



Cornell University

Institute for the Social Sciences

2013-2015 Summary



This reports highlights the Institute for the Social Sciences (ISS) activities and achievements from July 1, 2013, thru June 30, 2015.

Background

We are living in an era when some of the most pressing issues facing humanity are social in either their origin or their consequences. We are witnessing rising economic inequality, stagnant or declining social mobility, terrorism and political violence, economic sluggishness and recession. At the same time our climate is changing, human interactions in the digital age are different than they once were, and advances in genotyping are raising serious privacy implications.

Through three signature programs -- Theme Projects, Faculty Fellows, and Small Grants – the ISS fosters systematic, evidence-based, and interdisciplinary knowledge of social processes to address these critical concerns. A catalyst promoting new collaborations and partnerships, the ISS plays a key role melding social scientists with those working in the physical and natural sciences as well as the humanities to strengthen Cornell and the social sciences across the university.

Theme Projects

Since its inception in 2004, the ISS has hosted eight interdisciplinary teams of scholars focused on addressing a topic through an ISS *theme project*. Competitively selected, the projects are comprised of tenure-line faculty from around Cornell. Project members meet regularly for three years to exchange ideas, conduct research, and hold events open to the Cornell community and beyond.

The ISS has played a leading role helping theme project members secure external grant awards, even in the context of a 10-year decline in federal funding for the social sciences. Total external funding for all theme project team members is more than \$13.2 million. Of particular note, during the 2013-2015 time period, Project Leader Michael Macy (sociology and information science) on the 2005-2008 theme project, Getting Connected: Social Science in the Age of Networks (Networks), received a \$2.1 million Minerva award in 2014 for his research tracking critical mass outbreaks in social contagions.

Geri Gay (communication), also on the Networks team, was awarded \$500,000 by the National Science Foundation in 2014, to study how people interact with social technology.

Valerie Reyna (human development and psychology), member of the 2009-2012 theme project, Judgment, Decision Making, and Social Behavior (Judgment), secured a \$1.8 million grant in 2013 from the National Institutes of Health to examine adolescents' risky decision-making. This collaborative project includes team members and affiliates from the Judgement Project: William Schulze, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management; David Dunning, psychology; Ted O'Donoghue, economics; Brian Wansink, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management; Barbara Ganzel, College of Human Ecology; and Henning Voss, Weill Cornell Medical College.

Two other theme projects, Immigration: Settlement, Integration and Membership (2010-2013) led by Michael Jones-Correa, government, and Persistent Poverty and Upward Mobility (2008-2011) directed by Chris Barrett, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, generated more than \$1.25 million in grants for projects on immigrant trust and civic engagement, racial and immigrant group differences in employment in science-related

occupations, rural employment in India, and schooling and work transitions for young women in Africa.

From 2012-2015, the ISS hosted the Contested Global Landscapes, Property, Governance, Economy, and Livelihoods on the Ground (Land), under the co-leadership of Wendy Wolford and Charles Geisler, both in development sociology. This theme project brought together colleagues from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in applied economics and management, science and technology studies, natural resources, history, anthropology and American Indian studies.

The Land project sponsored or cosponsored more than 65 events, including lectures, workshops, and panel discussions open to the public. Team members secured a Cornell University Press series, *Land: New Perspectives on Territory, Development and the Environment* – an avenue to disseminate research in this interdisciplinary field blending geography, natural resources, sociology and history. The group also published more than 40 articles, and co-authored several new books together.

During the summers 2013, 2014, and 2015, the project sponsored week-long summer Institutes where scholars from around the globe came to Cornell to explore and concentrate on different aspects of land ranging from property (2013) to knowledge and the politics of Land (2014) and occupation (2015). Early in their career scholars (either postdoctoral fellows, all but dissertation, or recent Ph.D. recipients) were competitively selected. Prior to the workshop, each participant contributed a paper read by all beforehand. During the week together, the attendees took turns discussing and critiquing their papers. The Summer Institutes were cosponsored by the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future and the Social Science Research Council (2013 only).

While the Land team's official term ended in the spring 2015, the group continues to meet regularly, working on collaborative research projects, and organizing events for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Theme (CIE) Project (2013-2016) held its kick-off lecture on April 9, 2015. The project includes a stellar group of sociologists, economist, psychologists, organizational behavior strategists, and a legal scholar, under the direction of M. Diane Burton in the College of Industrial and Labor Relations. The project is exploring critical questions about innovation and entrepreneurship in the U.S. and other leading high-tech economies. Project members also are looking at how new ideas are created, developed, diffused and evaluated, and how teams and firms create conditions fostering innovation.

Team members, Melissa Ferguson, psychology, and Jack Goncalo, organizational behavior, are working together with others on several creativity studies: *Ease of Implicit Revisions Predicts Creativity*, *Implicit Evaluation of Creativity*, and *Implicitly Creative: The Rapid Formation of Implicit Trait Impressions Beyond Positivity and Negativity*. Plans are underway to present posters at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology in San Diego in 2016.

Faculty Fellows

ISS faculty fellows are competitively selected once every three years for a semester-in-residence at the ISS to pursue their research -- a time when they are granted partial administrative and teaching relief. For example, Kim Weeden, sociology, used her time as Faculty Fellow in 2012, to produce papers on high school students' occupational plans published in *American Sociological Review*, another piece on income inequality in industrialized nations

published in *Social Science Research*, and a third paper in *American Behavioral Science* about changing patterns of work and the gender pay gap.

Designed for tenure-track Cornell faculty to be considered for promotion within the next two-three years, the ISS Faculty Fellows program holds weekly meetings giving faculty the opportunity to get to know their colleagues, including those from a different college or department. Professional development sessions, such as media training, are also held. In the spring 2015, the ISS selected the third cohort –a group of 13 -- to begin residence in the fall 2015.

Small Grants Program

“The ISS small grants program is one of the few places on campus where a junior faculty member can go to secure funding for his research,” says a former ISS small grant recipient.

Twice yearly, the ISS solicits applications from tenured and tenure-track Cornell faculty for up to \$12,000 in research and conference support. The lead principal investigator must be a social scientist faculty member at Cornell. Each application is reviewed by two social scientist faculty members at Cornell and awards are competitively selected.

Project supported by the ISS include a grant in the fall 2013, to Camille Robcis, history, for her research project, *Catholics, Gender, and the Gay Marriage Debate in France*. Her work will be published in *Constellations* and the *Journal of Modern History*.

Michael Manville, City and Regional Planning, received ISS small grant support in the spring 2014 for his project examining the impact that tolls on congested highways have on low income drivers and low-income residence.

Alexander Kuo, used his award in the spring 2015, to conduct surveys before and after the 2015 national elections in Spain. He is analyzing how an economic crises affects voter behavior and supports new political movements.

Since the small grant program's inception in the spring 2005, the ISS has provided \$1.7 million for the small grant program to support 214 research projects and 35 conferences in all eight colleges.

Administration

Kim Weeden, sociology, was the director of the ISS from spring 2013 through spring 2015. Daniel T. Lichter began leading the organization during summer 2015. He is the fifth director of the ISS.

Also, in the summer 2015, the ISS relocated to the seventh floor of Rhodes Hall. The new location includes 13 bright faculty and staff offices overlooking the valley and campus.