

Point critique

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Céline Bessière and Frédérique Houseaux were able to “follow the interviewers” and draw some conclusions from their own field observations about how statistical data are produced. A turbulent questionnaire session with a farm worker shows the importance of the survey situation and misunderstandings about the terms used. The authors propose to use these “failed” survey relationships to bring to light the often-neglected role of the interviewer. Finally, they suggest bringing together interviewers and survey designers and using the data produced while keeping in mind the translation process that governed their production.

Christian Baudelot and Michel Gollac arrive at the conclusion that we have to “make do” with what we have and refuse to give up the increase in knowledge that statistical surveys offer. They argue that as long as we do not confine ourselves to statistics, we can use them to fight against the very ethnocentrism governing the act of data gathering.

Florence Weber examines the interaction between the Insee interviewer and the interviewee: “anonymous relationship and survey form” are combined to make surveys similar to relationships between other types of subordinate government agents and citizens. By playing on the nature of the questions asked, we merely shift the spot that gives rise to misunderstandings, which are both instructive and constructive.

Finally, Alain Desrosières raises the question: “What are surveys for?” If the

same criticisms have been formulated for decades and have never put an end to statistical surveys, it means that what is at stake is not only cognitive but also political. Thus, we must reconstruct the purposes served by surveys along with the social means used for the statistical products and statements.

Fenêtre

■ **Alban Bensa, Gérard Noiriel: Le temps de l'histoire. Entretien avec Jean Chesneaux**

Dans cet entretien entre Jean Chesneaux, Alban Bensa et Gérard Noiriel sont retracées quelques-unes des grandes orientations de l'œuvre de ce professeur émérite à l'université Paris-VII, historien spécialiste de l'Extrême-Orient et du Pacifique, et penseur critique de la modernité. La discussion accorde une place centrale aux conceptions du temps et de l'histoire développées par Jean Chesneaux dans son dernier ouvrage *Habiter le temps*.

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■ **Historical Time. An Interview with Jean Chesneaux.**

In this interview with Jean Chesneaux, Alban Bensa and Gérard Noiriel have captured some of the major orientations found in the work of the Professor Emeritus at the University of Paris 7, an historian specialised in the Far East and the Pacific, and critic of modernity. The discussion focuses on the conceptions of

time and history developed by Jean Chesneaux in his latest work *Habiter le temps* (Living in Time).

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■ **Francine Soubiran-Paillet: Histoire du droit et sociologie: interrogations sur un vide disciplinaire**

Il n'existe pas en France aujourd'hui une discipline véritablement constituée d'histoire du droit prenant en compte les sciences sociales, la sociologie en particulier. Pourtant au moment de sa création, au milieu du XIX^e siècle, la *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, revue de référence pour les historiens du droit français, sut être un lieu de problématisation des enjeux du droit, de réflexion sur le sens et les fondements des institutions juridiques.

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■ **Francine Soubiran-Paillet: Legal History and Sociology: questioning a disciplinary vacuum**

There is no genuine discipline of legal history in France today that takes social sciences, particularly sociology, into account. Yet, in the middle of the 19th century, when the *Revue Historique de Droit Français et Etranger*, the standard journal for historians of French law, was created, it served as a locus for questioning the stakes of law and thinking about the meaning and foundations of legal institutions.