Editos
Our Guest’s message

“Have fun or perish”

The last report of HCERES speaks for itself: over the last 5-year period, from 2013 to 2017, BETA has issued numerous scientific publications (classified or not). This is a very respectable result. Admittedly, we are still behind TSE, PSE, and the other SE. And yet we remain in the leading group of economics/management laboratories in France.

Measuring science has become vital nowadays. One can easily understand why. We legitimately are accountable to our funders. But we must still reflect on the real nature of our duty: which is to produce scientific knowledge (and this is slightly different from producing publications). And to do so, the best driving force, the most efficient motivation tool will always be the desire for knowledge, the enjoyment obtained from solving puzzles... in other words, an intrinsic motivation that has very little to do with the logic of publishing.

The greatest minds have always adamantly claimed that science is a game. A rather special game, a game which requires discipline and method, but nevertheless a game.

The more we are asked to provide publications, the more we should bear in mind the playful essence of our job. Without fun, we shall not find anything worth finding.

Dear colleagues, at the start of this 5-year cycle, may you have a great deal of fun in your research. Enjoy!

Julien Pénin, Director of BETA

A “new” letter for BETA

A new 5-year cycle involves a new laboratory! In this respect, BETA’s newsletter also wishes to use a makeover and somewhat change its general approach. Of course, we are not erasing the past, as this letter – our letter – must withhold its identity, skilfully and carefully constructed by my predecessor, Bruno Jeandidier, whom I salute.

As in previous issues, though it may be organized differently, the emphasis will be put on what remains the “biodiversity” of BETA: scientific excellence, caring for our doctoral students, the national and international reach of our laboratory, activities which disseminate knowledge...

Beyond that, our “new” letter is intended to be shorter, in close complementarity with BETA’s website, even more outward-looking (towards other laboratories, in France and worldwide, administrative supervision, media, private partners...). This second ambition results in this particular English version of our letter, the first of this kind. I must now conclude, wishing you a pleasant reading... whatever language you pick!

Herrade Igersheim, Deputy Director and Responsible of the "équipe com" of BETA

Our Guest’s message : Alan Kirman

USIAS Fellow
Director of Studies at EHESS
Member of IUF
Emeritus Professor at Aix-Marseille University

From the moment that I arrived in France at the end of the 70s I have been coming regularly to Strasbourg. Before that, when I was at CORE in Belgium and then at the University of Warwick I came a couple of times. My association with ULB and BETA reflects the changes in my interests. Whilst I was under the influence of mathematical economics and general equilibrium, I spent time with Philippe Artzner and then for a long time with Rodolphe Dos Santos. Rodolphe and I deviated as he remained faithful to general equilibrium, and I tried to explore how real markets function and how the whole socio-economy is a complex evolving adaptive system. Our paths have crossed again as we are both fascinated by the history of economic thought. I have also left a little mark on BETA since Paul Pezannis a former doctoral student was a maître de conference here and Isabelle Maret who also survived doing her PhD with me is still firmly ensconced here.

But, most of my recent visits to BETA including the current one to USIAS have been to work with Robin Cowan and with Moritz Mueller and we have looked at various problems including that of how the integration of black academics into teaching posts at South African Universities has evolved over time. Somehow, the members of BETA have always been prepared to discuss my somewhat weird interests in things as varied as ants, fish markets and have tolerated my long crusade against the “representative agent”, still dead after all these years. I suspect that in the next ten years economics will change beyond recognition and that as I once said in an article, the general equilibrium church which I left long ago, will have changed from a beautiful cathedral full of fervent believers to one frequented by a few curious tourists. The world is changing very fast and economics is not keeping up, crises have happened and will always happen but they are not due to some mysterious exogenous shocks but to the way in which the system is constantly reorganizing itself. There is a Chinese curse which says, “May you live in interesting times” and nobody can deny that our time is much too interesting.

But, despite all these upheavals BETA is still like a second home and seems recently to have achieved an almost Zen-like serenity. Long may it last.

Abstract. We use a comprehensive model of strategic household behavior in which the spouses’ expenditure on each public good is decomposed into autonomous spending and coordinated spending à la Lindahl. We obtain a continuum of semi-cooperative regimes parameterized by the relative weights put on autonomous spending, by each spouse and for each public good, nesting full cooperative and noncooperative regimes as limit cases. Testing is approached through revealed preference analysis, by looking for rationalizability of observed data sets, with the price of each public good lying between the maximum and the sum of the hypothesized marginal willingness to pay of the two spouses. Once rationalized, an observed data set always allows to identify the sharing rule, except when both spouses contribute in full autonomy to some public good (a situation of local income pooling).


Abstract. This paper studies how inter-municipal cooperation, through the creation of a new jurisdictional tier with transferred competencies and tax powers, affects the four main direct local tax rates (business tax, residence tax, property tax on developed land, property tax on undeveloped land) in France. We use an instrumented difference-in-differences method with an original, exhaustive panel of 36,530 French municipalities over the 1994–2010 period. Our estimation results show that inter-municipal cooperation led to an increase in the four (municipal plus inter-municipal) tax rates, which accounts for 35% of the increase observed by the taxpayer on average. Tax increases are greater for the four tax rates when a tax regime consisting in sharing tax-bases between municipal and inter-municipal governments has been adopted. As for municipal tax rates alone, the smaller the municipality, the sharper their decrease. Finally, the heterogeneity of the youth share of the population between municipalities is a key driver of the extent to which inter-municipal cooperation differs across municipalities.


Abstract. Following a recent wave of deregulation, lawyers now use a large variety of media to advertise their services. A common argument against this increasing reliance on advertising is that it might stir up frivolous lawsuits. In this article, we investigate the relevance of this argument by developing an asymmetric information game of litigation. The main results show that this stirring-up effect does not necessarily occur in equilibrium and advertising may improve welfare by decreasing the social cost of accidents. Therefore, the liberalization of legal advertising should not necessarily be considered as a threat to the efficiency of the tort system.


Abstract. Research and Technology Organizations (RTOs) and universities are important elements of countries’ innovation systems. As they are both halfway between science and industry, they are often considered to be the same thing. However, recent studies have stressed the differences between the two. In this paper, we analyze the innovative characteristics (impacts and types of innovation and internal R&D investments) of firms that collaborate with RTOs versus universities. Our study is based on statistical analysis of Community Innovation Survey micro-data (CIS 2012). Our results suggest that firms that see RTOs as more important sources of knowledge than universities have a higher probability of developing service innovation, invest less in internal R&D but are less likely to introduce new, ground-breaking innovations into the market. These results have significant policy and management implications, especially regarding the different but complementary contributions offered respectively by RTOs and universities.


Abstract. Household activities are still little discussed in economics. Several commentators have presented it as the result of an old and persistent nonrecognition of unpaid domestic work’s social and economic value by economists. According to them, the “devaluation” of this work stems from its categorization as unproductive labor throughout the history of economic thought. While, within separate studies, Mill and Jevons have been accused of devaluing household activities assigned to women, no direct comparison of their discussions has ever been made. Yet, such a comparison is particularly enriching. Mill and Jevons are indeed situated at a turning point of the history of economics and the productive/unproductive distinction. The article endeavours to highlight and to clarify the implications of this transition by examining Mill’s and Jevons’s definitions of economically productive activities and, more generally, their conceptions of economics.


Abstract. We analyze how much a core rational-choice model can explain the temporal and spatial variation in fertility and school enrollment in France during the 19th century. The originality of our approach is in our reliance on the structural estimation of a system of first-order conditions to identify the deep parameters. Another new dimension is our use of gendered education data, allowing us to have a richer theory having implications for the gender wage and education gaps. Results indicate that the parsimonious rational-choice model explains 38 percent of the variation of fertility over time and across counties, as well as 71 percent and 83 percent of school enrollment of boys and girls, respectively. The analysis of the residuals (unexplained by the economic model) indicates that additional insights might be gained by interacting incentives with cross-county differences in family structure and cultural barriers.
Hello, could you briefly introduce yourself?

Hello, my name is Vincent Vergnat, and I defended my thesis on economics on December 6th 2017. This thesis was written under the direction of Bertrand Koebel at BETA - Strasbourg.

When did you decide to pursue doctoral studies and why?

I decided to do a PhD between my first and my second year of Master’s degree [Statistics and Econometrics - Strasbourg]. At the time, I was doing an internship at the ORSAS (Regional health and social affairs observatory), in Lorraine. My tasks included sorting databases, as well as using descriptive statistics and commenting results. But I also wanted to find out and understand what was hidden behind those statistics. For instance, I was working on the poverty rate, but I wanted to dig deeper, in order to understand the determinants of poverty and find out what type of policies could impact it. I thought that a PhD would help me answer those questions.

What was your doctoral thesis work objective?

My doctoral thesis focuses on studying the evolution of labour supply when entering adult life. This means that I explore the factors which influence the decision made by young adults to work or not to work. I mainly focus on two mechanisms: the influence of leaving the family home, and the influence of having a first child.

What main results did you obtain? Were there any surprises?

My thesis contains four empirical studies. Those studies show the importance of family background on labour supply decision made by young adults. For example, I was able to show that educated women are penalized, as far as salary is concerned, after the birth of a child. As a matter of fact, the birth of a child delays their progress in terms of salary. Also, I showed that public policies may influence mothers returning to work, but so may company characteristics. I particularly show the importance of company size, or even that of type of industry, when returning to work as a new mother.

Does your work have any societal implication? Or any potential political implications?

There are implications for public policies. This type of work allows us to get a better understanding of how young adults act, and what factors may influence their labour supply. For example, my work encourages me to think that studying the implementation of an autonomy allowance may be interesting. This is regularly discussed in the public sphere, and it would help young people become more self-supporting, by offering an income which does not depend on the family background. It would also be interesting to extend the RSA (active solidarity income) to younger people (under 25 years old). In fact, my work has proved that extending the RSA could reduce poverty among young adults, without deterring them from working.

What did you learn about yourself during your PhD studies?

It made me realize that I was able to carry out a project from start to finish. A PhD thesis is a long and sometimes difficult process, and being the main actor and having managed to complete it in 3 years’ time, is very rewarding. I also found out that I could be independent, and get organized in order to finish my thesis in due time. Following this PhD, my motivation to engage in research still remains.

How to succeed your PhD? Do you have any advice?

One must, of course, be curious and motivated, eager to learn about new things and understand them. I think that, without a curious spirit, it may be difficult to successfully complete a doctoral thesis. One must also be able to question oneself. Listening to other people’s remarks is very important, whether they are other PhD students, your supervisor, or the other researchers you meet throughout your PhD. Therefore it is important to go present your work during conferences and seminars, in order to get an objective and external feedback. Finally, I would advise PhD students to exchange views with other researchers and why not develop new projects with them. This is a good way to find new ideas and gain new perspective on one’s work.

Vincent Vergnat is now post-doctoral researcher at LISER (Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research) and at Luxemburg University.

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https://sites.google.com/site/vincentvergnat/

Interview conducted with the Doctoral School Augustin Cournot / the complete interview is available:

http://ed.ecogestion-cournot.unistra.fr/?cat=16

Portrait of a PhD

Interview with Vincent Vergnat, 2017 BETA Phd graduate, by Benoît Dicharry, Maho Nakagawa and Arnaud Wolff, 2nd year doctoral students at BETA.

PhD defenses (January-September 2018)

Nam Quoc TRAN
July 9th 2018
Under the supervision of Phu Nguyen-Van
“Essays on environmental performance and productivity of firms: Applications to Vietnamese SMEs”

Kim-Marlene LE
September 12th 2018
Under the supervision of Julien Pénin
“The Role of Creative Communities and Entrepreneurs in Producing Digital Content without Formal Intellectual Property: The Case of Alternative Pornography”

Florian CLAEYS
September 13th 2018
Under the supervision of Alain Karsenty (CIRAD) and Philippe Delacote
“A bioeconometric modelling of logged tropical forests to simulate low-carbon strategies for Central African concessions”

Cyrielle POIBAUD
September 20th 2018
Under the supervision of Ragip Ege and Herrade Igersheim
“Equality and social justice. A philosophical approach”

Marine Charlotte ANDRE
September 26th 2018
Under the supervision of Meixing Dai
“Implications of adaptive learning for the design of optimal monetary policy”
**New projects**

**ANR Project “Social Transformation in South African Science and Innovation” (STIS)**
Leaders: Robin Cowan and Moritz Mueller
Goal: Achieve a balanced representation of racial and other specific social groups in various occupations is important both politically and socially. This project investigates the integration of excluded groups into social collective, with an empirical focus on the racial transformation of the South African science system. We build a simple model and use two unique data sets to examine the racial transformation taking place in South African science. We explore the process itself, but expand the analysis to examine the effects of racial transformation on the content and structure of the broader system of science and (industrial) innovation. The project speaks to very important and pressing policy issues currently centre-stage in South Africa, but the general results will be applicable much more broadly, to the common problem of occupational (de-)segregation.

**Inra-Agiravir-Nestlé Waters partnership**
Person in charge at BETA: Serge Garcia
Goal: monetary valuation of environmental and social services, and their impact on the local economy, as part of the protection of water resources in the catchment area of Vittel. The contract between Inra, Agiravir (in charge of protecting water resources in the catchment area of Vittel-Contrexéville since 1992) and Nestlé Waters France plans to fund a doctoral student, interns, field surveys and other research missions.

**Abroad**

- *Olivier Damette*
  Invited researcher, University of Surrey and University of Cambridge, September 2018
  Topic: climate change and economic growth.

- *Serge Garcia*
  Invited researcher, University College (Dublin)
  From March to May 2018
  Topic: find out farmers’ motives with regards to afforestation incentive programmes in Ireland.

- *Jean-Alain Héraud*
  Visiting professor, University of Adelaide (Australia)
  September 2018
  Topic: complexity management, economic development of territories and urban planning.

**Home**

- *Tim Friehe* (invited by Y. Gabuthy)
  Professor of Marbourse University, Marbourse (Germany)

- *Gauthier Lanot* (invited by B. Koebel)
  Professor at Umea School of Business, Economics and Statistics, Umea (Sweden)

- *Theophilos Papadimitriou* (invited by M. Sidiropoulos)
  Professor at the Department of International Economic Relations & Development, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini (Greece)

- *Holger Stichnoth* (invited by B. Koebel)
  Senior researcher and deputy director of the “Social Policy and Redistribution” research group, Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW), Mannheim (Germany)

- *Marco Valente* (invited by A. Lorentz)
  Associate Professor at Laboratory of Economics and Management (LEM), Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, Pisa (Italy)
BETA and civil society (January - September 2018)

Medias

“Mister Gattaz, your role is to defend French companies, not financial markets”
Tribune written by Yamina Tadjeddine
Le Monde, February 20th 2018

“Michel Aglietta, thinker of capitalism”
Tribune written by Laurence Scialom, Yamina Tadjeddine and Anne-Laure Delatte
Le Monde, May 31th 2018

“EDF, nuclear energy and manipulation of the market for electricity: economic lighting on a delicate case”
Article written by Maxime Crémel
Le Cercle – Les Echos, April 22nd 2018

“Chief Amélie de Dietch”
Article written by Herrade Igersheim and Charlotte Le Chapelain
Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace, July 31st 2018

“The ambiguous anniversary of July 14th: Bastille Day or anniversary of the Federation?”
Article written by Guillaume Bagard and Georges El Haddad
The Conversation, July 13th 2018

“The occurrence of a market crash”
Yamina Tadjeddine in le Grain à Moudre program
France Culture, February 13th 2018

“Circular economy and environmental protection”
Interview by Philippe Delacote
Xerfi Canal, July 11th 2018

“Organizational innovation: where do new ideas come from ?”
Interview by Bérangère Szostak
Xerfi Canal, September 3rd 2018

Public Lectures

Conference held by Yamina Tadjeddine
Géopolitiques de Brest
February 1st 2018
“The consequences of the financial crisis on Southern countries”

Conference held in partnership with the Centre Culturel Alsacien
With Amélie Barbier-Gauchard
Strasbourg, February 5th 2018
“Federalism: a key for Alsace, France and Europe”

Panel organized by AITB et Aprofin
with Yamina Tadjeddine
Metz, February 15th 2018
“Banks and Fintech”

Conference held by Yamina Tadjeddine
organised by the Pôle ECC in Nancy
February 20th 2018
“Cryptocurrencies”

Panel organised by the student union
ECC with Yamina Tadjeddine
Nancy, March 22nd 2018
“Bitcoin cryptocurrencies: is this the end of banking and regulation?”

Conference organised by the association
“Clinique de Droit de Nancy”, with Samuel Ferey
Nancy, April 9th 2018
“Predictive justice and its impacts on law for the future”

Conference held as part of the University project
“A campaign against misconceptions! “, with
Philippe Gillig
Colmar, May 10th 2018
“Are we heading towards a labour-free world?”

A debate held by CCI
with Eric Schenk
Strasbourg, May 15th 2018
“IT careers in a digital era, what’s next?”

Members of BETA took part in Pint of Science
Jérôme Hergueux and Herrade Igersheim
Strasbourg, May 14th 2018
“ What if economy dealt with the human aspect?”
Agnès Gramain and Olivier Simard-Casanova
Nancy, May 16th 2018
“acting consciously”

Conference held by Claude Diebolt
Clermont-Ferrand, July 4th 2018
“We are Ninjas: How Economic History Has Infiltrated Economics Through Cliometrics”

Conference held by Herrade Igersheim and
Charlotte Le Chapelain
General assembly of the association De Dietch
Reichshoffen, July 7th 2018
“Industrialisation and female entrepreneurship in the 19th century: the case of Amélie de Dietch”

Conference held by Yamina Tadjeddine
CFPB Nancy, July 17th 2018
“What are the challenges for education and research, regarding the digital revolution in the world of banking and finance?”

Prizes and awards

Claude Diebolt
Elected 40th president of the Association Française de Science Economique (AFSE)

Jean-Alain Héraud
Member of the Conseil de Développement de l’Eurométropole de Strasbourg
(development board of Strasbourg Eurométropole)

Mathieu Lefebvre

Sofia Patauli
Prize for the best presentation, with the paper “Demand-pull innovation in science” co-written with Stefano Bianchini and Patrick Llerena during the Science, Technology and Innovation conference in May (Valencia, May 2018)
Campus APT, Nancy

Researchers

David Shanafelt
Junior Researcher INRA
Research domains: Spatial dynamics of biodiversity, Human-nature interaction, Natural resources management

Campus Michottes, Nancy

Researchers

Eve-Angéline Lambert
Professor in Economics, IAE Nancy School of Management
Research domains: Law and economics, Bargaining, Competition policy

Thomas Lanzi
Associate Professor in Economics, Faculté de Droit, Sciences Economiques et Gestion de Nancy
Research domains: Strategic communication, Economics of risk and uncertainty, Behavioural economics

Campus Strasbourg

Researchers

Julien Jacob
Associate Professor in Economics, Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion de Strasbourg
Research domains: Economic analysis of liability, Tort law, Economics of risk and uncertainty, Environmental economics, Health hazards, Technological change, Innovation

Mathieu Lefebvre
Professor in Economics, Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion de Strasbourg
Research domains: Public Economics, Economics of Aging, Labour Economics, Experimental Economics

PhD and post-doctoral fellows

Kéa Baret
Under the supervision of Amélie Barbier-Gauchard and Theophilos Papadimitriou (Democritus University of Thrace)

Charlotte Bez
“Long-term effectiveness of public policy incentives with intrinsic versus extrinsic sustainable behaviour of agents. Agent-based modeling of the transition towards green passenger mobility concepts in urban areas”
Under the supervision of Patrick Llerena

Kenza Bousedra
Under the supervision of Sandrine Wolff

Pauline Brunner
Under the supervision of Véronique Schaeffer

 Quentin Commine
Under the supervision of Eric Schenk

Delegation

Théophile Azomahou, full time delegation, October 1st 2018 to August 31st 2019
Research domains: Development economics, Applied econometrics

Engineers and staff

Stéphane Krebs
Researcher Engineer INRA
Research domains: Multi-agent modelling, Forest economy

Alexandre Maryol
Associate Professor in Economics, UFR Droit, Economie et Administration de Metz
Research domains: Industrial economics, Regulation of public services

PhD and post-doctoral fellows

Majida Jrad
Under the supervision of Yamina Tadjeddine, Ahmad M. Shahin and Lina Kemayel (Lebanese University)

Sarah Van Driessche
Under the supervision of Eve-Angéline Lambert and Julien Jacob

Phu Nguyen-Van
Senior Researcher CNRS
Research domains: Economics of environment, energy and natural resources, Applied econometrics

Faustine Perrin
Associate Professor in Economics, Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion de Strasbourg
Research domains: Climometrics, Human Capital, Growth, Fertility, Gender

Emilie Ruiz
Associate Professor in Economics, IUT Louis Pasteur
Research domains: Crowdsourcing, Open Innovation, Organizational Innovation

Christian Freund
Post-doctoral fellow, Under the supervision of Robin Cowan
Research domains: Agent-based modeling, Network theory, Finance

Jia Liu
“Complementarities in performance between product, process and organizational innovation”
Under the supervision of Julien Pénin and Patrick Rondé

Quang Huy Nguyen
“Social impact on the adoption of organic farming: The role of religious beliefs and religious leaders”
Under the supervision of Anne Stenger and Phu Nguyen-Van

Oriama Ruth
“Innovation triggered transformation towards a knowledge-based bio-economy in Kenya”
Under the supervision of Thierry Burger-Helmchen

Agathe Simon
Under the supervision of Amélie Barbier-Gauchard and Mathieu Lefebvre

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