Could you tell us a bit about your intellectual journey?

Marion Fourcade: I grew up in the South of France and went to college in Paris. I was a social science program student at the University of Paris where I spent the first years of my PhD. During my PhD I was also at Stanford and Princeton, who trained me at Harvard, but also at Stanford and Princeton, where I was trained by Orlando Patterson, Libby Schweber, Yasemin Soysal, John Meyer, Frank Dobbin, Michelle Lamont and Viviana Zelizer. My interests in cross-national differences come from my own personal life, and it has remained that way to this day.

My dissertation, and then my first book, Economies and Myths of Societies, explored the institutional forces that have shaped the professional identities, practical activities and disciplinary projects of economists in the United States, Britain, and France. My interest in cross-national differences comes from my own personal life, and it has remained that way to this day.

Although my sociological training in France had a profound

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Could you tell us a bit about your intellectual journey?

Why did you choose the theme Moral Economies, Economic Moralities for the 2016 SASE meeting at UC Berkeley?

Marion Fourcade: Of course the theme is a nod to Amitai Etzioni, whose Moral Dimension, whose concerns were in part, a reaction against the neoclassical assumption of a self-interest maximizing agent in the founding of SASE itself. The purpose there was to contribute to the founding of SASE itself. The purpose there was to challenge the neoclassical assumption of a self-interest maximizing agent in the founding of SASE itself.

Marion Fourcade: My first SASE conference was in Amsterdam in 2001. I was presenting a paper on the internationalization of economics. I was exposed to unfamiliar concepts and to the relentless variety of the economic world across social contexts. I was exposed to unfamiliar conceptual frameworks and to the diversity of the economic world across social contexts. I was exposed to unfamiliar conceptual frameworks and to the diversity of the economic world across social contexts.

Marion Fourcade: Of course the theme is a nod to Amitai Etzioni, whose Moral Dimension, whose concerns were, in part, a catalyst in the founding of SASE itself. The purpose there was to contest the neoclassical assumption of a self-interest maximizing agent in the founding of SASE itself. The purpose there was to challenge the neoclassical assumption of a self-interest maximizing agent in the founding of SASE itself.

Marion Fourcade: Of course the theme is a nod to Amitai Etzioni, whose Moral Dimension, whose concerns were, in part, a catalyst in the founding of SASE itself. The purpose there was to contest the neoclassical assumption of a self-interest maximizing agent in the founding of SASE itself. The purpose there was to challenge the neoclassical assumption of a self-interest maximizing agent in the founding of SASE itself.
individual and to incorporate other motives into the theory of human action, such as altruism. There was an explicitly normative dimension in this position, which does have its place in the context of a discipline that is often criticized for celebrating selfishness. Now human motives and actions need not be high-minded to have a moral dimension, that is, to be saturated with normativity. And it is up to us, the analysts, to understand the foundations of this normativity in social relations, to describe its shape, and to analyze its consequences.

Second, and reflecting this resolutely constructivist understanding, there is the obvious reference to EP Thompson, the great historian of the English working class, who famously coined the concept of “moral economy” in reference to the deep emotions that pertained the marketing of food in time of dearth, and promoted ethically decent workers to demand, through various types of violent actions, what they felt were “just” prices.

Finally, the theme of morality, and its intersection with economic processes, is also an homage to Viviana Zelizer and to my colleague ARlie, who has shown us, the means to pursue self interest (but also altruism) are learned, not innate, and they vary across societies and cultures.
classification systems is fundamentally a study of the social order. In studying the categories into which we divide the world, we ask questions about the nature of classification: dividing the world into categories almost inevitably raises the question of moral unfairness. We might ask whether the things we allow, implicitly or explicitly, and those we don't, are treated as separate from the economic processes. In fact, these representations and feelings, and the practices they sustain, do a lot of economic work, too. We see this, for instance, in the existence of taboos and moral struggles against the commodification of many goods. Finally, the things we say and those we don't, in institutional rules and divisions we pay and those we don't, in institutional rules and divisions. We can study these forces, at least in part, by understanding the work (mostly) French academics (quite simply, understanding the world through classification, which I regard as a sort of intellectual practice, I think that what counts is the intellectual French, or intellectual English, as a habit of mind to which one cannot return. The work of the intellectual, does it not, let me try to explain, is to try to be an exposé of the intellectual English, and this is exactly what it sounds like.**

Marion Fourcade: I am working on it! Seriously, it sounds a bit scattered, does it not? Let me try to give an ex-post (and thus heavily rationalized) account of my recent intellectual curiosity. My work is my interest in classification, which I regard as a sort of intellectual practice, I think that what counts is the intellectual French, or intellectual English, as a habit of mind to which one cannot return. The work of the intellectual, does it not, let me try to explain, is to try to be an exposé of the intellectual English, and this is exactly what it sounds like.**
Marion Fourcade: Our purpose is to use the resources of social theory to analyze the new forms of data surveillance and the political economy of redistribution and inequality, and on the nature of moral hierarchies in society.

Can you tell us a bit about your book manuscript in progress, The Ordinal Society? (co-authored with Kieran Healy)

Now I firmly believe that abstract ruminations won’t get me far and that to say something interesting about classification, I would have to observe closely exemplars of classifying words and techniques, classified objects, and valuation practices across social contexts. So I started looking for a series of empirical terrains that would allow me to analyze a large amount of environmental valuation data and to analyze a large amount of court transcripts in oil spill cases, and the incredible richness of this material, where everything is transcribed verbatim, in turn offered an opportunity to observe up close a series of very peculiar courtroom exchanges. So my co-author (Roi Livne) and I collaborated on court transcripts, so my co-author (Roi Livne) and I collaborated on court transcripts, in oil spill cases, and the incredible richness of this material, where everything is transcribed verbatim, in turn offered an opportunity to observe up close a series of very peculiar courtroom exchanges. So my co-author (Roi Livne) and I collaborated on court transcripts, in oil spill cases, and the incredible richness of this material, where everything is transcribed verbatim, in turn offered an opportunity to observe up close a series of very peculiar courtroom exchanges. So my co-author (Roi Livne) and I collaborated on court transcripts, in oil spill cases, and the incredible richness of this material, where everything is transcribed verbatim, in turn offered an opportunity to observe up close a series of very peculiar courtroom exchanges.

Colin: Can you tell us a bit about your book manuscript in progress, The Ordinal Society? (co-authored with Kieran Healy)

Our purpose is to use the resources of social theory to analyze the new forms of data surveillance and the political economy of redistribution and inequality, and on the nature of moral hierarchies in society.
What are you reading these days?