

Logic, Argumentation & Reasoning

Interdisciplinary Perspectives from the Humanities
and Social Sciences

Volume 13

Series editor
Shahid Rahman

Logic, Argumentation & Reasoning explores the links between Humanities and the Social Sciences, with theories including, decision and action theory as well as cognitive sciences, economy, sociology, law, logic, and philosophy of sciences. It's two main ambitions are to develop a theoretical framework that will encourage and enable interaction between disciplines as well as to federate the Humanities and Social Sciences around their main contributions to public life: using informed debate, lucid decision-making and action based on reflection.

The series welcomes research from the analytic and continental traditions, putting emphasis on four main focus areas:

- Argumentation models and studies
- Communication, language and techniques of argumentation
- Reception of arguments, persuasion and the impact of power
- Diachronic transformations of argumentative practices

The Series is developed in partnership with the Maison Européenne des Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société (MESHS) at Nord - Pas de Calais and the UMR-STL: 8163 (CNRS).

Proposals should include:

- A short synopsis of the work or the introduction chapter
- The proposed Table of Contents
- The CV of the lead author(s)
- If available: one sample chapter

We aim to make a first decision within 1 month of submission. In case of a positive first decision the work will be provisionally contracted: the final decision about publication will depend upon the result of the anonymous peer review of the complete manuscript. We aim to have the complete work peer-reviewed within 3 months of submission.

The series discourages the submission of manuscripts that contain reprints of previous published material and/or manuscripts that are below 150 pages/85,000 words.

For inquiries and submission of proposals authors can contact the editor-in-chief Shahid Rahman via: shahid.rahman@univ-lille3.fr or managing editor, Laurent Keiff at laurent.keiff@gmail.com.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/11547>

Isabelle Bruno · Florence Jany-Catrice
Béatrice Touchelay
Editors

The Social Sciences of Quantification

From Politics of Large Numbers
to Target-Driven Policies

 Springer

Editors

Isabelle Bruno
CERAPS (UMR 8026)
University Lille 2
Lille
France

Béatrice Touchelay
IRHIS (UMR 8529)
University Lille 3
Villeneuve-d'Ascq
France

Florence Jany-Catrice
CLERSE (UMR 8019)
University Lille 1
Villeneuve-d'Ascq
France

ISSN 2214-9120 ISSN 2214-9139 (electronic)
Logic, Argumentation & Reasoning
Interdisciplinary Perspectives from the Humanities and Social Sciences
ISBN 978-3-319-43999-0 ISBN 978-3-319-44000-2 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-44000-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016948621

© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2016

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*To the memory of Alain Desrosières
(1940–2013)*

Contents

1	Introduction. The Social Sciences of Quantification in France: An Overview	1
	Isabelle Bruno, Florence Jany-Catrice and Béatrice Touchelay	
Part I Sociology of Quantification: Alain Desrosières's contributions		
2	Introduction to the work of Alain Desrosières: the history and sociology of quantification	17
	Michel Armatte	
3	Alain Desrosières's reflexive numbers	33
	Luc Boltanski	
4	Alain Desrosières's spectacles: one lens realist, the other constructivist	43
	Emmanuel Didier	
5	From <i>statistics</i> to <i>international quantification</i>: a dialogue with Alain Desrosières.	55
	Roser Cussó	
6	Learning from the history of the probabilistic revolution: the French school of Alain Desrosières	67
	Fabrice Bardet	
Part II The Statistical Argument in the Neoliberal Era		
7	Quantifying the effects of public action on the unemployed: disputes between experts and the rethinking of labour market policies in France (1980-2000)	83
	Etienne Penissat	

8	Counting the homeless in Europe: ‘compare before harmonising’	97
	Cécile Brousse	
9	The statistical backbone of the new European economic governance: the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure Scoreboard.	109
	Gilles Raveaud	
10	Evaluating public policies or measuring the performance of public services?	129
	Florence Jany-Catrice	
Part III Uses of Quantification : Power and Resistance		
11	Private accounting, statistics and national accounting in France: a unique relationship (1920-1960s).	139
	Béatrice Touchelay	
12	Figures for what purposes? The issues at stake in the struggles to define and control the uses of statistics.	149
	Marion Gilles	
13	The uses of quantification: power and resistance. The example of unemployment statistics	161
	Pierre Concialdi	
14	Statistical argument: construction, uses and controversies. Prices and purchasing power	171
	Alain Gély, Bernard Sujobert and Béatrice Touchelay	
15	The quantification of the social sciences: an historical comparison.	183
	Alain Desrosières	

List of contributors

Michel Armatte is a statistician and economist, teacher in Paris-Dauphine University and research worker on history of statistics, probability and econometrics at Centre A. Koyré. He was a long date compagnon of Alain Desrosières. His last book is on *Economics as an Engineering* (2010).

Fabrice Bardet is a senior researcher at University of Lyon (ENTPE). He is specialist on sociology of quantification and urban development. He holds a PhD in Political science from the University of Paris 1 La Sorbonne (2000) and the habilitation to be PhD supervisor (HDR) from Lyon 2 University (2013). He has recently published *La contre-révolution comptable. Ces chiffres qui (nous) gouvernent* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2014).

Luc Boltanski is director of research in sociology at the French School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS). Regarded as a leading figure in critical thought and what has come to be known as French pragmatic sociology, his influence in the fields of sociology, political science, economic history and social economy has been wide-ranging. Among his latest published works in English are, to name but a few, *Mysteries and Conspiracies. Detective Stories, Spy Novels and the Making of Modern Societies* (Polity Press, 2014), *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation* (Polity Press, 2011) or *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (with Eve Chiapello, Verso, 2007).

Cécile Brousse was a senior official at the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and a researcher at the *Center for Research in Economics and Statistics* (CREST). She is currently working at the Directorate for Research, Studies and Statistics (DARES) in the French Ministry of Labour, Labour Relations and Solidarity.

Isabelle Bruno is associate professor in political science at University of Lille (France) and member of the Lille Centre for European Research on Administration, Politics and Society (CERAPS, CNRS/Lille 2). Among other research interests, she works on benchmarking as a technology of fact-based government and on EU processes of quantification. She recently co-edited with E. Didier and T. Vitale a special issue on « Statactivism: State Restructuring, Financial Capitalism and Statistical Mobilizations », published in *Partecipazione e Conflitto. The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies* (vol. 7, n° 2, 2014).

Pierre Concialdi is currently working as an economist at France's Institute for Social and Economic Research (IRES). Earlier he worked as a deputy director at the Center for Research on Incomes and Costs (CERC). His studies have focused on income inequalities and poverty, social protection and the financing of social security, tax progressivity, low-wage employment and unemployment.

Roser Cussó is Professor at University of Paris-I. She works on the history and sociology of international quantification (statistics produced by intergovernmental and supranational organizations), and more generally on international and transnational technical activity. Her interest is specially focused on the impact of expertise on the public debate and on the

functioning of democracy. Her main research areas are education, population, and minorities, as well as related economic questions.

Alain Desrosières (1940-2013) is the founder of the social history of statistics. After graduating from France's Ecole Polytechnique, he was concerned about social issues and, therefore, chose to study at the National School of Statistics and Economic Administration (ENSAE). He became an administrator at the INSEE in 1965. His commitment to the dissemination of statistical information and his interest in history led him to play a key role in the development of the critical approach to statistics. Analyzing in detail their conditions of production, their uses and their impacts on societies, Desrosières published in 1993 *The politics of large numbers : a history of statistical reasoning* (Harvard University Press, 1998) as a first synthesis of his thought and research. Concerned with the effects of neoliberalism on democracies, he dedicated work to the role and place of statistics in new forms of governance, notably marked by the withdrawal of the Welfare State. His studies were published in 2008 in the two volumes of *The Statistical Argument*. Desrosières has played a leading role in the evolution of the social sciences of quantification both in France and in the Anglo-Saxon countries.

Emmanuel Didier is a former student of Alain Desrosières and became a friend even more than a colleague. He is a CNRS researcher and at the same times a visiting professor at the UCLA Institute for Society and Genetics where he acts as the deputy director of a joint laboratory called EpiDaPo. In addition to writing books on the socio-history of quantification which is his main topic, Emmanuel Didier edited and wrote the introduction to the last book of Alain Desrosières 2014, *Prouver et gouverner, un analyse politique de la statistique publique*. La Découverte, Paris.

Alain Gély is a public statistician, former INSEE official and CGT activist involved in the National Council on Statistical Information (*Conseil national de l'information statistique* or Cnis). He takes part in the "comité du label", committee which issues the certificates of general interest and statistical quality in the public statistical surveys.

Marion Gilles is a sociologist, research officer in French National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions and a Research Associate at the Max Weber Center (University of Lyon). She has defended a thesis at the EHESS on the process of quantification of health at work and its effects within companies, entitled "Counting to weigh in? The quantification of 'health at work' : in between institutionalization and conceptual ambiguities".

Florence Jany-Catrice is full Professor in economics at the University Lille (France). She conducts her researches at the Clersé (CNRS-UMR8019). She is an honorary member of the Institut universitaire de France (IUF, 2006-2012). Her researches concern mainly the economy of quality in the field of the service economy: quality of labor and employment; quality of output, wealth and their statistical measures. She published *The New Indicators of Well-Being and Development* (Palgrave MacMillan) 2006, with J. Gadrey; and *La performance totale: nouvel esprit du capitalisme?* (2012, Presse Universitaire du Septentrion).

Étienne Pénissat is a researcher (CERAPS, CNRS). He conducts research on the sociology of quantification. He worked on the construction and the uses of labor statistics in France since 1945. He has also investigated the role of social statistics in the construction of the European Union. He published with Jay Rowell: « The Creation of a European Socio-economic Classification: Limits of Expert-driven Statistical Integration », *Journal of European Integration*, 37 (2), 2015, 281-297.

Gilles Raveaud is associate professor of economics at the Institute for European Studies of the University of Paris 8 – Saint-Denis. A co-founder of the French Post-Autistic Economics Movement, he has specialized on the defence of pluralism in economic teaching (see “Teaching Introductory Economics in a Pluralist Way: Why and How”, in Robert GARNETT, Erik OLSEN, Martha STARR, (eds.), *Economic Pluralism*, London, Routledge, 2010, pp. 250-261). He has also done critical work on the European Employment Strategy (see “The European Employment Strategy: Towards More and Better Jobs?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2007, Vol. 45, N° 2, pp. 411-434).

Bernard Sujobert is a public statistician, former INSEE official and CGT activist involved in the National Council on Statistical Information (*Conseil national de l'information statistique* or Cnis). He is also a member of the board of governors of the Institut pour le développement de l'information économique et sociale (IDIES).

Béatrice Touchelay is professor of history at the University of Lille (France), a researcher at the Institut d'histoire du Septentrion (IRHiS/CNRS). Specialist of history of public statistic, of history of private data and accounting, professionals of accountants, accounting practices of enterprises, she studied also history of taxations and public policies in France and Europe, lobbying of businessmen and associations and development of expertises.