CONTENTS

4 What role do oaths play in social bonds?

5 Does the legitimacy of threats in international relations matter?

6 How did texts circulate in Europe before the introduction of print?

7 What is the value of randomized impact evaluations on development programs in Kenya?

8 How do we open up a comparative space between Hollywood and Chinese cinema?

9 “Taking the bull by the horns…”. Théorie, critique, utopie

10 Why do assets matter for children and families?

11 What determines the successful integration of immigrants in receiving countries?

12 Why do countries respond to terrorist attacks in various ways?

13 The Trudeau Scholarship

14 The Mellon Postdoctoral Program

In this issue of Arts Insights I want to introduce you to our newest professors in the Faculty of Arts. Some have come to McGill from faculty positions at other universities, some after holding post-doctoral fellowships, and some directly upon finishing their PhDs. All are engaged in ground-breaking, captivating research, ranging from analyzing the role the oath plays in human relationships to analyzing the impact of the provision of electricity on households in rural Kenya, from examining the impact of asset holding on children and families to examining the factors that shape states’ counterterrorist policies. All are at the very top of their fields.

I want to introduce you to our Trudeau Doctoral Fellow and our Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows as well. Post-doctoral fellows in particular reflect a sea change in the academic culture of the humanities and social sciences. In the past, post-doctoral fellowships were the purview of the sciences. This is no longer the case. While many doctoral candidates in the humanities and social sciences still move directly into tenure-track positions, the increasingly common path of the brightest new stars is to secure competitive post-doctoral fellowships that enable them to refine and expand upon their doctoral work. Post-doctoral fellowships often involve teaching as well, providing the fellows with much-needed experience before they embark on their tenure-track careers.

Each of these cutting-edge researchers – whether a new faculty member or a doctoral or post-doctoral fellow – is exploring a fundamental aspect of the human condition, shedding light upon how we lived in the past, how we live today, or how we might live tomorrow.

Welcome to this issue.

JULIET JOHNSON
Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies
Faculty of Arts
WHAT ROLE DO OATHS PLAY IN SOCIAL BONDS?

Oaths are not necessarily something that one thinks about much, but they do serve an important role in our society. You ‘swear’ to something when you’re just trying to convince a friend, or emphasise a promise. Then there are the more formal contexts of courtrooms or taking public office, where one must take an oath. Finally, treaties are sworn between various political entities, such as ethnic groups or nation-states. This range of oath usages finds many parallels in Ancient Greece, where my research resides, and my work on oaths has become an anchor for my thinking about social and societal relationships more broadly. Today perjury carries a legal penalty, rather than divine retribution, but the sting of broken trust in almost any trust-relationship, whether between a romantic couple or between military allies, remains.

Oaths in the archaic epic the Iliad serve a particularly significant role, as there was no idea of a ‘state’ in our modern sense. What that means is that oaths between individual characters dominate the text, and create a web of international relations based on the oath-bound relationships of aristocratic leaders. The peace treaty between the Trojans and the Achailians in Book 3 illustrates this, as Menelaos, one of the leaders of the Achaians, and the famously jilted husband of Helen, refuses to take an oath with Paris, the equally famous seducer of Helen, because he is untrustworthy. In the end, it is Agamemnon, brother of Menelaos, and Priam, the father of Paris, who strike the treaty for the two peoples. This example speaks to the great power of the oath – it can stop the fighting between two armies, as much as to the real limits of an oath – it can’t be taken with someone who is untrustworthy to begin with.

Oaths then become a fascinating focal point of human relations from the individual to the international from the earliest point in Greek literature, and the examination of oaths in Greek literary and historical contexts becomes an important part of understanding how any relationship works. An oath is a verbal act that creates trust by the invocation of a power greater than oneself. If oaths are then a baseline for the creation of trust between enemies, or the reassertion of trust between friends, there are situations where hatred or distrust runs too deep to be bridged by the formality of an oath. The absence of an oath is just as crucial, where an unspoken bond of trust can emerge organically where there was none before. In one of the most famous scenes of the Iliad, Priam comes to beg for the corpse of Hektor, whom Achilles has killed. By the end of the scene, Achilles has agreed not only to return the corpse, but also to allow a temporary treaty between the armies for his proper burial – all without swearing an oath. My work then looks at how the characters of Greek literature act within this ethical framework of sworn and unworn trust relations.

LYNN KOZAK is Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Classical Studies.
DOES THE LEGITIMACY OF THREATS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MATTER?

State leaders regularly go to great lengths to portray their actions as resting on some basis of legitimacy, rather than power. Yet this is puzzling behaviour to many international relations scholars, who think strictly in material terms. According to this conventional wisdom, the effectiveness of a country’s threats should rely on its economic might, and how many warships and fighter jets it has. Indeed, in an international system devoid of a central authority, it remains unclear exactly why things like legitimacy should matter.

Yet it turns out that power alone is often insufficient to influence foreign behaviour. One way in which I demonstrate this is by comparing the effectiveness of two channels through which the United States tried to influence foreign trade policy, especially with regard to Japan, from 1975 to 2000. One was a legislative tool that the US Congress could use to threaten countries with trade sanctions without regard for international law, called Section 301. It was universally condemned as an illegitimate weapon of the American trade policy arsenal: European officials went as far as calling it a “commercial nuclear bomb”. The other option was to file a complaint through the World Trade Organization and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which was widely seen as a legitimate means of influencing foreign trade policy, since all countries had agreed to its terms.

Two facts make this a particularly valuable comparison: both instruments were used to pursue very similar (and sometimes the same) cases; and while both instruments relied on the threat of trade retaliation to compel countries to give into demands, the unilaterally Section 301 was, historically, far more likely to actually lead to retaliation. The unilaterally formulated threat, in other words, was the scarier one of the two, materially speaking.

Yet the record of both instruments is startling. Despite its greater credibility, Section 301 was less effective in getting countries like Japan to concede to U.S. demands. Why? While in any given instance, giving into a Section 301 threat might have been the wiser move, it had a bearing on the future: because the only thing undergirding an illegitimate threat is power, giving in suggests weakness, in a way that conceding to a legitimate threat formulated through a multilateral organization does not. In fact, conceding in the latter case may make you look like a good player in the global arena, which comes with its own benefits.

What is more, resisting illegitimacy paid off: when countries such as Japan refused to comply with Section 301 threats, they often faced immediate consequences, in the form of trade retaliation, yet it made subsequent illegitimate threats less likely. The US tended to adjust its behavior once it encountered resistance. In the end, a buildup of such opposition brought the entire Section 301 regime down, and in line with WTO rules.

A similar story may explain why countries seek to build largely symbolic coalitions when leading military interventions abroad. Legitimacy, in these cases, makes threats more potent. Appealing to shared principles is thus not only virtuous; it’s politically savvy.

KRZYSZTOF PELC is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science
My current research analyzes how religious politics during the crisis of the Great Schism of the Western Church (1378-1417) impacted international communication in a manuscript culture. One of the most pressing concerns for secular and ecclesiastical authorities alike in late-medieval Europe was ending the Schism, which erupted when two rival popes—one in Rome, the other in Avignon—each claimed to be the rightful head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Secular powers scrambled to form alliances, backing whichever pope could best represent their interests. Questions about the source and administration of authority on earth, while discussed long before the Schism, also found more urgent and radical expression during this period.

The alliances which aimed to end the Schism also gave rise to new channels of cultural and textual communication. One of the most historic alliances during this period was formed in 1381, when England and Bohemia were joined by the marriage of Anne of Bohemia to England’s King Richard II. Anne’s father, Charles IV, had turned the Bohemian city of Prague into the rich cultural center of the Holy Roman Empire. The new relationship was to provide a unified base of support for the pope in Rome, while ensuring economic benefits for the allied regions. Yet the tremendous impact of the alliance was caused less by political bonds than by the cultural correspondence between the two countries which the new ties enabled. As one major example, during this period texts containing the condemned doctrines of the Oxford theologian John Wyclif and his followers were conveyed to reformers in Bohemia. Wycliffites advocated vernacular preaching and biblical translation, and radically questioned the legitimacy of the church hierarchy. Scholars of English literature, history and religion have been interested in the exchange with Bohemia for what it can tell us about the impact of Wycliffite texts on continental reformist movements, and for what it reveals about reformist textual activity in England. Indeed, the prosecution of Wycliffites in England became so fierce that relatively few of their texts survived there. Wycliffite texts preserved in Bohemian manuscripts are often our only record that these texts ever existed.

At the same time, enthusiasm for the study of heretical correspondence has overshadowed other central aspects of the Anglo-Bohemian cultural exchange which involved strands of mainstream English and Bohemian culture in terms of literary, religious, political and academic contacts. My analysis of the poetry, mystical writings and epistolary propaganda which was brought from England to Bohemia, much of which I have discovered for the first time in Czech and Austrian manuscripts, contextualizes the better known reformist exchange in terms of a broader and more variegated landscape of manuscript transmission. In the process, I show how the reformist exchange achieved such prominence without the benefit of the printing press or of any centralized model of textual production or dissemination.

Indeed, a new model for understanding late-medieval communication is essential, as medieval news and texts were transmitted along the available networks in ways that cannot be understood using print-era paradigms. I treat late-medieval communication as a practice that lacked a single stabilizing framework. Consequently, I do not see medieval attempts to propagate as conforming to the ancien régime style of political maneuvering that many scholars have applied anachronistically to the Middle Ages. On the contrary, communication channels were extremely difficult to police. As a highly contingent, localized practice, communication was mediated and conditioned by ad hoc personal contact and unstable documentary forms. European religious politics during the Schism period, however, lent urgency to the need to establish authoritative dominance over communication channels. Therefore, I argue that, during the Great Councils of the fifteenth century—meetings in which representatives from across Europe gathered for years to determine on pressing religious and political matters—there was a shift toward more centralized communication and textual dissemination.

MICHAEL VAN DUSSEN is Assistant Professor in the Department of English

Sketch of St Christopher, patron of travelers, from the itinerary of an anonymous Bohemian knight, c. 1400 (Prague, Knihovna Metropolitní Kapituly, MS H.15)
What Is the Value of Randomized Impact Evaluations on Development Programs in Kenya?

Public policies significantly affect our lives, and the development of nations. However, they are rarely evaluated in a scientifically rigorous manner. This is problematic, and tragic in some cases, as determining which programs, reforms, and/or policies are efficient is crucial when there are limited public resources. For example, the benefits generated by the three trillion dollars of foreign aid given to Africa over the past fifty years are unclear in the absence of rigorous evaluation. Evaluating public policies is made difficult by the “counterfactual problem”: one cannot observe the outcomes or behavior of a participant, had (s)he not participated. To address this issue, I implement social experiments, in which a treatment is randomly given to one group, and not to another. As the treated and untreated groups are equivalent to one another before the treatment, any differences arising after the treatment are causally due to the treatment. For the past four years, I have been implementing several social experiments in Kenya, where I lead my own field work and data collection, in order to evaluate development programs in a rigorous manner. One example of such development programs is rural electrification. In Kenya, only 2% of rural households were connected to the national electric grid in 2000. This lack of access to reliable and affordable energy services may have dire consequences on private sector development, women’s empowerment, education and health. One promising new approach is the establishment of micro hydro turbines that are constructed, owned, and operated by six local rural communities in the Kirinyaga district of Mt. Kenya. For the past four years, I have assembled an international partnership including researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Georgetown University, the University of Zurich, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi, and the World Bank, to carry out the first randomized impact evaluation on the socio economic and environmental impact of community-based rural electrification. Unlike previous evaluations, this one will isolate the causal impact of rural electrification by taking advantage of the randomized phase-in of the rural electrification program, with new neighborhoods being picked randomly to be connected whenever a new turbine is finished. I am also undertaking social experiments on voluntary contributions to public goods in this community, and on the impact of micro health insurance on welfare measures (such as biomarkers of stress) in a slum of Nairobi. Because they are so rigorous, yet easily interpreted, these randomized impact evaluations of development programs will provide governments and the international donor community critical information on the efficiency and effectiveness of different development programs.

“For the past four years, I have been implementing several social experiments in Kenya, where I lead my own field work and data collection…”

MATTHIEU CHEMIN is Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics.
HOW DO WE OPEN UP A COMPARATIVE SPACE BETWEEN HOLLYWOOD AND CHINESE CINEMA?

A “comparative space” is often imagined as a grey area, where two seemingly opposite cultural formations negotiate their differences, either real or imagined, in an attempt to establish a common ground. In cinema studies, two conceptual frameworks have so far been proposed. If we follow David Bordwell, Hollywood became historically the dominant mode of cinema primarily because it largely emulates, or works according to, a fundamentally universal cognitive process. The way we see is translated into camera work; the way we perceive and understand our surrounding is translated into editing; finally, the way we understand our individual or collective trajectories is translated into screenwriting. Bordwell believes that local film styles are more or less based on this universal model, while political, social, historical, and cultural differences produce variations and exceptions.

After the publication of Bordwell’s Classical Hollywood Cinema (1988), Miriam Hansen puts Bordwell’s model into question. For Hansen, the cognitive argument implicitly argues that the dominance of Hollywood, especially after the First World War, is “natural.” Hansen wishes to put the emphasis more on the social and the political spheres, and argues that after WWI, major cities around the world – Berlin, Hollywood, Moscow, and Shanghai – were all trying to negotiate contesting notions of modernity, e.g., material comfort versus trauma, capital versus labour, visibility of women vis-à-vis prostitution, redefinitions of masculinity and in-between classes, high art versus low art, etc. As a result, cinema functions as a vernacular or popular form of “modernism,” a democratic art or play where these conflicting notions of modernity can be discussed, reconfigured, and renegotiated.

According Hansen, Classical Hollywood Cinema offered an effective model for this kind of negotiation. In this light, Shanghai cinema in the 1930s, for example, emerged not out of cognitive universality, but out of a crisis of modernity that was at once unique to its social setting, and shared by other cosmopolitan cities at the time. Of course, film historians argue that Hansen might have offered a powerful theoretical model, but her own understanding of Shanghai cinema in the 1930s was not specific enough. Nonetheless, Hansen’s theoretical framework gives the Chinese public space – an arena where contesting notions of political opinions are discussed and negotiated – an agency in the shaping and configuration of what is meant by modernity.

Hansen’s model allows us to acknowledge, and begin to discuss, questions of political, gender, sexual, social, and economic asymmetries; nonetheless, it has yet to address a question fundamental to the objective of comparative cinema: What is cinema? As Haun Saussy argues, the implicit hope of a comparativist is to access the core of certain like things that assume different appearances. When Hollywood comes face-to-face with Chinese cinema, or vice versa, what does it tell us about cinema itself? What does their process of historical negotiation tell us about the principles by which we define ourselves as human, our understanding of political allegiance, our being in time, and our distribution of political power?

VICTOR FAN is Assistant Professor in the Department of East Asian Studies.

Dans le devenir des humanités, révélateur des tensions qui apparaissent entre savoir et pouvoir, la théorie littéraire a pourtant son rôle à jouer. C’est sa fonction au sein des sociétés et des cultures qu’il importe d’analyser. À cet égard, l’intervention de Fish, pourtant reconnu pour ses travaux sur Milton, et surtout The Authority of Interpretive Communities, sans parler de sa critique des politiques universitaires, traduit bien le degré zéro de la théorie. Avant d’envisager des solutions à « la crise », encore convient-il d’identifier adéquatement ses enjeux. S’il faut prendre « the bull by the horns », comme l’auteur le suggère, est-ce vraiment en expliquant (explain) et en (se) défendant (defend) auprès du public ? En refusant par exemple de justifier économiquement nos disciplines ou d’accréditer le cliché du chercheur oisif qui leur est attaché ? Dans le meilleur des mondes, la rhétorique de l’argumentation a sûrement cette efficacité prémise. Il subsiste néanmoins un problème capital, c’est la valeur des humanités, qui en cache un autre : la corrélation entre la pensée de la valeur et la pensée de l’humain. L’économisme de la compétitivité et de la productivité est une conception possible de ce rapport. Bien qu’il ne croie plus les humanités capables de « enhance our culture, our society, our humanity », Fish s’abstient de répondre à ce problème.

En janvier 2008, dans le même journal, l’auteur précisait toutefois : « To the question “of what use are the humani-ties ?”, the only honest answer is none whatsoever », ajoutant : « The humanities are their own good » (Will the Humanities Save Us ?). Ce qui est un reliquat d’idéalisme. Or s’il existe un lieu qui construit ce lien entre la valeur et l’humain, c’est précisément la littérature. Chaque œuvre l’invente même spécifiquement, articulant la requête de la valeur (la qualité artistique des textes) à l’expression des valeurs (les normes collectives).

S’il fallait justifier la théorie littéraire au sein des humanités, ainsi que le voudrait Fish, c’est donc comme anthropologie critique. Penser l’homme de la littérature, c’est d’abord penser ce que les œuvres font à nos représentations (et nos pratiques) du sujet, de la société, de la culture, de la politique, la manière dont elles les transforment. À ce titre, la critique n’est pas un genre (appelé « critique littéraire »), mais plutôt l’éthique de la théorie. Elle a peu à voir avec la version sceptique et réactionnaire, qui s’est installée dans les études françaises, amalgamant crise de la théorie, déclin des humanités et fin de la littérature (Compagnon, Todorov, W. Marx). La théorie est critique en ce qu’elle ouvre, à partir de la littérature, un questionnement sur les épistémologies qui ont pour objet l’humain (linguistique, sociologie, histoire, philosophie…). La critique est ce qui donne à la théorie sa fonction dans la société, et révèle le sens qu’elle a « dans la vie des hommes » (Max Horkheimer). En prise (ou en conflit) avec la société, la théorie littéraire ainsi définie est une forme de l’utopie.

ARNAUD BERNADET est professeur agrégé au Département de langue et littérature françaises
Amidst the rising unemployment and stalled economic growth brought about by the 2008 Great Recession, stories of financial hardship and poverty are once again in the spotlight. While the reduction of poverty among those over 65 in the US and Canada is widely recognized as a major policy triumph of the 20th Century, attempts to reduce poverty among other groups (children, single-parent families, and ethnic minorities) have been much less successful. Stagnant poverty is problematic, not least because it produces considerable costs to communities and society. Children born to families in poverty, for example, compared to those born to non-poor families, are at a higher risk of dropping out of school, being unhealthy, and committing crime.

Since the late 1980’s social welfare researchers have critiqued poverty policies that use income as a proxy for well-being. They proposed that the conceptualization of poverty be broadened beyond income to include financial (savings accounts, retirement funds) and non-financial assets (homes, vehicles, and business capital). Subsequent evidence has consistently shown that (a) asset poverty is higher than income poverty, (b) asset inequality is higher than income inequality, and (c) inter-generational correlations of wealth (assets) are stronger than correlations of income. While this descriptive work has advanced our understanding of economic inequality, the impact of asset holding on children and families has not yet been well examined. Most child and family studies include vague constructs of socioeconomic status (a blend of employment, education, and income) or simply income alone. Very few include asset measures.

My research aims to enhance our understanding of how financial and non-financial assets affect children and families with a focus on society’s marginalized populations. Building on previous research with Indigenous Native Hawaiians and low-income families in Singapore, I am currently examining how families experience financial stress. There are a number of mechanisms by which asset holding might influence family stress. First, parents who are asset secure will experience less day-to-day financial strain and, therefore, lower likelihood of domestic discord. Second, asset holding is likely to promote positive child outcomes. Children from families who hold assets are more likely to live in neighborhoods that nurture development, attend quality schools, and mature alongside other children from similar asset secure backgrounds. Third, asset holding of parents will indirectly affect children’s development via the influence on parental relations. In theory, children and families who own assets will probably experience less financial strain and will be more likely to thrive. To test these ideas, we recently demonstrated with longitudinal data that holding assets (home values, retirement savings, and liquid assets) reduced the likelihood of experiencing future economically stressful events (job loss, reduced income) and psychological financial stress (financial strain and worries) among a sample of low-income Americans. Accurately specifying the amounts of assets that matter to families and teasing out these effects, however, are ongoing methodological challenges. Ultimately, this work is expanding how we conceptualize well-being, and forming a rationale for social welfare policies to promote asset accumulation in addition to income.

DAVID ROTHWELL
is Assistant Professor in the
School of Social Work
WHAT DETERMINES THE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN RECEIVING COUNTRIES?

Historically immigration has been a major source of ethnocultural diversity for receiving countries. No other nation bears better testimony to this than the United States where immigration during the early twentieth century added Poles, Irish, Italians, and Russian Jews to the then predominantly Anglo- and German European native stock. The passage of the 1965 Immigration Act brought yet another wave of racial and ethnic diversity, this time in the form of Asian and Latino immigrants. Other traditional immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada, Britain, Germany, France, and the Netherlands also experienced dramatic shifts in the racial and ethnic composition of their population at different periods during the twentieth century. For example, migration of South Asians and West Indians from former British colonies to the United Kingdom during the 1950s and 1960s created for the first time, a sizable and permanent minority population. Likewise a sizable visible minority population emerged in Canada as a result of migration streams shifting from Europe to Asia and other non-European sending countries. The role of immigration in engendering dramatic demographic shifts continues well into the twenty-first century.

In the current era, however, immigration is also fueling ethnocultural diversity in countries that had previously been sources of migrants. New immigrant-receiving countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland are now undergoing the transition from being sending countries to that of host countries for immigrants from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The new immigrant-receiving countries are discovering that the task of integrating diverse immigrant groups who may not necessarily share similar ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic, or religious backgrounds with the native population is challenging, to say the least.

No nation, whether it is a traditional or new immigrant-receiving country, has been able to successfully (and peacefully) integrate all immigrants into its society. The path towards full integration has become even more complicated given the events of 9/11, with heightened fears of immigrants living “parallel lives,” and calls for a retreat from multiculturalism.

My research is concerned with the integration of immigrants in North America and Western Europe, and how immigrants in turn complicate and transform receiving societies. How do individual and group characteristics such as age, gender, generational status, race, ethnicity, and national origin affect processes of social inclusion or exclusion in the host country? What roles do residential neighborhoods, institutions and government policies play in the integration process? These are the kinds of questions that I seek to illuminate with my research. The dimensions of integration I examine include intergroup relations (e.g., anti-immigrant prejudice), residential segregation, health, and economic incorporation. I rely on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and seek to produce empirical research that better informs current immigrant integration policies.

Zoua Vang is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology
On October 7, 2000, the Lebanese Hezbollah abducted three Israeli soldiers. Despite some militant declarations, the Israeli response was mild. Six years later, in summer 2006, when the same organization killed three Israeli soldiers and abducted two others, this served as the match that ignited a one month war between Israel and the Hezbollah, in which over a thousand people were killed and many more were wounded and displaced.

How may one account for such differences in the policies of the same country? Why do some countries at specific times respond to terrorist attacks or threats mainly with conciliatory measures, negotiations or mild retaliations (e.g., Spain since the 1970s and France in the early 1980s), while others resort to massive repressions of human rights (e.g., Argentina during the late 1970s) or engage in war with other countries or political entities (e.g., the US in 2001 and in 2003)? Put differently, why is it difficult to imagine two nations reacting to the threat of terrorism in exactly the same manner?

Most previous research focused on two main related questions: (1) What should states do to efficiently fight terrorism and (2) how far should moral and norm-abiding states go in the name of fighting terrorism. Not enough attention has been paid, however, to the question of what are the factors that shape states’ counterterrorist policies.

My research explores empirically different explanations for the variations in states’ counterterrorist policies during the last four decades. I examine a wide variety of policies, including repression of human rights and civil liberties, the initiation of international disputes, military enforcement, counterterrorist legislation, and the ratification of international counterterrorist conventions. My findings suggest that the answer to the above question is more multifaceted than the literature on state counterterrorist policies often suggests. Many scholars of terrorism follow an (often implicit) assumption that when faced with the threat of terrorism governments simply do everything they can to minimize this threat, and therefore, that declared counterterrorist policies are directed first and foremost at preventing future terrorist acts. This logic is especially dominant in the public domain, and in the rhetoric of politicians, lawyers, and the mainstream media.

In my work, however, I demonstrate that states often fail to follow this straightforward logic, in which counterterrorism policies are directly responsive to terrorist actions and/or successfully deter or reduce subsequent terrorism. Instead, consistent with the logic of sociological and cultural theoretical approaches, the most consistent predictors of state counterterrorist policies seem to be spatial diffusion (i.e., the adoption of similar policies by neighboring states), cultural traditions (most notably a democratic tradition), and the existence of various domestic threats (notably non-violent internal dissent).

ERAN SHOR is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology.
CURRENT RESEARCH
Ph.D. Social Work, McGill University
Citizen Participation among Seniors: Action-research to Connect Rhetoric with Practices

BIOGRAPHY
Émilie Raymond’s travels through the world of the social sciences have been guided by her desire to combine academic, professional and community commitments. Since the beginning of studies that combined social work and anthropology, she has taken an interest in several topics related to social justice and citizenship: the expansion and conditions of microcredit for women in Senegal (bachelor’s in social service, Université Laval), the design of an alternative socio-professional rehabilitation model for illiterate or poorly educated people in Quebec (master’s in social service, Université Laval), and the transformation of family lifestyle in Chile and its implications for women (master’s in anthropology and development, Universidad de Chile). For each of these degrees, she developed participatory research practices combining scientific and social progressivism concerns.

Her interest in seniors began during her three-year stay in Chile. At the same time as her master’s studies there, she took part in community action projects that involved mainly seniors. Running popular education workshops for seniors allowed her to observe the disparity between their wealth of experience and the relevance of their opinions, on one hand, and the recognition and role given to this group as a whole, on the other. Subsequently, her work on the topic of social participation among seniors for the National Public Health Institute revealed to her that despite the extensive focus on this idea in the discourse and policies related to seniors, their voices are often poorly heard in public decision-making forums. Émilie has decided to do a doctorate in social work at McGill University to study this paradox and the challenges it presents for both social policy and social action.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Citizen Participation among Seniors: Action-research to Connect Rhetoric with Practices

Émilie Raymond’s thesis will allow her to work with seniors’ social movements to see how they perceive and implement citizen participation and to compare these experiences with social policies that seek to encourage various participatory behaviours among seniors. Through her doctorate, Émilie Raymond hopes to contribute to the renewal of gerontological studies by offering a participatory approach that invites seniors to become authentic partners in research. She also plans to support the efforts of seniors associations to defend and promote the rights of the groups they represent, and to take an active part in debates around age ratios and ways to encourage citizen participation in the entire community. In fact, Émilie is convinced that the accelerated greying of the population is far more than a demographic or economic issue: for her, it is a global and historic imperative to re-examine our characterization of the trajectory of life and to reflect on ways to build a more supportive intergenerational society.

Source: www.trudeaufoundation.ca/program/scholarships
Scholars across the humanities and social sciences at McGill University are engaged in cutting edge interdisciplinary research initiatives and innovative interdisciplinary teaching programs which makes McGill an ideal venue for this Program. Postdoctoral fellows establish a formal relationship with a senior scholar in a field allied to that of their dissertation. In so doing, they broaden their perspective beyond that which they held as graduate students and develop and enhance the questions they asked and the methodologies they used in their graduate studies.

McGill Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows also plan and teach two courses: one larger undergraduate course on their specific area of research, and one undergraduate seminar focusing on problems, questions, methodologies, and models of research in the humanities that cross traditional disciplinary fields.

The Mellon Postdoctoral Program was made possible by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Fellowships are initially granted for one year and are renewable once.

2009

CARLOTTA DARO received her BA from the University of Rome, and her MA and PhD in the History of Art from the Sorbonne. While at McGill under the direction of Professor Jonathan Sterne, Dr. Daro is pursuing research on the impact of telecommunication infrastructures in shaping urban form and experience in North America. Since 2001 Dr. Daro has been teaching courses on the history and theory of modern architecture at the École Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture Paris Malaquais and in 2008 she was a Visiting Scholar at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal. Her work has already contributed significantly to the fields of art history, architecture, music and communication studies. She is working on a critical study of architectural acoustics, which was the synthesis of her doctoral research on the relationship between sound and architecture in the latter half of the twentieth century. Dr. Daro is currently involved in a project on Muzak as a commercial industry and its role as an agent for the conditioning of public and private space. She has worked extensively as an archivist, architectural journalist and curator of art and architectural exhibitions.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS GAUVIN completed his MA and PhD at Harvard in the History of Science. He also holds an MA in the History of Geophysics and a BSc in Mathematical Physics from the Université de Montréal. His doctoral dissertation concentrated on how natural philosophy in seventeenth-century France was influenced by the material culture of science. Under the supervision of Professor Nicholas Dew, Dr. Gauvin is taking his doctoral research a step further and is investigating the involvement of the French artisanal community in the manufacture of scientific instruments. His multidisciplinary approach draws upon anthropology, art history, historical
archaeology, the history of science, and engineering. Dr. Gauvin has worked as a curator of the scientific collections at the Stewart Museum in Montreal and at Harvard’s Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments. He conducts his research in six foreign languages.

MARK ALGEE-HEWITT received his MA from the University of Western Ontario, and his PhD from New York University in the Department of English. His doctoral dissertation explored the history of the sublime in eighteenth-century literature through the study of word clusters in over 3000 texts. He also has extensive training in computer science and statistics. Under the supervision of Professors Tom Mole (English) and Andrew Piper (German), he will explore the potential today’s digital resources have to provide a new understanding of the socio-cultural, political and literary transformations that took place during the eighteenth century. Dr. Algee-Hewitt will make use of McGill’s computer-assisted textual analysis resources and will contribute specifically to the Text Analysis Portal for Research (the TAPoR project). He will also work closely with the Interacting with Print research group at McGill as he explores the role print played in these transformations. Dr. Algee-Hewitt has extensive experience teaching literature and critical theory at both New York and Rutgers Universities.

2010

ARNE HINTZ obtained his MA in International Political Economy from the University of Warwick, Coventry, UK and his PhD in Political Science from the University of Hamburg, Germany. Prior to his postdoctoral research fellowship at McGill, Dr. Hintz was Program Director of the Center for Media and Communication Studies at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. Under the supervision of Professor Marc Raboy, Dr. Hintz is investigating issues related to global media governance. In particular, he is studying the policy environment of community and citizens media, the role of technological standard setting, and questions of power and participation in emerging governance regimes. Dr. Hintz is actively involved in the Media@McGill research hub, and is the project manager for the international research project “Mapping Global Media Policy.” Dr. Hintz has a practical background in journalism and alternative media activism, he has been a community media advocate at the UN World Summit on the Information Society, the European Union and UNESCO, and he works as policy adviser with the Community Media Forum Europe and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters. He is a co-founder of the Civil Society Media Policy Consortium, and vice-chair of the Community Communication section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR).

PHILIP SLAVIN has a broad background in the fields of history and economics, as well as undergraduate degrees in musicology and violin performance. He received his PhD in Medieval History from the University of Toronto and went on to do postdoctoral studies at Yale University’s Economic Growth Center. Under the supervision of Professor George Grantham in the Department of Economics, Dr. Slavin will study the impact of environmental crises on nutrition and health in late medieval England. Crop failures, floods and cattle plague caused widespread starvation and disease that ultimately claimed forty percent of England’s population by 1351. Dr. Slavin has identified, digitized and tabulated over 6,000 archival sources from various repositories in the UK. The application of statistical models to these records will enable him to further our understanding of the long-reaching impacts of these events. Dr. Slavin is already widely published and is the recipient of many prizes and grants. He speaks three languages and has a reading knowledge of fifteen others.
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