FEATURES

Karine Van der Straeten
Caps off to political science!

Jean-Marc Olivier
From watches to aeroplanes: a childhood passion
Dear readers,

The beginning of our fourth year of operation has been an exceptionally exciting time. At the beginning of the academic year we were privileged to welcome eleven new Research Fellows, in anthropology, biology, experimental economics, history, political science, psychology and sociology; in January a twelfth (Jon Siegfeat) will join us in anthropology.

Our new arrivals could hardly have chosen a more lively time to join us, since they have been able to experience at first hand the news of the award of the Nobel prize in Economics to Jean Tirole, President of our Executive Committee. The IAST owes its existence to Jean’s vision and energy and it is an immense source of pleasure and pride for all of us to see Jean’s extraordinary research contribution recognized in this way.

Jean has been a consistent supporter of interdisciplinary research, both in his own work (which draws on collaborations in the fields of law, sociology, psychology and political science) and in the field of institution building. Interdisciplinary work is hard, but very rewarding when it works – and the IAST represents an ambitious bet that it can work here.

This semester sees also the second season of our Distinguished Lectures in the Social Sciences with three outstanding scholars tackling the theme of «Political Motivation» from a very wide range of standpoints.

I hope that the material in these pages will give you some sense of the energy and creativity that makes this such a rewarding time to be involved in the IAST.

PAUL SEABRIGHT - IAST DIRECTOR
What is the link between political and economic science?

Karine Van der Straeten: The two sciences are almost inseparable for policy recommendations by economists to positively impact decision-making; it’s important to understand the political constraints and oppositions that may arise to these recommendations. There is hence a long tradition of integrating political science into economics. Here at TSE for example we have a “public and political economics” group, and a “development” group which combine both approaches. In terms of methodology, a group of political scientists realised around 30 years ago that a number of economic science tools could also be applied to political science: game theory, mathematical modelling, econometrics, experimental and empirical approaches… in contrast with the traditional case study or monographic approach used in political science. So today, a certain number of political scientists and economists have come closer, thanks to these thematic and methodological links.

So, what is CAPS, and why did you create it?

KVS: Because today, while in the USA and the UK this interdisciplinary approach is well established, notably via groups at Rochester, NYU, Caledach, and LSE (to name but a few), there are very few groups in continental Europe dedicated to bringing together political and economic scientists for analytical and quantitative research. Our aim, via CAPS, is to bridge this gap, hopefully becoming within 5 years one of the leading centres in Europe.

Who do you have on-board?

KVS: To start with, I must mention the Meyer family who very generously gifted a donation allowing us to bring this project to life. Then, in terms of research teams, we are lucky to have a solid base at TSE to start from, including my colleagues Michel Le Breton, Philippe De Donder and Jean Tirole, who have all contributed to the field of political economy and the design of political institutions for a number of years. I have myself worked extensively on public opinion and electoral institutions, notably through mathematical modelling and experiments.

To this base we are delighted to add a great team of IAST research fellows with PhDs from leading centres in political science, including Patrick Le Billon (NYU), Jonathan Klingen (Rochester), Dominik Oel (NYU) and Charlotte Cavallé (Harvard). Finally, the strength of the IAST is its pluridisciplinarity, including my colleagues Michel Le Breton, Philippe De Donder and Jean Tirole, who have all contributed to the field of political economy and the design of political institutions for a number of years. I have myself worked extensively on public opinion and electoral institutions, notably through mathematical modelling and experiments.

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What is the CAPS research agenda?

KVS: Of course we do not plan to cover all fields in political science. Building on our strengths here, our research agenda, at least in the short run, will focus on the general themes of institution design and public opinion analysis. A few more specific examples include the analysis of incentives under alternative political institutions (impact of referendums…), the impact of new media on electoral campaign strategies, the analysis of new voting systems, and the role of preferences and incentives in shaping economic policy (pension design…).

What activities have you planned?

KVS: We began with a kick-off conference in April 2014, at which Gary Cox of Stanford gave a keynote speech on electoral rules, mobilisation and turnout. The next edition of the conference, on 26-27 March 2015, will feature a keynote speech by James Snyder of Harvard. Both speakers are exemplary in their fields. A few more specific examples include the analysis of incentives under alternative political institutions (impact of referendums…), the impact of new media on electoral campaign strategies, the analysis of new voting systems, and the role of preferences and incentives in shaping economic policy (pension design…).

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Jean-Marc Olivier: I think I was born a historian! Swiss by my mother and French by my father, I come from the East of France, more specifically from the Jura, an industrial mountainous region on the border between the two countries. The Jura was the cradle of the watch-making industry, which developed via a kind of “soft” industrial revolution, in small workshops and even in homes. At the end of the 18th century, watch-making was the most sophisticated technology in the world, and from that seed so much was born, notably the automobile industry. Peugeot, for example, was created at the foot of the Jura mountains. So I guess you could say I was inspired and fascinated by the rich history of this industry close to home. I wanted to dig deeper, understand my roots. I carried out my PhD on watch-making, and this set the cogs in motion for the rest of my career.

You have worked a lot on aviation history. How does one arrive there from watch-making?

Jean-Marc Olivier: Because aviation was also born from watch-making! Take for example Louis-Charles Breguet, early aviation pioneer – his ancestors were watch-makers. What aviation and watch-making have in common is the “soft” economic development model which is different from the factory systems typical of the UK, the USA and Germany. In Switzerland and in France, but also in Scandinavia, there is a tradition of technical know-how: how developed around metals which meant that in 1830, Switzerland produced more manufactured goods per capita – watches, but also textiles, machines, etc. – than in the UK. So, the true, albeit “soft”, industrial revolution happened there.

Toulouse is known for its aviation industry…

Jean-Marc Olivier: Toulouse and the surrounding region has a strong economic history that dates a long way back. When I first arrived here to take up my post in 1999, I hopped from one mountain region to another – studying for example small-scale industries in the Pyrenees and the South-West of France. And then I came to aviation. Paradoxically, despite Toulouse’s world-renowned aviation industry, historians here hadn’t actually studied the economics of the industry over time. It was perhaps intimidating to approach the giant Airbus group to access their archives, but with my childhood passion for model airplanes I certainly didn’t feel intimidated. I perhaps felt that I had a skill in understanding and explaining the often complex world of aviation. I was very motivated, and I made it my mission to develop a solid group in Toulouse working on the question. There are so many other related fields such as military history, relations with the US or the UK, relations with the UK or the US, and also relations with the wider world. It’s a big field and my post allowed me to develop it and I’m still doing so. The group in Toulouse is now very prominent and was recently awarded the Pierre Bérégovoy prize for the most promising research project in economic history.

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Distinguished lectures in the social sciences
After a very successful first season in 2013 around the theme of Origins, this year we are pleased to continue our special public lecture series given by three internationally renowned scholars on themes of interest to the whole of society:

POLITICAL MOTIVATION

THIS YEAR’S DISTINGUISHED LECTURES...

“OUR INNER APE: WAR, PEACE AND POLITICS”
› 25 September, 2014
To launch the series, Frans de Waal, primatologist from Emory University, gave a fascinating talk exploring and documenting the ways in which the duality of human nature (beast or angel?) is tied to biology. Are we inherently selfish or moral beings? De Waal answers these questions regarding human behaviour through the eyes of a primatologist, using the bonobo and the chimp as two provocative metaphors for ourselves and our evolutionary ancestry.

“DEMONCRACY REALLY IS THE WORST FORM OF GOVERNMENT EXCEPT ALL THE OTHERS...”

“POLITICAL VIOLENCE”
› 4 December, 2014
Elisabeth Wood, political scientist from Yale University will talk to us about the history of political violence in Colombia.

THIS SEASON’S OTHER CONFERENCES

STAKEHOLDERS IN MODERN CORPORATIONS
Within the IAST law & economics programme, Simone Sepé and Jean Tirole will organise a one-day workshop on the distribution of power within modern organizations.
› 17 December, 2014

COGNITIVE CONTROL IN SOCIAL DECISION MAKING
Conference in Sociology organized by Jean-François Bonnefon, Astrid Hopfensitz, Paul Seabright and Jean Tirole.
› 15-16 January, 2014

EVENTS
NEWCOMERS 2014

We are proud to welcome 11 research fellows specialising in a wide range of social sciences. Here are their profiles, with an example of their recent work:

1. Don’t you push my angry button
   Boris Van Leeuwen
   (experimental economics – University of Amsterdam)

2. Does it pay to be flexible? Life history consequences of residual learning abilities in wild Great tits (Parus major)
   Maxime Cauchoix
   (biology – Cerco)

3. Why be patient? The ultimate and proximate causes of patience
   Gladys Barragan
   (psychology – Cerco)

4. The evolutionary anthropology of fertility decline in rural Poland
   Heidi Colleran
   (anthropology – University College London)

5. Evolution of sibling interactions in humans
   Aida Nitsch
   (biology – Sheffield University)

6. Demand for Redistribution in the Age of Inequality
   Charlotte Cavallé
   (political sciences – Harvard University)

7. Political Economy of Social Identity
   Dominik Duell
   (political science – New York University)

8. Sex & Cooperation: Is sexual selection involved in the evolution of cooperative behaviour
   Arnaud Tognetti
   (biology – University of Montpellier 2)

9. A History of Money in Palestine: from the 1900s to the Present
   Sreemati Mitter
   (History – Harvard University)

10. How Organizations Matter with Digital Activism
    Jen Schradie
    (sociology – UC Berkeley)

    Hassan Malik
    (History – Harvard University)

12. Jonathan Stieglitz will also join us starting January 2015 from the University of New Mexico.

NEW BOOK: THE BRITISH PATENT SYSTEM AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, 1700–1852

IAST research fellow Sean Bottomley specialises in economic history and has just published a book via Cambridge University Press on the British patent system during the Industrial Revolution, presenting a fundamental reassessment of the contribution of patenting to British industrialisation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The book shows that despite the absence of legislative reform, the British patent system was continually evolving and responding to the needs of an industrialising economy. Inventors were able to obtain and enforce patent rights with relative ease. This placed Britain in an exceptional position. Until other countries began to enact patent laws in the 1790s, it was the only country where inventors were frequently able to appropriate returns from obtaining intellectual property rights, thus encouraging them to develop the new technology industrialisation required.
We need your feedback!

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS AS WE HEAD TOWARDS A NEW, IMPROVED VERSION OF THE MAGAZINE.

http://goo.gl/mUJf7l