SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

A SHOWCASE OF EXCELLENT RESEARCH PROJECTS FROM LERU UNIVERSITIES
Introduction by the LERU Chair

Since its founding in 2002, the League of European Research Universities (LERU) has emerged as a prominent advocate for the promotion of basic research at European universities. LERU strongly believes that basic research plays an essential role in the innovation process and significantly contributes to the progress of society.

LERU aims at furthering the understanding and knowledge of politicians, policy makers and opinion leaders about the role and activities of research-intensive universities. Drawing on the impressive academic potential and expertise of its network, LERU has a strong and significant impact on research policy in Europe.

LERU is dedicated to continuing this through direct communication and discussions within the policy community, sound proposals for further improvement and progress, and carefully considered position papers on fundamental issues such as academic careers and the role of universities.

Our broad spectrum of activities and our contributions to the research policy debate have established LERU’s reputation as a major stakeholder in the EU. LERU now has an important and well-respected voice in the discussions about the future of Europe’s research policy. In the years to come, LERU will continue to influence policy, and intensify cooperation among like-minded organisations worldwide to stress the importance of universities for research and innovation.

This brochure provides an excellent overview of the interdisciplinary research being undertaken at the LERU member universities, focusing on interdisciplinary research lead by researchers from the Social Sciences and Humanities.

I wish you pleasant reading.

Alain Beretz
Chair of LERU
Introduction by the Chair of the LERU Social Sciences and Humanities community

The Social Sciences and Humanities at the LERU universities flourish. This brochure gives a few examples of exciting and valuable research done in the fields of the Social Sciences and Humanities. The examples make clear this research is of the utmost importance to society. The Social Sciences and Humanities provide society first of all with a deep understanding of human behaviour and human culture, in past and present. The importance of this understanding should be obvious, since most challenges we are faced with are human in nature. Climate change cannot be understood without understanding human behaviour, now and in the past. Technology alone cannot create a secure society. Health and wellbeing cannot be achieved by medicine alone.

LERU wants to confirm the importance of SSH research to its members. Humanities research generates important new knowledge that is fundamental to broader societal issues in the world. They include international conflicts, human rights, ethics, religious traditions, institutions, changing media, literacy, identities and cultural memories, linguistic diversity, creative industries and cultural heritage. The Social Sciences investigate the processes that govern the behaviours of individuals and groups. This understanding is as important as contributions from scientific and technological disciplines to the creation, implementation and evaluation of effective public policies and innovative structures underpinning corporate performance. Humanities and Social Sciences are a key part of the research and innovation spectrum and must be represented as both a separate and integrated part of any new research and innovation programme, national, European and global.

The members of LERU support SSH research in their institutions. To paraphrase the UCL Council White Paper 2011–2021: today, in an era when the arts, Humanities and Social Sciences are perceived as being under threat from government’s funding changes, LERU remains committed to maintaining and investing in them. We need to counter a trend towards instrumentalist attitudes towards higher education in the new funding environment. A significant part of the LERU members’ staff work in the SSH domain and a significant number of ERC grants in SSH are executed at LERU institutions. The top-5 universities with regard to the number of ERC grants in the SSH domain are member of LERU.

So it is with pride that the 21 LERU universities present inspiring examples of Social Science and Humanities research. It is research which also inspires and informs the teaching at our institutions to many students in a multitude of programmes. And as the Hefei statement on the ten characteristics of contemporary research universities says, these students will leave universities to work in government, business and the non-profit sector, taking with them the knowledge, skills, and understanding that make it possible for these sectors to work effectively, to respond to changing circumstances and to innovate, but also to create a richer, more resilient and often more diverse and humane society.

I hope you enjoy the reading!

Wim van den Doel
Chair of the LERU SSH community

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What was the role of music in the evolutionary history of human beings? I would like to explore the idea that we may know the evolution of music by investigating the fundamental cognitive mechanisms that make up musicality (e.g., relative pitch and beat induction). In addition, I propose to collect accumulative evidence from a variety of sources (e.g. developmental, psychological, computational, physiological, phylogenetic, and cross-cultural evidence) to be able to identify whether a specific cognitive mechanism is an adaptation or not.

While it recently became quite popular to address the study of the origins of music from an evolutionary perspective, there is still little agreement on the idea that music is in fact an adaptation, that it influenced our survival, or that it made us sexually more attractive (to mention three prevalent positions). Music appears to be of little use. So why argue that music is an adaptation?

In this project I will develop a strategy that emphasizes cognitive traits that could have contributed to the origins of music. I will investigate whether a bottom up approach, in which one looks for the basic mechanisms that combine into a complex cognitive trait - in our case musicality -, is an alternative and potentially fruitful way to proceed.

It could well be that there are more species than just humans that have the proper predispositions for music to emerge, species that share with us one or more basic mechanisms that make up musicality. The mere fact that music did not emerge in some species is no evidence that the trait of musicality is absent.

Principal investigator and research team

Henkjan Honing is a precious multi talent. He entered the university in 1992 at the age of 33, after a successful career as a musician. Both a composer and performer of new music, he covered a broad field ranging from composing computer music and constructing sound installations, to participating in gamelan ensembles and explorations in Brazilian percussion and harpsichord playing. Meanwhile he obtained his PhD in London. In 1992 he started research at the University of Amsterdam with flying colours. His research career is a straight line that demonstrates tremendous results, international acknowledgments and prestigious prizes.

He is leader of the Music Cognition Group that has 12 group members, 7 affiliated professors, several PhD students and a changing set of about 20 MA-students. (See http://www.mcg.uva.nl/about.html)

Project details

The Cognition, Biology, and Evolution of Musicality project is part of a combined effort of a dozen devoted scholars participating in several interconnected projects and programmes that all aim at the exploration of the origins of music and musicality from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The Music Cognition Group started in 2005 and developed fast in an internationally recognised research lab.

Link to the Music Cognition Group: http://www.mcg.uva.nl
The Centre for Social Science and Global Health (SSGH) facilitates the use of social science expertise to better understand global health processes and move global health towards a truly global and trans-disciplinary perspective on health problems. The Centre brings together leading social scientists working on key global health challenges at the University of Amsterdam and collaborates with medical scientists. The centre is part of the University of Amsterdam Global Health Research Priority Area.

SSGH has a broad theoretical and methodological approach involving:

- Multi-site ethnographic studies of the micro-context of particular health phenomena and of the role of culture in health
- Macro-level studies and analyses of social and economic processes, flows of people, medical technologies and information, and complex health-related inequalities
- Methodological innovation, development of mixed methods and qualitative methodologies for studying global health issues
- The development of large international databases of qualitative data relating to global health
- Historical ethnographies of the origins of existing health-related phenomena
- Applied problem-solving social science research in clinical and medical research settings
- Theory-oriented research and theory development as a framework for understanding global health processes

Current SSGH projects include:

- COHERE: Developing sustainable community health resources in Uganda
- Eating Bodies: The eating body in Western practice and theory
- AIDSRIGHTS: Rights, Responsibilities, and the HIV/AIDS Pandemic
- SociaLab: Addressing social, cultural and historical factors limiting the contribution of medical laboratory services to antenatal care in West Africa
- Chemical Youth: What chemicals do for youths in their everyday lives
- ADAPT: Adapting European health systems to diversity

Principal investigator and the research team

Prof. Anita Hardon and Prof. Robert Pool co-direct SSGH. They both have extensive experience leading ambitious multi-site and multidisciplinary research programmes addressing key global health challenges – such as pharmaceutical use, HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention, and end-of-life care - in Europe, Africa and Asia.

The centre is comprised of ten full professors, three emeriti, five associate professors, nine assistant professors and six post-doctoral researchers. In addition to various large programme grants the team also hold a number of prestigious individual grants: three ERC Advanced Grants (Anita Hardon, Niko Besnier and Annemarie Mol), two ERC Consolidator Grants (Amade M’charek and Vinh-Kim Nguyen) and one ERC Starting Grant (Jarrett Zigon). Annemarie Mol has also received the NWO’s Spinoza Prize, the highest Dutch award in science.

Since 2010, SSGH has been supported by core funding allocated to the University of Amsterdam’s Global Health Research Priority Area (€300,000 per year). Furthermore, the projects currently undertaken by SSGH members amount to a contract value of over €10,000,000 of external funding.

WEBSITE: www.ssgh.uva.nl
While the project is coordinated by Dr Helen Higson at Aston University, Dr Olga Jubany of University of Barcelona is responsible for the scientific and methodological coordination of this interdisciplinary project, which includes scholars from 10 countries, with backgrounds in social anthropology, sociology, urban studies, economics, social policy and educational science. In addition to the interdisciplinary academic perspective, another important aspect of the project is the active participation and inclusion in the research consortium by City Halls and NGOs. Dr. Olga Jubany is the Director of the European Social Research Unit and Reader at the Social Anthropology Department. She is a social anthropologist, author of several investigations and publications in the fields of social exclusion, social control, resilience and identity, from an ethnographic tradition focused on comparative multi-sited research within the European framework. Her work engages in topics of gender, age and origin, from an intersectional approach. Her current work includes the International Coordination for the project LinkAge: Labour Market Integration of Vulnerable Age Groups through Social Dialogue (funded by the DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion).

The aim of the project is to examine the current state of social innovation against inequalities faced by young people, particularly those disadvantaged by origin, cultural background, area of living, and educational and economic situation. The project seeks to uncover the various strategies for navigating, surviving and overcoming inequality that have emerged and are emerging, among young people, in 10 cities across Europe. Through in-depth ethnographic research with a range of stakeholders the project looks to uncover the conditions and resources that give rise to these ‘innovations’. It also seeks to map the current state of play with regard to policy and practice aimed at tackling inequalities and the extent to which these register the changing demographic landscape of inequalities as this manifests in large urban centres of EU cities in the context of the current economic crisis. The project will examine the extent to which these strategies might be regarded as socially innovative and explore ways in which such strategies are transferable to contexts across Europe. A key outcome will be a contribution to the knowledge base of the complex ways inequalities manifest in the current economic climate. This will be complimented with detailed case studies of innovative strategies that exist at the everyday level among young people and disadvantaged groups, and which help them mitigate against the effects of deprivation and civic disengagement.

Citispype is a 3 year collaborative project, launched in January 2013 and funded by the European Commission under the FP7 Research programme for Social Sciences and Humanities. The budget of the project is € 2.496.684

Project website: www.ub.edu/ESRU
Trajectories of modernity (TRAMOD)  Comparing non-European and European varieties

The “Trajectories of modernity” (TRAMOD) project aims at advancing the comparative analysis of contemporary societies and policies with a particular emphasis on the existing plurality of societal self-understandings and related institutional structures in the current global context. It analyses these self-understandings against the background of the historical trajectories of those societies. The analysis of the existing multiple forms of modernity is the major challenge to current social and political theory and comparative-historical and political sociology. It requires a conceptual and empirical analysis of that which is common to different forms of modernity and that which varies between them.

The specific objectives are:
(a) to complement the prevalent institutional analysis of modern societies with an interpretative approach that focuses on societal self-understandings, and to elaborate an understanding of how novel interpretations emerge and how they contribute to reshaping institutions;
(b) to disentangle the overly complex concept of modernity into components that are empirically analysable in terms of both commonalities shared by all modern societies and differences that are due to the variety of possible interpretations of modernity – in a first step, these components are defined as the political, economic and epistemic problems of modernity respectively, or in other words, as the answers societies give to the questions: what are the rules that enable people to live together; how will their material needs best be satisfied; what are the knowledge bases on which social action can rest;
(c) to analyze selected non-European societies – in sub-Saharan Africa and South America – in terms of their specific articulations of these components of modernity and their historical transformations;
(d) to confront analyses of European modernity with the new analyses of non-European modernities with a view to laying empirically rich foundations for a global sociology of trajectories of modernity.

TRAMOD has made major steps towards accomplishing its core objectives. Maybe most fundamentally, it embarked on an extensive retrieval of historical and conceptual debates that aim at revising prevalent views of the past half millennium of human history, in the West often joined together as the periods of early modernity and modernity.

Principal investigator and the research team

Peter Wagner is ICREA Research Professor; Department of Sociological Theory, Philosophy of Law, and Methodology of the Social Sciences; Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitat de Barcelona.

Educated in economics, political science and sociology in Hamburg, London and Berlin, Peter Wagner has been academically active in various European countries, including Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Norway, as well as the USA and South Africa, before coming to Barcelona. He held a permanent researcher position at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, was Professor of Sociology at the Universities of Warwick and of Trento and Professor of Social and Political Theory at the European University Institute, Florence.

Wagner’s research has found wide international recognition in three areas: the sociology of the social sciences; social and political theory; and comparative and historical sociology. Since his widely cited A Sociology of Modernity (1994) he has combined his interest in the latter two areas in the conceptually guided and historically sound, comparative analysis of contemporary societies and their historical trajectories, leading to further path-breaking publications such as Modernity as experience and interpretation (2008) and Modernity: understanding the present (2012). The latter work is the first major publication from the ongoing ERC Advanced Grant project “Trajectories of modernity”, comparing societal self-understandings in Latin America (focusing on Brazil and Chile) and in Southern Africa (focusing on South Africa) with those in Europe. Against current trends towards overspecialization, his work aims at recreating a comprehensive social science, with philosophical grounding and historical perspective, at the current level of conceptual and methodological debate.

Team:
http://www.ub.edu/tramod/members/#R

Project details

http://www.ub.edu/tramod/

European Research Council Advanced Grant “Trajectories of modernity: comparing non-European and European societies” (TRAMOD); no. 249438 7th Framework Programme, Call of 2009, start date July 2010; budget 2.3 mln €.
Each of today’s major food species is distributed worldwide. While much of that food globalisation has resulted from modern trade networks, it has its roots in prehistory. By the end of the second millennium BC, the south west Asian crops, wheat and barley, were in several parts of China, and Chinese millets and buckwheat were in Europe. There was a parallel exchange of crops between South Asia and Africa.

There are some striking features of that early phase of food globalisation, features that relate both to the crop plants themselves and to the societies that utilised them. A series of later episodes of globalisation, from the Classical period onwards, involve exotic fruits, vegetables and spices. The earlier phase, however, is manifested in evidence for staple sources of grain starch, the cereals, and the ‘pseudo-cereal’ buckwheat.

Our project employs archaeobotany, genetics, stable isotope analyses and ethno-archaeology to establish when and how that early globalisation of staple foodstuffs happened, what it meant for human societies in very different parts of Eurasia, and what it meant for the plants upon which they relied for food. Our primary foci for genetic analysis are barley, wheat, foxtail millet and broomcorn millet.

In order to understand the pathways of movement across the continent, we are collaborating in excavations in Kazakhstan and Western China. To place those vast landscapes in context, we are undertaking palaeoclimatic analyses with a primary focus upon the stable isotope record.

The project is necessarily interdisciplinary and shows the importance of SSH research for the Food Security and Climate challenges of Horizon2020.

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**Project details**

The project, which is primarily funded by an ERC Advanced Grant, started in 2010 with an approximate budget of £1.7M.

The project web-site is: http://www.foglip.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/index.html
A Science of Human Nature?
Philosophical Disputes at the Interface of Natural and Social Science

Recent years have seen renewed attempts on the part of natural scientists to invigorate and inform the social sciences. Two prominent examples include the efforts of cultural evolutionary theorists to account for cultural change and cultural stasis, and the efforts of evolutionary psychologists to provide a scientific account of human nature.

The two trends are sometimes seen as mutually complementary, sometimes as antagonistic: cultural evolutionary theory needs to be informed by research on human psychology, and some argue that evolutionary psychology can provide this. In both cases, these efforts have met considerable resistance from the social sciences, especially from social anthropology.

Opponents of evolutionary approaches often argue not so much that an integrated synthesis between cultural and evolutionary approaches is impossible, but rather that the evolutionists have failed to understand the legitimate sources of resistance to neo-Darwinian approaches within social and cultural anthropology. This five-year multidisciplinary project seeks to uncover the philosophical foundations of these disputes, to offer a resolution of them, and ultimately to point the way towards a reconciliation of the two domains.

It has wide-ranging significance for discussions concerning inter-disciplinarity and the leading role of the humanities and social sciences therein. This has a bearing, then, on all of Horizon2020’s Grand Societal Challenges, though perhaps particularly the cross-cutting themes of Science with and for Society and the integration of SSH.

Principal investigator and the research team

The project is led by Professor Tim Lewens, Professor of Philosophy of Science in the department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge.

The research team includes two postdoctoral researchers, Drs Adrian Boutel and Christopher Clarke, one postdoctoral research assistant, Dr Elizabeth Hannon, and two PhD students, Andrew Buskell and Riana Betzler.

Project details

The project, which is funded by an ERC Starting Grant, started in 2011 with a budget of approximately £1.2M.

The link to the project web-site is: https://www.humannature.hps.cam.ac.uk/
The Europeanisation of Citizenship in the New States of South East Europe (CITSEE)

Principal investigator and the research team

Jo Shaw holds the Salvesen Chair of European Institutions at the University of Edinburgh. She led a team of researchers including the project senior researcher Dr Igor Stiks, and more than fifteen research fellows for differing periods of time throughout the life of the project.

The team was interdisciplinary in character, encompassing lawyers, political scientists, political theorists, sociologists, anthropologists, historians and other interdisciplinary specialisms such as gender and women’s studies.

Many members of the team are early career researchers from the new states of South East Europe and the project has enabled them to develop their careers within international academia (including funded PhD positions and various postdoctoral positions).

When states break up, new states are created, along with new citizenship regimes. This is what happened in Yugoslavia in the 1990s and 2000s, with some states involved in successive disintegrations. However, in Europe today, another ‘integrative’ force comes into play, and that is the European Union.

CITSEE has studied citizenship in the post-Yugoslav states against the backdrop of processes of European integration, looking at those processes of disintegration and re-integration through a prism of citizenship, which stresses the link between individuals and polities.

The project has involved detailed and contextualised studies of the individual citizenship regimes, plus comparative studies of the main elements which are distinctive of the post-Yugoslav constellation, such as the prevalence of ethnic citizenship regimes, the multiplicity of different territorial regimes, the impact on minorities and also on citizens of other former Yugoslav republics, the effects on the Roma as a transnational minority without a ‘kin state’, and problems of dual citizenship.

Project details

The project was initially funded for 60 months by an ERC Advanced Investigator Grant, from April 2009 (€2.24m). A project extension for dissemination purposes has been agreed until the end of December 2014.

www.citsee.ed.ac.uk (this is our project website and it contains more than 30 working papers and details about the project)

www.citsee.eu (this is our project web magazine – Citizenship in South East Europe – it contains more than 100 shorter contributions, including studies, stories, blogs, op-eds, news items, and photo reportages).

A feature of the project has been the use of visual representations for dissemination – photo reportages, animations and now videos, available via http://vimeo.com/citsee).

Monument in Zagreb marking Croatia’s accession to the EU: 1 July 2013  -  © Jo Shaw
Nudge-it is a European Commission-funded FP7 project bringing together dozens of scientists from 16 institutions across six European countries, the US and New Zealand. The project engages internationally leading experts in the neurobiology of motivational behaviour, reward and regulation of appetite, experimental psychology, functional brain imaging, behavioural economics and computational modelling. The project will develop innovative tools that link understanding across these interacting disciplines. The overall aim is to better understand decision-making in food choice and to build predictive models to contribute to improving public health policy.

The work undertaken by Professor Belot will involve field and lab experimental work with families from poor socio-economic background. The goal will be to develop better behavioural models of eating behaviour and, in particular, shed light on the importance of early exposure to obesogenic foods as well as the role of maternal stress on preferences for obesogenic foods. We aim to understand how dietary preferences are shaped by early experience in life and how malleable they are later on in life. Ultimately, the research findings should help to develop more suitable policy tools to tackle the problem of obesity.

Principal investigator and the research team

Prof Michèle Belot is Professor of Economics in the School of Economics, College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UEDIN. She is the director of the new Experiment Laboratory at the School. She works mainly in the area of behavioural economics and economic policy, and has been involved in the design and evaluation of policy interventions using administrative data, survey data and data collected through randomised controlled experiments both in the laboratory and in the field. Her recent work encompasses studies on habitual behaviour in the context of diet.

Other team members include Jonathan James, lecturer at the Department of Economics at the University of Bath, whose research has focused on the implications of free school lunch programmes in the UK and Dr Valeria Skafida, lecturer in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh, who has studied how infant and toddler diets develop and change in the early part of the lifespan, and how children’s diets relate to family meal habits, family income and human capital.
The Maoist Legacy: Party Dictatorship, Transitional Justice and the Politics of Truth

The question of how states and societiescope with the legacy of past atrocities has attracted considerable attention during the past two decades. Research has often been framed by the concept of “transitional justice”, denoting various types of judicial or non-judicial approaches to address past human rights abuses. Underlying most studies is the normative precondition to analyze transitions from dictatorship to democracy only. Yet, how are we to frame large-scale rehabilitations of victims, lustrations of bureaucratic personnel, and trials against perpetrators during non-democratic regime transitions? The project “The Maoist Legacy” looks at one major example of redressing past injustices under continuing authoritarian governance: the reversal of political verdicts in the People’s Republic of China after the death of Mao Zedong.

In December 1978, the Chinese Communist Party decided to embark on a reform path that has led to China’s spectacular economic successes in the past three decades. Simultaneously, the party reevaluated the legacy of the Maoist era. This reassessment included several million “unjust” cases from the Maoist past and has been virtually left unattended to by scholarly research. The project aims at addressing this gap by analyzing and documenting the communist party’s strategies and the societal consequences of this major reversal of verdicts in a digital database. It proposes to interpret the partial break from the Maoist legacy as an important, yet by and large overlooked example of transitional justice. The project will significantly contribute to comparative theorizing about standards and processes of dealing with past injustices within different types of system changes and regime transitions.
Cultures of Mobility in Europe (COME)

In the context of increasing globalization, mobility has become a political key concept and counts among the founding principles of the European Union. COME explores the variegated practices, experiences and perceptions of mobility in Europe as well as the complex societal challenges that arise with it, focusing on milieus and groups that have engaged in extensive and versatile mobile work-life arrangements, long before the emergence of long-distance air travel and the internet, and/or have often been marginalized and discriminated against on the very grounds of their mobility. The explorative case studies include:

1. Travelling Artists. Mobility and Artistic Practice in the 21st Century
2. Between Global Desire and Local Angst: the Circus in Germany
3. Romani Mobilities across the Atlantic
4. Contemporary Im/‐Mobile Life-Worlds of Yeniche in Switzerland and Germany
5. Mobility through the Body – Practices and Experiences of Contemporary Street Performers
6. Vivre dans une roulotte: Mobile Lifeworlds of Alternative Travellers in Germany and France

From the perspective of highly mobile actors, COME sets out to explore 1. which mobility regimes currently exist in the EU and how they intersect with each other, 2. how individuals and groups navigate the trajectories emerging from di- and converging regulations for mobility, entry and stay on the local, the national and the European level, 3. how legal, economic and social inequalities impact mobile work-life arrangements of EU citizens, and 4. how social affiliation and political participation are negotiated under the premise of increasing mobility within the EU and its member states.

Principal investigator and the research team

The research group currently consists of 5 researchers and 2 non-academic staff members (a student assistant and a part-time secretary). It is directed by Anna Lipphardt, who holds a tenure-track Junior-Professsorship with the focus on “Mobility and Culture in Europe”. Having studied International Relations, Baltic, Jewish and Cultural Studies in in Lithuania, Germany and the US, she was a member of the interdisciplinary DFG Graduate Program MAKOM at Potsdam University, where she also received her doctorate in Cultural Studies in 2006. For her Dissertation she was awarded the Klaus-Mehnert-Preis 2007 of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde (DGO) and the Prix de la Fondation Auschwitz 2009.

After her first postdoc position at Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin, where she also co-directed the Groupe de Recherche “Nazisme” (2006-2008), she joined the Institute of Advanced Studies, Center fo Excellence “Cultural Foundations of Integration” and the Zukunftskolleg at Konstanz University as a postdoc fellow (2008-2011).

Further members include Dr.des. Matthias Möller, who holds a Magister Artium and doctorate in Empirical Cultural Studies from the University of Tübingen, and three doctoral students: Esteban Acuña, who received his Master of Arts in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University and a B.A. in Anthropology at the National University of Columbia, Bogota, Jeanne Labigné, who after training as a professional dancer in London and Paris, received her Magister Artium (M.A.) in Ethnology at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, and Anja Joos (currently on maternity leave), who holds a BA and an MA in Sociology from Konstanz University.
The founder and the present director

Founded by Prof. Klaus Scherer and presently directed by Prof. David Sander, the CISA has received 27 million Swiss francs in funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation and 6 million from the University of Geneva. In addition to multiple research projects in different Swiss universities, the Centre has established successful doctoral and postdoctoral programs as well as an international summer school. It is active in the advancement of women and many knowledge-transfer activities.

Website: http://www.affective-sciences.org

Established by the University of Geneva, the Swiss Centre for Affective Sciences (Centre Interfacultaire en Sciences Affectives, CISA) hosts the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) “Affective Sciences – Emotions in Individual Behaviour and Social Processes”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss State Secretariat for Research. Spanning the biological, psychological, and social dimensions of affect, the CISA is devoted to the study of emotions from a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective, in terms of both basic and applied research. The vocation of the Center is to understand emotions, and how they affect the way individuals and societies behave. The Center, founded in 2005, is recognized as one of the leading research institutes on emotion, as attested by the high number of publications in journals and books from different disciplinary domains, and by the capacity of the Center to establish numerous collaborations with institutions (universities and companies) from different countries.

Project details

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Website: http://www.affective-sciences.org

The Center is now directed by Prof. David Sander who studied mathematics and psychology at the University René Descartes (Paris, France), and received a PhD in Cognitive Sciences from the University Louis Lumière (Lyon, France). He joined the Department of Psychology at the University of Geneva (Switzerland) in 2001.
LIVES. Overcoming Vulnerability: Life Course Perspectives.

Co-hosted by the University of Geneva and the University of Lausanne, LIVES is a National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Research and the Swiss National Science Foundation. It approaches the concept of “vulnerability” from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing on sociology, psychology, social psychology, socio-economics, economics, demography and medicine.

From a socio-economic and a political point of view alike, human vulnerability is a growing concern, associated with more turbulent life courses and family dynamics, with the impact of economic changes in a global world on individual careers, with the injunction of self-realization, and with the “psychologization”, if not “pathologization,” of the social. Precariousness, exclusion, suffering, distress, and frailty are some of the related concepts addressed by the various disciplines. LIVES uses the analytical tools of the life-course and life-span research traditions to operationalize vulnerability, to disentangle latent and realized states of vulnerability, to identify sources of vulnerability but also of stability and resilience, and to analyse interactions between individual and social resources as well as the life-long construction of inequalities. The LIVES research programme surveys and analyzes longitudinal data with both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Principal investigator and the research team

Michel Oris holds a professorship at the University of Geneva, Faculty of Social Sciences, and directs the Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Gerontology and Vulnerability (CIGEV). He is the Geneva leader of the LIVES project, coordinating more than 40 researchers.

Originally trained as an historian and a demographer, he has a wide experience of European research networks. His current research focuses on the health and living conditions of the elderly, interactions between individual trajectories and dynamics of social change and the inscription of vulnerabilities in individual life-courses.

Project details

LIVES was launched in January, 2011. For the first four years, it has received 14 million Swiss francs in funding by the Swiss Confederation. The associated Swiss institutions of higher education have provided an additional 5 million Swiss francs in funding. LIVES is also supported by cantons and foundations such as Pro Senectute Switzerland. The expected duration of Swiss National Centres of Competence in Research is 12 years. Most NCCRs are in life and technical sciences. Along with the Centre for Affective Sciences, LIVES is one of a handful of NCCRs in social sciences and humanities.

Website: http://lives-nccr.ch/fr
Cluster of Excellence
“Asia and Europe in a Global Context. The Dynamics of Transculturality”

Heidelberg University’s Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” has become a hot spot for young researchers and senior scholars in the humanities and social sciences from around the globe. About 250 scholars examine the processes of exchange between cultures, ranging from migration and trade to the formation of concepts and institutions. A central question is in which dynamics the transcultural processes between and within Asia and Europe develop. These complex historical relationships are of great relevance for the global transformations of our time.

The Cluster’s more than 60 research projects are divided into the four research areas “Governance & Administration”, “Public Spheres”, “Knowledge Systems”, and “Historicities & Heritage”. Interdisciplinary Research Groups enable collaboration between scholars across the areas, and five professorships, including Germany’s first chair for Global Art History, deepen the expertise. Start-up professorships and Junior Research Groups create career paths for young scholars. The M.A. “Transcultural Studies” and the Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies offer a structured, interdisciplinary curriculum and enable individual research projects. The Heidelberg Research Architecture supports collaboration by providing research infrastructure, knowledge management and database development. The scientific results are published in two book series and an e-journal.


In 2013 the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies was founded as a central research institute of Heidelberg University. It will continue the structures and transcultural agenda in research and teaching of the Cluster beyond 2017.

Axel Michaels, Barbara Mittler, Joseph Maran
An Interdisciplinary Education Concept for Older Employees - A Response to Demographic Change

Since 2008, the University’s Institute of Gerontology has been implementing interdisciplinary education concepts in large German companies and administration departments which are pursuing five objectives: (1) Maintaining employability, professional motivation, good health and quality of life until reaching retirement age; (2) developing and fostering perspectives for the continuation of professional activity beyond the legally-defined retirement age; (3) promoting collaboration between young and old in the professional and working world; (4) increasing the utilisation of older employees' creativity; (5) preparing for their own old age.

These education concepts encompass the following intervention areas: (1) Medical examination, and positively influencing a healthy lifestyle; (2) cognitive training with the teaching of new cognitive strategies; (3) endurance, agility and light weight-training; (4) reflection on the own personality and the potential to design ageing; (5) positive influence on the images of age in companies.

The intervention areas mentioned form part of an intervention project which extends over a period of five months in the respective individual intervention groups. There are three survey time points: before the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the intervention. Numerous medical, sport and exercise science, as well as psychological, parameters are checked. To date, a total of $N = 750$ persons have participated in these education programmes. It has been shown that the cognitive, physical and emotional plasticity up into the seventh decade of life is so strong that older employees greatly benefit from the intervention measures. The willingness to participate in such measures is very strong in all educational and professional classes.

The project received the 2013 Human Resources Award for Health Management by the Berlin-based journal Human Resources Manager.

Andreas Kruse, Dr. Dr. h.c., Professor for Gerontology, Director of the Institute of Gerontology, born 1955, Academic education in Psychology, Philosophy, Psychopathology and Music. Research areas: Potentials, resources and competence in old age; prevention and training; rehabilitation, coping with border situations in old age; palliative care; ethics; translation of research into politics. – The companies which have participated in this educational project include German Railway Company, (Berlin), Robert Bosch Company (Stuttgart), and several companies which are members of the Chemical Company Association of Baden-Württemberg, as well as several town/city councils. Since 2003, the study leader – Andreas Kruse, Director of the Institute of Gerontology – has been Chairman of the Federal Government’s Commission on Age and Ageing, and, in this capacity, has the ability to translate the project results directly into government policy.

Project details

The project has started in 2008; the total budget is € 1,400,500.

Funding source: German Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, German Ministry for Health, German Railway Company, Robert Bosch Ltd., Robert Bosch Foundation.
European language diversity for all

The starting point of the project was that the European linguistic landscape is experiencing a profound transformation. Innovations and changes in language policies, education, migration patterns etc. challenge and change the roles and functions of languages within and between states, ethnic groups and nations. They even influence the behaviour of individual people and entire language communities.

The project ELDIA (European Language Diversity for All) was built up as an interdisciplinary research project and platform for reconceptualizing, promoting and re-evaluating individual and societal multilingualism. It consisted of experts on applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, law, social studies and statistics, who represented eight universities in six European countries. Each team consisted of several researchers and specialists of issues related with contemporary multilingualism. The main strategy of the consortium was to elaborate on shared aims and contribute to a better understanding of how local, “national” and “international” languages interact in contemporary Europe. The key term of vehicular language was launched in the call for projects.

During three years the empirical research was conducted with a selected sample of multilingual communities, which sought to cover practically the whole spectrum of different political and socioeconomic circumstances of linguistic minorities in Europe. The list of investigated target groups included smaller and more numerous, autochthonous or migrant communities, vigorous and endangered, highly or weakly standardized languages etc. Those minority languages that were analysed in more detail all belong to the Finno-Ugric language family which is seriously under-represented in internationally accessible sociolinguistic literature. The results of the research project, however, are generalizable which was the main goal from the very beginning. The results of the project contribute to the study of multilingualism and the development of language policies in other multilingual contexts as well, in and outside Europe. The European Language Vitality Barometer was developed for the detailed analysis of language minorities.

As regards the research of Finno-Ugric languages at the University of Helsinki, the project was an illustrative example of actual topics emerging from present-day language environments.
Interdisciplinarity, cognitive tools, and the future of social science

(Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences - TINT)

Much of contemporary debate over scientific research and research policy is concerned with varieties of interdisciplinarity: how scientific disciplines are best related to one another (science-science relations) and how they are to be related to extra-academic agents and concerns (science-society relations).

These debates are laden with issues of conceptual clarity as well as explanatory and normative principle. These issues set the agenda of the Centre of Excellence. Its mission is defined by two broad goals. It pursues a practically relevant philosophy of the social sciences with consequences for scientific practice and its management. And it pursues a path towards a new philosophy of interdisciplinarity in all its important varieties.

The attainment of these goals requires multidisciplinary collective effort utilising multiple methodological approaches. The disciplinary targets and perspectives include philosophy, economics, sociology, anthropology, history, political science, cognitive science, medicine, (evolutionary, systems and synthetic) biology, and more. The future of the social sciences will largely be shaped by how they interact with one another (such as economics shaping the styles and theories in other disciplines) and how they interact with the cognitive and life sciences (such as cognitive neuroscience making an impact on conceptions of agency in the social sciences), as well as how the social sciences are utilised for designing policies dealing with societal issues (such as business innovation, urban planning, global poverty, and climate change). TINT not only analyses these very complex trends and the tensions therein, but also actively intervenes and thereby seeks to facilitate desirable future developments.

Principal investigator and the research team

The Centre of Excellence is the largest international research community in its field with 30+ members and a number of research associates and visitors, representing a multidisciplinary compilation of competences. The director, Uskali Mäki, is currently an Academy Professor at the Academy of Finland. He has published on a range of topics in the philosophy of economics, scientific realism and social studies of science. His current work focuses on modelling in science and varieties of interdisciplinary dynamics.

Mäki has extensive experience of designing and coordinating innovative and internationally visible collective activities. In 1997 at Erasmus University of Rotterdam, he founded an interdisciplinary institute that brought together expertise from philosophy, economics, cultural studies and business studies; and in 2006 in Helsinki, he launched a research project that addresses issues of interdisciplinarity in and between the social, cognitive and life sciences.
Empowering expectancies for health and disease: Training the immune and endocrine system

The variability between patients in responses to the same treatment is one of the most challenging health care problems. Expectancies about health and disease, including chronic inflammatory conditions, are known to induce immune and endocrine responses and directly affect health and treatment outcomes, with explained variance between 25-50%. Expectancy mechanisms and their consequences on the immune and endocrine system can be consequently expected to largely contribute to the treatment variability.

The major aim of this project is to unravel the central mechanisms of how peoples’ expectancies affect immune and endocrine responses and related health outcomes, through the use of multidisciplinary methods in experimental studies in healthy and clinical populations. For this purpose, we systematically apply this innovative approach to humans with different expectancy learning approaches (e.g. conditioning) and relate them to psychological, neurobiological and genetic mechanisms. Moreover, we study the long-term effects of novel psychological expectancy therapies, directed at immune and endocrine trainings, on reduced regular pharmacological treatments in chronic inflammatory conditions (e.g. replacing anti-inflammatory pharmacotherapies, reducing side effects).

This unique, cross-boundary approach provides innovative theoretical and clinical implications by connecting Social Sciences with Biomedical and Life Sciences, in addition to collaborations with Neuroscience and Humanities. Unraveling these mechanisms of training immune and endocrine responses provides a major validation of translational research that is largely based on animal research. Findings are of crucial importance for various health problems, opening new horizons for innovative health prevention and therapeutic strategies for a broad range of inflammatory conditions and physical symptoms.

Project details

Andrea Evers obtained an ERC Consolidator Grant in 2013, the personal grant for high-potential researchers in their mid-term career, within the 7th Framework Programme for Research, technological Development and Demonstration. Panel Social Sciences and Humanities (The Human Mind and Its Complexity). The grant is entitled “Empowering expectancies for health and disease: Training the immune and endocrine system”, with a total budget of ca. 2.000.000 Euro. The ERC project focuses on optimizing the role of placebo mechanisms and expectations (e.g. conditioning) in health and disease by training the immune and endocrine system. In this ERC Consolidator Grant, both laboratory experiments and clinical-experimental research in healthy subjects and clinical conditions are conducted. The project is hosted at the Institute of Psychology at Leiden University with close collaborations with the Leiden University Medical Center and other (inter)national partners, such as the Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition & Behavior of the Radboud University or the University of Essen. The project has a time schedule from 1 September 2014 to 1 September 2019.
NEXUS1492

Project details

The project is an ERC Synergy Grant (FP7) awarded in 2012 for a duration of 6 years with a total budget of €14.8M

THE TITLE OF THE PROJECT: NEXUS 1492: New World Encounters in a Globalising World

PROJECT PARTNERS:
- Prof. dr. Corinne L. Hofman (CPI), University of Leiden, the Netherlands (archaeology)
- Prof. dr. Gareth R. Davies (PI), VU University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (geochemistry)
- Prof. dr. Ulrik Brandes (PI), University of Konstanz, Germany (network science)
- Prof. dr. Willem J.H. Willems (PI), University of Leiden, the Netherlands (heritage)

PROJECT WEBSITE: www.nexus1492.eu

Corinne L. Hofman is Corresponding Principal Investigator of the ERC-synergy project NEXUS 1492. She directs a large international research group. Hofman has carried out archaeological research in the Caribbean since the 1980s. Her primary interests are the communication systems and interaction networks of the indigenous Amerindian populations prior and after European colonisation in 1492.

NEXUS1492’s unique trans-disciplinary synergy of four PIs and their teams of archaeologists, social, natural and computer scientists, and heritage experts will pioneer new analytical tools, and apply multi-disciplinary cutting-edge techniques, theoretical frameworks and skill sets to provide a novel perspective on New World encounters in a globalising world.

NEXUS1492 investigates the impacts of colonial encounters in the Caribbean, the nexus of the first interactions between the New and the Old World. This Synergy Programme intends to rewrite a crucial and neglected chapter in global history initiated by European colonisation by focussing on transformations to indigenous, Amerindian cultures and societies. NEXUS1492 addresses intercultural Amerindian-European-African dynamics at multiple temporal and spatial scales across the historical divide of 1492. NEXUS1492 will work with local experts to develop sustainable heritage management strategies, creating a future for the past. This past is under threat from looting and illegal trade, construction development and natural disasters (e.g., climate change, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions).

By placing the Caribbean’s indigenous past within a contemporary heritage agenda, this programme strives to increase the awareness and protection of heritage resources. The innovative approach and outcomes of NEXUS1492 will be of global scientific significance and high societal relevance.
Comparing Technology cultures in Urban DR Congo (1960-present): Kinshasa, Kikwit and Lubumbashi

Contemporary societies are faced with an ever-increasing importance of new kinds of technologies. Anthropologists ask questions about the interactions between the non-human and the human. Urban anthropologists look into the ways in which technologies organize and are organized by urban lifeworlds. The research program sets out to analyse the ways in which technological infrastructures have been co-producing the postcolonial society in 3 different cities of the Democratic Republic of Congo (1960-present).

The selected types of technology are located in the domains of communication (telegraph communication, radio/TV, landline and cellular telephony, and/or Internet interactions), health (e.g. hospitals, medical laboratories, blood tests, imaging technologies like X-Ray radiography and ultrasound), and energy (electricity, nuclear energy, and/or hydro-energy). The choice of 3 different types of technology is informed by a desire to distinguish between the specificities of particular technologies and political, cultural and social influences on appropriations of technology. This will be the first comprehensive study of the dialectics between technology, society and culture in African urban contexts. The cities are Kinshasa, Kikwit and Lubumbashi.

The methods used are long-term fieldwork in DR Congo, including participant-observation, interviews, and archival research in Congo. Drawing on insights of urban anthropology, anthropology of technology and African studies, the goal is threefold: (a) to contribute to the field of urban anthropology by bringing in new concepts and claims through a “technology” focus; (b) to contribute to the field of Science, Technology & Society (STS) by formulating Africanist perspectives; and (c) to contribute to the genre of ethnographic writing by experimenting with “localized manuals”.
Frame – Fostering Human Rights Among EU (Internal and External) Policies

Context - FRAME focuses on the ways in which the EU’s internal and external policies can contribute to the promotion of human rights. The Lisbon Treaty has made the respect and promotion of human rights a core value and objective for all the EU’s actions and policies. However, the EU is confronted with important challenges in this respect, such as the fragmentation of human rights-related competences between itself and the Member States, the coherence between its human rights and other policies, and the growing contestation by a number of third countries of certain understandings of human rights and of the position of the EU to promote them.

Objectives – FRAME’s main objective is to address these challenges through multidisciplinary social science research and thereby to have a decisive impact on the EU’s policies by providing the necessary building blocks for the development of comprehensive and coherent European Human Rights Policies. FRAME contribute in this regard: (i) a sound knowledge base taking into account the evolving factors, concepts, institutions and instruments underlying the protection and promotion of human rights at the EU, international and national levels; (ii) a critical examination and appraisal of the EU’s real and potential contribution to global human rights governance through its engagement with actors and its wide-ranging policies and instruments; (iii) a thorough scrutiny of the effectiveness of human rights promotion in the maze of EU institutions, competences and policies; and (iv) a set of indicators, tools and policy proposals allowing for a consistent and tailor-made integration of human rights in EU external and internal actions and policies.

Principal investigator and the research team

FRAME is coordinated by Prof. Dr. Jan Wouters and a specially assigned team of five researchers at the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies (KU Leuven). The project as a whole is carried out by a consortium of 19 academic partners from the EU (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, UK) and third countries (China, Egypt, India, Peru, South Africa, the US). The full list and presentation of partners is available here: http://www.fp7-frame.eu/partners-universities/

The project was entrusted to the consortium after a highly competitive selection process.

Prof. Dr. Jan Wouters is Full Professor of International Law and International Organizations, Jean Monnet Chair Ad Personam EU and Global Governance, and founding Director of the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies and of the Institute for International Law at Leuven University. He is Visiting Professor at Sciences Po (Paris), Luiss University (Rome) and the College of Europe (Bruges).

Adaptive governance of mountain ecosystem services for poverty alleviation enabled by environmental virtual observatories

Mountain regions are complex socio-ecological systems undergoing unprecedented environmental changes. At the same time, they are among the most data scarce regions in the world. This is especially true for remote regions such as the Himalaya and the Andes, which contain many “poverty pockets”: poor communities bypassed by economic development, and suffering most from the degradation of ecosystems services such as water supply and soil fertility.

New technological developments in sensor technology and mobile networks hold great promise to alleviate the lack of knowledge about ecosystem services in such regions. At the same time, technology to promote social interaction and knowledge sharing, such as mobile phones, make it possible to include local people and other decision-makers in this process, to ensure that the generated information is relevant for local ecosystem management and adopted in the decision making process.

The project experiments with participatory monitoring of water supply and soil quality in remote regions of Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Ethiopia and Peru. A team of engineers and natural scientists develops new sensors and methods for data quality control and interpretation together with local stakeholders. Meanwhile, a team of social scientists analyses the dynamics of local decision-making, the impact of new scientific knowledge, and the consequences for local development and poverty alleviation.

The ultimate goal of the project is to turn the classic top-down approach of knowledge generation and transfer into a participatory and inclusive process of “co-generation of knowledge” between all involved actors, favouring poor and disadvantaged groups.

Principal investigator and the research team

The international research team includes investigators from Imperial College London, the University of Birmingham, Wageningen University, the University of Antwerp, the Technical University of Berlin, and Cornell University. The consortium merges expertise in environmental engineering, hydrology, meteorology, political geography and environmental governance, natural resources management, public administration and policy, institutional development, and ecology. Regional project partners provide further research capacity and locally relevant knowledge: the University of Bahir Dar (Ethiopia), the University of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan), the Society for Hydrology and Meteorology (Nepal), and the Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Eco-region (Peru), who all represent an elaborate network of local partners.

Principal Investigator Wouter Buytaert is a senior lecturer at Imperial College London. He has 15 years of research experience in tropical mountain regions, focusing on the impact of human activities on the water cycle, water resources management and decision support, and sustainable development.

Project details

The 3-year project started in November 2013 with a budget of £1.8 million.

It is funded by the NERC/ESRC/DFID programme on Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA).

PROJECT WEBSITE:
http://paramo.cc.ic.ac.uk/espa/
Weather and Trade in a Globalized World: A Firm-level Analysis

Evidence is mounting that climate change is not only a phenomenon of the future, but that the weather might already be changing now. In recent years, the frequency of extreme weather events, such as extreme temperatures, draughts and floods, has risen. This project assesses the costs that arise from climate change, not on the basis of simulations, but from actual events. In a globalized world, economic activity is likely to be affected both by local weather and by events worldwide through global supply chains.

Using a unique dataset of firm-level trade-transactions combined with high resolution weather data, we examine the relationship between weather and the productivity of manufacturing firms in Europe. Through econometric analysis, we derive both the direct and indirect effects of weather on the firms’ economic performance. We observe that domestic exposure to high temperatures can reduce firm productivity. Global firms are shown to be affected by weather events internationally if they import elements of their production process from countries exposed to such events, emphasizing the importance of the degree of vertical specialization, as well as changes in comparative advantage, when looking to understand the global impact of climate shocks.

Mitigating climate change necessitates major economic shifts for our societies. By measuring with greater precision the amount of damages that could be avoided by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, one can provide better motivation for the required actions. This is an example of how economic and other SSH research can inform policy making on climate change, one of society’s greatest challenges.

Principal investigator and the research team

Dr Mirabelle Muûls is a Junior Research Fellow in the Business School and an associate of the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London. Her research focuses on the economics of climate change, seeking to understand the impact of climate change policies on environmental and economic performance, as well as climatic influence on economic and social outcomes.

Jonathan Colmer is a PhD candidate at the London School of Economics, based at the Centre for Economic Performance. His research explores the intersection between economic and natural systems and the assessment of policy interventions on business and environmental performance.

Dr Ralf Martin is an Assistant Professor in Economics at Imperial College London. His research assesses the impact of government interventions on business and environmental performance.

Dr Ulrich Wagner is an Associate Professor in Economics at Carlos III University in Madrid, Spain. His work focuses on assessing the impact of climate change policies, such as the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme or the UK Climate Change Levy on economic performance.

Project details

Our project started in Summer 2013 and is ongoing. Mirabelle Muûls was funded by the Leverhulme Trust through an Early Career Fellowship (ECF-2011-622).

This research is also supported by the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London (http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/grantham/resources/ipccwg3/supply-chains).
UCL Lancet Commission on Managing the Health Effects of Climate Change

This report, the result of a truly inter-disciplinary team of researchers from virtually every one of UCL’s ten faculties, argued that climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st Century. It demonstrated that at least six different pathways connect climate change to global health: changing patterns of disease and morbidity; food security; water and sanitation; shelter and human settlements; extreme events; and population and migration. While the empirical work was provided by a team of medical and other scientific specialists, the report was framed as a set of distinctive challenges drawing on concepts from social science, law and humanities.

An epistemological challenge identifies the various informational gaps needed to address the health effects of climate change. An ethical challenge identifies the injustice that the worst effects of climate change are likely to fall on the poor and most vulnerable. A political challenge identifies the lack of global and local governance mechanisms needed to undertake concerted action. This framing, which structures the entire report, was devised by a sub-group of the commission including academics and researchers from anthropology, law, political science, geography, economics and philosophy.

Project details

2008-2009

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/igh/research/projects/all-projects/lancet-1

Budget around £50,000, provided by UCL Grand Challenge of Global Health and The Lancet.

Currently it has 756 citations on Google Scholar

Principal investigator and the research team

The Principal investigator was Professor Anthony Costello from UCL’s Institute of Global Health, and the team included Mustafa Abbas (medical student) Adriana Allen (Development Planning Unit), Sarah Ball (Institute of Global Health), Sarah Bell (Institute of Global Health), Richard Bellamy (School of Public Policy), Sharon Friel (Epidemiology and Public Health), Nora Groce (Disability and Inclusive Development), Anne Johnson (Population Health), Maria Kett (Disability and Inclusive Development), Maria Lee (Laws), Caren Levy (Development Planning Unit), Mark Maslin (Geography), David McCoy (Global Health), Bill McGuire (Earth Science), Hugh Montgomery (Medical School), David Napier (Anthropology), Christina Pagel (Mathematics), Jinesh Patel (Medical Student), Jose Antonio Puppim de Oliveira (Environment and Sustainable Development), Nanneke Redcliff (Anthropology), Hannah Rees (Researcher), Daniel Rogger (Economics), Joanne Scott (Law), Judith Stephenson (Population Health), John Twigg (Civil Engineering), Jonathan Wolff (Philosophy), Craig Patterson (Facilitator).

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) philosopher, jurist and spiritual father of UCL
The Commission met during November, 2009, to June, 2011, to provide an analysis of how health outcomes can be improved through modification of the physical fabric of towns and cities and to discuss the role that urban planning can have in the delivering of health improvements. The Commission began from the premise that cities are complex systems, with urban health outcomes dependent on many interactions and feedback loops, so that prediction within the planning process is fraught with difficulties and unintended consequences are common.

The report emphasized the importance of engaging stakeholders in the planning process; the difficulties of health inequalities within cities; and the importance of complexity analysis to explore unintended consequences in complex systems.

These are inter-related issues: changes in the urban environment often lead to unintended consequences which particularly affect the poor and vulnerable who are often excluded from the debates that gave rise to the initiatives. More inclusive, community based, engagement is recommended as part of future planning. The inter-disciplinary team included academics from the Bartlett School of Planning, Geography, Philosophy, Engineering, Population Health and elsewhere in order to provide a holistic framework in approaching a topic which is intrinsically multi-disciplinary.

The UCL Lancet Commission on Shaping cities for health: complexity and the planning of urban environments in the 21st century

Principal investigator and the research team

Yvonne Rydin Principal Investigator, Professor of Planning, Environment and Public Policy in the UCL Bartlett School of Planning.

Ana Bleahu (Geography), Michael Davies (Building Physics and Environment), Julio D Dávila (Urban Policy), Sharon Friel (Global Health), Giovanni De Grandis (Philosophy), Nora Groce (Disability and Inclusive Development), Pedro C Hallal (Child Health), Ian Hamilton (Sustainable Design), Philippa Howden-Chapman (Public Health), Ka-Man Lai (Civil Engineering), C J Lim (Architecture), Juliana Martins (Urban Design), David Osrin (Global Health), Ian Ridley (Planning), Ian Scott (Facilitator), Myfanwy Taylor (Geography), Paul Wilkinson (Epidemiology), James Wilson (Philosophy).

2009 - 2011

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/healthy-cities/

Budget around £50,000, provided by UCL Grand Challenge of Sustainable Cities and The Lancet, UCL Alumni and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council Crucible Programme.
Principal investigator
and the research team

Marianne Gullberg, PI, is professor of Psycholinguistics at the Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, and Director of Lund University Humanities Lab, an interdepartmental research and training facility for the Humanities. At the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, the Netherlands, 2000-2009, she headed the research group The Dynamics of Multilingual Processing and co-founded the Nijmegen Gesture Centre, the first centre of its kind. She has published extensively on second language/bilingual acquisition and processing, on gesture production and comprehension. She uses both behavioural and neurocognitive methods and her research is funded by several national funding agencies. She edits three international journals, and has acted as Vice-president of EUROSLA. The research team will consist of SSH experts on language, acquisition, gesture, and neurocognition, of programmers and VR specialists, forming an interdisciplinary team.

Most people in the world speak several languages and often learn new languages in adolescence or adulthood. All speakers also coordinate speech and gestures in language-specific ways. The world is thus bilingual and communication is bimodal. Yet we know surprisingly little about the neuropsychological processes underlying bimodal use and learning of multiple languages, and even less about how language learning can be improved and facilitated. Understanding these issues is central to all disciplines concerned with the human condition – our thinking, learning, communication, and evolution. It is also a societal challenge of the first order. In a world where bilingualism is prevalent and also an educational goal, it becomes imperative to probe the nature of bilingualism and learning, and to find effective strategies for education. This project tackles these challenges in three ways. First, we establish bimodal profiles of monolingual and bilingual speakers combining data from sensor technology (articulography, motion capture) with detailed linguistic analyses. Second, we build virtual monolingual and bilingual speakers combining the sensor data with virtual reality (VR) techniques to develop test platforms and digital tools for teaching (e.g. virtual French teachers). Third, we probe monolingual and bilingual speakers’ bimodal comprehension using electrophysiological measures of brain activity and manipulated virtual agents (e.g. accent-free speech with foreign gesture). Strand one and three provide baseline data, and strand two crucially develops tests of bilingualism and tools for improving learning based on these baselines. The combination of expertise in linguistics, phonetics, learning theory, didactics, and computational approaches to (big) language data is vital to the enterprise.

The first necessary focus of the project is on method development, specifically for the coordination and alignment of articulography (speech) and motion capture (gesture) systems in data collection and in analyses. New test paradigms for electrophysiology must also be piloted. One key challenge is to develop models of coarticulation of (sustained) speech data in articulography which has so far mainly been applied to the production of isolated words. Another challenge is to develop detailed hand models for manual gestures in motion capture. Existing models have typically been tailored to practical goal-directed actions (grasping and lifting cups, for example), rather than manual gestures which have different properties. The project therefore has few breakthroughs to report at this point, but we expect to have made major advances in all areas within a year, advances crucially dependent on crossdisciplinary collaboration between SSH scholars and experts from other fields.

Embodied bilingualism: Handling multiple languages in development and use

The project is funded by a Wallenberg Scholar grant to Gullberg from the Knut & Alice Wallenberg Foundation with a total budget of 15 million SEK (approx. 1.6 million EUR) over five years. The project has started in earnest in 2014.

http://www.sol.lu.se/en/project/631
Just and Durable Peace

The project focused on just peace and how to build a durable peace in the Middle East and the Western Balkans. The project utilised an interdisciplinary approach, drawing upon insights in peace & conflict research, international law, political science and international relations in order to make contributions to science, policy-making and the causes of just and durable peace.

The project focused on three objectives: The first concerned the quest for justice in contemporary peace processes, which is a central concern as several violent conflicts and wars are distinguished by gross human rights violation, ethnic cleansing and extensive suffering among civilians. These conflicts are particularly resistant to conflict settlement through negotiation and traditional diplomacy. The use of transitional justice mechanisms, for instance, democratic reforms, protection of human rights and the (re)installation of the rule of law, have come to the fore on the peace-building agenda. The second objective focused on the quest for durable peace as several contemporary conflicts tend to resist negotiated settlement and the ones that do reach a peace agreement still have a poor track record on implementation. The third objective addressed the quest for effective strategies, particularly concerning the legal and democratic accountability of states and international organisations in comprehensive post-conflict peacebuilding.

Project details

The project was funded within the 7th Framework Programme, awarded 2007, for the period 2008 – 2011, with a total budget of €1 350.

www.justpeace.eu

Principal investigator and the research team

The project was coordinated by the Department of Political Science, Lund University and the consortium consisted of seven partners. Associate professor Karin Aggestam was project leader and scientific coordinator; associate professor Annika Björkdahl was project manager. Principal investigators and team leaders were professor Oliver Richmond, school of International Relations, University St Andrews; professor Adrian Hyde-Price, Centre for European politics and languages, Bath University; professor Chandra Lekha Sriram, Centre for human rights, University of East London; professor Inger Östergedal, faculty of law, and professor Peter Wallensteen, department of peace & conflict, Uppsala University; professor Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, swiss centre for conflict resolution, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and dr Hasan Mohmani, centre for conflict prevention, Jordan Institute for Diplomacy.
Principal investigator and the research team

The P.I., Giovanna Bagnasco Gianni, is associate professor of Etruscan Studies in the Università degli Studi di Milano (Dipartimento di Beni Culturali e Ambientali - L-ANT/06), a member of the Dottorato di Ricerca (Etruscologia) group at Sapienza Università di Roma and of the Istituto Nazionale di Studi Etruschi e Italici. Her most important achievements relate to contact among different cultures in the ancient European and Mediterranean world.

She is the director (2004) of the archaeological excavations of the Università degli Studi di Milano at Tarquinia and responsible for an interdisciplinary research team that is formed by a number of scholars involved in research, conservation and valorization of Cultural Heritage:

- Università degli Studi di Milano
  Stefano Valtolina (Informatica)
  Andrea Zerboni (Geografia Fisica e Geomorfologia)
  Eleonora Riva (Psicologia Sociale)
- Politecnico di Milano
  Susanna Bortolotto (Settore ICAR/19 - Restauro)

Despite the current use of multidisciplinary methods, we face archaeological interpretation still entrusted to preconceived theoretic models. On the contrary our ecosystem of tools and services, thanks to which multidisciplinary domain experts can examine all typologies of data of a given culture, makes it possible to shift from the materiality of Archaeology to invisibility of Ancient life through the identification of the “syntactic” links connecting the material aspects of the documentation left by ancient communities.

However by controlling the whole research process, the “Tarquinia Project” is also going to be the benchmark for developing outreach innovative and creative solutions to involve scholars and the public at large, according to their context of use, needs and interests. The virtual Museum of the “Tarquinia Project”, available on-line, offers a dynamic overview of the cultural heritage of the Etruscan Tarquinia (UNESCO 2004) and represents a model to be adopted also in other situations.

Project details

The “Tarquinia Project” started in 1982 and has been carried out by the Università degli Studi di Milano thanks to a series of national grants. “Tarchna”, the virtual Museum of the “Tarquinia Project”, was co-funded by the EU.


DURATION: 2004-2007

TOTAL BUDGET: 1046,000 euros

link to project website http://tarchna.tarchna.it/totemonline/ (web browser CHROME)

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Project leader:
Università degli Studi di Milano
1. Dipartimento di Scienze dell’Antichità
2. Dipartimento di Informatica e Comunicazione (DICO)

Co-organisers:

- Computer Science Department, Claude Bernard University Lyon (France)
- Institute of Archaeology/ Art Collections, Ruhr - University of Bochum (Germany)
- Department of Computer Sciences, University College Dublin (Ireland)
- Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland)
- Department of Classical Archaeology, University of Warszawa (Poland)
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)
Reconciling Economic and Social Europe: Values, Ideas and Politics (RESc-EU)

The welfare state (WS) and the EU are two precious legacies of the XX century. Their mutual relationship has been however fraught by unresolved tensions (and a potential “clash”), which the recent crisis seems to have markedly exacerbated. The project purpose is to investigate the genetic roots of such tensions, their temporal swings, the possible institutional solutions and their political pre-conditions. When, how and why did the initial “elective affinity” between the WS and the EU start to weaken? Is “reconciliation” possible and how? The project will focus on the intellectual and political dynamics of both WS-building and EU-building. Drawing on Weber’s insights on the relationship between values, ideas, and politics, a new framework will be elaborated, aimed at reconnecting these three elements in the explanation of change, thus breaking new grounds in institutional theories. An extensive empirical work will be carried out, based on a multi-disciplinary approach (political science, political philosophy, sociology, history, policy analysis, law and economics). Detailed case studies will reconstruct the logic of key past junctures, such as the crisis of the 1970s, the years between the Amsterdam and the Lisbon Treaties, the post-2008 crisis. Public attitudes on the EU’s social dimensions will be tapped through a survey and a “Blog Sentiment Analysis”. Academic and expert networks will be involved as well as EU policy makers, in order to discuss the scientific and policy implications of the project results. Policy documentation, assessment and proposals will be produced through an observatory (“EUvisions”) for systematic data collection and analysis on (social) EU-building “in action”.

Project details

The project is funded by an ERC Advanced Grant and has started in June 2014.

The host Institution is the University of Milan, Department of Social and Political Sciences. There will also be an additional participant: the Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione Luigi Einaudi, Turin, which will host the EUvision observatory.

The total funds will be in the order of 2.5 million euros for five years.

The project’s main deliverables will be scientific articles, and at least two edited books and one single author monograph. A number of academic seminars and conferences will be organized, bringing together scholars from different backgrounds. The EUvision observatory’s production will be more policy-oriented and will include: a regular newsletter on “EU-voices from the net”, tapping in almost real time public orientations on EU-building; a number of timely issue papers on relevant challenges, in order to contribute to the European policy debate and a series of regular “Intellectual Europe reviews” discussing major statements by academics, think tanks experts, public intellectuals etc.

Principal investigator and the research team

Maurizio Ferrera is Professor of Political Science and President of the Graduate School in Social, and Political Studies of the University of Milan. He has published widely in the fields of comparative welfare states and European Integration. He is the author of “The Boundaries of Welfare. European Integration and the New Spatial Politics of Social protection” (Oxford University Press, 2005). In Italian he has recently co-authored “Alle Radici del Welfare all’Italiana” (Marsilio, 2012). He sits in many scientific boards and has been adviser of the European Commission since 1993. In his role as policy adviser, he has constantly strived to highlight the role of interdisciplinarity for framing and solving collective problems.

The project team includes a senior researcher and three post-docs, recruited through an open competition. The “EUvision” observatory involves several junior policy analysts.
The Rachel Carson Center (RCC) is an international and interdisciplinary project at LMU that started in 2009. It is sponsored by Germany’s Federal Ministry for Research and Education. Its research focuses on “Nature as a Cultural Challenge” and on “Transformations in Environment and Society”. The RCC is open to scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. RCC fellows and staff members have training in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences; many are environmental historians. More than 100 fellows and over 30 doctoral students have been working on issues regarding the interrelationship between environmental and social changes. Our research focuses in particular on the reasons—social engines, political factors, cultural perceptions, and environmental conditions—that have caused changes in the past and will cause changes in the future. The focus on “transformation” has particular currency in the context of current public discussions. It is found in the main recommendations of Germany’s Advisory Council on Global Change, Welt im Wandel—Gesellschaftsvertrag für eine Große Transformation (World in Transition: A Social Contract for Sustainability). In their work, Carson fellows are focusing on the dynamism of natural transformation, the force of social change, and gradual shifts in environment and society. Many of the questions that project members ask are of immediate political relevance; they deal with changes in economies and values, with the creation of new political systems and technologies, with the drying up of old natural resources or the discovery of new ones, and they discuss unintended consequences and risks that have been involved in historical attempts to control nature.
Digitalization has been dramatically changing the communication of news. While journalists were traditionally responsible for creating, interpreting and distributing news, the rise of the Internet has empowered regular citizens to participate in (and thus to influence) this process. Recently, digitalization has also begun to take over other tasks that used to be reserved for journalists such as the selection and aggregation of news. In particular, services that automatically bundle content and tailor it to the users’ individual preferences are becoming increasingly popular as a cost-effective and efficient means to process information (e.g., Google News). Yet, little is known about how these developments may change the traditional business models of publishers and thus may affect the quality of public communication in general.

The goal of this project is to address these questions by examining two main elements of the media ecosystem: agenda setting and the funding of news services. In an experimental setting, we will test different methods for aggregating and personalizing news. These methods include content-based filtering (which selects content based on the individual interests of the user), collaborative filtering (which selects content prioritized by the crowd of other users), and a hybrid of both methods. The results will provide information on the topic agenda and users’ willingness-to-pay and will thus contribute to the agenda setting theory and the digital goods theory. The project provides the starting point for the new research area “Individual and Societal Consequences of Digitalization” at LMU Munich.
IMPerspectives is a new EU-funded 9 million euro research project coordinated by the University of Oxford (Dr. Paula Harrison) and involving 27 research institutions in Europe and beyond from a wide range of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary backgrounds. This team are working together on the major societal challenge of climate change. More specifically, IMPRESSIONS aims to advance understanding of the consequences of high-end climate change and to evaluate how such knowledge can be embedded within effective and integrated adaptation and mitigation decision-making processes. The project works closely with decision-makers to better understand their knowledge needs and maximise their active participation in the research. It is also developing a novel stakeholder-driven methodology for the creation of an integrated set of high-end climate and more extreme socio-economic scenarios. These scenarios are being applied to a wide range of existing and new models of impacts and adaptation in five case studies covering global, European and regional/local (Scotland, Iberia and Hungary) scales.

The impacts modelling work is embedded within an integrated assessment approach which advances analysis of multi-scale and cross-sectoral synergies and trade-offs (covering the agricultural, forestry, biodiversity, water, coastal, urban and health sectors). The time- and path-dependency of adaptation and mitigation options will then be evaluated taking account of the non-linearity and tipping points described in the scenarios and impact model results. Finally, all the results will be synthesised and analysed to identify the inherent risks and opportunities associated with new integrated policy strategies for adaptation to, and mitigation of, high-end climate change.

Project details
The IMPRESSIONS project started on 1 November 2013 and has a duration of 5 years, finishing on 31 October 2018.

The total budget for the project is 11,250,000 euros of which the EU contribution is approximately 9 million.

The project is funded under the European Commissions’ 7th Framework Programme.

Further information can be obtained from the project’s website: www.impressions-project.eu.
The Balkh Art and Cultural Heritage Project (BACH)

Oxford University’s ‘Balkh Art and Cultural Heritage Project,’ (BACH) funded by the Leverhulme Trust has a dual aim of undertaking new research on Afghanistan’s early Islamic history, and building the capacity of Afghan colleagues in cultural heritage research. It is an excellent example of the humanities helping to develop Innovative and Reflective Societies that understand their history by supporting those locally who would protect and enhance their cultural heritage, and using digital methods to enable greater participation and awareness in Afghanistan of the region’s rich history.

- BACH is using Oxford’s IT expertise to build a comprehensive database into a time-series or ‘layers’ of maps, and analysed within a GIS framework. The finished datasets will be published as Google Maps® layers.
- A Dari language version of the website is being created to maximise the information available in Afghanistan about the local area.
- BACH will serve as a case study for revisiting the history of other eastern Islamic cities, and by extension the political and economic development of this part of the Islamic world.
- BACH researchers visiting Afghanistan always pair with Afghan cultural heritage workers. The team members provide ‘on-the-job’ training to their Afghan counterparts. In December 2013, the project hosted two Afghan visitors from the National Archives and Kabul University on visits to Oxford and Birmingham.
- BACH is helping to build a corps of qualified Afghan partners, and to integrate them within the wider community of international cultural heritage and historical researchers and practitioners.
- BACH’s partners include research and cultural heritage organisations in Afghanistan, including the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Kabul National Museum and the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan (DAFA).

Principal investigator and the research team

Edmund Herzig is the project’s Principal Investigator. Arezou Azad co-manages the project and oversees the textual survey and critical edition and translation of the Fada’il-i Balkh. She works closely with Ali Mir-Ansari. Paul Wordsworth is Research officer on the team, and is investigating the wider landscape of Balkh, analysing trade routes and regional hydrological networks. Both he and Michael Athanson are working on the digital cartography of the city. Other team members include Pierre Simeon, and Stefan Heidemann, who take responsibility for artefact analysis. Hugh Kennedy and Tasha Vorderstrasse work with textual sources in Arabic and Chinese respectively. Robert Hoyland has held a seminar series in Kabul on the early Islamic history Afghanistan and Central Asia. Each international team member has partnered with Afghan scholars for training and communication purposes. Nicholas Evans, a doctoral student in Oxford, worked through dozens of reports by Soviet archaeologists on Bactria; an intern Zeinab Alsadat Azarbadeegan carried out London-based research in the India Office Records to support the mapping team, and helped in the planned Dari version of the BACH website.

Project details

http://balkhhertitage.org/

START DATE: Sept 2011

FULL PROJECT COST: £493,810 - £257,233 from Leverhulme Trust, £236,577 from Oxford University

1 ‘Understanding the roles of individuals, communities, institutions, states and cross-national collaboration over time is crucial for Europe’s future’. The Future of the Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe, p. 37.
DECINDICO is an interdisciplinary project of research teams in the fields of neuroscience (UPMC, CNRS, INSERM) and philosophy of sciences (Université Paris-Sorbonne). The researchers will study in a new and simplified way the decision making process in collectivity of animals and transfer these results to Human beings.

Recently, numerous research projects, especially in the fields of social psychology and cognitive sciences have highlighted the influence of structure and social hierarchies on decisions of individuals. Other studies suggest that the concept of individuality is very common among animals. This “individuality” is defined by the coherency of an individual in terms of his answers and decisions faced with environmental and social challenges and by constant differences between the answers of individuals. The results are in general on a descriptive level and DECINDICO enters a new phase in order to update these mechanisms and realise innovative insights due to the interdisciplinary approach of natural sciences and SSH.

With this objective in mind, the neuroscientists have developed an experimental device, ‘Souris-City’, a large environment where animal groups live during long periods in semi-natural conditions with socially and ecologically adequate situations. In this environment, groups of mice have controlled access to specific areas to feed and drink while their social and circadian behavior are permanently monitored via several sensors (video control and RFID detection).

The neuroscientists focus on the device of ‘Souris City’ and the philosophers work on the influence of collective organizations and social hierarchies on decision making processes among Humans. The experiments and results of ‘Souris-City’ are analyzed through interaction between neuroscientists and philosophers and are compared and transmitted to decision making models of Human beings.
AFrique Australe: Transitions Environnementales

The Neogene of Africa is particularly interesting for human paleontology, because it is during this period that the human lineage and that of African apes diverged. Major climate changes that occurred during this time had a strong effect on the pale environments, faunas and floras across the globe. Africa being centered on the equator underwent major changes during this period, with significant displacement of biogeographic boundaries, phytochores and species distributions. In addition, climate change has led to a very important evolutionary activity, especially in plants and mammals. The vast majority of the assumptions about the evolution of hominids and their environments are focused in eastern Africa. However, pale environmental and paleontological data also indicates that southern Africa is a region not to be overlooked.

The project is characterized by its multidisciplinary approach (geochemistry, sedimentology and palaeontology) to study the past environments. It focuses on the studies over the last 12 million years in southern Africa, targeting new sites allowing comparisons with known data obtained from sites in sub-Saharan Africa. It fills a gap in the study of environments and therefore climates from a period where the first representatives of our family emerged. Since the mid-1920s, the trend has been to focus on the same sites. We are trying to understand if there was a local evolution in the south between non-human hominoids and the first Australopithecus. Recent discoveries of Miocene and Pliocene sites in Etosha park in Namibia and Pliocene/Early Pleistocene at Bolt’s Farm in the Cradle of Humankind in South Africa, represent new research potential in southern Africa, because they are located at a key chronological turning point for understanding human origins.

**Project details**

The Sorbonne University project started in March 2014 and will run for two years, funding by the Sorbonne Universities Convergence Program “Environnement & Society” (75 000 euros).

In Etosha, the project was initiated in 2006 with the first discoveries of Mio-Pliocene fossils in the Etosha area during a short reconnaissance. Two trips in Namibia have been then supported in 2007, 2009 by CNRS, French Embassy in Windhoek and the Geological Survey of Namibia (logistics and administration) under the auspices the National Heritage Council of Namibia. Some results are already accessible in the Communications of the Geological Survey of Namibia (2014).

In South Africa, the project focuses on sites at Bolt’s Farm excavated by the team of the CNRS LIA n°1041 HOMEN (Hominids and Environments: Evolution of Plio-Pleistocene Biodiversity) in association with the Plio-Pleistocene section of the Ditsong National Museum of Natural History since 2011. The researches have been supported by CNRS UPR 2147 and the French Embassy in Pretoria under the auspices of the South African Heritage Resources Agency. http://www.afrique-australe.aidr.fr/files-activites/projets-de-recherche/la-biodiversite-au-plio-pleistocene-dans-le-cradle-of-humankind-en-afrique-du-sud-homen

**Principal investigator and the research team**

Dr. Loïc Segalen is a member of the group « Biominéralisation et environnements sédimentaires » at the Paris Earth Sciences Institute (Institut des Sciences de la Terre de Paris). His research interests are mainly focused on a multidisciplinary approach (geochemistry, sedimentology) of the Neogene palaeoenvironments and palaeoclimate in continental domains. The research team integrate specialist in sedimentology (Dr Alain Person, UPMC), paleontology and human evolution from the MNHN and the CNRS (Pr Brigitte Senut, Dr Martin Pickford, Dr Dominique Gommery, Dr Sénégas).
COMPARSE

Study of the relationships between cognition, motivation, and personality, for emotional adaptation and regulation, using empathic virtual simulation

Principal investigator and the research team

Principal investigator:
Michel-Ange Amorim is Professor in Cognitive neuropsychology at University Paris-Sud. He became head of the CIAMS (Complexity, Innovation, Motors and Sports activities) in January 2014.

Other researchers
• Christine Le Scanff Professor of Psychology (Univ Paris-Sud). She is also the Dean of the Sport Sciences Faculty and the director of the PhD School.
• Brice Isableu is Assistant Professor Psychology and Neurosciences (Univ Paris-sud)
• Jean-Claude Martin and Laurence Devillers are both Professor in Computer Science at Paris-Sud University. JC Martin is also Head of the Group “Cognition, Perception and Usability” at LIMSI-CNRS.
• Christine Passerieux and Eric Brunet are both Professor – Psychiatrist at the University of Versailles. They are in charge of the pathology application of the model.
• Edith Filaire is Professor of Physiology at the University of Orleans.

The project investigates the links between emotions, cognition and behaviour in terms of performance facilitation, protection, and vulnerability as a function of empathetic emotional contexts. The main hypothesis is that the emotional context’s effect on perceptive, executive, motor performances, as well as social cognition, varies according to (1) temperamental factors (personality traits) and (2) the type of empathic adaptation (pre-reflexive vs reflexive; virtuous vs prejudicial). The groundbreaking nature of this project stems, on the one hand, from an interdisciplinary exploration of the links between emotion and cognition (differential psychology, psychopathology, cognitive neuropsychology, computer science, human movement sciences), and, on the other hand, from the will to understand emotional regulation and its mechanisms, not only in terms of emotional induction, but on how empathetic adaptation facilitates performance. Beside healthy individuals, participants, the project also includes patients suffering from mood and/or social cognitive disorders (schizophrenia, bipolar disorders).

The applied consequences of the present project are turned towards e-learning as well as the cognitive remediation of altered functions when working with patients presenting a dysfunction of the emotion-cognition links. The project hopes to assist protocol definition with regards to the investigation of links between emotions, cognitions and behaviours; to develop multimodal bodies of knowledge on spontaneous complex emotional expression behaviours; and to generate an adapted experimental platform integrating various existing tools towards the study of the affective interaction between users and virtual characters.

Project details
The project began in January 2012 for 36 months. The total funding was EUR 410,479 from the National Agency of Research in France (ANR).

The main partner is the CIAMS (EA4532) of Paris-Sud.
Cloud Business Organisational Design (CBOD)

This project, inscribed in fundamental research, but with applicability in real world settings, aims at developing the management, economics and IT community knowledge on cloud computing, from an organizational and business point of view.

Although Cloud Computing appears as a pervasive and disruptive technology promising to have a major impact on information systems in organizations, this topic has scantily been analysed in information systems research until now and mainly from a technical perspective. Given the importance and the depth of changes brought by this trend of “cloudification” of information systems in organizations, it seems important for both managers, decision makers and IT/IS researchers to increase their understanding of this phenomenon, in order to help organizations benefit from this new technological trend, and in particular comprehend in a more holistic way the different dimensions that are involved in the design and the operation of cloud-based IS.

This project will consist in elaborating a variety of means that will make significantly simpler the elaboration, the decision and the evaluation of cloud-based solutions from information system management and business point of view, and able to accommodate the need for an holistic approach.

More specifically this project will:
• Make an inventory of cloud-based research and approaches in the domain of managing information systems.
• Elaborate a conceptual and analytical holistic framework of cloud computing for organizations. A particular attention will be given at articulating the different dimensions, rather than considering each of them separately.
• Elaborate different means to model and simulate cloud-based design in organizations enabling a more active and intelligent exploration of Cloud-based solutions from an organizational and business point of view. The means considered include approaches such agent-based modelling, system dynamics, equation-based modelling, ontology modelling, and associated tools, with a particular interest to solutions that are very comprehensible (both in exploring and designing the models)
• Provide a techno-economic model of cloud technology in relation to their dimensioning, and cost models, so as to inform the selection of the way services are offered and charged to the “customers”, and for instance to guide the choice of the most effective business models
• Investigate issues related to Cloud Computing solutions adoption by organizations
• Build a set of cases and scenario able to reflect the diversity of issues, situation and perspective of Cloud-based information systems (e.g. business models, resistance to change, national specificities and international comparison, etc.), that will be also used to validate the approach

The project addresses key societal challenges, especially by considering how ICT and cloudification impact innovative capabilities of European firms and industries. The project, which takes an interdisciplinary approach, articulates different perspectives : ICT hard technology, economics, organisation science and management science. It will contribute to the emerging field of organisational design by assessing how the cloudification of organisations design might be an important perspective in innovation.

Principal investigator and the research team
Ahmed Bounfour is Professor at University Paris-Sud, Holder of the European Chair on Intellectual capital and Director for the Networking and Innovation Group of RITM, the research Institute in economics and Management of University Paris Sud. He is also co-leader of the digital modelling research field, Digital society Institute , University Paris Saclay and Editor of SpringerBriefs in Digital Spaces.

Research team
• Emmanuel Waller, Associate Professor, Informatics, University Paris Sud
• Bogdan Cautis , Professor, Informatics, University Paris Sud
• Melanie Herschel , Associate Professor, Informatics, University Paris Sud
• Nicole Bidoit, Professor, Informatics, University Paris Sud
• Alain Rallet, Professor, Economics, University Paris-Sud
• Florence Durieux, Professor, Management Science, University Paris-Sud
• Serge Pajak, Associate Professor, University Paris Sud
• Ioana Manolescu-Goujot, Director, INRIA
• Valérie Fernandez, Professor, Telecom ParisTech
• Laure Muselli, Associate Professor, Telecom Paris Tech
• Valérie Fautero, Associate Professor, Telecom ParisTech

Project details
The project started in February 2014, and will end Mid 2016
The funding is provided by the National Agency of Research in France (ANR).
TOTAL BUDGET : 335000 Euros.
The project is also supported by a complementary fund (30 K Euros) from CNRS for developing interdisciplinary research under the PEPS- Projet Exploratoires Premier Soutien for Saclay University- action line
WEBSITE : http://www.ritm.u-psud.fr/
The current political and economic turmoil and the EU’s crisis of intelligibility raises an important scientific challenge making it necessary to move beyond the prevailing institutional and mono-disciplinary approaches in European studies to produce new insights on the new boundaries of European democracy, integration and policy. The Strasbourg School of European Studies intends to develop original investigative methods to analyze the competing historical, political, social, economic, scientific and legal dynamics at play in the definition of the European project and the way in which it impacts on European societies.

The project focuses on the central question of the nexus between European institutions and societies around two research themes:

1. The relationships between the transnationalization of the fields of power and the transformations of politics. Based on historical, sociological and political research on the space of European actors (in a broad sense, including institutional actors, interest groups, professionals of European, national and local policy, Council of Europe...), the study of the changing configurations of the national, European and international fields of power will shed light on the crisis of the European project.

2. The relationships between the transnational circulation of public policy norms and instruments and the production of the European societal space. This innovative approach to the analysis of Europeanization processes and European public policy will focus on the circulation of regulatory instruments and on the appropriation of these instruments by the diverse audiences that make up the European societal space.
The project ArkeoGIS is an online free-ware that aggregates databases produced by French and German archaeologists and geographers. Over 25 different datasets are offered to the participants, giving them access to metadatas concerning both archaeological and geographical objects - sites, artefacts, analysis... With this new tool, the community of research has the opportunity to develop new trans-boundary research projects, moreover, public and private operators share their results, spare time and money, university teachers can provide direct access to literature to their advanced students, in French or German language. Rescue archaeologists are aware of the state of art in the neighbour country, and geographers can use archaeological data in their research.

Sharing those data is also important outside the research, when we want to present our work to the public. Museums, schools, tourism and cultural resources management but also urban planners are interested in our results. Having trans-boundary mappings of where the Romans did settle, or information of the ecological impact of overexploitation of forest or the floodplains over the last 5000 years are results that concern both SSH research and the actual society.

Principal investigator and the research team

Loup Bernard, French archaeologist, studied in Aix-en-Provence and Tübingen, the research team integrates geographers from Strasbourg (D. Ertlen, D. Schwartz) working on holocene soil use, German archaeologists (University Freiburg), archaeological public services (DRAC-SRA, Landesamt fuer Denkmalpflege) and rescue archaeologists (INRAP, PAIR, ANTEA). This community gains of sharing data : new work and analyses are planned with the knowledge of what the neighbour already did, so the costs are lowered, more trans-boundary projects appear and the language barrier is lowered.
This project addresses one of the major challenges for European societies and the well-being of European citizens as well as a major challenge for SSH research: How to foster a sustainable European workforce? Economic and demographic trends are impelling the need for a sustainable European workforce, consisting of productive, satisfied employees (micro level), profitable organizations and cohesive workplaces (meso level) and a high employment rate and flourishing economy (macro level). So far comparative research has focused on the micro and macro level. Little is known about the role of organizations and their investments in a sustainable workforce.

This research programme introduces the organizational level and its interaction with the country and employee levels into research on the sustainable workforce. First, it examines organizational investments in (1) human and social capital, (2) work-life policies, (3) work flexibility, (4) long-term employability of older workers, and (5) flexicurity. Second, it explains differences in such investments and their utilization by employees based on micro, meso and macro characteristics, including interactions between the three levels. Third, it analyzes whether organizational investments contribute to better performance by the employee, the organization and the country. Revising theoretical mechanisms, we formulate original hypotheses based on the idea that interdependencies between organizations and employees and related mutual risks and norms influence investments and their utilization by employees.

A unique feature of this ambitious program is its multi-level design. Data will be gathered on 30 organizations and their employees in nine countries (Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK) representing different types of welfare regime with ample variation in macrolevel conditions. The applicant’s longstanding data-gathering experience and cooperation with researchers in these countries makes data collection feasible. The data will permit in-depth examination of all three levels and of micro-meso relationships. The European Foundation’s European Company Survey will be used to test meso-macro hypotheses. The project is truly interdisciplinary, on the interface of sociology, economics, and psychology, using insights from and contributing to the growth of knowledge in each of these disciplines.
Institutions

Institutions is one of the four Strategic Themes of Utrecht University. It starts from the insight that a crucial determinant of the ability of societies to deal with challenges is their institutional infrastructure. To adapt and innovate traditional institutions, and to develop new ones for dealing with new challenges, is not easy and straightforward, however. It requires a deeper knowledge of how institutions are formed, how they function and how they shape outcomes. To this end, scholars from economics, history, public administration, law, sociology, ethics, innovation studies and geography have joined forces to improve the understanding of the formation and effects of institutions and how they contribute to the construction of open and sustainable societies. The programme is organized around five concrete themes:

- **Cooperation, self-regulation, collective action** considers how to ensure cooperative behaviour among groups of citizens using modes of voluntary human behaviour and interaction, as well as effective regulation.
- **Democratic governance, citizenship, trust** concerns sustainable democratic governance: how to create and reinforce robust, resilient, and inclusive democratic institutions, based on the rule of law, at various geographical scales.
- **Equality, inclusion, social mobility** focuses on equal opportunities for people in our society: how to achieve a broad distribution of political and economic resources, avoid inequality and related tensions.
- **Innovation and economic growth**, investigates how innovation should be managed and regulated to improve economic and societal performance.
- **Social sustainability and resilience** deals with the question how to organize our society so that economic development is not hampered while at the same time the basis for future development is not eroded, economically, ecologically and socially.

**Project details**

The research programme started in 2013, has a five year budget of 1 million euro’s, funded by the university and the participating faculties. For more details see: [http://www.uu.nl/university/research/EN/strategic-themes/instituuties](http://www.uu.nl/university/research/EN/strategic-themes/instituuties).

**Principal investigator and the research team**

Bas van Bavel (1964) is a distinguished Faculty Professor of socio-economic history. In 2007 he was asked to coordinate the university focus area Origins and Impacts of Institutions. By bringing together the best researchers of the departments of history, sociology, economics, law and public administration, this research area developed into a thriving, interdisciplinary research community, combining academic quality with societal relevance. The results are endorsed by Utrecht University as one of the four strategic themes of Utrecht University, with Bas van Bavel acting as the academic director.

The programme team consists of Mark Bovens (professor of Public Administration), Vincent Buskens (professor of Theoretical Sociology), Marcus Düwell (professor of Philosophical Ethics), Marko Hekkert (professor of Dynamics of Innovation Systems), Tanja van der Lippe (professor of Sociology of Households and Employment Relations) and Erik Stam (professor of Economics of Entrepreneurship and Innovation).
Dynamics of Healthy Aging

The vision of the project is an evidence-base for individualized quality-of-life-stabilizing interventions that work in the real life of ageing individuals. The project takes four new approaches: It examines the determinants of healthy instead of ill ageing, it examines the factors stabilizing instead of declining health, it uses an evidence standard for real life instead of laboratory outcomes, and it aggregates results on the level of individuals instead of populations.

Current approaches to clinical ageing research focus on illness detection and prevention, use population data to examine the effects of health behaviours, and examine untypical ageing populations of single-disease individuals. This project uses a new paradigm on healthy ageing research: It takes a contextualized and self-regulated individual development approach, and systematically examines pathways of dynamic health-stabilization within individuals. The advantages of this paradigm are: It allows to systematically determine and substantially increase the effects of environmental contexts on the maintenance of cognitive, physical or social health, to include individual need measures when deciding between treatments, to install aging individuals as decision-makers in their own health affairs, to measure the effects of treatments in real life, and to develop and use modern portable technology to determine health outcomes in real life.

Establishing the approaches of the project in healthy ageing research, thus, is supporting the development of innovative theories, methodology, and technology. With its focus on individual health in real life, it is necessarily interdisciplinary, and with its practical applications it can contribute enormously to a productively ageing society and vital longevity.

Current collaborators at the University of Zurich (UZH): Martin (Gerontology), Jäncke (Neurosciences), Battegay (Internal Medicine & Multimorbidity), Bischoff-Ferrari (Geriatrics), Ehlert (Clinical Psychology), Flitsch (Ethnology), Freund (Lifespan Development), Hengartner (European Ethnology), Kunz (Theology), Maercker (Psychotherapy), Oberauer (Experimental Psychology), Rüner (Robotics), Scholz (Health Psychology), Steineck (Japanology), Weibel (Geographic Information Systems).

Project details

The project is part of a long-standing strategic initiative of UZH to support innovative and user-oriented ageing research. Starting in 2002 with the strategic hiring of new positions in gerontology and psychology of ageing, it strengthened the interdisciplinary Gerontology Centre. This served as a bottom-up incubator for the further development towards healthy ageing research as a University Research Priority Programme “Dynamics of Healthy Ageing” and the coordination with other ageing research groups at UZH and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ). The Philosophical Faculty has supported the strategic initiative with matching funds for competence centres in the field such as the Gerontology Centre and the International Normal Ageing and Plasticity Imaging Centre (INAPIC). Locally, the project coordinates over 15 research groups with over 100 researchers on all qualification levels. Nationally, national centre grants and several national research programmes have been informed by the project, and recently the Swiss Academies of Sciences have put “real life health outcome measurement” on the national research agenda. Internationally, the recent founding of the European Cognitive Aging Society (EUCAS) including several LERU universities has demonstrated the large potential for international collaborations.

In the last five years (2010-2014), the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the UZH have invested CHF 3.3 Mio (EUR 2.7 Mio) into the project. By now, the project has attracted funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation and private foundations of CHF 10 Mio (EUR 8.17 Mio).

LINKS TO PROJECT:
University Research Priority Programme “Dynamics of Healthy Aging”
http://www.dynage.uzh.ch/index.html
Gerontology Centre
http://www.zfg.uzh.ch/index.html
International Normal Ageing and Plasticity Imaging Centre (INAPIC)
http://www.inapic.uzh.ch/index.html
Project details

What started in 2008 with an initiative on “Language and Space” (National Science Foundation), in its next step became the foundation of the “Zurich Center for Linguistics” 2010. Since then, the UZH has systematically supported and reinforced collaborative research in the field of linguistics. The University Research Priority Programme “Language and Space” started on 1 January 2013 and combines linguistic research in the fields of language areas and multimodal interaction. The project “Language and Space” is assigned to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and is part of a long-standing strategic initiative of UZH to support innovative and interdisciplinary research in linguistics. By the end of 2016, the Faculty of Arts, the UZH and the SNF will have supported linguistic projects with EUR 12.5 Mio.

LINKS TO PROJECT:
University Research Priority Programme “Language and Space”
http://www.spur.uzh.ch/index_en.html
Zurich Center for Linguistics
http://www.linguistik.uzh.ch/index_en.html

Language and Space

In highly mobile societies, language plays an essential role in maintaining and understanding identities across space and cultures. However, very little is known about language in real-life contexts and the links between language, physical space and social contexts. By choosing a particular language or regional variety, language users identify with or distinguish themselves from others. Speakers also use language to establish social categorizations and positioning. So far, little is known about the relations between language areas and everyday interaction spaces.

The project “Language and Space” closes these knowledge gaps using cutting-edge technology and innovative methodology, combining insights from dialectology with language typology, interactional linguistics, and social sciences. Methodologically, the individual projects within the cluster use and develop new technologies: (1) geocomputational techniques to explore the spread and pattern of linguistic features in a language area, (2) eye-tracking technology to investigate the role of the gaze as a part of human spatial interaction based on and supported by language, and (3) linguistic engineering to analyse corpora of less commonly taught languages lacking standardization.

The interdisciplinary project cluster also deals with how people describe the world around them and seeks to develop methods that link computational representations to these descriptions. Thus it explores and provides principles contributing to the understanding of how cultural heritage emerges and how it is transmitted. The results will certainly lead to applied research and, in consideration of the facts concerning the social mobility of multilingual groups, the implementation of processes and measures in public education.

Principal investigators and the research team

Elvira Glaser and Heiko Hausendorf, the directors of the project “Language and Space”, decided to combine their research interests in language areas and interactional spaces. By now, many research fellows joined in, and the research team currently consists of 19 research groups (collaborators) covering several language families and specializations, while belonging to different disciplines and faculties – namely Linguistics (Comparative Linguistics, Indo-European Studies, Romance Languages, Slavic Languages, German Studies, English Studies, East Asian Studies), Computational Linguistics, Geography/Geocomputation, and Popular Culture Studies. There are a large number of committed assistant professors and doctoral candidates within the project (in the research groups as well as in the three laboratories: GIScience-Lab, VideoLab, CorpusLab). The group managed to strategically staff vacancies within the Faculty of Arts, and the integration of projects fostered further collaborations, especially between young academics.

Current UZH collaborators: Glaser (Germanic Philology), Hausendorf (German Linguistics), Behr (Sinology), Bickel (General Linguistics), Dürrschmidt (German Language), Glessgen (Romance Philology), Hundt (English Linguistics), Jucker (English Linguistics), Kabatek (Romance Linguistics), Linke (German Linguistics), Loporcaro (Romance Linguistics), Purves (Geocomputation), Schreier (English Linguistics), Stark (Romance Linguistics), Tschöfen (Popular Culture Studies), Volk (Computational Linguistics), Weibel (Geographic Information Science), Weiss (Slavic Linguistics), Widmer (Indo-European Linguistics).
ABOUT LERU

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is an association of twenty-one leading research-intensive universities that share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded in 2002, LERU advocates:

• education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding;
• the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society;
• and the promotion of research across a broad front in partnership with industry and society at large.

The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience.

Facts and figures

Together LERU member universities account for more than:

• 550,000 students, including 50,000 PhD candidates.
• Each year about 55,000 master's degrees and 12,000 doctorates are awarded at LERU universities.
• The total research budget of LERU's members exceeds €5 billion.
• More than €1 billion is granted by research councils, while over €1.25 billion comes from contract research.
• The total sum of research grants from EU projects to LERU universities is approximately €300 million.
• More than 20% of ERC grants have been awarded to researchers at LERU universities.
• Over 230 Nobel Prize and Field Medal winners have studied or worked at LERU universities.
• 55,000 academic staff and 55,000 non-academic staff work at the member institutions (hospital-only staff not included).
League of European Research Universities

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