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The construction of value(s) around the varietal diversity of pulses: a relational approach to markets

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The conservation of biodiversity is recognized as a major social and environmental issue, as well as a pillar for the transformation of agri-food systems. However, the loss of biodiversity, both wild and cultivated, continues. This raises questions about the extent and ways in which biodiversity is valued by different actors in society.

This thesis aims to contribute to the emerging field of research of the valuation (which concerns the process and actors) and values (with the aim to characterise the types of values at stake) of biodiversity, and more specifically of cultivated biodiversity, by drawing on theories and concepts of economic sociology and science and technology studies (STS).

Participant observation, as well as semi-structured interviews, are used to conduct a qualitative and comparative analysis of two case studies in France, around two varieties of dried beans belonging to the same species. These two case studies are part of the European DIVINFOOD project on the valorization of minor cereals and legumes in organic farming. The objectives of this research are to:

- characterize the various values (economic and non-economic) claimed by different actors around these two varieties;
- qualify the interactions and relationships between actors in order to understand how networks around these two varieties are built to create markets;

- describe the functioning and rules of these emerging markets;
- gain a deeper understanding of how and whether new ways of organizing markets, with specific values proper to each bean variety, can promote the scaling-up of organic agriculture while positively influencing the conservation of cultivated biodiversity

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