

Report of the jury of the defense of the dissertation of PhD candidate Sébastien Lerique
entitled "Epidemiology of Representations: An Empirical Approach"

October 27, 2017.

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The candidate achieved a brilliant presentation of his work. The jury has been extremely enthusiastic about the extent and breadth of his contributions to the current literature on the empirical appraisal of cultural attractors. The thoroughness and rigor of the work that Sébastien has carried on during this thesis was also very evident. In this respect, he managed to mobilize a vast array of distinct quantitative methods which were chosen and sometimes developed specifically for the purpose of the thesis. In particular, the creation of an original web-based experimental platform aiming at reproducing transmission chains in an in vitro setting is particularly impressive and innovative, as is the approach to process data stemming from these experiments. In particular, the candidate managed to combine various streams of research to demonstrate the practical possibility of describing empirical sentence evolution in an automated and systematic manner.

More broadly, the jury could appreciate the maturity of the candidate whose work is situated at the interface of several disciplines, most prominently cognitive science and computational social science. His thesis contributes very significantly to demonstrate the potential of the latter to tackle pressing issues relevant to the former. More broadly, Sébastien could demonstrate a high level of hindsight and knowledge on the theories surrounding the contributions made by his dissertation, which was both visible in his manuscript, oral presentation and pertinent answers to the questions of the jury.

All this signals a high likelihood of a brilliant academic career.

For all these reasons, the jury awards to Sébastien Lerique the title of Doctor in Cognitive Science of EHESS.