



Abstracts for Esprit 11/2008

Editorial: Beyond the financial debacle: A surfeit of risk and debt. *Esprit*

Introduction. Between neo-liberalism and control: Government at a crossroads. *Marc-Olivier Padis*

1. The financial crisis and calls for regulation

The turning points in the crisis. A panel discussion with *Bruno Biais, Christian Chavagneux, Fabrice Demarigny and Jérôme Sgard*

There can be no going back to *status quo* after this crisis. Even though the resolutions made in the aftermath of previous crises remained ineffective, governments, which are unrivalled when it comes to emergency action, will be in a position to impose *quid pro quos* on financial institutions. These will no longer be able to fend off public controls with claims of superior knowledge and farsightedness.

Beyond transparent information: A need to control liquidity. *André Orléan*

A renowned economist specializing in financial and speculative mechanisms, the author scrutinizes the current widespread calls for more regulation, a notion which is typically understood in a variety of ways. The ongoing crisis calls for a thorough change of intellectual viewpoint and a recognition that additional transparency will not be enough *per se*, since what must be called into question is this very lack of differentiation between individual markets which is the source of generalized liquidity.

Put out the fire and rebuild the house on new foundations. *Pervenche Berès*

The chair of the European Parliament's economic and monetary sub-committee sheds light on the European dimension of the ongoing crisis. Any rebuilding of financial market frameworks will necessarily have a European dimension, and may even pave the way for an EU economic policy.

2. Neo-liberalism and generalized competition

A. Competition and the economic entrepreneur

The Welfare State face to face with competition. *Jacques Donzelot*

What view can we take of ongoing trends in the Welfare State, as time-honoured protective schemes are being eroded? Rather than the State "stepping back", what we have is a broader pattern whereby society at large is mobilized and the State, instead of fading away, operates in a different way. A review of unemployment, security and housing policies shows that what is at play now is a more diffuse, though consistent, type of action that relies more

on local government while highlighting competition and mobility.

Neo-liberal vs liberal economics? *Michaël Foessel*

Neo-liberal economics is often seen as a successor or a variant to classical free-market theory. Now based on the respective intellectual roots of these two theories, the views they take of the individual, the role they ascribe to government along with their understanding of rationality, one must recognize that we are dealing rather with two very distinct, indeed opposed or antagonistic ways of thinking.

Boxed item — Neo-liberal economics and neo-conservative politics: An unlikely link. *M. F.*

A fresh model for the French judiciary: Efficiency, strategic agency, and security. *Antoine Garapon*

Far from just denoting a pragmatic perspective, a number of ongoing reforms in the French judiciary are part of a consistent approach, based on three pillars that have become undisputable: efficiency; respect for the choices made by the rational agent that is the person subject to trial; and, finally, security.

B. The market and the fading away of the territory

Moving into cognitive capitalism. An interview with *Yann Moulier Boutang*

If we are to understand the role played by finance and new technologies in today's capitalism, we must consider the broader-ranging change at work, which puts knowledge at the core of value creation. This characterization is a prerequisite to any new-fangled critique of the effects this new growth regime can have on society.

The predominant stock exchange model and the volatility in value. *Olivier Mongin*

Why should stock exchanges embark on dramatic rollercoaster's? The pattern is neither exceptional nor irrational by nature: it is a way of expressing our relationship to value, i.e., the challenge we face when trying to determine "the value of valuables". Any financier's duty admittedly is to anticipate rises in value prior to betting on them, and yet s/he remains hostage to the readiness of frivolous opinion to get carried away, along with (if in their own way) political leaders and the media.

The territorial mooring of laws. *Alain Supiot*

The process of economic globalization goes hand in hand with one where laws lose their territorial moorings. However, such loss of differentiation through location does not seem to be any more viable than the old, strictly inter-State system. Yet, if we are to maintain a practicable pattern, we need to find a fresh sense of measure and of boundaries.

Feature articles

Peru: Back from Eldorado. *Antoine Maurice*

In this account of a three-stage journey — the capital, the Andes and the Amazon — the author depicts a country with large gaps in wealth, geography, and perceptions of history; whereas economic activity remains archaic in the Amazon, it is becoming more international in Lima, and under the influence of mounting Native American pride in the hills.

Looking back on life in occupied France: From Grenoble to Switzerland.

Claude Klein

The author offers an account written by his mother, Cécile Klein–Hechel, of her and her family's life during WWII: fleeing before the enemy, followed by a precarious stay at Grenoble, and eventual flight across the Swiss border in 1943. This testimony on Jewish persecution highlights the support the fugitives received from local French communities prior to the flight to Switzerland.

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