



Summary of the 18 successful DGT Call Projects

Title: Impact of forced displacement on the development of social preferences and trust in children in the Sahel region (FORDIS)

Funders involved: ANR, NSF, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Marie Claire Villeval](#), National Center for Scientific Research and University of Lyon

Consortium: [Jean Decety, University of Chicago](#); [Rhea Luana Arini, University of Lincoln](#)

Summary: The FORDIS project examines the development of social preferences, trust, and social norms in children exposed to forced displacement due to intergroup conflicts in Burkina Faso applying a multidisciplinary approach that includes education, behavioural economics and developmental psychology. The project will evaluate fairness, trust, trustworthiness, and cooperation, and the perception of gender social norms (specifically, genital mutilations and forced child marriage). This project is contributing to our understanding of the development of social preferences and how they can be affected by forced displacement and the associated uncertainty. It will be used to inform policy interventions to foster prosocial motivations, trust, and social norms that discourage violence, promote cooperation, and sustain democracy.

Title: Participation in the City: How Urban Participatory Innovations are Reshaping Democracy, Governance and Trust (PAR-CITY)

Funders involved: ANR, FAPESP, NCN, NRF, NSF, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Samuel Halvorsen](#), Queen Mary, University of London

Consortium: [Gabriela de Brelàz, Universidade Federal de Sao Paulo](#); [Guillaume Gourgues, Université Lumières Lyon 2](#); [Agnieszka Kampka, Warsaw University of Life Sciences](#); [Stephanie McNulty, Franklin & Marshall College](#); [Anna Selmeczi, University of Cape Town](#); [Zachary Spicer, York University](#).

Summary: PAR-CITY brings together a unique interdisciplinary set of 25 researchers to examine how and why cities respond to the key democratic challenges of our times. The project will undertake a relational comparison of seven major cities covering four regions across the global south and north. Each city has been chosen due to its promotion of one or more urban participatory innovations (UPIs) in recent years and will address the same central research questions in order to achieve three objectives. First, PAR-CITY will establish the empirical significance of cities for responding to the global challenges of democracy, governance and trust (DGT). Second, the project will examine the role of digital media, tools and technologies in eroding or strengthening DGT in large cities. Third, the project will advance concepts, models and theories of DGT through the central notion of UPI.

Title: Learning Amidst Disinformation and Social Conflict: Young People and Teachers Co-Constructing Curriculum through Transnational Dialogue (4Cs)

Funders involved: HRZZ, SSHRC, UKRI - ESRC

Lead-PI: [Lee Jerome](#), Middlesex University

Consortium: [Kathy Bickmore, University of Toronto \(OISE\)](#); [Zrinka Ristic Dedic, Institute for Social Research, Zagreb](#)

Summary: The project aims to address the growing gap between young people's lived experiences and their schools' citizenship-relevant curriculum practices, in the contrasting contexts of England, Croatia, and Canada. In this rapidly changing world, inundated with instantaneous but unreliable information and images, existing approaches to teaching about controversial and sensitive issues may not engage with students' myriad situated experiences, strong emotions, or digital cultures. As co-participants with researchers in collaborative inquiry and dialogue, students and teachers in each local setting will co-construct new educational projects that facilitate meaningful mutual engagement about the difficult and divisive issues and the media sources the youth consider important, mindful of the constraints surrounding teachers' work. This will enable the project team to elaborate new principles and exemplars of education that can meet contemporary challenges to democracy and peace.

Title: Democracy, AI and Big Tech: Assessing corporate activities in the advancement of Artificial Intelligence in the UK, US and Canada (AIDEMOCRACY)

Funders involved: SSHRC, NEH, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Lina Dencik, Goldsmith's, University of London](#)

Consortium: [Victor Pickard, University of Pennsylvania](#); [Joanna Redden, Western University](#)

Summary: The role of Big Tech in the advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the central questions for the future of democracy, governance and trust. With a focus on the role of Big Tech, this project will explore how AI strategies are shaped and what this means for democracy, governance and trust through a multi-method, interdisciplinary and transnational comparative study. Assessing corporate influence through a combination of computational and qualitative methods across policy, government, media and civil society within the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada, the project will uncover the role that corporations play in animating AI's growth in key established democracies. Moreover, by showing alternative framings and engaging with a range of stakeholders to discuss ongoing findings, the project will explore avenues for intervention to foster democracy, governance and trust.

Title: Emergent Diseases, Patient Activism, and the Co-Production of Expertise and Democracy in US, France and Brazil (CoProExpert)

Funders involved: ANR, NSF, FAPESP

Lead-PI: [Gil Eyal, Columbia University](#)

Consortium: [Madeleine Akrich, Mines Paris Tech PSL](#); [Larry Au, City College of New York](#); [Renan Gonçalves Leonel da Silva, Universidade Federal de Sao Paulo](#); [Janaina Pamplona da Costa](#) & Andre Luiz Sica de Campos, UNICAMP; [Maya Sabatello, Columbia University](#).

Summary: In recent decades, emergent diseases have caused profound frictions in democratic governance across the Atlantic. Sluggish institutional responses and inadequate treatments have escalated disputes between advocacy groups, patients, medical experts, and scientists in regulatory agencies over the speed, direction, and implications of scientific research. This project offers a systematic exploration of this critical issue in Brazil, France, and the US. The project will compare the contestations and collaborations between medical science agencies and

patient organisations and explore the extent to which different participatory science formats can either mitigate or deepen the crisis of trust in public health and scientific experts.

Title: A Comparative Study of Russian Migrant Communities following the Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine (DemEx)

Funders involved: NCN, NSF, SSHRC

Lead-PI: [Marlene Laruelle, George Washington University](#)

Consortium: [Zuzanna Brunarska, University of Warsaw](#); [Paul Goode, Carleton University](#); [Ivetta Sergeeva, George Washington University](#)

Summary: This project studies the dynamics between migration and democracy. It explores the challenges and opportunities posed to governance, political inclusion, and cooperation. Areas of investigation include the role of émigrés in fostering resistance and the development of civil society networks. The major questions being investigated are how political migrants interact with the political landscapes of their host countries and their homeland; how these exiles contribute to political dynamics in their homeland through political remittances; and how the narrative of political emigration is leveraged to shape perceptions in both sending and receiving countries.

Title: A Cross-National Study to Promote Democratic Dialogue on Social Media Using Generative Artificial Intelligence (DemDialogueAI)

Funders involved: NSF, SNSF, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Christopher Barrie, University of Oxford and New York University](#)

Consortium: [Christopher Bail, Duke University](#); [Anikó Hannák, University of Zurich](#)

Summary: There is broad concern that social media inhibits productive debate about politics— a cornerstone of democracy. Yet, few scholars have explored how social media platforms might be redesigned to counter such trends. This project proposes a cross-national study that employs generative artificial intelligence, agent-based models, and online experiments to identify how the algorithms that shape the information users see on social media could promote democratic norms, increase trust, and decrease polarization. The project aims to reveal

how digital platforms can promote prosocial behaviour and bolster democratic trust, providing a model for future business leaders and policy makers who seek to regulate the social media industry.

Title: The Potential of Digital: Optimising Trustworthy Digital Contact (PODTRUST)

Funders involved: ANR, NCN, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Katharine Dommett](#), University of Sheffield

Consortium: [Elizabeth Dubois, University of Ottawa](#); [Damian Guzek, University of Silesia, Katowice](#); [Karolina Koc-Michalska, Audencia Business School](#); [James Weinberg, University of Sheffield](#)

Summary: High trust interactions between citizens and political actors such as politicians, government officials, and journalists, enable collective action, inspire participation and ensure adherence to political rules and norms. Yet these bonds are subject to challenge and increasingly frayed. This project is exploring whether and under what conditions digital communication can strengthen or erode trust – specifically looking at communication via email, social media, chatbots, social media influencers, and AI-generated synthetic media. The project expects minority communities will have different expectations for communication with political actors and will examine how women, ethnic minorities and diaspora communities respond to alternative forms of contact.

Title: Open Constitutional Democracy: Reconciling Deliberation and Constitutional Democracy

Funders involved: SNSF, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Michael Pal, University of Ottawa](#)

Consortium: [Odile Ammann, University of Lausanne](#); [David Vitale, University of Warwick](#)

Summary: In response to the phenomenon of democratic decline, widespread loss of political trust, and failures of governance globally, democratic reform and innovation are of paramount importance. This project aims to develop a revised version of Open Democracy that enhances citizen participation without sacrificing the institutions that are necessary for rights protection and effective governance. The project

has three components: 1) developing a theory of “Open Constitutional Democracy” that enhances democratic participation and political trust but which specifies their relationship to foundational constitutional principles and institutions; 2) building an innovative model of governance that incorporates principles of Open Democracy; and 3) demonstrating the need for robust interpretation of the social right to education as necessary for democratic flourishing.

Title: Investigating the Relationship between Science Diplomacy and Global DGT: The Role of Inclusive Metascience Observatories (IMSO4DIPLO)

Funders involved: FRQSC, ANR, FAPESP, NCN, NRF, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC, NSF

Lead-PI: [Cassidy R. Sugimoto, Georgia Institute of Technology](#)

Consortium: [Kieron Flanagan, University of Manchester](#); [Amâncio Jorge Silva Nunes de Oliveira, University of Sao Paulo](#); [Emanuel Kulczykcki, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan](#); [Johann Mouton, Stellenbosch University](#); [Didier Torny, CNRS](#); [Vincent Lariviere, Université de Montréal](#)

Summary: This project is examining the role of evidence-informed science diplomacy as a strategic instrument to strengthen democracy, governance, and trust (DGT). The project will utilize qualitative and quantitative methods to (1) understand the relationship between science diplomacy and DGT; (2) conceptualize and operationalize metascience observatories and investigate the extent to which they can be leveraged to improve science diplomacy; and (3) explore how threats to DGT could be mitigated and opportunities seized through inclusive metascience observatories. The outputs will include both academic-oriented products, as well as communications to policymakers and the wider public, honouring the practices of open science. In addition to these products, outcomes will include communities of practice for science diplomats and training opportunities for early-career researchers.

Title: Graphic Design Histories for Creative Dissent: Archiving and Ethical Challenges (GDHCD)

Funders involved: FAPESP, NRF, UKRI-AHRC

Lead-PI: [Teal Triggs, Royal College of Art](#)

Consortium: [Priscila Lena Farias, Universidade de Sao Paulo](#); [Deirdre Pretorius, University of Johannesburg](#)

Summary: This project focuses on the graphic objects of street protest for global movements. By defining and critically engaging with histories of creative dissent since the 1950s in Brazil, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, the project reveals graphic design's capacity both to address and to exacerbate social crises and inequalities. Looking at protests across the political spectrum, the project takes it as axiomatic that 'democracy' can be defined in different ways: that liberal left democracy is not the same as populist right democracy, and that both give rise to protest and protest street objects. The project asks: What are the national specificities of modes of visual communication for communities of resistance in Brazil, South Africa, and the UK? How might cultural memory of the development of struggles for democracy support and perpetuate the work of archiving institutions in the future?

Title: Global Governance, Trust and Democratic Engagement in Past and Present (GLO)

Funders involved: NSF, SNSF, SSHRC, UKRI-AHRC

Lead-PI: [Daniel Laqua](#), Northumbria University

Consortium: [Carolyn Biloft, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies](#); [Daniel Gorman, University of Waterloo](#); [Susan Stokes, University of Chicago](#)

Summary: We live in an era of resurgent populist movements that seek to defend national sovereignty against the perceived threat of 'globalism'. However, mistrust of the existing or potential mechanisms for global governance is not confined to one particular part of the political spectrum, especially when it comes to questions of representation and legitimacy. If citizens lack trust in international cooperation, it can have wide-ranging implications: it risks undermining cross-border efforts to tackle global challenges, for example humanitarian crises, health inequalities and the climate emergency. This project addresses this urgent contemporary problem from a historical perspective: it traces popular engagement with bodies that sought to regulate or resolve global matters, from the aftermath of the First World War to the early 2000s. By recovering the past relationship between political participation, democracy and international institutions, the project enables us to better understand how we might reimagine global cooperative mechanisms in the present.

Title: An Exploration of Independent Journalism's Epistemologies: Enhancing Democratic Resilience in the Age of Disinformation (EDIT)

Funders involved: NRF, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Sarah Ganter, Simon Fraser University](#)

Consortium: [Mel Bunce, City University of London](#); [Musawenkosi Ndlovu, University of Cape Town](#)

Summary: Independence is considered a critical value of high-quality journalism in democratic societies. Simultaneously, independent journalists worldwide face physical, psychological, and economic attacks at increased rates. This project aims to examine how independent journalism enhances trust and democratic resilience (the ability to uphold the quality of democratic institutions and practices). The proposal posits that independent journalism is not a monolithic construct and its meanings, perceptions, and interpretations are highly reliant on specific contexts. Therefore, the project intends to gather data across four countries (South Africa, UK, Canada, Brazil) to identify differences and similarities in how researchers, citizens, independent journalists, editors, founders of independent news organisations, and governments perceive and implement independent journalism.

Title: Repairing sociality, safeguarding democracy: Transatlantic North-South narratives and practices of deep equality (RSSD)

Funders involved: FAPESP, NRF, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Christi van der Westhuizen, Nelson Mandela University](#)

Consortium: [Lori Beaman, University of Ottawa](#); [Bhekithemba Mngomezulu, Nelson Mandela University](#); [Paula Montero, Universidade de Sao Paulo](#); [Thabisani Ndlovu, Walter Sisulu University](#); [Lella Nouri, Swansea University](#)

Summary: Valuable research has been undertaken on current social polarization, weaponization of difference and democratic backsliding. Less common are investigations into everyday navigation and negotiation of diversity in creating conditions for mutual understanding and social recognition. This project will develop local case studies and collaborate in cross-country comparative analyses to understand how local practices of deep equality may provide new frameworks for strengthening democracy, ensuring inclusive governance, and improving trust. The project will craft a conceptual framework incorporative of both South and North epistemologies to enable mutual learnings about alternative practices that repair sociality towards greater trust and inclusion, despite the erosion of confidence in political representation and the legal system of producing justice. The investigation extends to digital practices to understand how digital and social media play a role in practices of

deep equality particularly by exploring agency, community and sociality in online discourses related to each local context and through a separate case study which focuses specifically on social media activism in the UK.

Title: Governance of Policy Failure Risks in the Design and Implementation of Mission-Oriented Innovation Policies – Sustainability experiences from the Global North (GRIP)

Funders involved: NCN, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Mercedes Bleda](#), University of Manchester

Consortium: [Seweryn Krupnik, Jagiellonian University](#); [Alexandra Mallett, Carleton University](#)

Summary: Mission oriented innovation policies (MOIP) are a new generation of transformative policies aimed at fostering innovations that help address complex societal challenges. The uncertain, multilevel, and complex character of MOIP exacerbates the risk of policy failure, i.e., the risk of the policies not delivering their intended goals, leading to ineffective policy support and growing distrust towards governments. This project aims to analyse policy failure risks in the design and implementation of MOIP and identify suitable risk governance approaches to address them. To do so the project analyses specific MOIP initiatives with sustainability related goals in three selected countries (United Kingdom, Poland and Canada) using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (to identify necessary and/or sufficient links through systematic cross-case comparison) and Process Tracing (to construct key causal mechanisms at the within-case level). The research contributes to a better understanding of MOIP failure risks and their governance, which can in turn help reduce policy failure and increase levels of trust in institutions and public authorities.

Title: Youth, affective polarization and trust: a transnational perspective (YAPT)

Funders involved: FAPESP, NRF, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Marjoke Oosterom](#), University of Sussex

Consortium: [Halfdan Lynge, Wits University](#); [José Verissimo Romão Netto, Universidade de Sao Paulo](#)

Summary: The role of social media engagement in dynamics of affective polarization and trust is weakly understood for countries in the Global South and particularly among youth. This project explores the extent to which young people's social media engagement with online manifestations of party polarization influences their levels of social and institutional trust, and consequently, their social and political behaviours. With the results of the research, the project aims to uncover entry-points for depolarization. In Brazil, India, and South Africa, the project will focus on understanding dynamics of polarization, trust and behaviours among urban youth. In the UK, the project will work with diaspora youth from these three countries, analysing their social media engagement with polarized debates in their countries of origin. The project will combine qualitative, participatory research to capture youth voices, with social media analytics (SMA) that will analyse online polarized debate at scale. Preliminary findings will inform the design of deliberative MiniPublics, followed by another round of qualitative research, which will explore whether it is possible to engage youth in ways that reduces polarized debates and increases social and institutional trust.

Title: Balancing Trust and Accountability: Charities, Government, and Society

Funders involved: NSF, SNSF, SSHRC, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Elizabeth Searing, University of Texas](#)

Consortium: [Nathan Grasse, Carleton University](#); [Alasdair Rutherford, University of Stirling](#); [Georg von Schnurbein, Universität Basel](#)

Summary: This project utilizes four unique country contexts (Canada, the U.K., Switzerland, and the U.S.) to map and understand cross-sector opinions on trust and accountability. Though these four countries have much in common, there is significant variation in regulatory approach, interpersonal trust, and popular sentiment toward public-serving institutions. The project will rely on this variation to understand trust and accountability, focusing on the mutual perceptions of four audiences in each context: operating charities, foundations, governmental agencies such as regulators, and the public.

Title: Economic Futures: the interplay of identities, trust and governance in South African townships

Funders involved: NRF, NSF, UKRI-ESRC

Lead-PI: [Munacinga C Simatele, University of Fort Hare](#)

Consortium: [Jaimie Bleck, University of Notre Dame](#); [James Copestake, University of Bath](#)

Summary: This project addresses the interplay of trust and governance and the effect on the economic development of South African townships post-apartheid. It examines the potential for self-sustaining growth within these historically marginalised communities, which still face significant socioeconomic challenges. The project's goal is to understand and leverage the unique cultural and economic characteristics of townships to promote inclusive growth and reduce dependency on external economic structures covering four themes: the economic potential, technology as an enabler, finance as an enabler and the interplay of social identities and economic activity. The project is using the Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol (QUIP) and Participatory Assessment of Development (PADev) tool to facilitate narrative explanations of the drivers of change in various factors that affect the township economy.