

AT A GLANCE

Founded: 2002

Most recent renewal: 2012

Program Directors: Peter A. Hall, Harvard University, and Michèle Lamont, Harvard University

Fellows and advisors: 19

Institutions represented: 16, in 3 countries

Fields and subfields: sociology, including demography, social stratification, social theory and cultural sociology; political science, including comparative politics, political economy and comparative public policy; organizational, cultural and social psychology; political philosophy; history; economics

Interaction meetings: 3; in Boston and Princeton, USA; and Montreal, Canada

Relevant knowledge users: community organizations focused on addressing inequality, resilience and inclusion; public policy-makers

Supporters: BMO Financial Group, 1 anonymous donor

SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Explores the roots and effects of social inequalities and asks the question: What makes a society successful?

The program in Successful Societies experienced a significant year of growth, exploration and research progress. During its present five-year term, the program is examining the social and cultural processes that lie behind the production and reproduction of inequality. Careful deliberation and dialogue among program fellows and advisors, with support from CIFAR, led to the successful recruitment of five new fellows and one new advisor to the program. These appointments bring an extended range of new perspectives to the program, including expertise in the anthropology of Canada's First Nations, in immigration and social cohesion, and in patterns of social development and ethnic conflict in South Asia.

The program piloted a new interaction format during its three program meetings

during the year, enabling extended periods of discussion focused on papers in progress authored by program fellows. Resulting from these engaging and fruitful discussions, the program began to conceptualize a new collective volume that will focus on ways in which social and cultural processes interact to produce and mitigate inequality. Fellows will collaborate on chapters representing the program's wide-ranging disciplinary perspectives and approaches.

The program also spent the year preparing for the conclusion of its five-year term. In collaboration with CIFAR, the program identified and recruited an international expert panel of reviewers that will assess the program's past achievements and future proposal in September 2016.

Fellows engaged in several knowledge outreach opportunities, including a CIFAR Change Makers event in Montreal, in which researchers joined civic and government leaders in exploring the challenges of inequality and opportunities to create more inclusive societies.

Research

- Fellows began the intellectual planning for a new collective volume that will examine how social and cultural processes interact to generate and mitigate various kinds of inequality from the micro- to macro-levels of society. For instance, how does rising income inequality impact access to critical goods and services, such as education? The volume will pay close attention to ways in which institutional frameworks and cultural repertoires condition social outcomes. With chapters written collaboratively by program fellows, the work will provide a unique multidisciplinary contribution of perspectives to the literature about inequality.
- Senior Fellow **David Grusky** (Stanford University) was a member of a team that developed an \$8-billion-per-year program aimed at reducing poverty. The program has the potential to appear as a ballot initiative in the 2018 California election. Notably, political scientists in the CIFAR program in Successful Societies contributed insights and feedback during the course of this effort.
- Senior Fellow **Will Kymlicka** (Queen's University) and colleague Keith Banting completed an edited volume, *The Strains of Commitment: Solidarity in Diverse Societies*, to be published by Oxford University Press. The work addresses the challenge of sustaining solidarity in increasingly diverse societies and seeks to bring leading social science research to bear on issues of public debate. The manuscript includes contributions by Senior Fellow **Irene Bloemraad** (University of California, Berkeley) and Program Co-Director and Senior Fellow **Peter Hall** (Harvard University). Draft chapters were the focus of discussion at a program meeting last year.

Other notable publications

- Boix Mansilla V, **Lamont M**, Sato K. 2016. Shared cognitive-emotional-interactional platforms: Markers and conditions for successful interdisciplinary collaborations. *Sci Technol Hum Val.* 41(4): 571-612.
- Hacker JS, **Pierson P**. 2016. American amnesia: How the war on government led us to forget what made America prosper. New York (NY): Simon & Schuster.
- Red Bird B, **Grusky DB**. 2016. The distributional effects of the Great Recession: Where has all the sociology gone? *Annu Rev Sociol.* Accepted.

IdeasExchange

- Program Co-Director **Peter Hall** and Senior Fellow **Jane Jenson** (Université de Montréal) participated in a CIFAR Change Makers event in Montreal in May 2016. This workshop focused on **New Models for Thriving: How Social Innovation Supports Inclusive Societies** and had strong attendance and discussion by civic and public leaders.
- In November 2016, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University hosted a panel discussion led by Program Co-Director **Michèle Lamont** (Harvard University), featuring the program in Successful Societies' approaches toward the study of inequality. The panel included fellows **David Grusky**, **Peter Hall**, **Will Kymlicka** and CIFAR Advisor **Hazel Markus** (Stanford University) and engaged faculty and graduate students from across disciplines.

Global Academy

- The program engaged three graduate students to serve as program meeting reporters and provide written summaries of the presentations and discussions that took place. Most fellows have doctoral students whose research is influenced by the ideas flowing from the collective discussions within the program.

To learn more: <https://www.cifar.ca/research/successful-societies/>



Senior Fellow Jane Jenson presents her work at the CIFAR Change Makers workshop in Montreal in May 2016.