SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

*States of a Science. Statistics through
its Treatises (1800-1914)*

Michel ARMATTE

Starting from the point of view that a treatise gives a full account of a temporary, stable form of knowledge and ability — which are for its author the essence of any academic field —, we have taken the corpus of treatises published between the French Revolution and the first World War referring to statistics, as a measure of various states of this science. From administrative to mathematical statistics, the genesis, evolution and disappearance of the main topics in the treatises outline the debate about its purposes, methods, and boundaries and the institutional events accompanying its development. This study reveals the irreducibility of statistics to any single paradigm.

*The Montyon Prize of the Royal Academy
of Sciences during the Restauration*

ÉRIC BRIAN

The Bourbon Restauration is generally taken as the political conjuncture which explains the recession of administrative statistics after the napoleonic era. The study of the Montyon prize in statistics, founded in 1817, provides an empirical improvement for another hypothesis. Here, the various administrative and scientific attempts to promote social observation in France from the end of the Old Regime up to the Monarchy of July are considered as manifestations of a structural process of change in the social division of labor between science and administration.

Different aspects of the prize are studied : its creation and its activities, the model promoted through official programs and reports emphasizing the accumulation of « positive facts », the rewarding procedures, and, finally, the crisis of its perpetuation at the end of the 1820's. It appears that the Montyon prize can be seen as the last and somewhat desperate attempt to save the intellectual heritage of a generation of scientists trained during the last decade of the Old Regime. The political conjuncture of the Restauration seems to have concentrated and intensified the effects of a longer process of change. Therefore the prize prepared the renewal of administrative statistics after 1830.

*The Individual and Sociology :
Sixty Years of Study on Social Mobility*

Gilles de LA GORCE

Since its origins, the status of the individual in sociology is a crucial theoretical factor. This question is approached here through three important moments in the history of the analysis of social mobility. The founding work of Sorokin in 1927 reveals how the problem of mobility and of the metaphore of space, which is its base, are rooted in the debate over the hereditary transmission of social characteristics. The post-war work of American sociologists reveals the point to which the study of social mobility has become an entirely separate specialization, without its functionalism changing the problem which is nevertheless very marked by a biological model of society. Statistical sociology of mobility, by proposing during the 60s and 70s solutions to the problems of method and measurement, ends up legitimating this specialization by giving it the appearance of a formal science, without however putting into question the epistemological presuppositions of theories which date from Sorokin's period. The analysis of mobility appears thus as an exemplary case in the history of science, by showing what are the conditions for founding a specialization and for its theoretical and methodological consolidation within an academic discipline.

Maurice Halbwachs' Conceptual System

Michel AMIOT

Maurice Halbwachs' sociological works rely on a conceptual system which can be defined as : aristocratic dualism of matter and mind. 'Social' has been identified with 'spiritual' which itself has been identified with the leading values of the Old Regime aristocracy. At the opposite pole of matter stand the working classes (industrial workers and peasants), that only afford rudimentary sociality. Yet matter, paradoxically is not merely, in Halbwachs' eyes at the opposite of the 'social' and 'spiritual' pole. As a study topic for social morphology and demography, it also represents the body without which the spirit/society could not exist. A conceptual system which devotes close attention to the working class, but rejects so deliberately work outside of the social sphere could but leave no outlet into industrial sociology, which developed in France after 1945. This may help account for the long lasting decline into which the Durkheimian school had fallen by that time.

*Literature and Painting :
Power of Fakes and the Creation of a Value*

ÉRIC MÉCHOULAN

A reading of Perec's Un Cabinet d'amateur and Bogg's « paintings » shows how fiction, which is implied by the production of fakes, is connected with the production of a value. A theory of reference, even fictitious, then, is never independent of the decisive event of the evaluation. And art furnishes the process of such an event.