

Panel 1: How to enhance sustainability and wellbeing at the heart of EU open strategic autonomy

Andrea Saltelli

Study Group on 2023 Strategic Foresight Report (INT/1039)
HEARING, 5 February 2024 (10:00–13:00)
Brussels, European Economic and Social Committee



1) **Question posed by the organizers:** “how much foresight should be based on past experience/skills or on a futuristic, out-of-the-box vision (i.e. which paths are useful for short term/emergency and long term/vision)?”

Suggestion: Foresight is never neutral. Look carefully at what ideology underpins which method of analysis and which policy

Suggestion: The ‘box’ is already perhaps futuristic, because of a preponderance of techno-optimistic visions

2) **Question posed by the organizers:** How do foresight exercises focusing on technology and economic competitiveness fit in with social and regulatory aspects?

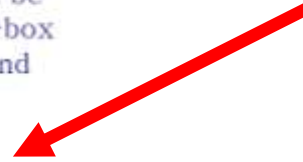
Suggestion: Focusing on technology and economic competitiveness in a neoliberal framing and new public management (NPM) approach **are antithetic ‘by design’** to achieving fair social policies and sound regulations.

Suggestion: Pay attention to how present technological trajectories are aggravating this trend

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Sources



Futures

Volume 91, August 2017, Pages 62-71



Original research article

What is wrong with evidence based policy, and how can it be improved?

[Andrea Saltelli](#)^{a b c}  , [Mario Giampietro](#)^{a c d}





Environmental Science & Policy

Volume 106, April 2020, Pages 87-98



The technique is never neutral. How methodological choices condition the generation of narratives for sustainability

[Andrea Saltelli](#)^{a b}  , [Lorenzo Benini](#)^c, [Silvio Funtowicz](#)^a, [Mario Giampietro](#)^{d e}, [Matthias Kaiser](#)^a, [Erik Reinert](#)^{a f}, [Jeroen P. van der Sluijs](#)^{a g h}













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Volume 142, April 2023, Pages 99-111



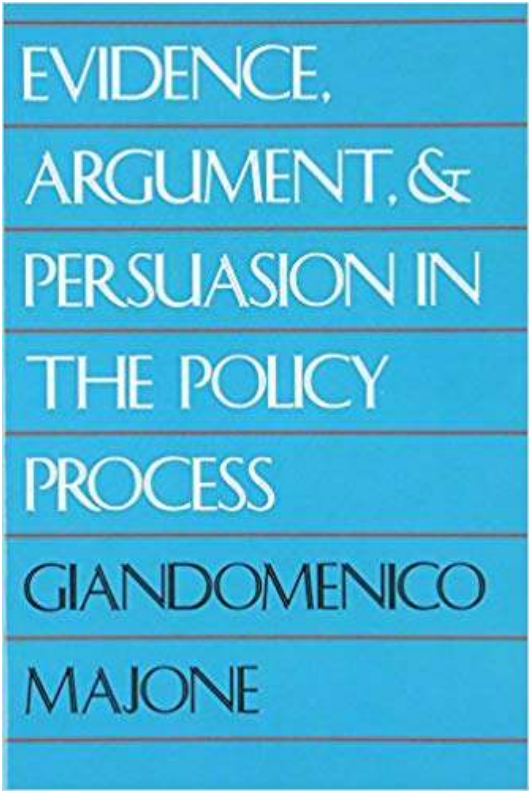
Impact assessment culture in the European Union. Time for something new?

[Andrea Saltelli](#)^{a b}  , [Marta Kuc-Czarnecka](#)^c , [Samuele Lo Piano](#)^d , [Máté János Lőrincz](#)^d , [Magdalena Olczyk](#)^c , [Arnald Puy](#)^e , [Erik Reinert](#)^{f g} , [Stefán Thor Smith](#)^d , [Jeroen P. van der Sluijs](#)^{b h} 

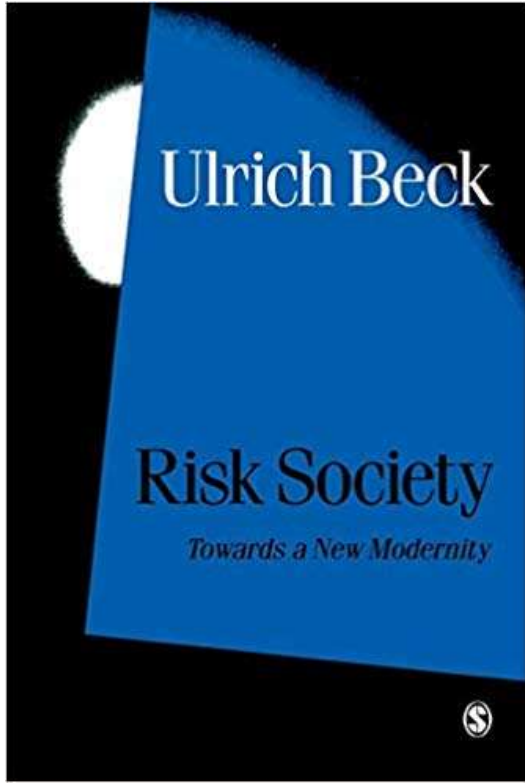
From Ulrich Beck to Giandomenico Majone: the technique is never neutral



Ulrich Beck
(1944 –2015)



1989



1992 (1986)



Environmental Science & Policy

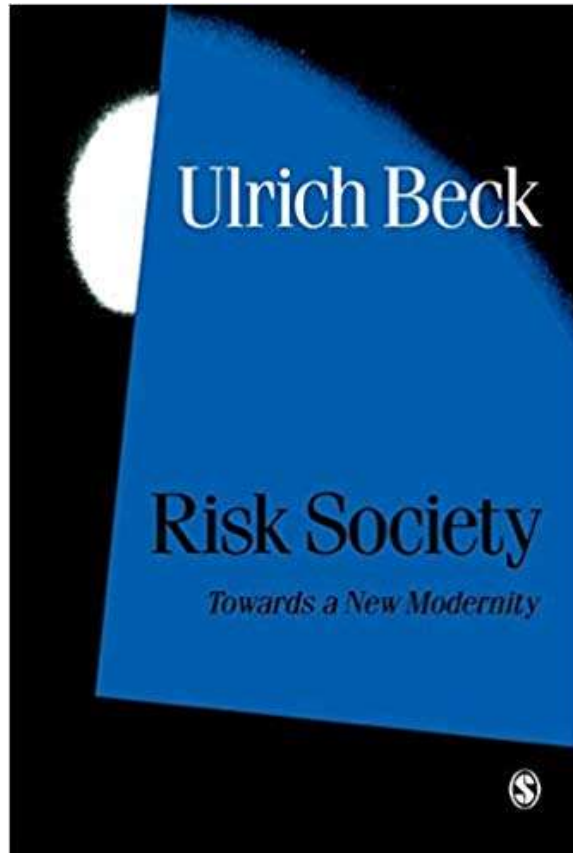
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The technique is never neutral. How methodological choices condition the generation of narratives for sustainability

Andrea Saltelli ^{a, b} ✉, Lorenzo Benini ^c, Silvio Funtowicz ^a, Mario Giampietro ^{d, e}, Matthias Kaiser ^a, Erik Reinert ^{a, f}, Jeroen P. van der Sluijs ^{a, g, h}

Science as a self-service shop for financially well-endowed customers in need of arguments (Beck 1992)

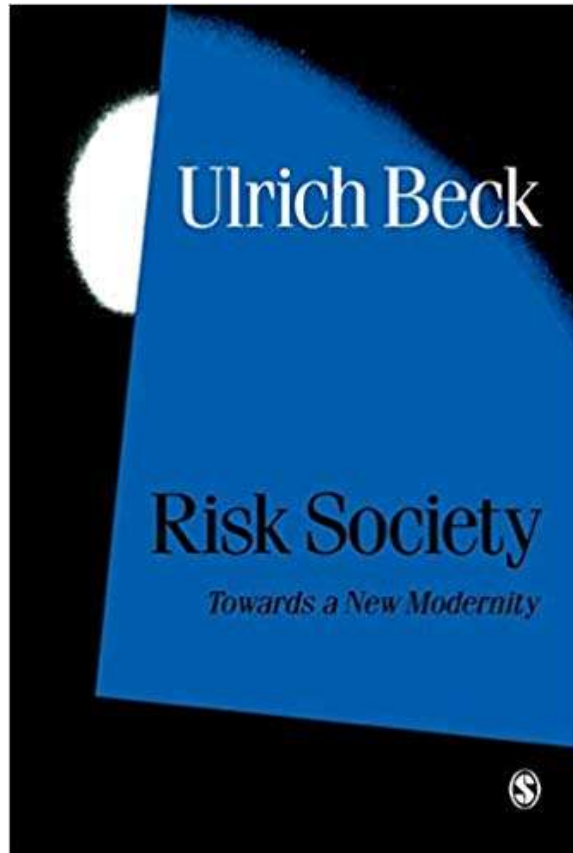


1992 (1986)



Ulrich Beck
(1944 -2015)

“... from the experts and the fundamental controversies they have fought out (or not fought out) one can learn how unwelcome results can be blocked professionally (by methodological criticism, for instance).”(Beck 1992)



1992 (1986)



Ulrich Beck
(1944 –2015)

EVIDENCE,
ARGUMENT, &
PERSUASION IN
THE POLICY
PROCESS
GIANDOMENICO
MAJONE

Majone: “In any area of public policy the choice of instruments, far from being a technical exercise that can be safely delegated to the experts, reflects as in a microcosm all the political, moral, and cultural dimensions of policy-making” → use more ‘lenses’













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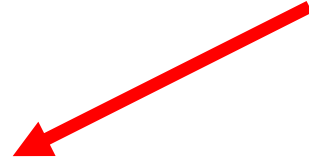


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Suggestion: The 'box' is already perhaps futuristic, because of a preponderance of the techno-optimistic imprinting in the EC

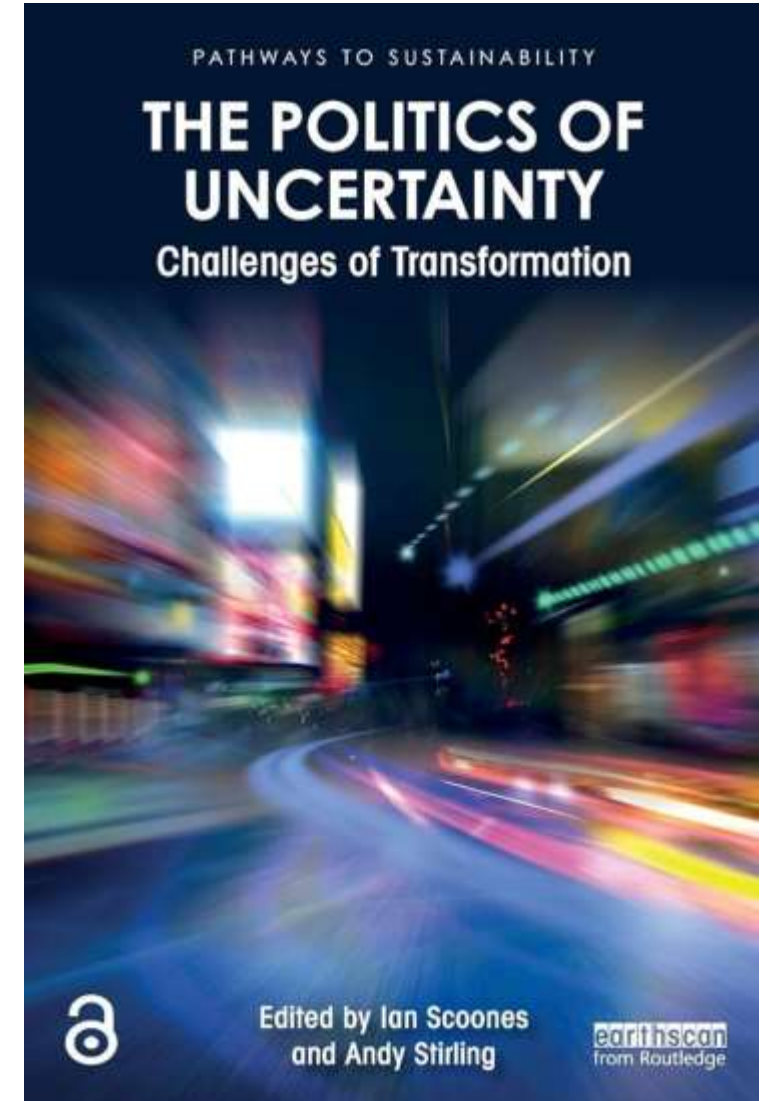


4 Sources

THE UNRAVELLING OF TECHNOCRATIC ORTHODOXY?

Contemporary knowledge politics
in technology regulation

Patrick van Zwanenberg



Structural reasons for a ‘technocratic orthodoxy’

- Commitment to the single market: the EC needs a centralized, standardized, risk assessment approach
- A pro-biotech agenda in the interest of EU growth and competitiveness

Zwanenberg, Patrick van. 2020. “The Unravelling of Technocratic Orthodoxy.” In *The Politics of Uncertainty*, edited by Ian Scoones and Andy Stirling, 58–72. Routledge

Structural reasons for a ‘technocratic orthodoxy’

- A fear that abandoning a standardized approach may open the road to endless deconstruction, leading to more burdensome regulations

Zwanenberg, Patrick van. 2020. “The Unravelling of Technocratic Orthodoxy.” In *The Politics of Uncertainty*, edited by Ian Scoones and Andy Stirling, 58–72. Routledge

Structural reasons for a ‘technocratic orthodoxy’

- A latent form of scientism among officials who sincerely subscribe to a vision of science’s neutrality – so that critical voices must be either ‘hidden interests’ or ‘anti-science’

Zwanenberg, Patrick van. 2020. “The Unravelling of Technocratic Orthodoxy.” In *The Politics of Uncertainty*, edited by Ian Scoones and Andy Stirling, 58–72. Routledge

Wynne, Brian. 2014. “Further Disorientation in the Hall of Mirrors.” *Public Understanding of Science*. SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England.

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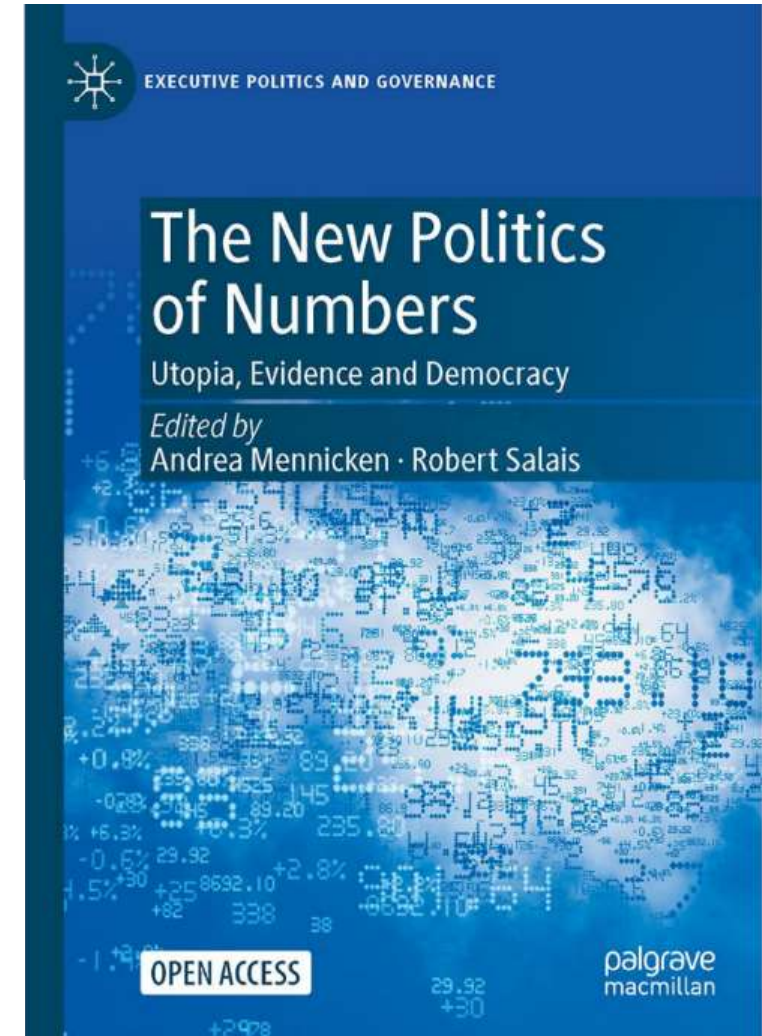
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Sources

CHAPTER 12

“La donnée n’est pas un donné”: Statistics,
Quantification and Democratic Choice

Robert Salais

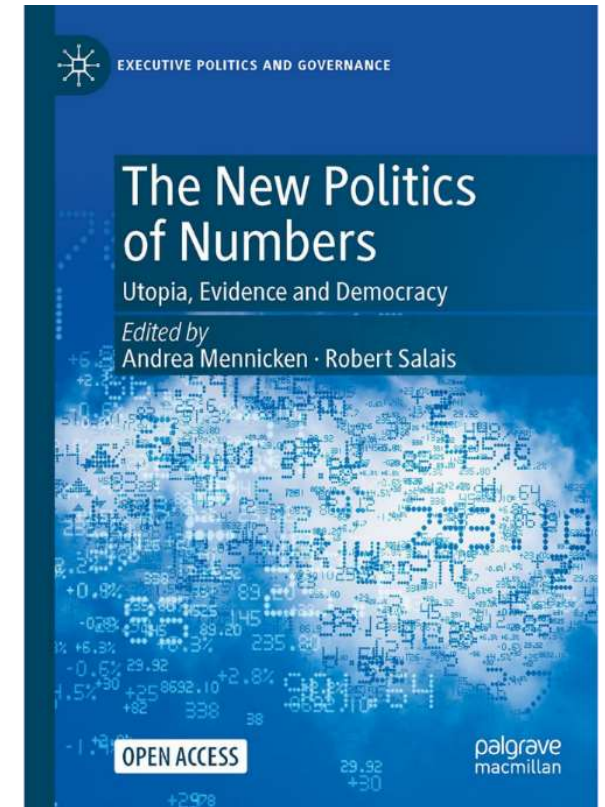


A technical proof of quality is illusory without a parallel investigation of normative quality

Technical Quality

Normative quality

How the numbers of neoliberalism (New Public Management) constitute a regime of a-democracy; the example of indicators of employment



Salais, R. (2022). “La donnée n’est pas un donné”: Statistics, Quantification and Democratic Choice. In *The New Politics of Numbers: Utopia, Evidence and Democracy*, Andrea Mennicken and Robert Salais, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 379–415.

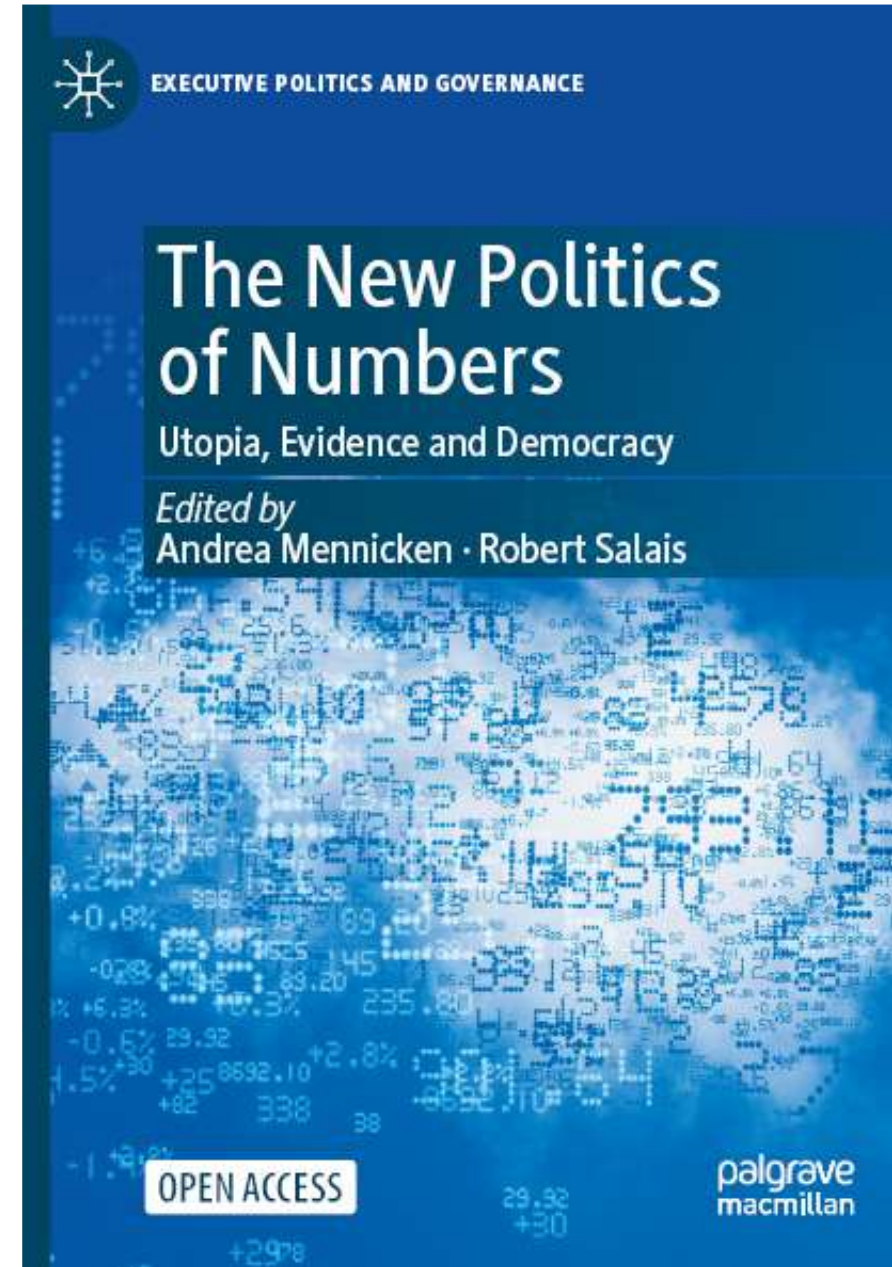
Evidence based policy

Statistics (creating things that hold together (Desrosières) for the solution of practical problems)

Policy based evidence

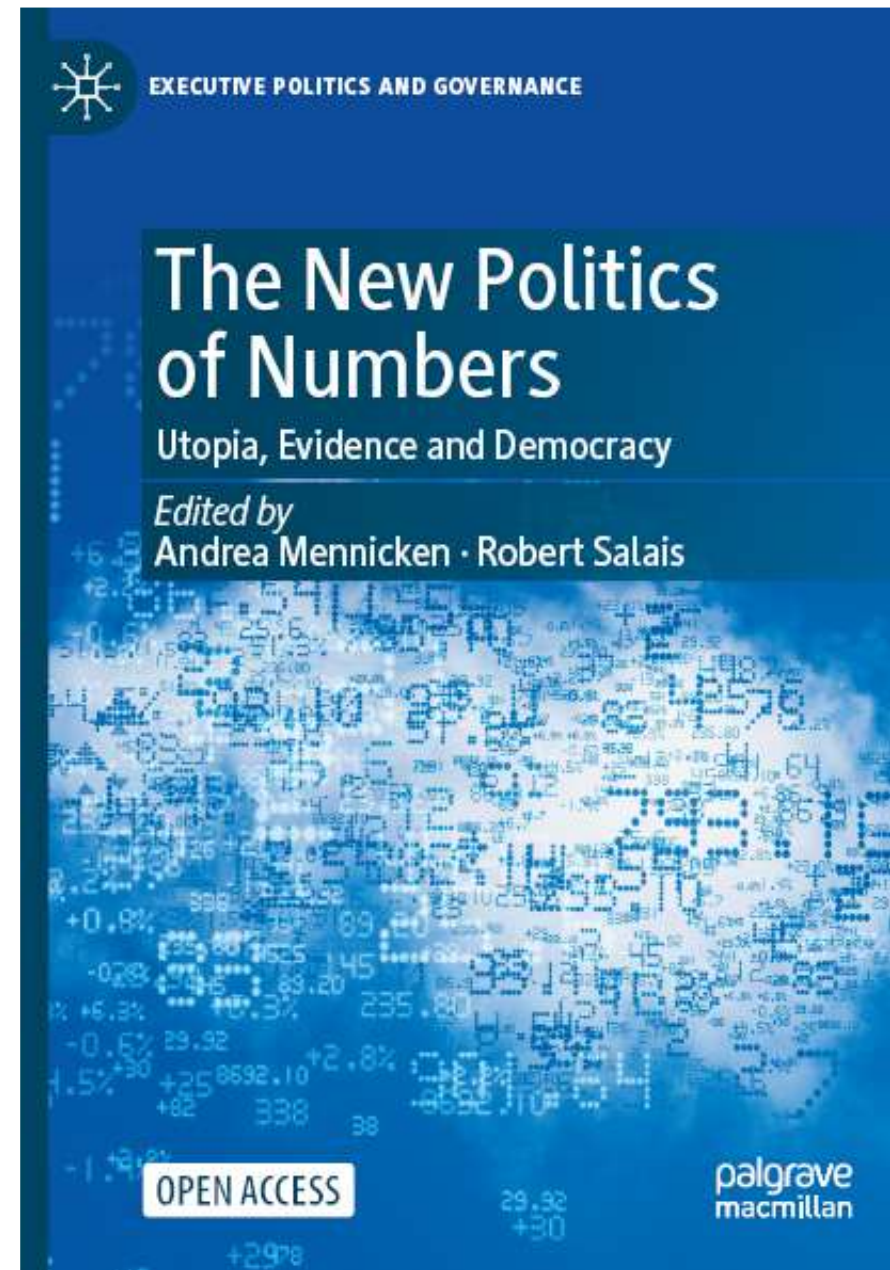
Governance driven quantification (a reversal of the statistical pyramid)

CHAPTER 12, “La donnée n’est pas un donné”: Statistics, Quantification and Democratic Choice, *Robert Salais*



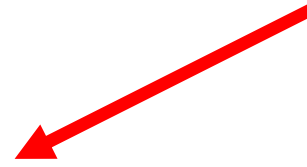
Governance driven quantification is based on pretended objectivity (neutrality), reductionism and justificationism that contribute to a loss of democratic agency (a-democracy)

CHAPTER 12, “La donnée n’est pas un donné”: Statistics, Quantification and Democratic Choice, *Robert Salais*

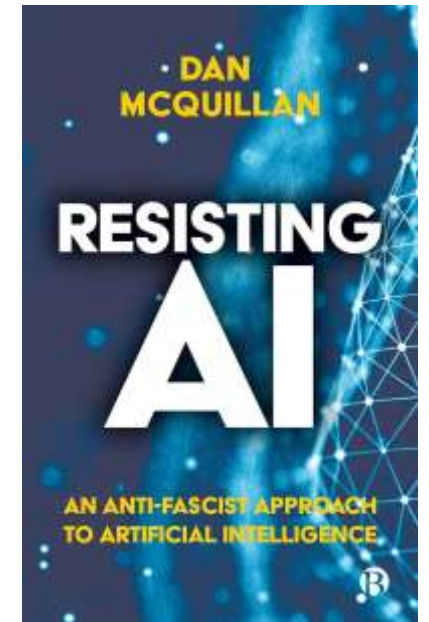
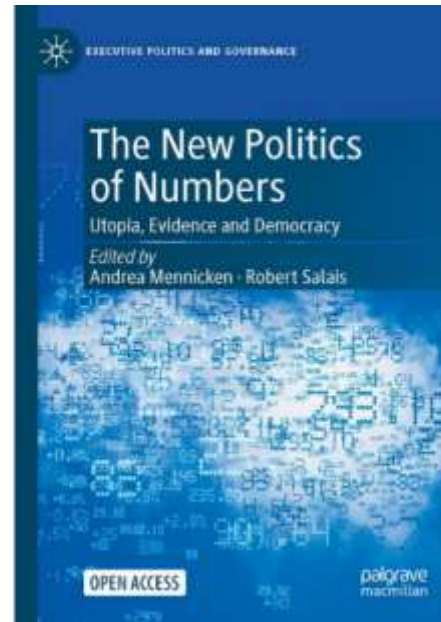
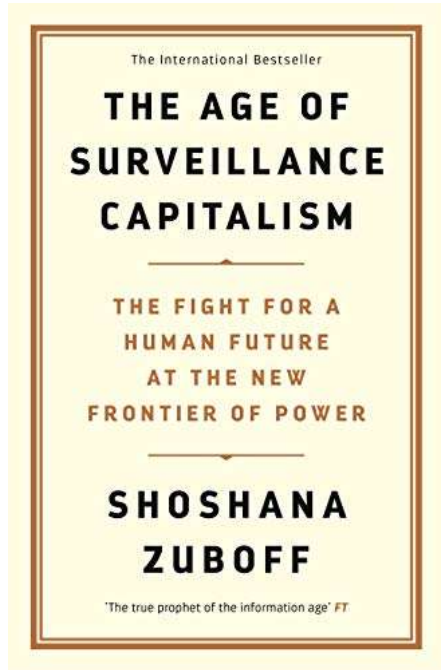


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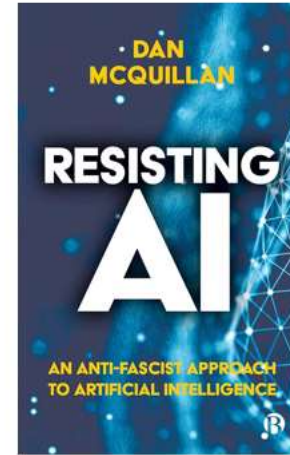
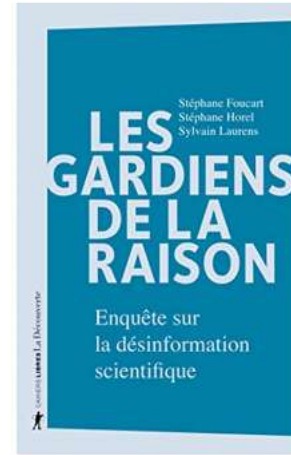
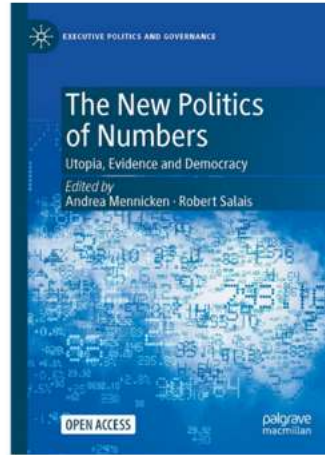
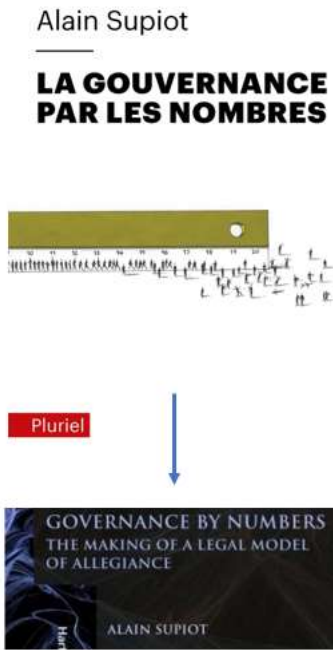
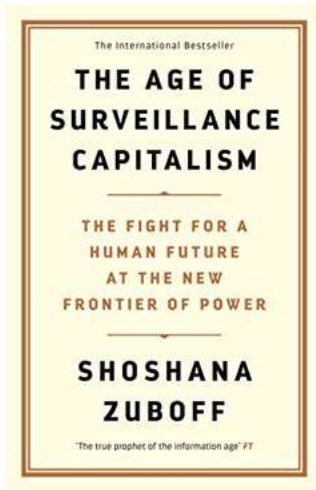


Sources



‘Social and regulatory aspects’ need to contend with regulatory capture where power asymmetries reign: those who have the deepest pockets get the best [foremost ‘scientific’] evidence

Today: New powerful instruments such as the use of AI and algorithms in combination with cognitive psychology and the new social media are deployed to influence the behaviour of consumers / voters





Available online 26 October 2021

In Press, Journal Pre-proof ?

A summary of the argument



Science, the endless frontier of regulatory capture

Andrea Saltelli ^a  , Dorothy J. Dankel ^{b, c}, Monica Di Fiore ^d, Nina Holland ^e, Martin Pigeon ^e

END



Where to find this talk: www.andreasaltelli.eu



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August 25 2023: The politics of modelling is out!



Praise for the volume

"A long awaited examination of the role —and obligation —of modeling."

Nassim Nicholas Taleb, Distinguished Professor of Risk Engineering, NYU Tandon School of Engineering. Author, of the 5 -volume series *Incerto*.

"A breath of fresh air and a much needed cautionary view of the ever-widening dependence on mathematical modeling."

Orrin H. Pilkey, Professor at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, co-author with Linda Pilkey-Jarvis of *Useless Arithmetic: Why Environmental Scientists Can't Predict the Future*, Columbia University Press 2009.

"The methods by which power insinuates itself

Mastodon Toots by

@AndreaSaltelli



AndreaSaltelli

2023/8/28 11:24

August 26 Podcast (16m) - interview for ABC NET RADIO, AUS: Assumptions and consequences: the politics of modelling, Guests: Ehsan Nabavi and Andrea Saltelli, Producer - Chris Bullock.

abc.net.au/listen/programs/sun

View on mstdn.social

Extra slides

Sylvain Laurens

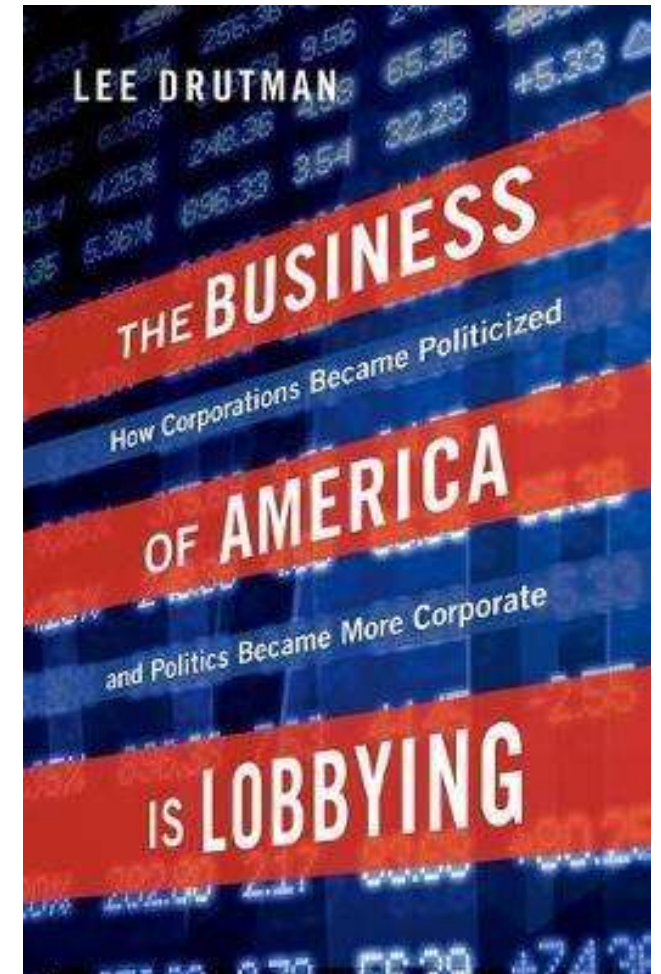


**LOBBYISTS AND
BUREAUCRATS IN BRUSSELS**
CAPITALISM'S BROKERS

Sylvain Laurens



Lee Drutman



For both Laurens and Drutman a salient aspect of this power is lobbyists' access to more and better disseminated knowledge/science