Dear readers, the IAST project is a unique undertaking. No other institution engages in social science research integrating scientists with backgrounds ranging from biology to history, economics and philosophy. The Institute can already boast remarkable achievements, as recently emphasized by the IAST’s Scientific Council midterm report. It has attracted highly reputed program directors and gifted researchers in nine disciplines. This concentration of talents has generated truly multidisciplinary projects, with a significant number of working papers combining analysis of economics, political economy and psychology. The next step is to integrate anthropology, sociology, biology, history and philosophy into the analytical framework. This issue has been addressed in the Scientific Council’s 2015 report. Clearly, multidisciplinary research is a challenging undertaking and there is no “best” way to encourage it.

The IAST will have to continue to be flexible and keep its founding principles in mind. We hope to facilitate risk-taking and innovation by reinforcing senior researchers’ support for junior researchers. We also want to foster thought diversity, for example by increasing the faculty’s international dimension. Another key target is to improve synergies, in particular via partnership with other institutions. The IAST has come a long way in the past four years. We are excited to see how far it can reach.

GERARD HERTIG - IAST Scientific Council member - Professor of law, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ)
Flashback to recent events

We must learn to value the social sciences - Le Monde

The scientific journal feature earlier this year urged scientists to ask why they face public opposition to their theories, writes IAST director Paul Seabright in Le Monde, and called for the integration of approaches from the social sciences. Public skepticism arises not just in matters of medicine, evolution or climate science, but also in economics. The benefits of immigration, for example, are widely accepted by economists, but widely contested by the public. The reasons for this divide are unclear but the example suggests we should not judge the social sciences by the vagaries of public opinion.

Pecking order of sociable weavers - SABC Documentary

Investigating the fascinating nesting behavior of sociable weaver birds on location in the Kalahari, IAST researcher Amadu Tognetti featured in South Africa Broadcasting Corporation’s 50/50 TV documentary recently. The research team hope to draw valuable lessons about the dynamics of cooperation that may be common to all social organisms, including humans.

Why companies are abandoning science - Le Monde

Companies are investing less in basic scientific research, writes IAST director Paul Seabright in Le Monde, according to a recent study of US and European companies from 1980 to 2007. During the same period, R&D spending has nearly doubled. The authors conclude: “Companies seem to value the golden eggs as much as before, but they have stopped valuing the gosse.” One possible explanation is a greater focus by companies on core skills, as a result of increasing competition from Chinese imports.

HashTag activism is not in the hands of everyone - BBC NewsHour

As #feminism was sweeping across Twitter, IAST researcher Jen Schradie told BBC NewsHour that rather than digital activism having a “flattening effect”, it is groups with the most organized, hierarchical structures that achieve the highest levels of participation. “We have this image of digital activists as ‘left radical,’” she said, “but I’ve found the complete opposite. It’s actually conservative, reformist groups that use the internet at much higher levels because they see it as a pipeline to power.”

Conferences on elections, behaviors, institutions and reforms

March 26-27, 2015

Jointly organized by the IAST and Toulouse School of Economics (TSE), the second edition in a series on elections and democratic institutions brought together economists and political scientists to present and discuss the latest advances in this interdisciplinary field. The ten presentations from international researchers combine a mix of methodological approaches - both formal analysis, empirical studies and experiments. A special thanks goes out to James Snyder, Professor of History and Political Science at Harvard University, for his keynote opening lecture on “The Role of Primaries in the US Electoral System.” Watch out for the third event in the series, scheduled for spring 2016.

Cooperation for choosing gender - Le Monde

Recent discoveries about the genetic mechanisms for determining sex organs should give pause to those for whom sexual identity is reassuringly binary. Rather than resembling a process controlled by a simple switch, sexual identity results from a fragile compromise between two opposing armies of genes. The consequences for individuals born with ambiguous sex organs are often difficult. Can we imagine a future where gender is a private choice, like religion in a secular state?

Political behaviour and voting


Cooperation and cooperation


Religion

Meet the IAST’s latest recruits

Jonathan Stieglitz is an evolutionary anthropologist from the University of New Mexico who began work as an IAST research fellow in January. He plans to work with IAST psychologists, biologists and economists to further his research in the Bolivian Amazon, where CT scans are among the cutting-edge techniques being used to ask what small-scale societies can tell us about the human condition.

It takes a genuine passion for research to spend 10 years visiting remote forager communities, putting up with gastro-intestinal parasites, diarrhea and the absence of modern amenities. Or to consider the prospect of fieldwork in war-ravaged central Africa. Jonathan Stieglitz, however, is just relieved he didn’t have to pick up his dad’s shovel.

“Everybody’s an anthropologist. You don’t need a PhD to be fascinated by human behavior, just look at the success of reality television. Star Magazine, the National Enquirer, gossip – all of these things demonstrate that humans are very interested in each other. My father’s a geologist, and I was never doing that. I would spend six months in one village or town, and I would live very much like the people. Most of these characteristics were relatively common over human evolutionary history. We’re not claiming they are perfectly analogous to our human ancestors, but they share a lot of sociocultural features. This is the appeal of studying small-scale societies.”

Arriving in Toulouse earlier this year, Stieglitz says the IAST offers a unique experience.

“The really fascinating and appealing thing about coming here was the explicitly inter-disciplinary environment, the opportunity to work with psychologists, other evolutionary anthropologists, biologists and economists. I found out very quickly that there are big differences in methods and who we study, but we all use very similar principles and theories to approach and explain relatively similar questions.”

Collaboration with IAST scholars has already led to innovative research ideas, says Stieglitz, who will be returning to Bolivia this summer for two months. “I want to extend an economic game that’s been done here by Astrid Hauerstein (IAST program director in psychology) and colleagues. She’s looked at the extent to which husbands and wives agree on the allocation of resources within a family. The IAST is very strong in experimental economics, and anthropologists very rarely use experiments and economic games. So we want to use a modified version of Astrid’s game in the field to look at variation within the Tsimane population but also to compare, say, Tsimane levels of cooperation with those of couples in Toulouse.”

Stieglitz is also involved in a groundbreaking study of cardiovascular and skeletal health. “We’re taking adults over the age of 15 to a hospital for CT scans. The machine lets you look for plaques, which can restrict blood flow and cause heart attacks, and also we can look at skeletal structure. I’m beginning to work with researchers at Paul Sabatier University and Purpan Hospital, including José Braga, a physical anthropologist and Pascal Swaller (biomechanics expert) and Marine Faruch Billeffe (radiologist) who are very familiar with computer technology that lets you reconstruct things like bone mineral density. This is a technical collaboration, using existing data and state of the art techniques. This has never been done in a foraging population.”

Bolivian Amazon, where the IAST is based, is analogous to our human ancestors, but they are a lot of socio-ecological features. This is the milieu that draws me.”

Becoming a father has understandably led to a reduction in field time. “Before I wouldn’t bat an eye at going for six to eight months, whereas now even going for a few weeks I get tremendous guilt. I’d like to bring my family with me but my daughter’s only three. The big concern is: what happens when you get a diarrheal disease or respiratory infection? We employ full-time physicians and laboratory technicians and we offer free healthcare to everyone in our study. This is a real strength of our project. But my wife doesn’t buy it!”

“I tell her it’s not that bad. It’s like camping among friends. I’ve had the opportunity to develop deep bonds and relationships. Of course you’re bathing in the river so you get inundated with lots of stuff that wouldn’t happen in Toulouse, so I’ve had gastro-intestinal parasites, diarrhoea, the works. In my early years, I would live very much like the Tsimane themselves. When you have more time you’re able to immerse yourself in local norms. I would spend time in one village, cooking with firewood and exchanging things for meat and plantains.”

Stieglitz says he would love to spend the rest of his life in France, but his days in the field appear far from over. One of the many reasons for coming to the IAST was the prospect of starting another field site. “We have talked about studying Pygmy communities in Africa. A lot of Pygmy projects are led by French researchers, so it could be an interesting collaboration. The problem of civil war in Congo and the Central African Republic, but we’ll see where that goes.”
The IAST boldly assumed its place at the vanguard of the digital economy. The announcement was made jointly on February 12 by IAST / TSE chairman Jean Tirole and Fleur Pellerin, French Minister of Culture and Communication. At the launch, the Minister said the chair would help France to spearhead new regulation and make Toulouse the European and international capital of digital and cultural research.

The chair, which is named after the late Toulouse economist Jean-Jacques Laffont, will receive a state-funded research budget of 750,000 euros over three years. It will also benefit from the support of private and public-sector sponsors including Accor, Samsung, Orange, the Société des auteurs et compositeurs de musique enregistrée (SACEM) and the Société des auteurs dramatiques (SACD) and the Caisse des Dépôts.

IAST director Paul Seabright said that the launch was the product of a year-long consultation process with Minister Pellerin, formerly minister dedicated to the Digital Economy. “The project has accelerated since Jean Tirole won the Nobel Prize for Economics. His profile has been raised and this has allowed him to implement his ideas. We started from the observation that it has never been easier to distribute not only creative content, but also management software on the Internet. However, it has never been more difficult to be paid for this work.

Our goal is to bring together between 25 and 30 researchers. We want to attract the best talent in the world and so we will recruit three types of ‘gray matter’. We’re going to bring in senior and junior researchers to Toulouse. We will also have visitors and the chair has already partnered with a US researcher who works on health economics. Finally, a dozen researchers already present in Toulouse will bring their skills. We are not starting from zero because the Toulouse economists have already developed well-received theories of regulation, adopted by antitrust agencies and developed especially by Jean Tirole.”

Each year the Chair will hold a high-level public meeting in Paris, inviting leading names in digital economy research. Regular workshops and conferences will also be held in Toulouse, Paris, Brussels and beyond.

Professor Tirole said that IAST involvement would help the Chair to maintain a holistic vision. “The digitalization of society is at the heart of the economic and social changes of the 21st century. The launch of the Chair at a time...”

BUSINESSES LEND THEIR SUPPORT TO THE CHAIR

- Orange believes that the bonds between business and the academic world advance our knowledge and help to form future professionals who will know how to integrate the best of innovation to conceive the networks, products and services of tomorrow.”
- “The research topics carried out by this Chair are also at the heart of the digital concerns of Société Générale: data protection, security and confidentiality in the Cloud and intellectual property rights in the digital economy.”
- “Samsung calls for an open ecosystem and the creation of synergies between the actors of different markets to permit the internet of things to demonstrate its infinite possibilities.”
- “Digitalization is a fundamental issue for tourism, the number one product distributed online in France and Europe, and particularly for Accor.”
- “The Caisse des dépôts group, the Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques (SACD) and the Société des auteurs et compositeurs de musique enregistrée (SACEM) are also supporting the chair.”
IAMESS was alive with discussion of the latest advances in experimental methods in April, as almost 100 social science researchers gathered in Toulouse. The International Meeting on Experimental and Behavioral Social Sciences (IMEBESS) gave academics from a diverse range of research traditions a chance to exchange ideas, debate their findings, and attend keynote speeches by pioneering scholars Colin Camerer, Cristina Bicchiere and Marie Claire Viallet.

It was only the second IMEBESS, but the meeting’s success in attracting top-flight talent owes much to the pedigree of its predecessor, which toured in Spain over much of the past decade. The International Meeting on Experimental and Behavioral Economics (IMEB) was a less ambitious project but organized similarly. The current interdisciplinary spirit was noticeable from the start. “One of the local organizers at the first meeting, Fernando Aguilar, was a philosopher not an economist,” said Enrique Fatás, Professor of Economics at the University of East Anglia. “We were genuinely interested in interdisciplinary research and talking to open-minded economists.”

“I was really an entrepreneurial development,” said Jordi Brandts, Research Professor at the Institute for Economic Analysis (CSIC) in Barcelona. “It’s always been a very bottom-up thing. We started 11 years ago in Cordoba and because it was a success we just went on and on. We did it nine times in different Spanish cities.” The growth in popularity of the meeting and the immigration of Spanish experimentalists led to thoughts of expansion.

“We didn’t want to compete with the ESA [Economic Science Association] European meeting,” said Fatás. “But we thought, maybe if we make it a little bit different, more interdisciplinary, we may move outside Spain.”

“The interdisciplinarity which IMEBESS builds upon and reinforces has nothing to do with formalism, hand-waving interdisciplinary,” said fellow organizer Diego Gambetta. Professor of Social Theory at the European University Institute. “The simplicity of design and the clarity of theory that, in order to succeed, experimental research demands of scholars makes it much easier to pursue fruitful links across disciplines. It promotes a high degree of analytical precision that travels well - across economic, social and psychological sciences, all the way to evolutionary biology - limiting misunderstandings and naturally highlighting points of common interest. Here we are all concerned with foundations of human behavior, and this is why I like it and will continue to support it.”

After last year’s meeting in Oxford, Nuffield College is due to become IMEBESS’s institutional umbrella. “Nuffield and IAST represented very similar things to us. Now we have four people on our scientific committee,” said Fatás, “us, plus Ray Duch from Nuffield, and it is a nice combination of sociology, political science and economics.”

The organizers were delighted with the quality of research and debate in Toulouse. “It’s going very well,” said Fatás. “There are some nice papers and I see plenty of interaction too. It’s a fantastic venue, and the support of IAST is really appreciated. Acted Hoppenz (IAST program director) did a terrific job of putting it all together.”

IMEBESS is set to broaden its scope still further. “We want to expand in maybe a more aggressive way,” said Fatás. “We would like to attract more political scientists, psychologists and anthropologists. We’ll be delighted to get historians and lawyers. The program reflects the offers of papers. It naturally mimics the evolution of research and interest in the behavioral academic community.”

“In a way, hard-core economics topics are going down by themselves in this community,” added Brandts. “Gender is a big thing now in economics that nobody worried about in the past. But we don’t define the social sciences: we’re open to all of them.”
KEYNOTE INTERVIEW

Welcome to the GOLDEN AGE of social science

Research is at last breaking out of 20th-century academic apartheid, spurred on by the opportunities provided by big data analysis and unprecedented levels of communication between disciplines, NGOs, companies and governments. A new era is dawning, says Professors Colin Camerer, Cristina Bicchieri and Marie Claire Villeval, whose diverse interests in human behavior stretch across economics, psychology, philosophy and neuroscience. Invited to Toulouse as keynote speakers at this year’s IMEBESS conference, these three high priests of multidisciplinarity joined in a wide-ranging debate with IAST Connect to set out their vision for a brighter, interconnected future.

"Eat out of the way" snaps Professor Colin Camerer, when asked if he has a message for those who are unconvinced by his joined-up approach to solving problems. This affable neuroeconomist is bullish about the advances of social science and in a hurry to get to the answers. He is prepared to unlock the secrets of human behavior by any means necessary, whether that be fMRI brain scans, rigorous game-theory experiments or anthropological studies of corporate culture. Above all, he is impressively eager to engage with others.

Ever since earning a degree in quantitative studies at the age of 17, Camerer has refused to be held in check by institutional barriers and preconceptions. "I think I always from university on was interested in more than one thing. And putting different things together." Early on, Camerer was heavily influenced by the work of psychologists like Amos Tversky, Daniel Kahneman and Paul Slovic. "They were doing psychology in a way that, mathematically and in terms of data, you could see how it would integrate with economics, and that was the beginning of behavioral economics. At the University of Chicago business school they had a few psychologists teaching managerial judgment, and the MBA students got to hear about real people and their mistakes. It wasn’t as interdisciplinary as things have gotten to be here at Toulouse (IAST) but there was a kind of coexistence of very different types of people. I also wanted to talk about not just lab data but things that happen in the field. In the world, the institutions and inequality-things that are really important in people’s lives."

Now Professor of Behavioral Finance and Economics at the California Institute of Technology, Camerer says the future of academic research is full of promise. In particular, the more creative use of the formal tools of economics and mathematics of social context are vital ingredients in a rich new blend of behavioral and social sciences. "We are entering a golden age of social science because the degree of communication across fields is probably better than it’s ever been. The openness in economics is better not just vis-à-vis, say, cognitive psychology, but also empirical ethics and moral and social networks."

25 years ago in France, interdisciplinary research was quite rare. "It’s completely different because disciplines communicate based on their own strengths and they respect each other."

"It turns out you have to invent some new ideas. Economists like Matthew Jackson were looking for something new and exciting and they realized that social networks are really important, and not just in small-scale societies. When companies search for a new CEO, social networks are going to constrain who is going in those positions. So occasionally a combination of a constraint and a tool that has lived in one discipline suddenly gets spread everywhere, a bit like a global trade and ideas. For example, it used to be you could only get good bread and coffee in Europe, and in the US, well, it’s less awful than it used to be!"

Surging this wave of enthusiasm for an interconnected approach, Professor Marie Claire Villeval is the research coordinator at the University of Lyon’s Cortex, an ambitious project studying human cognition and behavior, from neurons to individuals. Like IAST, Cortex is also a Laboratory of Excellence. Speaking with an elegant cadence, her self-effacing tone seems well suited to running a team of diverse backgrounds and clashing egos.

Villeval began as a labor economist but, like Camerer, she was soon feeling constrained by the limits of orthodoxy. "I was a bit frustrated for two reasons. Firstly, it was not so easy 20, 25 years ago to get access to data, at least in France. The second was that it’s always been interested in exotic preferences. And in labor economics it was not very highly regarded. But I had the chance to meet people doing experiments and the first was Werner Güth, who invited me and gave me the chance to play the ultimatum bargaining game. I started to understand that with very simple games we can express very powerful motivations. I saw the interest of running experiments and opening my mind to a different method. And the books by Colin in particular were very inspiring, showing that using the mathematical tools of economics you can communicate with other disciplines and everybody can bring something."

Mirroring Camerer’s optimism about the arrival of a new golden age, Villeval insists that France’s keener pace with America’s "Twenty or 25 years ago in France, interdisciplinary research was quite poor because it was frequently people who were not very good in economics meeting with people who were not very good in sociology or psychology. Now it’s completely different because disciplines communicate based on their own strengths and they respect each other. We still publish in our field, but we have more opportunity than before to meet with others. We also have more incentives, more grants and more encouragement."

For Villeval, interdisciplinarity is like a public good game, an experiment in which subjects choose how many of their tokens to put into a public pool. "We need to bring that thing we do, but our skills are not sufficient to explain a complex phenomenon. The more we know, the more we understand that our knowledge is very limited: so we need to interact with other people and we have more facilities to do that to do that. In France in particular we have these Laboratories of Excellence, IAST and also Cortex in Lyon, which give us the opportunity to communicate. I learn from people working on stem cells or cognition and I realize we’re not talking about things that are complementary. It’s not only between social sciences - we have pushed back the walls."

For Camerer, there are almost no limits to the potential of this eclectic approach. "If you think about developing new things and solving problems, it almost has to be interdisciplinary. Think about Aids. The doctors would say it’s a medical problem, but if you’re an African sociologist, it’s not just a medical problem; it’s a problem of truck drivers using prostitutes and contraband. And if politicians in South Africa say there’s no such thing as Aids, there’s a political propaganda piece of it. Or addiction is very similar. Or terrorism. When you start to think about practice, it forces you to be much less discipline-focused and you have to start to look for who has ideas."

Cristina Bicchieri, too, is eager to talk about practical benefits of the cross-disciplinarity of ideas. Despite not feeling well after a long journey to Toulouse, her conversation is animated and colorful. Professor of Social Thought and Comparative Ethics at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), Bicchieri’s interests lie in philosophy, psychology and game theory, but she has also served as a consultant to Unicef since 2008. She has advised the World Bank, the Gates Foundation and other aid organizations how to combat negative social practices such as female genital mutilation or child marriage.

"So, for example, why don’t people use free condoms?" she asks. "Well, because sexual behavior is apparently a very private activity, but in reality it’s a social activity in the sense that you do what your peers do, you talk to them about that. Etc. A typical interview after a few years ago was ‘let’s give people information’ or ‘let’s go and inform them that if they do such and such a thing, they get AIDS’ or ‘You should nurse your baby as soon as it’s born.’ Unfortunately, the mother-in-law dictates the rules, says no.” Interventions often fail, says Bicchieri, because aid workers fail to appreciate the power of social norms and expectations.

To help policymakers encourage prosocial behavior, Bicchieri has been working not just with medical experts on global health, but also with experts in communication, replacing questionnaires with vignettes which are easier to understand. "People very often don’t respond to hypothetical or counterfactual questions. Now there is a booming field of vignette making and they even do little movies to get telling answers. It has a huge impact on policies." Combining an understanding of social motivations with medical knowledge can have tremendous impact on policies.

What is happening is amazing. First of all, you can identify a person’s position in a network; there’s a huge set of data on Twitter. Second, you can record how change occurs – some subgroups start out of nowhere and die..."
"As academics," says Villeval, "we have changed our point of view because before it was considered not ‘clean’ to work for companies. The rest of the world has changed too. Companies are more open. I was surprised when interacting with them that they wanted to explore different methods. For example, we got in touch with public trans- mission companies who said, ‘We have a problem: many people cheat’. And they don’t understand why people cheat and to what extents – they have done surveys but they realize it’s not enough to understand the in- dividual determinants. I wanted to do a field experiment and surprisingly they told me ‘Yes, we would like you to do lab experiments first, then we’ll go further together in the field and change things’. So it’s perhaps a golden age because it’s easier for us to interact with companies, with governments, with NGOs. Camerer agrees. “I think that’s part of the golden age, that governments and companies that we used to think of as completely opa- que, unhospitable institutions – we, ‘just give us money, please, and that’s all we expect from you’ – are much more proactive. Also, compa- nies and governments don’t care about your pedigree, they just care about who knows things that can help them solve problems and make progress. They’re much more discipline blind than we are. We look at vitae and are like, ‘Oh, you published in blank-blank-blank’, and they go to a meeting and it’s just, ‘Who has something interesting to say that we can understand?’ It’s helpful because it means that there is another clientele that doesn’t value interdisciplinarity just for its own sake, and doesn’t penalize it, but just wants people who can give answers.” The golden age is also being fuelled by the increasing sophisti- cation of tools that can process and analyze the huge data sets, often referred to as big data, made available by the advance of digi- tal technologies. “The ability to do lab expe- riments has improved a little bit, but not that dramatically,” says Camerer. “The dramatic increase has been with the web and so called ‘lab in the field’ experiments where you can go to many different locations, a lot of times collaborating with an NGO or government. The idea of companies doing experiments inside the company is a pretty modern, post-Silicon Valley phenomenon. Camerer. “It takes time to learn each other’s language,” says Camerer. “One problem is you use different words, like ‘I don’t know what you mean by epigenetic’. The second problem is you use the same word, like ‘rational’, and then you really get confused! Trust is another thing that social sciences think about in different ways. We can come to a consensus, it may take that takes ages or you end up deciding that there’s different flavors of things that we want to have different names for.” Camerer. “The labor market for academic success is exact the kind of integration we need. This is the typical example of research which is super interdisciplinary, happening in various areas: linguistics, an evolutionary model, network analysis, big data and how to deal with it. This is exactly the kind of integration we need. This is the typical example of research which is super Intertdisciplinarity, where there is one problem, but with many facets, and different people can contribute. This is the idea. This is the golden age of social science: the fact that we zero in on problems more than disciplines”. of various areas: linguistics, an evolutionary model, network analysis, big data and how to deal with it. This is exactly the kind of integration we need. This is the typical example of research which is super interdisciplinary, where there is one problem, but with many facets, and different people can contribute. This is the idea. This is the golden age of social science: the fact that we zero in on problems more than disciplines."
Cheats, liars and bribes

Haunted by thoughts of deceit and corruption, Shakespeare’s Hamlet is obsessed with “this canker of our nature”. Of course, it’s not just in 16th-century Denmark that something rotten is rotten. From bribery, trafficking of influences, extortion, embezzlement, counterfeiting, to collusion and conspiracy, corruption infects all countries. Drawing on some of the latest research by experimental and behavioral social scientists, the IAST hosted a fascinating seminar session on the subject at the 2015 IAST seminar.

The idea that honesty can bolster economic development is not a recent one. Speaking at the IMBESS Conference, David Hugh-Jones cited 19th-century Chinese scholar Feng Guifen, who attributed the success of Confucianism across different cultures, to the Chineseness of Confucianism. Another is a proverb that crops up in many parts of the world, but Oge Dijk’s research suggests that the flow of corruption is not necessarily a top-down process: “One of the reasons that corruption is endemic in many countries is that a corrupt official can bribe their supervisor to escape any charges. If in turn this supervisor is caught for taking bribes, they can simply bribe their superior. When all officials and supervisors are rational and corruptible, nobody ever gets caught; corruption simply cascades upwards, increasing the penalty or likelihood of being caught does not lessen corruption but simply alters the distribution of income along the bribe chain.”

For most economists, the root causes of corruption lie in the delegation of power. Corruption is modeled as criminal behavior by agents, such as the police or financial advisors, entrusted to act on the behalf of principals, such as taxpayers or shareholders. According to this view, corruption could be avoided by fixing the incentive structure or the institutional setting.

This idea is supported by both Oge Dijk and Vera Angioleva, who have conducted experiments which suggest that using bonuses could help reduce corruption. Angioleva’s paper analyzes the relationship between financial advisors and clients, and finds that the highest rates of honesty are achieved when experts are encouraged by a combination of three factors: the possibility of gaining a good reputation, competition and bonuses.

More detailed comparative studies are needed in transitioning populations, where both ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ forms of wealth and status influence fertility. Colleran and her team seek to redress the balance: “Few studies have compared wealth and status effects on fertility in multiple local contexts. Fewer still have examined how interactions between different measures may produce context-dependent reproductive outcomes. Moreover, little is known about how inequality varies on the continuum of economic modernization, or how different mixes of assets translate to fertility in mid-transitional contexts.”

Colleran’s data comes from an anthropological demographic study of nearly 2,000 women living in rural communities. The area is characterized by centuries of peasant subsistence farming but is now rapidly becoming integrated in a market economy. As subsistence farming populations, wealthy and high-status people typically have high fertility. In transitioning and market economy populations, wealthier and high-status people typically have lower fertility and wealth inequality is temporally reduced. Despite extensive research on the subject, there is little agreement about how these two broad reversals occur, or how they may be connected.

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The fruits of declining fertility

WOMEN, WEALTH AND STATUS IN RURAL POLAND

As subsistence farming communities around the world have become integrated in a market economy, fertility has tended to decline. Working with data from rural Poland, the IAST’s Heidi Colleran has carried out groundbreaking research into this crucial moment of demographic transition. Her results provide a rarely available insight into the changing dynamics of wealth, status and inequality in one of the few European regions where this change is still ongoing.

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Colleran’s data comes from an anthropological demographic study of nearly 2,000 women living in rural communities. The area is characterized by centuries of peasant subsistence farming but is now rapidly becoming integrated in a market economy. As subsistence farming populations, wealthy and high-status people typically have high fertility. In transitioning and market economy populations, wealthier and high-status people typically have lower fertility and wealth inequality is temporally reduced. Despite extensive research on the subject, there is little agreement about how these two broad reversals occur, or how they may be connected.

The results of Colleran’s research show that wealth and status generally have opposing effects on fertility, and that they interact; wealthy women with higher levels of educational capital have fewer children, whereas wealthy women with lower educational capital have more children.

This decoupling of wealth and status allows variation in reproductive strategies to emerge alongside new forms of status stratification. Couples abandoning farming for market-oriented employment receive an economic and a demographic dividend. Non-farming income is increased, permitting investments in educational capital, savings and other assets. And with declining demand for children as economic contributors, resources are diluted among fewer people.

Colleran finds fertility decline to be associated with declining inequality in wealth and market integration, but not with declining inequality in educational capital. “Our analyses support the assumption that more equality in market integration is related to the accumulation of educational capital. So why was inequality in educational capital unimportant for predicting fertility decline? The answer lies partly in the fact that market engagement in this population is not dependent on high levels of education, as informal and migrant wage-labor, and to a lesser extent, seasonal cash cropping, can generate significant financial returns for less-educated households. This explains why women with the highest educational capital, while more market integrated, were not necessarily wealthier.”

Colleran’s results capture reproductive stratification alongside new kinds of status stratification. She expects similar interactions to exist in other transitioning populations, and urges more cross-cultural work to establish whether they are a general feature of socio-economic stratification.

Fertility decline and the changing dynamics of wealth, status and inequality

Heidi Colleran, Grazyna Jasienska, Anna Nunko, Andrej Galusjczyk and Ruth Mace...
Jordanna’s journey

NEXT STOP, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON!

Jordanna Matlon is a sociologist with a special interest in questions of race, identity and exclusion, particularly for members of the African diaspora. Jordanna was one of the very first IAST “rookies”, joining the Institute as research fellow in 2012 just after its creation. Three years down the line and many exciting IAST experiences later, Jordanna is now preparing the next leg of her marvelous adventure: a move to Washington to take up a new interdisciplinary position at American University. IAST Connect caught up with Jordanna to find out more.

Jordanna, tell us about your new job

I’ll be moving this summer for a new position as Assistant Professor of Global Urban Studies at American University’s School of International Service (SIS), a department aimed towards international, interdisciplinary scholarship. The school is fantastic - consistently ranked in the top 10 of international relations programs both in the United States and internationally. Although I tend to be theory-oriented, SIS has more of a policy orientation, so my hire is an expression of the school’s interest in diversifying its faculty. Moreover, by 2030 American U aims to become a leader in metropolitan studies, and I heard there was good support for creating a position in Global Urban Studies.

As well as working on my research, I will also teach a range of undergrad, masters and PhD courses. In my first year I will teach The Postcolonial City and Visuality in Africa. Of all the schools I interviewed with, I was most excited about SIS - faculty are incredibly involved in “real world” issues, advising governments, writing policies, and publishing regularly in high-profile newspapers. And it was apparent during the Q&A that there I had potential colleagues who were by far the most informed about my research, so it feels very much “at home”.

Jordanna’s research investigates the livelihoods and lifestyles of men in the urban informal economy of Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire.

This is a great success story for the IAST. How has your time here helped you towards this new challenge?

My three years at the IAST have been the perfect preparation for this new move. I am a sociologist, but SIS is an interdisciplinary department with key strengths in political science. The past three years I have been practicing the art of translating my research across disciplines, and learning about other methods of inquiry and theoretical paradigms. I’m sure this showed when I interviewed, and will come of great use as I begin my new job.

More generally, the IAST has been a fantastic opportunity to spend this crucial early period of my career wholly focused on my writing, which resulted in numerous publications and hence a competitive CV. Add to that the benefits of Toulouse, which is a beautiful city full of cultural offerings and great food, and Europe more generally, where I have had the chance to become acquainted with academic traditions outside of the U.S. This will serve me well at a school that focuses on the international, and I hope it will also reflect positively in my research. And I’ve had the privilege of traveling outside of France frequently and wouldn’t have traded this experience for anything. I am of course delighted about moving to Washington, DC, but I will be sad to leave Toulouse and the wonderful people at the IAST. I have made friends and colleagues for life here.

Could you tell us more about your ongoing and upcoming research projects?

My research investigates the livelihoods and lifestyles of men in the urban informal economy of Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, with particular attention to the relationship between marginal black men and identity construction in Africa and the African diaspora. I employ qualitative methods: ethnography, interviews, and visual analysis. Drawing on my dissertation, I am currently preparing my book manuscript, ‘I will be VIP!’ Masculinity, modernity, and crisis on the neoliberal periphery. In it I interrogate how urban informality is a key manifestation of the “feminization of work” and its relationship to normative masculine identity.

Additionally, I am in the early stages of an ethnographic film project on bus drivers and bus art in Abidjan, tentatively titled This is how we roll. Black men’s visibility and the status economy of bus portraiture on the African urban periphery: It will constitute the first half of my next book project comparing high-status jobs in the informal and formal sectors.

JORDANNA’S LIFE BEYOND BORDERS

- early 1990s, Duwergsteun, Burkina Faso
- mid 1990s, Pilbara, Australia and northern California
- late 1990s, Ibadan, Nigeria
- 1998 - 1999, Saint Paul, Minnesota
- 1999 - 2000, New York City – Columbia University, and Melbourne, Australia – University of Melbourne study abroad
- 1999 - 2000, UK – Projects Assistant, urban regeneration agency
- 2003, Xi’an, China – English teacher, Shannxi medical college
- 2004, Cochabamba, Bolivia – high school teacher
- 2004 - 2007, UC Berkeley, MLA and PhD, research in Abidjan
- Côte d’Ivoire (2008-2009); and dissertation writing in Kalapampa, Mexico (2010-2011)
- 2012 - present, IAST, France, and Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015 - American University, Washington, DC

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Distinguished Lectures in the Social Sciences

The Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse continues its special public lecture series, the IAST Distinguished Lectures in the Social Sciences, given by internationally renowned scholars on a theme of interest to all concerned citizens.

THEME FOR 2015:
THE HUMAN FAMILY

- **September 24, 2015:**
  Svante Pääbo
  Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig
  “Our evolutionary lineage”

- **November 5, 2015**
  Janet Currie
  Princeton University
  “The influence of families on the life outcomes of children”

- **December 3, 2015**
  Emmanuel Todd
  INED Paris
  “Globalization and the changing nature of families” (this lecture will be in French)

**Venue:** Amphitheater CUJAS at the Toulouse 1 Capitole University
**Address:** Anciennes Facultés, 2 rue des Puits-Creusés, 31000 Toulouse

www.iast.fr/dl

This magazine and event are funded by a French government subsidy managed by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche under the framework of the investissements d’avenir programme référence ANR-10-LABX-0029.