

Jany-Catrice, Florence

Article

A grammar of performance

economic sociology_the european electronic newsletter

Provided in Cooperation with:

Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies (MPIfG), Cologne

Suggested Citation: Jany-Catrice, Florence (2010) : A grammar of performance, economic sociology_the european electronic newsletter, ISSN 1871-3351, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies (MPIfG), Cologne, Vol. 11, Iss. 3, pp. 3-9

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/155947>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.

A Grammar of Performance

By Florence Jany-Catrice¹

I. Etymological duality

The etymological duality of the word 'performance' is a source of both semantic richness and ambiguities. On the one hand, the verb 'to perform' means to function, operate or behave in a particular way, and although it was originally limited to the functioning of animals or machines, its meaning is no longer restricted in this way and can be extended to any being or situation². Moreover, in the sense of 'to accomplish', it means to carry out or complete a task, giving it a dynamic effect referring to both the action and the result of that action.

On the other hand, the word's Latin etymology gives it a meaning more akin to the (still positive) idea of perfection. This idea relates more to a quality of an individual and in this case denotes a task or situation requiring exceptional qualities, the public manifestation of capabilities, etc. In this sense, performance refers not so much to an action as to the outcome of an action.

Thus, all things considered, this ambiguity of meaning arises out of the fact that 'performance' denotes, in turn and with increasing degrees of overlap, both the results of an action and the optimisation processes involved in attaining those results.

In the sphere of work and employment, 'performance at work', although now in widespread use, is a relatively recent expression and has retained, through successive additions, these two meanings of performance. It is fairly widely regarded as one element in a new way of displaying commitment to paid work; the tools used to measure performance at work have become the gateways to self-commitment, even serving, if need be, as the basis for new forms of voluntary servitude. Implicit in them also is the notion of excellence and victor.

The elevation of 'performance at work' to the status of a culture or even a cult in its own right (Dejours, 2003), which it has taken corporate and other managers less than two decades to achieve, has been fostered by a fourfold socioeconomic change: the development of economies

dominated by service industries (§II.); the growing individualisation of employment relationships (§III); the 'modernisation' of public services (§IV); and the expansion of quantification (§V). The practices associated with the evaluation and measurement of performance at work can perhaps be seen as the most highly developed manifestation of these four simultaneous changes. This being so, and although certain forms are dominant in contemporary capitalism, the notion of performance has retained its pluralistic nature with regard to both its construction and the systems put in place to assess it.

II. Productivity in services: an elusive notion

The transformation of industrial economies and production systems into service economies has changed the mode of coordination of agents and the arrangements for incentivising employees, in particular because everything coming under the heading of 'production' is less clearly defined and more determined by convention. The introduction of arrangements for coordinating and incentivising employees often seems to be a (limited) response to the difficulties of mechanically applying the productivity indicators used in manufacturing industry (§2.1.), in particular because of the conventions associated with the 'product' or output of service activities (§2.2.).

2.1. The difficulty of using the notion of productivity in service economies

The Fordist era was underpinned by a regime aimed at increasing production (in volume terms) and distributing the fruits of the growth in output on the basis of a so-called Fordist compromise. This compromise rested on a combination of objectified indicators of industrial productivity, on the one hand, and of principles of redistributive justice, on the other. The objectified indicators of industrial productivity were associated with managerial practices that focused on the volume of manufacturing output relative to the time workers took to produce it, while the redistributive justice was based on the notion that the pace of pay increases and of social progress should be in line with increases in productivity gains. Work organisation in the industrial productive systems made productivity (of a production factor, particularly labour) one of the key indica-

tors in the wage-labour nexus. The notion of productivity compared output (what is produced by an individual or an organisation) to inputs (the volume of labour required to produce the output in question).

The application of this industrialist concept to service activities rapidly became problematic, particularly because it is not immediately evident what the output of a service activity is and because, in most services, it is difficult to separate out the process of producing a service from the result of that process (Gadrey, 1996). Just as it is easy to identify what a firm in the automotive or clothing industry produces, and hence to monitor that output or to relate it to the effort required to produce it, so any attempt to establish what the output of a hospital, school or even a consultancy firm is raises much thornier issues.

Broadly speaking, the responses to the issues raised have been of two kinds. The first involves the estimation of inputs only, which is of course consistent with the need to allocate scarce resources (leading to the stipulation of a certain amount of contact time with students or a certain number of days' consultancy work in firms etc.). The second kind of response has been to estimate certain outputs, which of course requires agreement to be reached on the purpose of the activity and on the way in which its output is to be quantified. In this second case, which is constantly being developed and refined, these agreements (or conventions) are more or less negotiated compromises between what the actors, monitors and regulators of the transaction wish to adopt as the 'media for or evidence of activity in order to coordinate actions or reach compromises' (Gadrey, 1996), whether that coordination is contractual or not.

2.2. The necessary conventions on the product or output of service activities

The initial aim in analysing results and employee performance in service activities was to evaluate the *product* or output, just as productivity had been used in its time in manufacturing industry. Such evaluation is uncertain and makes coordination within activities more complex.

The reasons for these difficulties and complexities are to be found, firstly, in the nature of service activities themselves, particularly when the tasks to be carried out involve the provision of care, support, advice, knowledge transfer etc. The ill-defined scope of such activities creates difficulties in identifying their boundaries and volume. What is the vol-

ume and unit of output of education or home help services? A certain number of tasks carried out? A certain number of hours spent working? Merely posing these questions is sufficient to raise our awareness about the difficulties created by the distinction between production process and the result of that process, on the one hand, and the uncertainty and complexity surrounding employees' areas of responsibility, on the other, and the dead end to which the functional application of tools developed in the productivist (and volume-based) Fordist era leads, particularly when the activity in question is carried on as part of a service relationship³.

The volume-based approach that used to be embodied in the tools developed to measure industrial productivity [same volume produced with a reduced input], and on which the whole notion rested, is sometimes of no use or even counter-productive when what is to be captured (or what ought to be captured) is more a matter of gains *in the quality* of the goods and services produced and consumed. This applies in particular to activities in which the allotted tasks involve 'spending time with', 'doing with' in the case of apprenticeships, maintaining other people's independence, the provision of care etc. In searching for sources of industrial-style productivity gains, there is a serious risk that the real purpose of these tasks will be overlooked and that the activities will be organised in ways that turn out to be counter-productive⁴.

The unique nature of service activities also makes evaluations of any given activity and its results more complex⁵. By causing two protagonists to interact with each other, the service relationship makes it difficult to standardise actions; it is on such standardisation, of course, that measures of industrial productivity are based. These uncertain encounters mean that quality can vary over time, despite recurrent attempts to rationalise work organisation in order to reduce this variability. These attempts are embodied in norms, quality labels and so on.

As it became clear that there were forces seeking to drive up performance levels but that the task of committing employees to targets that could only be the result of fragile conventions was becoming increasingly uncertain and complex, so the foundations were laid for a new wage-labour nexus characterised by the following dialectic: (1) on the one hand, certain forces (generated, for example, by managers seeking to rationalise public action) are leading to the objectification of the result of an activity (which is also the numerator of the performance ratios), on the

assumption that this objectification can be achieved by putting in place batteries of quantified indicators; (2) on the other hand, other forces are tending to ensure that what is produced, particularly in services, can only be the result of joint negotiations, which works against the objectification of activities and hence of performance. Thus this position, which has been adopted by some professional groups and trade unions, for example, recognises that a multiplicity of conventions have become established through negotiation, thereby providing the foundation for a pluralistic approach to the evaluation of activities, of their results and hence of performance (see *infra*).

III. The individualisation of employment relationships

The development of the service economy is not the only factor in the rise to prominence of the concept of performance and the associated arrangements and systems. The general trend towards the individualisation of employment relationships has also played an important role in the development of coordination, incentive and monitoring systems. For example, the transition from hierarchical discipline to certain forms of autonomy and self-commitment has relied largely for its progression on the establishment of performance measurement and employee incentive systems. Individuals enjoy greater autonomy (which does not of course mean that they are free) in the allocation of these increasingly less undivided and routinised tasks as well as in carrying them out, and in many cases also take responsibility for providing the necessary technological and cognitive adaptability.

Employee commitment to the actions that make up the production process is the principal guarantee of product quality, and work intensification tends to be achieved by these performance systems, which have both incentivising and controlling effects. In its most highly developed form, management on the basis of individual performance involves the establishment of arrangements in which the remuneration for work done is no longer an institutional construct but the result of individualised relationships. The compensation paid to employees is conditional and determined within an incentive system (Coriat, 1990).

Just as there are dynamics confining the notion of skill to individuals (Lallement, 2007), so organisational efficiency is increasingly tending, from this point of view, to be reduced to the sum of individual performances, that is to the effort expended in order to exceed the minimum standard re-

quired to fill a post. These individual evaluations are supported by two types of arrangements:

- target-based contracts, or even individual performance improvement contracts, the aim of which is to increase employee commitment to work while avoiding continuous monitoring of their activities. This is the case with individual performance improvement contracts, which aim to remunerate doctors on the basis of their performance and their ability to adhere to the stipulated norms.

- comparative arrangements (internal honour boards, internal and external prize lists) in which what is required is not so much an output/input ratio as simply to be better than one's peers. *Benchmarking*, that is the systematic comparison of performance on the basis of figures, and the spotlighting of the leader as a model for others to follow (Bruno, 2009), further reinforce the system. This reduces the internal management of work organisation systems to a competition between individual capabilities. It is also an indirect means of allocating scarce resources.

However, there is a difficulty in establishing a link between individual performance and collective performance or the performance of an organisation. If used in a naive and generalised way, sophisticated individual performance tools may turn out to be counterproductive in organisations, whose performance can never be reduced merely to the sum of individual performances. This is because the individual rationality does not always produce the expected collective efficiency and because an organisation, particularly a public organisation operating in the public interest, may have a mission that cannot be readily broken down. This applies, for example, to targets for reducing educational inequalities or increasing coeducation, which are difficult to put in place simply by extending the use of individual evaluative tools relating to pupils or teachers. It also applies to targets for increasing individuals' healthy life expectancy, which cannot be met by putting in place a sophisticated regime of individualised target-based contracts for the medical profession.

The institutionalisation of individual performance and measurement systems has also benefited from the fragmentation of work groups and the inability in many cases of the groups that are in place to challenge these new technologies and to open up space for debate. Figures tend to objectify the meaning of work. They gradually come to substitute for it, as employees comply with contracts based on quantified targets, or are supposed to do

so. Quantification becomes a form of automatic control that paralyses individual and collective thinking. Such policies are also based on the assumption that the prescribed work is the same thing as the actual work done (Dejours, 2003).

IV. The drive for improved performance is legitimated by the need to evaluate public policies

New needs with regard to the coordination and evaluation of public policies have strengthened this trend towards the objectification of performance. The emergence and popularisation of the evaluation practices that have been applied to public policies in France since the mid-1980s has gone hand in hand with an unprecedented wave of 'modernisation' (i.e. control of expenditure) in the public services, which was already at work with the rationalisation of budget choices and of public action. One of the most visible symptoms in terms of work and employment once again has been the establishment of performance evaluation systems (sometimes remote from work situations), with the legitimacy of public action increasingly being determined by investigations of its 'effectiveness' and 'performance'.

By creating a distinction between three aspects of performance (known as the 3 Es: efficiency, effectiveness and economy), consultancy firms have propagated the notion that it is possible to evaluate the overall performance of public services by putting in place systems based to a large extent on those used to identify companies' overall performance. Governments have taken them over in the name of quality or effectiveness, of fairness or efficiency (Normand, 2006, p. 6).

Economy, firstly, is a financial ratio that compares direct outputs to costs. Efficiency is the ratio that is closest to the notion of productivity as used in manufacturing industry. It relates the direct results of service production to the inputs used; there is a risk here of confusion between the direct result and the inputs⁶ (that is the factors that are used in the production process, such as labour). Effectiveness compares the resources used with the long-term results or outcomes. This notion of effectiveness is more highly developed in activities (1) in which it is difficult to identify what exactly can be attributed to an employees' direct action and when account has to be taken of more indirect effects, linked in part to exogenous events, and (2) in which the evaluation of an action's effectiveness has a long time horizon (life expectancy, for example). In some

cases, this notion of (long-term) effectiveness loses its denominator and is no longer compared to the resources deployed in order to achieve it. It becomes a tool that has both an incentivising and an evaluative function and is used to lay down quantified targets. Certain practices linked to the so-called LOLF⁷ reform (the organic budget law adopted in 2001) are examples of this approach⁸. These targets may be individual or collective, informal or contractual. In most cases, this drive for improved performance has gradually laid the foundations for extending economic calculation into areas that had previously been spared, particularly education (Normand, 2006) and health care (Pierru, 2007).

In all cases, it is possible to imagine radically different ways of defining the economy, efficiency or effectiveness of a health care or educational establishment or of a police service. These three dimensions correspond to different aspects of what might constitute the 'performance' of individual and collective actions (financial, productivity in volume terms, long-term effectiveness). Once decoupled from the others, each one might also be an indication of the spaces for negotiation and debate that might be opened up: greater efficiency may lead to less effectiveness, just as greater economy is often incompatible with that same effectiveness, particularly if the time horizon for evaluating effectiveness is the long term.

V. The shift from multidimensional performance evaluation systems to performance figures: a performance revolution?

5.1. From performance to ratiocracy

Among codification systems, those that involve the attribution of a numerical value (indicators, international classification systems etc.) seem to be specific in nature (Ogien, 2010), since the power of the numbers wins out over individuals' ability to construct arguments and produce proof (of their good faith at work etc.). The power of the numbers seems to reduce the scope of the uncertainties that are going to be taken into account, albeit at the risk of neglecting what is essential.

The attribution of a numerical value to performance, as to other things, is based on and produces various forms of equivalency rating. Standardised forms of calculation and the results thereof (e.g. bibliometrics as a means of evaluating researchers' performance) tend to be extended at a

later date to a whole occupational sphere or even, through a process of mimetism or homology, to areas beyond that sphere. When the numerical value is not or ceases to be envisaged as a negotiable space open to debate, it begins to be perceived as cold and inhuman, brutal even. It reduces the ability to compare points of view that, on occasions in collective disputes, made it possible to consider the reasons why people commit themselves to work and the ways in which they might commit themselves properly.

A clear progression can be observed in the design and use of quantification tools (measures of individual performance, construction of batteries of *indicators*, drawing up of contracts based on *quantified* targets). The process of quantification involves a stage in which judgements are made, in order ultimately 'to attribute a value'. Thus any evaluation of performance in activities that are by their nature ill defined is the result of this difficult process of reconciliation. When it is the result of structured, well thought-out work, and supported by an examination of reality, performance evaluation may be validated. In some cases, however, it has become a blindly mechanical exercise, which leads to ratiocratic excesses.

Indeed, it is an excessive reliance on quantification that has led some human resource management systems to be characterised as 'ratiocratic'. The authority or legitimacy of these systems results from the expert knowledge that implicitly forms the basis of this ratiocracy but which also makes such systems increasingly virtually and disconnected from the hardships and ordeals of work. 'There is no longer any grounding in reality. It is claimed that objective, quantitative measurements can be made thanks to the divine and scientific individualised evaluation of performance. That is simply impossible. The balance between work and the results of work has been lost' (Dejours, 2003). Evaluation – and in particular evaluation of performance at work – has increasingly come to rely on numerical values, before which workers are enjoined to bow down: indicators, statistical data and quantified targets.

The numerical values attributed by management experts or economists gradually become detached from the hypotheses, uncertainties and conventions of all kinds, whether technical or value-based, on which their development was based. There is a risk, which cannot be ignored, that quantified indicators will be used in a simplistic way or that the process of attributing numerical values will become performative (Ogien, 2010). This gives rise to various types of drift. Thus policies on unemployment become policies on

unemployment figures (Data, 2009). Organisations seek to influence performance figures by adopting re-endogenisation strategies (Beauvallet, 2009) (– in some cases, for example, service users are carefully selected, both to reduce uncertainty and to increase immediate performance (cf. the policies adopted by certain secondary schools in France). In both the private and public sectors, work organisation eventually comes to be organised solely around statistics. Used in this way, numerical values are representations of the dominant vision that have obscured or even eliminated the opportunities for evaluations conducted from a variety of different viewpoints. Furthermore, far from objectifying results, these numerical values turn out rather to be tools for incentivising workers and intensifying work, for justifying career progression and for monitoring independent work, tools which, according to T. Coutrot (1990), are appropriate ones for the neo-liberal enterprise.

5.2. Performance as a means of coordinating action: a cartography of the four performance regimes

Although we have presented a linear and synchronous analysis of the evolution of the dominant model of performance, there are in fact a number of different performance worlds that either cohabit or constitute hybrid regimes.

As far as work and employment are concerned, the performance models seem to us to be structured by two major debates. One concerns the process whereby the performance regime is produced; the modes of evaluation reflect both the (imposed or negotiated) coordination and its institutional referencing: are the performance evaluation arrangements put in place in a planned or negotiated way? The other concerns the nature of the criteria used to measure and evaluate and whether they are one-dimensional or multi-dimensional.

5.3 Process leading to the production of performance regimes

The process of producing a performance regime can be negotiated or planned. Those that are planned form part of a complete contract, are constructed unilaterally and are characterised by numerical values that make it appear well designed and 'finished'. The veil of objectivity that the figures impart makes it more difficult to enter into debate about it or to resist it. A negotiated performance evaluation system, on the other hand, will take account of all the

parties involved and will be implemented on the basis of consultation, making it the result of compromise and, where appropriate, non-constraining.

5.4 One-dimensional or multidimensional performance criteria

Evaluation of these performances may be intended to produce either a one-dimensional or multidimensional indicator. Just as the evaluation of firms’ ‘overall performance’ is intended to assess its effectiveness in economic, social and environmental terms, so the aim in the case of the performance of public or private service activities is to envisage the possibility of a transition from a one-dimensional to a multi-criteria evaluation of the value added produced by the services provided (Gadrey, 1996). Thus a multi-criteria evaluation takes account not only of the multiplicity of these service activities and products but also of the fact that they are based on conventions. The main criteria that have traditionally been recognised fall within the scope of the technological, industrial, market, financial, domestic, civil, civic and even environmental ‘worlds’ (Boltanski, Thévenot, 1991; Salais, Storper, 1993).

It is certainly in service activities, the keystone of which is procedural rationality, that the reasons for using complex evaluations of effectiveness and performance are to be found. The reason for this is that the uncertainties, potential conflicts and contradictory analyses surrounding the representation of the product arise out of the complexity of the situations involved (e.g. health, education, consultancy, home help services etc.), the nature of the service relationship itself, which frequently requires mutual adjustments (users/employee) and the idiosyncrasy that is more or less inherent in this relationship. This characteristic is fundamental, in that it makes it impossible to standardise products and the way they are processed, even though such standardisation lies at the heart of efforts to measure performance. Despite attempts to homogenise ‘cases for treatment’ (homogeneous groups of patients, homogeneous groups of treatments, iso-resource groups) or, in some cases, to define ‘legitimate target groups’, this idiosyncrasy has not been brought under control.

5.5 Four performance regimes

The two disputed areas around which performance evaluation systems are structured⁹ serve as a basis for identifying four performance regimes, in the sense that performance has the status of a coordinating mechanism in a service

world (although increasing numbers of service activities are to be found in manufacturing firms) that can be individualised and quantified, as shown in the following table.

The evaluation is	one-dimensional <i>(the indicator functions as a cognitive simplifier)</i>	Multidimensional
The process is		
Planned <i>(and expressed in simple, quantified measures)</i>	Example: hourly productivity	Example: LOLF reform
Negotiated <i>(and expressed in a quantitative and/or qualitative multicriteria grid)</i>	Example: quantified target for a cadre commercial	Example: evaluation of organisations’ economic and social utility

The performance regime that is embodied in the notion of ‘industrial labour productivity’ should undoubtedly be added to the planned process/one-dimensional performance combination. The present-day equivalent of the ‘planned/multidimensional’ combination is the LOLF experiment¹⁰. The most paradigmatic case of the negotiated evaluation/multidimensional evaluation comes from the social and solidaristic economy which, encouraged by the public authorities, seeks to evaluate its economic and social performance in terms of its ‘economic and social usefulness’. The negotiated/individual regime is part of a distinctive contractual arrangement in which each agent, following negotiations, is assigned a target expressed in numerical terms, as is the case with some sales executives. In this way they can have some degree of control over the sales target which they then have to meet. Thus it is because of the particularity of services, especially public services, which uphold the public interest and have been defined over the course of time as part of a complex and tortuous process of social construction, that the evaluation of effectiveness and performance raises a number of complex issues.

5.6 Conclusion

The multiplicity of ways in which performance can be expressed is not simply, or even primarily, a question of the (hierarchical or spatial) level of analysis. It arises primarily out of the non-spontaneous way in which it is defined. To an even greater extent than productivity, which was conceived by and for an industrial world, performance ‘is the object of processes of social construction, of agreements on how to measure it and of conventions that may vary from one period to another and from one firm to another, depending on the collective organisation of work’ (Eymard

Duvernay, 1997). Thus it is within this multiplicity of worlds that serve to justify action, or even within competing value systems, that performance can be viewed from a variety of different points of view. From this perspective, analysis of public policy evaluation becomes, in retrospect, an heuristic of value to employment systems in general. After all, over and above the question of the measure to be used, it was when the notion of performance at work and in the world of work gained widespread acceptance that the 'status' or definition of work which, as is becoming increasingly clear, can be characterised as 'enforced autonomy', began to be questioned or renewed.

Florence Jany-Catrice (Florence.jany-catrice@univ-lille1.fr) is an economist (University of Lille 1) specialized in the economics of service and the job market. She is one of the founders of the *Revue Française de Socio-économie*. She has recently published *Les Services à la Personne* (with FX Devetter and T. Ribault), Paris, La Découverte, 2009.

Endnotes

1A shorter version of this contribution is to be published in the *Dictionnaire du Travail et de l'emploi*, coordinated by A. Bévort, A. Jobert, A. Mias, M. Lallement, ed. PUF, coll. Quadrige.

2*Dictionnaire étymologique et historique des anglicismes*, 1920, p. 105.

3This is also true for the concept of "economic growth", see (Gadrey, Jany-Catrice, 2006).

4Thus, in personal services for example, the time spent with elderly people is being reduced in some cases, in accordance with the principle of seeking sources of industrial-style productivity gains. While it is true that the care is being provided more quickly, it is also true that one of the main purposes of the service is being ignored, namely to support an elderly person in carrying out everyday activities at his or her own pace (see Devetter et al. 2009). Similar observations are regularly being made by those analysing the tasks carried out by hospital nurses.

5This is also found, incidentally, in certain industrial organisations engaged in 'made-to-measure mass' production.

6An example would be the number of hours of lessons provided by an educational establishment: are they to be regarded as input or direct outcome?

7Acronym for *Loi Organique relative aux Lois de Finances*.

8Thus in the police service there is a concern with the evolution of the crime rate, while in the immigration service the focus is on the number of removals actually carried out.

9Here we are following the approach adopted by Eymard-Duvernay (1997) in respect of 'action regimes' and transposing it

to the establishment of performance evaluation regimes in organisations.

10The supposed democratic nature of which is not in any way linked to the use of negotiated indicators; on the contrary, they are planned but linked to the accountability of the French Parliament.

References

- Beauvallet, M.**, 2009: *Les stratégies absurdes. Comment faire pire en croyant faire mieux*. Seuil.
- Boltanski, L./L. Thevenot**, 1991: *De la justification. Les économies de la grandeur*. Gallimard NRF Essais.
- Bruno, I.**, 2008: *A vos marques, prêts cherchez, la stratégie européenne de Lisbonne. Vers un marché de la recherche*. ed. du Croquant.
- Coriat, B.**, 1990: *Penser à l'envers. Travail et organisation dans l'entreprise japonaise*. ed. C. Bourgois.
- Coutrot, T.**, 1998: *L'entreprise néo-libérale, nouvelle utopie capitaliste ?* Paris: La Découverte.
- Data, L.**, 2009: *Le grand trucage. Comment le gouvernement manipule les statistiques*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Dejours, C.**, 2003: *L'évaluation du travail à l'épreuve du réel, critique des fondements de l'évaluation*. Inra éditions.
- Devetter, FX./F. Jany-Catrice/T. Ribault**, 2009: *Les services à la personne*. La Découverte, coll. Repères.
- Eymard-Duvernay, F.**, 1999: *Approches conventionnalistes des entreprises*. In: *Gérer et comprendre*, n°58, 58-71.
- Gadrey, J.**, 1996: *Services. La productivité en question*. ed. Desclée De brouwer.
- Gadrey, J./F. Jany-Catrice**, 2006: *The new indicators of well-being and development*. Pgrave Mac Millan.
- Lallement, M.**, 2007: *Le travail. Une sociologie contemporaine*. ed. Gallimard, coll. Folio, Essais.
- Lascoumes, P., P. Le Gales**, 2005: *Gouverner par les instruments*. Presses universitaires de Sciences Po.
- Normand, R.**, 2003: *Les comparaisons internationales de résultats: problèmes épistémologiques et questions de justice*. In: *Éducation et Sociétés*, n° 12, 73-89.
- Ogien, A.**, 2010, forthcoming: *La valeur sociale du chiffre. La quantification du politique, entre performance et démocratie*. In: *Revue française de socio-économie*, n°05, 2010.
- Pierru, F.**, 2007: *Hippocrate malade de ses réformes*. ed. du Croquant.
- Salais R./M.Storper**, 1993: *Les mondes de production*. Paris: EHESS.
- Vatin, F.**, 2009: *Evaluer et valoriser. Une sociologie économique de la mesure*. ed. Presses universitaires du Mirail.