

**“Shifting Attitudes: Radical Upheaval and its Legacies”,**  
an interdisciplinary conference hosted on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June of 2014  
by the **Institute for Advanced Studies, Toulouse, France**

We invite you to submit proposals for a conference, at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Toulouse, France ([www.iast.fr](http://www.iast.fr)), relating to “**shifting attitudes.**”

**Attitudes** should be taken in the broad sense, to cover everything from generalized optimism and pessimism, -- as for instance measured in consumer confidence surveys,-- to questions of “values”. Topics can also cover either individual or shared attitudes and values, including the kinds of things that people discuss and make the focus of collective reflection, as well as those beliefs or values that individuals happen to have, and that we can measure in the aggregate. But in each case, the focus will be on **Shifting Attitudes**, because although there are significant discussions of what determines attitudes generally, there’s a relative dearth in understanding of how, and under what circumstances, those attitudes can change. Against this backdrop, and with reference to a range of different approaches from different fields, this conference will address the question of how individual or collective attitudes shift, and what motivates them to do so. The organizers assume that thinking in interdisciplinary ways may shed new light upon attitudes that shift, or remain stagnant, even in the face of evidence that they are incompatible with indicators, or concrete data. Contributions are welcome from any discipline including economics, psychology, sociology, history, political theory, and literature. Although open to a wide range of approaches and materials, *preference will be given, -- though not exclusively,-- to studies that bring to bear historical or contemporary empirical evidence on the causes of attitude change.*

Keynote addresses will be given at the conference by Yann Algan (Sciences-Po Paris) and Elise Snyder (Yale University).

Please email the full-text of the proposed symposium presentation and a short C.V. to Valérie Nowaczyk ([shifting.conference@iast.fr](mailto:shifting.conference@iast.fr)) with the words “Shifting Attitudes” in the subject heading. Proposals must be received **by February 28, 2014**, though earlier submissions are encouraged.

Some examples (by no means exhaustive) of discussions that could be held include:

- ✚ Theoretical work on “attitude formation” from the realms of psychology or neuroscience, including work on the resilience of attitudes even in the presence of (say) evidence that should undermine them. This could include work on “attitude coordination” (those kinds of attitudes where there is evidence that people calibrate their own attitudes explicitly in relation to those of others), and where there are likely to be major and sudden shifts.

- ✦ Assessments of social media and its effect on attitudes, including measures of “happiness”. Satisfaction or pleasure derived from on-line environments including video games, Facebook, or virtual networking, contrasted with more ‘traditional’ forms of seeking pleasure, reassurance or recognition.
- ✦ Descriptions of financial crises in literature and life, such as the financial meltdowns described in Émile Zola’s *La Curée* and *L’Argent*, and assessing their impact upon (say) contemporary investors;
- ✦ Discussions about shifting attitudes towards the euro, and the EU, in light of bank and property crises.
- ✦ Reflections on the ‘failure’ of revolutions, such as those of 1830, 1848 or 1871, to bring about lasting changes to attitudes of people in the societies within which they occurred.
- ✦ The impact of the “college years” on attitudes amongst students, and assessment of the attitude shifts that (often) occurs post-graduation.
- ✦ Studies of efforts aimed at changing workers’ attitudes towards their own labor and the products therefrom, including work on ESOPs and co-ops, and their relationship to prevailing forms of production and exchange.
- ✦ Assessments of societies in which citizens returned to older (failed) paradigms, even after generations of shifted attitudes. Examples could include US policy towards freed slaves post civil war, Yugoslavia post-1989, Rwanda’s genocide, the growth of religion in the US.
- ✦ Resistance and “the manufacture of consent,” and related discussions about whether attitudes shift more under deliberate collective effort than as the unintended consequence of social upheaval.
- ✦ Discussions of psychological approaches to such ideas as: concocting “big lies” as means of changing attitudes; using “new information”, “new sources”, “new options”, or a “new script” to explain significant shifts in attitudes over time.
- ✦ Broad changes in recent years in attitudes to such high profile social issues as interracial or homosexual sex, legalization of marijuana, the value of incarceration and the death penalty on reducing crime, or the role of the military, -- and the resistance to these efforts.
- ✦ Overview of overt and indirect efforts aimed at changing broadly held ideas relating to health, in such areas as nutrition, STDs, obesity, drug treatments, and disease.
- ✦ Shifting attitudes towards immigration, including undocumented persons, in relation to political pressures from parties, employers and security officials.
- ✦ Attitudes to distribution and the welfare state
- ✦ Attitudes to social elites