

Il percorso storico della statistica nell'Italia Unita

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The State, the Market and Statistics: Five Ways of Acting on the Economy Alain Desrosières

A thread running through the analysis of relations between statistics and their social and cognitive context is provided by the history of the different ways of seeing the role of the state in running the economy.

This article offers a simplified view of five configurations that can be seen as typical: French-style social engineering is one of its modes, while classical liberalism reduces this intervention to a minimum and welcomes the freeing of market forces.

The social state aims to protect workers from the consequences of the extension of mercantile logic to labor. Keynesianism makes the state responsible for the macroeconomic running of a society whose mercantile character is not challenged. Finally, neo-liberalism prefigures a state resting on macro-economic dynamics that it might be possible to direct with incentives, accepting the main hypotheses of the theory of rational anticipations.

	Conceptualization of society and the economy	Mode of action	Forms of statistics
Engineer state Production and people (since the 17 ^e century)	Hierarchized institution, rationally organized. France, from Colbert to De Gaulle. USSR	Optimization under constrain. Reduction of the costs. Planning. Technocracy. Great work. Long term vision.	Demography. Production in physical quantity Table of inter-industrial exchanges Material balance.
Liberal state commerce and prices (since the 18 ^e century)	Physiocracy. A big market. Free Competition.	Fight against corporatism Free-exchangism. Anti-trust laws protecting from monopoly.	Statistics favoring markets' transparency (Case of the American agriculture). Measurements of possible dominant position. Market shares.
Welfare state waged work and its protection (since the end of the 19 ^e century)	The labor market is not a market like another. It has to be protected	Laws on working hours, accidents, unemployment, and retirement benefits. System of compulsory insurance warranting social rights.	Labor statistics. Wage, employment, unemployment. Sampling surveys on workers' budgets. Indices on consumption price.
Keynesian state Global demand and its components (since the 1940's)	The market cannot function alone without generating crises. It must be regulated at a global level.	Overseeing and piloting of the occasional gap between global demands and offers, <i>via</i> monetary and budgetary policies.	National accounting. Conjuncture analysis. Economical budgets.
Neoliberal state Polycentrism, incitation, Benchmarking (since the 1990's)	A large market. Free and unbiased competition. Financiarization. Scattering of the decision center in the form of a network.	Passage from rights to incentives. Examples : bonus-malus, Market in polluting rights Transformation of administrations into agencies. Contractualization. Coordination by emulation. Example of the European OMC	Objectification of new spaces of equivalence. Objectification of statistics' contractual qualities. Construction and use of indicators in order to evaluate and classify performances. <i>Benchmarking</i> completes, or replaces, directives and regulations.