AREAS OF RESEARCH / TOPICS

Until 2013, the research activities at the Centre Lillois d’Études et de Recherches Sociologiques et Économiques (Clersé) were divided into nine programmes. Since January 2014, our research activities have been reorganised into three key areas to enhance multidisciplinarity and to better reflect changes in contemporary society.

Area 1 - Comparative political anchor points and dynamics (Coordinators: Gilles Chantraine and Brigitte Steinmann)

This area brings together researchers focusing on the different expressions of the relation between individuals and “politics”. This refers both to the challenging of institutional powers (private and public powers, particularly the State and its ideological and coercive instruments) and to the formulation of political alternatives, separate from these powers (against them, external to them, despite them). Researchers therefore take into account both official or traditional political institutions, and the political, institutional or activist conflicts, struggles and mediation which shape and give substance to their action, occasionally influence or redefine them, or even oppose them and depart from them.

Area 2 - Working worlds and private worlds (Coordinators: Bernadette Tillard and Alexandre Léné)

This research approach is based on two distinct points:

- Adoption of a deliberately empirical perspective that takes into consideration social relations. In fact, research centred on “social worlds” provides an opportunity to better understand complex collective processes and social transformations. The “world” notion underlines, on the one hand, the stability of the organisation of a certain number of “collective activity structures” and, on the other hand, the dynamics of the segmentation and reconfiguration of the frontiers between these worlds, resulting from power relations between collective players;

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I would like to highlight three positive points that reveal the laboratory’s full potential:

• The first point relates to the remarkable involvement of our teaching research staff in the laboratory’s research activities and dynamics. In addition to performing teaching-related tasks and carrying out their educational duties and research activities, many are actively involved in the Laboratory Board, the Programme Management Committee and the Faculty Board. Together, they played an active role from the end of 2011 onwards in discussions on the restructuring of our nine programmes into three areas of research. These programmes were implemented in early 2014.

• The second point is the internationalization of the laboratory’s research, one of our key assets. It has allowed Clersé to forge an identity for itself, to gain in attractiveness and to win recognition across Europe and worldwide. Clersé researchers have worked in numerous countries and have had a keen eye for the most interesting research to conduct in a wide range of regions, including Africa, Latin America and Japan.

• The third point is the interest shown in our local environment and “civil society” by our research community. Many researchers have established long-lasting relations with administrative authorities, non-profit organisations and other local public action players, within institutional (CNAV, CAF, DIRECTES, etc.) or academic partnerships (MESHS, PUDL, Céreq)/schemes initiated by the Nord-Pas de Calais region (researcher/citizen research projects) or by the LMCU/networks of organisations or professionals (ONED, CRES, etc.).
Clersé evolved out of the research initiatives launched by this unit. It started out as a small CNRS-associated research team (ERA) formed in 1974 by Jean-René Tréanton within the Institute of Sociology. The same year, an inter-regional entity of the Centre for Qualification Studies and Research (CEREQ) was founded in Lille, and placed under the responsibility of Jean-René Tréanton. The ERA was integrated in 1978 into the Work, Education and Employment Sociology Laboratory (Laboratoire de Sociologie du Travail, de l’Education et de l’Emploi), with Claude Dubar, also under the direction of Jean-René Tréanton. Some economists, for their part, joined François Stankiewicz in the Systems and Work Analysis Laboratory (LAST, Laboratoire d’Analyse des Systèmes et du Travail).

The integration into the CNRS in 1980 of several local sociologists, initially from the Development Analysis Centre (CAD, Centre d’Analyse du Développement), provided an opportunity to bring together sociology entities into a single research center. The economists from LAST decided to join the new unit. From the start, Clerse’s staff therefore included researchers from both disciplines. It was Michel Simon, professor of sociology, who was chosen as the person best suited to lead and ensure unity of action in this new laboratory. Created in 1981, Clerse was recognised by the CNRS as an associate laboratory in 1982.

When the CNRS decided to bring together local universities within a social sciences research federation, Ifrési, in 1986, Michel Simon was appointed director of the new unit, whom Clerse was one of the leading components.