentions, nonhumans will never have inertia by themselves (Latour 1996a: 86), since an actor is never isolated (Latour 1988: 108-109). Simply put, nonhumans do not have agency by themselves, if only because they are never by themselves.

The radical critique of prefixed categorizations by ANT and STS altered the thinking of space among geographers as well. More generally speaking, ANT appeals to geographers because it addresses many concerns at the heart of geographical research, particularly the question and theorization of distance/proximity and scale, the role of technologies and the relationship between the natural and social world (Müller 2015a: 30). It is even much more than that, since ANT “redefine[s] geography” (Murdoch 1997). Instead of trying to categorize space and landscapes into micro-macro dimensions and relations, ANT scholars propose a geography of “topologies” (Mol, Law 1995) or a “science of nearness and rifts” (Serres, Latour 1995: 60). Such geographies require no less than a withdrawal from a mode of thinking in terms of macro- and micro-dimensions, and the use of a relational perspective that is not constrained or bound by space. Moreover, geographers have started to acknowledge that their research does not simply represent the world as it appears, but cultivates new ways of formatting it by “actively experimenting with the production of space as

an integral part of one's own practice" (Paglen 2009: 31). A greater methodological reflexivity in the research process and the handling of data comes along with the awareness that researchers co-construct social and economic realities through their practices:

"We are in the business of creating links, of making them, of bringing them more or less successfully into being. Which means in turn that we are no longer trying to find good ways of narrating and describing something that was already there. Instead, or in addition, we are in the business of ontology. We are in the business of making our objects of study. Of making realities, and the connections between those realities. Of making the realities that we describe. Of trying to find good ways of interacting with our objects, ways that are sustainable, ways that make it possible to link with them." (Law 1997: 65)

Researchers not only describe, but act upon the world through their research and the drawing of connections. The diversity of connections that constitute economic entities should be investigated and taken into account as much as the comments, vocabularies and theories used by researchers (Latour 2005b: 49; Roberts 2014). Researchers constantly enact reality, or rather realities in the plural, through (research) practices and their ways and means of analyzing and depicting the world (Mol 2002). Research, hence, is a thoroughly performative practice.

Eight prisms for the study of markets

Since its original and rather narrow interest in the construction of scientific knowledge, STS- and ANT-inspired assemblage thinking has transcended disciplinary fields (Bosco 2015) and reached out into research areas that were hitherto reserved for traditional social theory. Of particular interest for this research endeavor is the adoption of these insights in the field of market studies. In the late 1990s, Michel Callon carried out a "market test" of ANT (Callon 1999) by

asking how and if ANT can be rendered useful for the study of economic markets. This is a valid question given the fact that ANT-inspired approaches postulate distributed agency and hence an agential inseparability between humans and non-humans. The market, on the contrary, is a sphere marked by a “strict formal separation between what circulates (goods which are inert, passive and classified as non-human) and human agents who are active and capable of making complicated decisions (producers, distributors, consumers)” (Callon 1999: 182-183). This is why the experiment of constructing and assembling markets is a particularly promising case.

1. Agency in markets is sociotechnically distributed

Let me start with a very basic clarification of what I understand by the essence of an economic actor or rather, economic agency. Understandings of the sources of economic agency vary in different disciplines and fields: Economic agency in neoclassical economics is exerted by a calculating rational individual, represented by the construct of *homo oeconomicus* and linked to utilitarian market behavior. In political economy and the new economic sociology of markets, this construct is widely rejected on grounds of ideological or analytical misrepresentation (Foss, Klein 2010; Fourcade 2007) and it is argued that calculative behavior “is marginal and at best an *ex post* rationalization for choices grounded in other logics” (Callon, Muniesa 2005: 1230; Beckert et al. 2007). These logics include cultural norms, laws, and institutions. Economic sociologists oppose *homo oeconomicus* and substitute it for another abstract figure: *homo sociologicus*. Granovetter has withdrawn from this simplistic dichotomy by proposing the notion of “network” in which all economic and social interaction takes place (Granovetter 1985). Yet, in doing so he dissolves everything into networks. His approach cannot explain the configuration of economic actors, because it takes the identity and existence of economic actors as pre-given. The configuration of networks, however, depends precisely on the identity and equipment of the economic actor.

Actors become calculating market agents if they are equipped with the necessary tools. In the understanding of Michel Callon, an (economic) actor is “made up of human bodies but also of prostheses, tools, equipment, technical devices, algorithms, etc. – in other words, is made up of an agencement” (Callon 2005: 4; Context 1). His analytical emphasis is on the ensemble of market devices (Dumez, Jeunemaitre 2010a), rather than an exclusive focus “on what one might call [one actor’s] glamorous agential peaks” (MacKenzie 2009: 22). The agents’ calculative equipment (knowing how to calculate or how to keep records of farming practices) is co-produced by devices (calculator, Excel tables or paper sheets). In fact, calculative capacity must not be understood exclusively in numerical and mathematical terms (Lave 1988), but rather in broader sociopolitical terms as the capacity to act upon “economics at large” (Callon 2007b: 335). What does this mean for market agents who aim to become part of GVCs? Through all kinds of tools and investments – manuals, contracts, record-keeping books, workshops, and field schools – farmers (it could be any other market agent) in the Global South become familiarized with the functioning of global markets and thus equipped and capacitated. For instance, they are enabled to live up to the standards, norms, and rules of global markets through the documentation of their farming activities. A comprehensive set of tools – from agricultural technologies and practices to inscription devices such as policies, documents, evaluation reports, economic models – emerges around value chains and generates socio-technically distributed economic, i.e. calculative, agency. Calculative tools are at the heart of the emergence of economic agency.

Context 1: Markets as agencements – an etymological reflection

The French term “agencement” is a word-play borrowed from Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze, Guattari 1987) and often associated with what has been widely translated into “assemblage” in English. Although the two notions are sometimes understood and used as a synonym, they are not direct translations (Law 2004; Phillips 2006). While the French term “agencement” stems from “agencer” (to arrange or fit together) and “agence” (agency) and connotes “arrangement”, “configuration” or “fixing” in English (Callon, Çalışkan 2005; Phillips 2006: 108), its English counterpart – the notion “assemblage” implies “joining” and “gathering”. In French, its referent has a technical connotation, and can refer to the components of a machine (Hardie, MacKenzie 2007: 58).

The word-play opens up new ways of thinking about distributed notions of agency and distributed cognition (Bennett 2005; McFarlane 2011; Giere, Moffatt 2003). “Agence” in French is translated with “agency” in English and connotes the capacity to act and give meaning to action. An agencement denotes socio-technical arrangements (Callon, Çalışkan 2005: 24-25) in which all parts – independent of their human or non-human status – possess the capacity to act. The term’s usual English rendering as “assemblage” or “arrangement”, however, has too passive a connotation (Hardie, MacKenzie 2007: 58). They do not – at least not in their original meaning – grant agency to non-humans, and thus imply a divide between human market agents (those who assemble and arrange) and things that have been arranged. To the contrary, “agencement” has the same root as agency: “agencements are arrangements which are endowed with the capacity to act in different ways” (Çalışkan, Callon 2010: 9). An agencement is built up by the connections between its components, but insists on the autonomy of each component. Deleuze’s original definition highlights the role of each component that makes up arrangements: “It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage’s [it should be translated as “agencement”] only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis” (Deleuze, Parnet 1977: 69). Consequently, “all the elements of a non-homogeneous set converge, making them function together” (ibid.: 39), but it never goes so far as that the parts lose their autonomy. Deleuze (ibid.: 52) stresses that “it is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind” (Anderson et al. 2012). Hence, parts within agencements do not possess a pre-fixed ontology, but are constituted by the agencements of which they are (temporarily) part.

What is missing in the understanding of agencement or network as proposed by Latour and Callon, is an explicitation of the spatial dimension that allows global markets and forms to function (Ong, Collier 2005b: 12; Anderson et al. 2012). Ong and Collier's book "Global Assemblages" (2005a) elaborates on this idea. They extend the key claims of ANT – including an emergent temporality of assemblages, shifting forms, and composite concepts – to the spatially informed concept of "global assemblage": "Global" refers to a broadly encompassing, seamless, and mobile form, while "assemblage" implies heterogeneous, contingent, unstable, partial, and situated determinations that are not reducible to a single logic (ibid.). The notion indicates that there are inherent tensions, and reveals in this sense a strong commonality with Callon and Muniesa's (2005) understanding of markets as socio-technical agencements which organize the circulation of goods together with the price and property rights attached to them through the contradictory encounter of quantitative and qualitative valuations. After all, one risk remains: The rich conceptual repertoire might draw attention away from what is really at stake in an ANT-informed approach to the study of markets. Concepts help to make sense of the world, yet it is through practice that they gain significance and it is in practice that they are enacted.

2. The design of markets is a collective project

The construction of markets is realized by both economists and practitioners who collectively test market models outside of the economic laboratory. Yet this argument is far from uncontested. It is widely assumed that economic theories and models are developed in academic laboratories by "confined economists" (Callon 2007b) who draw and control the boundaries between the outside of real society and the inside of economics. What happens in the scientific laboratory usually remains a sealed space for the outer world. Inside the laboratory, society is made up of abstract individuals with given preferences and predictable behaviors who match mechanistic concepts of market orders. The study and perception of the "laboratory" has been extended and indeed revolutionized by STS (e.g. Latour, Woolgar 1986; Knorr-Cetina 1981b) as it has brought to the fore the

complete spectrum of activities and actors involved in the production of knowledge (Knorr-Cetina 1992: 115). The cultural and social dimensions of scientific practice must be revealed, since science and technology are never apart from the realities that they describe or manipulate. Instead, they must be considered as participants in the project of “shaping, bringing forth – performing – new worlds” (Barnes 2008: 1434). And this claim should reach beyond the academic laboratory: While writings in the tradition of STS and the sociology of science have chosen scientists and scientific laboratories as privileged objects of research, ANT scholars have challenged the assumption that science is solely happening in laboratories (Callon 2007a; Latour 1999). They extend the idea of the academic laboratory to society more generally. Bruno Latour goes so far as to claim that “laboratory life [is extended] to all of our collective existence” (Latour 2004a: 112).

The making of markets “involves joining together with others, both within the academy and “in the wild” [as opposed to “confined economists”], in “hybrid research collectives” (Callon et al. 2002: 195). This reflexive intervention is performed through the coordinated action of practitioners and academic economists alike (Mitchell 2005): Callon and Rabeharisoa (2002) have demonstrated in a study about patient organizations that both professional investigators involved in clinical and biological research and lay persons collectively enact technical innovation.⁶ In the case of value chain development in the Global South, ongoing investments to make markets work involve a broad array of academics, business experts, development consultants, policy makers, and entrepreneurs who draw up regulations and certification systems and enroll researchers, technological engineers, certification bodies, business gurus, professional economists, and international organizations. All have their share in market construction.

⁶ Callon claims that the conception of “economics at large” and its political implications is where the main difference between his and Latour’s approach lies: “Bruno [Latour] has clarified the operations constituting a politics of networks by showing how to reconsider relations between politics and nature. With my colleagues Yannick Barthe and Pierre Lascoumes (2009), I have explored the institutional configurations that make it possible to reconcile scientific adventure and political concerns” (Callon 2008: 27).

3. *Markets are always in the making*

The enrolment of market agents and the qualification of economic goods is temporary, because “links and nodes in the network do not last all by themselves, but instead need constant maintenance work, the support of other links and nodes” (Law 1997: 52). Markets are mechanisms of ordering, separation, and evaluation of economic worth and they are contingent: “There is no social order. Rather, there are endless attempts at ordering” (Law 1994: 101). The terms “econom-ization” – and more precisely “market-ization” – illustrate that they are always in the making. Accordingly, markets are “an achievement as much as an outcome, a starting point or a reality already there that could simply be revealed. The diversity of scientific or vernacular definitions of the economy or of behaviors and activities qualified as economic, and the controversies triggered by these definitions, are an indicator of a state of relative indeterminacy” (Callon, Çalışkan 2005: 370). The open-endedness and variability of economic configurations also reveals itself, for instance, in those moments when they do not align or stabilize as previously expected. Andrew Pickering’s *The Mangle of Practice* (1995) provides a useful framework that helps to grasp the experimental endeavor of science which can be applied to market-making as well. He demonstrates that the production of scientific knowledge is always linked to the development of technological, conceptual, and social apparatuses that enable scientific concepts to become effective and realize themselves. Machines and social systems are interrelated and must be continuously brought in line (“tuned”) with one another. Market agents such as farmers are not passive subjects governed by external “higher” forces – global policy regimes, norms and standards, technological devices or specific forms of expertise. They can resist new entanglements and associations when they do not engage in the modes and practices which are valued by powerful market agencies.

Hence, such temporary configurations may not only lead to stabilization but equally cause friction (Tsing 2005). Materialized flows of people, ideas, capital, and politics are subject to transformation as they enter the “sticky materiality of practical encounters” (ibid.: 1). The adjective “sticky” points to the impact of all

kinds of infrastructure in the establishment of global relations which can enable but also hinder mobilities. Material and technological infrastructure facilitates the transfer of objects, ideas, and people, yet it may equally hamper their mobility. Global market connections rather turn out as “awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (ibid.: 4). In other words, markets cannot be enduringly framed or formatted. Externalities may prevent previously aligned entities from staying in an agencement. Callon borrows the notion “overflowing” from the sociologist Erving Goffman (Goffman 1961) to claim that anything that is mobilized in a specific setting “guarantees, simply by virtue of its presence, that the outside world is also present” (Callon 1998a: 5). While in the world of economists, framing seems to be the rule and possible, the framing of value chain interventions, agents, and goods requires in practice many investments, it is expensive and always precarious.

4. Market-making is about translations

Translation, a term borrowed from Michel Serres (1974), is central to market-making and “is both about making equivalent, and about shifting. It is about moving terms around, about linking and changing them” (Law 2007: 5), and more pointedly, it is about aligning things that were previously different. Translation of goods and agents is indeed the defining feature of markets, as Callon has argued elsewhere (2008: 25, original emphases): “[A]gencements are operators of translation, and translation is the basic module on which *agencements* are built”. To return to the quote at the very beginning of this chapter, “economization” refers to the translation process during which “behaviours, organizations, institutions, and, more generally, objects which, in a particular society, are tentatively and often controversially qualified by scholars and/or lay people as economic” (Callon, Çalışkan 2005: 2).

Marketization represents one specific mode of economization which has currently become prevalent. In the course of marketization processes, what counts as economic is qualified and calculated and thereby separated from what is not part of markets (Ouma et al. 2013). The type of translation that occurs in markets

involves on the one hand the qualification and singularization of a product: This occurs when a product is alienated from its original context, is made calculable and when its properties are defined and associated with an economic, ecologic, or other value. The valuation of goods must not be understood exclusively in economic terms. Cochoy has proposed the term “qualculation” (Cochoy 2008) for the double movement of qualitative judgement and quantitative assessment that are both central to markets. Through various safety and quality standards such as GlobalGAP, environmental, social, ethical, or Fairtrade standards, goods are become certified and are ascribed a particular economic value (Chapter 7). A glance at the anthropology of valuation provides insights into the inner logic of these processes: “The forces that explain the circulation-transformation of things are the same forces that give things value. In short, things circulate because they are valued and it is because they are valued that they become goods” (Dewey 1915, cited in Çalışkan, Callon 2009: 390). On the other hand, marketization embraces the configuration and framing of individuals as calculative and accountable market agencies who are technically and cognitively equipped to evaluate products (“subjectification” in Çalışkan, Callon 2009: 389; Chapter 8): “Farming as a business” is a credo that has gained momentum in market-oriented development programs. Farmers are by no means passive subjects upon whom a certain reality is imposed. Indeed, farmers actively enact valuations and engage with technical, cognitive, procedural, and material devices (Higgins, Larner 2010; Miller, Rose 2008): Mobile market information systems, managerial benchmarking tools, contracts, and certifications format sociotechnical relations, whereby farmers in the Global South are framed as responsible business partners. Such entanglements bring about entrepreneurial selves who adhere to logics of market rationality, profitability, and productivity.

Markets, then, are defined by a double movement of entanglement and disentanglement of products and market agencies. The association *with* and disassociation *from* market agencements through processes of valuation and qualification determines the “in” and “out” of markets. Otherwise expressed, market-

ization involves the alienation of ideas, concepts, products, and people from their original context.

5. Market-making has disciplinary effects

The framing of economic entities and agents comes along with disciplining. A study of market-making – and the micro-practices of market agencies – must at some point engage with what Foucault has called the “microphysics of power”. Foucault’s analyses of disciplinary mechanisms and governmental rationalities shed light on the “calculated management of life” (Foucault 1981: 140, cited in Mennicken, Miller 2012: 6). In this vein, Foucault defines “governmentality” (governance + mentality) as a mode of analysis that reveals “the who and what one should study in the critical investigation of the relations of knowledge, authority and subjectivity in our present” (Miller, Rose 2008: 5). This refers to administrative practices of bookkeeping and recording that farmers in the Global South have to adopt and follow meticulously. As such, a disciplinary practice and mechanism of sanctioning is, for instance, the fact that farmers in Ghana cannot receive awards as “best national farmers” if they do not keep records of their activities (Chapter 8). More broadly, the increasingly sophisticated and all-encompassing standardization, certification, and metrology regimes that govern global markets are technologies for the governing of conduct (Busch 2011). They impose procedural and product-related norms and regulations upon market agents and determine whether the latter can or cannot participate in markets. Indeed, such standards are much more than indexes along which a pre-defined social reality is regulated. As ontological devices, they configure and transform realities by valuing and rendering visible things while concealing others.

6. Markets materialize in (traveling) policies

Markets materialize in policies that can travel and act at a distance. Reports, charts, tables, maps, or figures facilitate travel over time and space while retaining their form and shape. Accordingly, a concept becomes powerful (only) when it is materialized whereby it can “act at a distance” (Latour 1987): Action, ac-

cording to Latour, emanates from centers of calculation in which representational devices such as maps are assembled and molded into “immutable mobiles” (ibid.: 227-229). Values and political goals can be achieved when statements – such as the value chain approach – are entangled with technical devices, embodied competencies, rules, and procedures. It travels – spatially and also ideationally – from the headquarters of development organizations or from the academic laboratories to policy makers, entrepreneurs, and public officials elsewhere. Although ideas usually do not have a clear-cut origin, they are often associated with a specific time and place symbolically. This gives them authenticity and ideological convincibility (Peck, Theodore 2010: 170). Inscribed in policy agendas and legal arrangements, the value chain concept exerts considerable influence in the places where it touches ground. Manuals, evaluation reports, PowerPoint presentations, policy papers, and embodied knowledges in mobile consultants enact a multi-source type of power as they develop into relations that link geographically discrete locations (Cook, Ward 2012: 16).

Policy transfer has sparked broad debates among scholars in the social sciences (e.g. Künkel 2015; McCann et al. 2013). It was for a long time considered a result of structural forces, conceived either in the form of coercion, lesson-drawing, emulation or diffusion (Stone 1999). From such a perspective, policy-makers assume a passive role and policies themselves are considered as stable and replicable (Benson, Jordan 2011; Peck, Theodore 2010). Resisting orthodox accounts which suggest a simple and mechanistic replication of policies across different sites (Dolowitz, Marsh 1996; Rose 1991), I understand the traveling of policies as a social process involving multiple agents, tools, and techniques which leads to the transformation and remaking of geographically near or distant politico-institutional landscapes, but also of the policies themselves.

Accordingly what I propose is to enrich the study of markets and marketization using a policy mobilities perspective: An orientation towards the contingent features and multi-directional mobilities of market models acknowledges that ideas of the market take shape in policies that travel along ideational and socio-institutional settings. It directs attention towards the spatial effects of embodied

practices, knowledge, and agency across “translocal fields of power” (Ong 1999: 159). The means of inscribing the value chain approach into the agendas of development agencies and guidelines reveal much deeper insights into the power of market models to gradually construct the realities they attempt to describe: This is achieved through the inscription of the value chain approach into institutional arrangements and policy agendas.

7. Markets are relational constructs

Market devices, agents, and technologies are qualified and gain significance in relation to others. Along the way to Ghana and Peru, the value chain framework is modified once it enters new market agencements and policy agendas in which, for instance, the pro-poor rationality may be sidelined while the business orientation gains the upper hand (Chapter 6). The model becomes meaningful only through the web of relations that it is situated in. This relational claim has important implications for the reading of spatial connections.

There is a tendency in the social sciences and beyond to differentiate between macro and micro level, areas, institutions, and interactions (MacKenzie 2009: 33-34). Accordingly, a macro phenomenon would be globalization or global capitalism, while a micro phenomenon refers to a seemingly mundane technicality or an exchange between two persons. ANT, for instance, has often been blamed to explore in too minute detail the relational and productive features of small-scale actor-networks while being incapable of making wider “macro” political claims. This critique disregards that from an ANT perspective, “there is no overall social, natural or conceptual framework or scale within which events take place: as webs grow, they tend to grow their own metrics. But then, without a foundational macro and micro, the distinction between macro- and micro-sociologies (...) makes little sense except as a performative effect of those sociologies: class, nation state, patriarchy become effects rather than explanatory foundations” (Law 2000, cited in Law 2007: 8). Accordingly, any a priori, essentialist categories and dichotomies (society/nature, knowledge/technology, market/non-market) must be questioned, since the practice of categorizing ena-

bles black-boxing and draws attention away from the very matter of concern. Put differently, “a macro-actor is a micro-actor seated on black boxes” (Latour, Callon 1981: 299).⁷ Certainly, in this book I cannot do away with notions such as global, local, micro, macro, national, international, etc. Yet, I do not use these terms as determinist geographical constructs. Instead, I approach them as fields that are connected in space and shaped by their relations and connectivity to other entities in broader agencements (Law 1999: 4). This has implications for the conceptualization of the “global” – a broadly encompassing, seamless, and mobile form (Ong, Collier 2005b: 12) – and “globalization” – the extension of functionally integrated economic activities across national boundaries (Dicken 1998: 5). The use of such terms should always reflect the processes and outcomes that, for convenience, can be called “globalization” rather than being used as a catch-all phrase that embraces broader economic and political dynamics. As a consequence, what should be foregrounded are the relational effects in networks, since they can reveal insights into the power that a macro-actor has temporarily acquired within a socio-material agencement.

8. Hence, markets are performative effects

Let me come back to the figure of homo oeconomicus (Prism 1) to conclude what the previous precepts ultimately suggest. Although it has often been rejected for its high degree of abstraction, this construct provides space for discussion. Callon maintains that homo oeconomicus is not a fiction, but can be configured as a temporary effect of the established associations (Callon 1998b: 22, 30, 51). How does homo oeconomicus become a reality? Homo oeconomicus and calculative behavior are not simply there, but can be configured cognitively “with the aid of economic theory, of technology and of much else” (MacKenzie et al.

⁷ If the argument is followed one step further, the notion of network as a pre-established category could be challenged as well. Latour however sticks with the notion because “it has no a priori order relation; it is not tied to the axiological myth of a top and of a bottom of society; it makes absolutely no assumption whether a specific locus is macro or micro and does not modify the tools to study the element ‘a’ or the element ‘b’” (Latour 1996: 373). It fits ANT and the performativity approach, which aim at de-naturalizing and de-absolutizing phenomena. Rather than a deconstruction of the latter, these approaches seek to provide solutions and methods to unveil the inner workings of institutions, procedures and concepts to reconnect them to the “social” at large.

2007: 141; Callon 2007b). The cases of the stock ticker in financial markets (Preda 2006) or of trading screens that are linked to electronic networks (Cetina, Bruegger 2002) are strong arguments indeed. Both studies reveal the role of physical equipment that brings into being – or even reshapes (MacKenzie 2009: 13) – markets and market behavior.

The “performative turn” has caused broad debate in the social sciences and human geography in particular (Glass, Rose-Redwood 2014). The term “performative” was coined in the 1960s by speech-act philosopher J. L. Austin, who distinguished utterances that do things – such as “I apologize”, which if one says it, is an apology – from utterances that report on states of affairs separate from the utterance, such as “It is raining”. The first category embraces “performative” utterances: They define acts in themselves that perform the action to which they refer (Austin et al. 1976). They do things. Austin focused his attention on utterances, but did not include social (inter-)action and performances in his studies. Jacques Derrida, known for his elaborations on deconstruction theory, has popularized the works of Austin on the performativity of language-in-use across the humanities and social sciences (Derrida 1982). The concept has been refined by Judith Butler who related the concept to gender and questions of identity (Butler 1990) by arguing that bodies, norms, identities, and even biological sex is produced through performative, iterative acts.

Economists’ modelling activities are entangled in representation and intervention, which has been illustrated more recently in several studies, of which I want to mention a few in order to explain what it means to say that economics is performative (Callon 2007b). Michael Goldman’s study of the World Bank’s new commitment to complying with environmental principles demonstrates the powerful entanglement of knowledge and expertise (Goldman 2007). Through the adoption of a “green neoliberal” approach, conventional forms of state power and agency were replaced which led to a sociotechnical transformation of property systems, production practices, and state agencies. Another illustrative case of the performativity of economics and the power of “Northern” expertise is Timothy Mitchell’s *Rule of Experts* in which he reconstructs the politics of 20th

century Egypt to demonstrate how the introduction of private property laws and measurement methods generated a new concept of the “national economy” (Mitchell 2002). Julia Elyachar’s study about the making of micro-entrepreneurs according to the concept of homo oeconomicus in Cairo is a similarly brilliant analysis of performative materializations of the economy (Elyachar 2005). Moreover, Brett Christophers aptly elaborates on the performative world-making of economic models through urban political-economic transformation in the UK (Christophers 2014). Marie-France Garcia-Parpet’s study about the construction of a strawberry auction market in France shows how a perfect setting for market interaction was set up and transformed buyers and sellers into formal market agents, and the site of encounter into a model-like platform of market exchange (Garcia-Parpet 2007 [1986]). A recent study by Florian Weisser about international negotiations on climate change stresses the role of policy papers for organizational action in international politics (Weisser 2014). Documents are shown to act as agents by themselves and play a thoroughly performative role (Cooren 2004). They set hierarchies, designate areas of responsibility, assign roles, and organize workflows. The above mentioned studies indicate that theories and models are projects that transform rather than describe the world as they are applied by economists, policy makers, and society at large.

To say that economics is performative does not mean that economic models become reality as self-fulfilling prophecies, as some business scholars argue (Ferraro et al. 2009, 2005). Indeed, the performativity concept goes beyond self-fulfilling prophecies or prescriptions which suggest that economic models become real because they reflect human beliefs that people subsequently act in accordance with. A performative perspective on markets acknowledges the role of beliefs, statements, practices, and material devices. As a consequence, it is not merely the aim of economics and its adherents to better understand the world, but to act upon it. The models of economics become effective tools in performing the economy rather than being mere passive “representations” of reality: The value chain approach not only depicts the infrastructure of global markets, but has come to constitute their very organization through material, technological,

legal, or procedural elements as well as the belief in its effectiveness by policy-makers, development practitioners, and entrepreneurs. It is a gradual process in which value chains become performative effects of contingent socio-technical arrangements (Barnes 2008: 1436).

The politics of markets

ANT- and STS-inspired studies have often been criticized for negating the broader political and societal framework in which the relations between entities of a network as market agencements unfold (Ausch 2000; Star 1991), for lacking a critical commitment and position (Mallavarapu, Prasad 2006; Roberts 2012), and for focusing on “networks” instead of more broadly defined “scapes” (Latham 2002; Santos, Rodrigues 2009; Whittle, Spicer 2008). The performativity approach of Callon has been the subject of critique for focusing exclusively on the technical sphere of markets while sidelining the political effects of marketization or for lacking an underlying theoretical framework (Barry, Slater 2002; Fine 2005, 2003; Holm 2007; Miller 2005, 2002; Mirowski, Nik-Khah 2007). We have to ask, and here I follow Stefan Ouma (2012: 66), whether we can study markets without studying capitalism? These critiques have inspired me to engage in a deeper reflection and clarification of what I understand by “politics at large” in the making of markets.

The scholarly discipline that is mostly concerned with the matter of concern, i.e. politics, “the political”, and policy-making provides an initial pillar upon which subsequent reflections are based. The traditional field and understanding of politics by political scientists focuses on the sphere of institutions, political strategies, interests, or ideologies. While scholars in international relations have usually defined “the political” from a positivist and technical perspective which takes “the political” as a given, more recently there have been calls within the discipline to bring back ontological issues center stage (Wight 2006). Andrew Barry, for instance, defines and differentiates “the political” as “the ways in which artefacts, activities, or practices become objects of contestation” from

“politics” in the sense of institutionalized politics of governments and parties as “a way of codifying particular institutional and technical practices” (2001: 201, 6). Politics has always tried to bridge the gap between competing visions of how the world is and how it should be. While ANT's original approach focused on describing the linkages between nature, technology, and society through the practices of scientists in academic laboratories, proponents of ANT have elaborated their own understandings of “the political” more recently. “The political” as understood by Callon et al. (Callon et al. 2009; Rabeharisoa, Callon 2002) highlights the “democratisation of democracy”, i.e. the participation of laypersons and specialists alike in political decision-making. Latour (2005a) and others (e.g. Braun, Whatmore 2010) propose a material approach, a “Dingpolitik”, that addresses things and issues of concern such as new infrastructures, mobile phones and genetically modified organisms rather than values and beliefs. Stengers proposes the study of cosmopolitics (Stengers 2011) and Mol has elaborated her version of an ontological politics (Mol 1999). Independent of the perspective one chooses, politics is, after all, ontology.

My interest lies in the political implications of investigating value chains by unveiling the associations that become powerful in the course of their emergence. While initially the research interest was oriented towards the (socio-)political outcomes and effects of traveling ideas of the market, it shifted to a concern about the mechanisms and means that allow the circulation of models, their mobilization and institutionalization in new settings and their adoption by organizations, public agencies, and academic institutions to take place in the first place. The question “what are markets?” becomes futile at the moment that the focus shifts to the tools that allow the social to be disconnected from the economic sphere, because “the question is not: what do we call economic behavior, or what is the economy, but how are behaviors, institutions, agencements, and rules of the game economized?” (Callon 2008: 22). Considered under this new angle, we must even go beyond and question not only how things, procedures, and agents are economized and reconfigured, but also how we as researchers

contribute through our research to such “perceived” (and real) economization (Chapter 4).

The mobilization of market models in the Global South has political impacts in the traditional institutional sense, as the incorporation of the value chain framework in policy agendas and legal arrangements reveals (Chapters 5 and 6). Its inscription goes beyond technical shifts in wordings. “Market design”, as Kera and Tuters argue (Kera, Tuters 2011: 5), “contributes to discussions over the issues of ecological, economic, and political crises by offering various scenarios of future interactions between actors”. The circulation of the value chain framework moreover has political effects in another, less tangible, sense in that diverse forms of knowledge and expertise are co-created. Studying and writing up the making of markets “is not a simple description (assuming that such a thing were possible which it is not). It does not simply work in the world. It also works on it” (Law, Singleton 2013: 500; Gibson-Graham 2008). Then the process of designing and framing market transactions, market agencies, and thus market boundaries is political and transformative per se (Callon in Barry, Slater 2002: 286). Therefore, there is an ethical obligation for us to take account of the political implications and effects that our research has on particular sites, arrangements, and people.

The creation of “enabling environments” and the conditions within which market models develop is much more than a technical or purely scientific market framing. In fact, the creation or stabilization of what belongs to a market agencement and what does not is a politicized sphere of conflict over market boundaries. Of no less importance is the awareness that imagining other worlds as a researcher contributes itself to new ways of conceiving “the market”. Understood in this vein, this research project about market-making in the Global South is a deeply political project. This comes little surprisingly, since “we always act politically” (Law, Hassard 1999: 7; Law, Singleton 2013). The question is: How do we do it?

Conclusions

”Treating artifacts, organizations and expertise as black boxes is an inescapable aspect of daily life in high modernity: not to do so is to head for the hills of Montana with the survivalists. The point, however, of ‘open the black box!’ as a heuristic is that what may be inescapable as a practical matter is nevertheless unsatisfactory intellectually. Not to examine the contents of black boxes is to miss a critical part of how societies are constructed.” (MacKenzie 2005: 557)

In this chapter, I have presented the epistemological and ontological underpinnings upon which my research of market-making in Peru and Ghana builds. The proposed research program that I have labelled *associational politics of markets* aims to overcome and denaturalize essentialist approaches for the study of circulating market rationales. Investigating the processes of market-making demands a close and critical observation of societal transformation on various levels: Market-making is reflected in formal institutional arrangements as well as in every-day practices that are required to make markets work. It is constituted by investments of various actors who draw associations between things that were previously different and disconnected: Poverty reduction has not always been linked to market-orientation: The value chain approach, however, has established a connection between management literatures and development policy (Chapter 4).

The proposed research program is the product of a circular and reflexive research process including empirical field work, the analysis of documents and audio transcripts, and the writing stage. It was not established in advance of my field research or only “applied” to the matters of concern, but was developed in the course of an intense engagement with the circulation of the value chain concept in countries of the Global South. Following MacKenzie’s call to “open the black box”, *associational politics of markets* facilitate investigations into the emergence, materialities, practicalities, socialities, and effects of an all-encompassing global market order.

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