

# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction   | 1  |
| 1 The Measurement of Social Value                              | 10 |
| What does quantification mean?                                 | 12 |
| The calculative practices of the market                        | 15 |
| The state as data manager                                      | 17 |
| Engines of quantification: digitalization and economization    | 21 |
| 2 Status Competition and the Power of Numbers                  | 26 |
| Dispositives of comparison                                     | 28 |
| Commensurability and incommensurability                        | 31 |
| New horizons of comparison                                     | 33 |
| Registers of comparison and investive status work              | 35 |
| 3 Hierarchization: Rankings and Ratings                        | 40 |
| Visibilization and the creation of difference                  | 40 |
| On your marks!   | 43 |
| University rankings  | 47 |
| Here today, gone tomorrow: the market power of rating agencies | 53 |

|   |   |     |
|---|---|-----|
| 4 | Classification: Scoring and Screening                     | 60  |
|   | Credit scoring  | 63  |
|   | Quantified health status                                  | 67  |
|   | Mobility value  | 71  |
|   | ‘Boost your score’ – academic status markers              | 74  |
|   | Social worth investigations                               | 78  |
| 5 | The Evaluation Cult: Stars and Points                     | 81  |
|   | Satisfaction surveys                                      | 82  |
|   | Evaluation portals as selectors                           | 84  |
|   | Peer-to-peer ratings                                      | 87  |
|   | Professions in the evaluative spotlight                   | 89  |
|   | Like-based reputations on social media                    | 93  |
| 6 | The Quantified Self: Charts and Graphs                    | 99  |
|   | Health, exercise and mood                                 | 101 |
|   | The collective body                                       | 104 |
|   | Motivation techniques                                     | 106 |
| 7 | The Power of Nomination                                   | 111 |
|   | The nomination power of the state                         | 112 |
|   | Performance measurement and the framing<br>of competition | 115 |
|   | The nomination power of experts                           | 119 |
|   | Algorithmic authority                                     | 123 |
|   | Critique of nomination power                              | 125 |
| 8 | Risks and Side-Effects                                    | 129 |
|   | Reactive measurements                                     | 129 |
|   | Loss of professional control                              | 133 |
|   | Loss of time and energy                                   | 135 |
|   | Monoculture versus diversity                              | 137 |
| 9 | Transparency and Discipline                               | 141 |
|   | Normative and political pressure                          | 144 |
|   | The power of feedback                                     | 147 |
|   | Technological surveillance in the workplace               | 149 |
|   | The new tariff systems                                    | 151 |
|   | The interdependence of self- and external<br>surveillance | 153 |
|   | The regime of averages, benchmarks and<br>body images     | 155 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 10 The Inequality Regime of Quantification    | 158 |
| Establishment of worth                        | 160 |
| Reputation management                         | 162 |
| Collectives of non-equals                     | 166 |
| From class conflict to individual competition | 168 |
| Inescapability and status fluidity            | 170 |
| Self-reinforcing effects                      | 174 |
| <i>Bibliography</i>                           | 177 |
| <i>Index</i>                                  | 196 |