



MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT
HALLE-WITTENBERG

A.W. Amo Lecture

4th December 2019, 6pm, Melanchthonianum XX, MLU, Universitätsplatz 8/9, Halle

Emmanuel Didier
Centre Maurice Halbwachs – CNRS/ENS/EHESS, Paris

“Quantitative Marbling” New Conceptual Tools for the Socio-history of Quantification

The lecture argues that the socio-history of quantification is not a simple sub-domain of Science and Technology Studies (STS). On the contrary, it can provide tools for investigating a wide range of social situations from a new and interesting perspective. We begin by providing a new definition of quantification. Next, we consider the way numbers permeate society to its very core, forming rich veins of data for social science research. From this process, referred to here as “quantitative marbling,” three distinct categories emerge: data veins produced by governments, those produced by social activists (often contesting the former), and lastly, those produced by non-governmental global networks. We conclude by suggesting that social processes aiming to free certain social aggregates of quantitative analysis are also worthy of attention.

Emmanuel Didier is a Full Professor at the Centre Maurice Halbwachs at École Normale Supérieure, Paris, and a member of the Center for the Study of Invention and Social Process at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is a founding member of EpiDaPo (Epigenetics, Data, Politics), initially a joint research unit of CNRS and UCLA. He taught at the University of Chicago and at UCLA and now teaches at École Normale Supérieure and École Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Administration Économique, both in Paris.



DFG Priority Programme SPP 1448

Adaptation and Creativity in Africa

Technologies and Significations in the Production of Order and Disorder