

My research is based on reflexive studies on the treatment of normative issues in economics, and is meant to convey pragmatic knowledge regarding the properties of instruments of public decision, such as methods of evaluation of public policies, voting procedures, deliberative processes.

My reflexive studies include an historical overview of welfare economics, and of the importance of moral and political values in economics through the years. My results concerns the importance of the epistemological stances of economics through history, the different positions regarding the positive-normative demarcation in economics, the consequent transformation of the interpretation and the properties of utility, the evolution of welfarism, and the overwhelming role of practical matters (see the volume I edited with Roger Backhouse and Tamotsu Nishizawa).

They also consist in a systematic philosophical scrutiny of the standard framework of welfare economics: welfarism, according to which social welfare depends exclusively on individual utilities. My results highlight the unexpected tensions occurring between the philosophical justification of welfarism, its mathematical translation in the economic models, and its technical applications in operational contexts. I have introduced the idea that, under formal welfarism, the normative load of social welfare function, could ultimately defined by two elements only: the choice of a well defined notion of well-being, and an aggregative (or a distributive) process, and I have challenged this can be fully achieved.

In accordance with welfarism, voting rule are standardly justified by the respect of individual preferences, besides the aggregative process. I have coordinated voting experiments in the field: we have proposed voters in the first round of every French presidential election since 2007 to vote with different voting rules (see the "Operation Voter Autrement"). Our data not only show that electoral results expectedly depend on the voting rule, they also illuminate the different reasons why and how the expression of individual political preferences are framed by the aggregative stage. Our analyses conveys a novel knowledge on the properties of different voting rules, and of their different refinements in actual political contexts.

... Next step in my researcher's life starts now. Inspired by a theory of justice built upon Sen's notion of positional views (see my last WP with Muriel Gilardone), I want to explore the properties of various specific modes of participatory processes.

Antoinette Baujard, 2021/03/21