

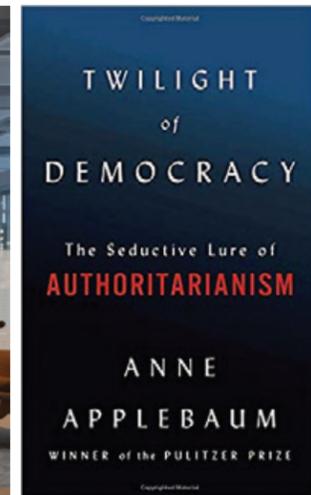
The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute

AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY



**FISCAL YEAR 2020
ANNUAL REPORT**





A Year of Discovery, Design, and Dialogue

Events of the past year, including the coronavirus pandemic and protests against racial injustice in the United States and around the world, highlight just how profound the challenges facing global democracy are—and just how urgent the need is for institutions that can help make sense of the moment and chart a productive path forward.

This year, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute significantly advanced our mission of integrating research, teaching, and practice to understand democratic decline—and resilience—and to offer actionable solutions. Importantly, this year we developed our strategic plan, completed in June, which will provide a framework, guide efforts, and ensure thoughtful growth as we move forward with our work.

We organize our work around three core functions: discovery, design, and dialogue. Discovery refers to the work of our core faculty, who will catalyze transformative, multi-disciplinary inquiry. Design is the collaboration between scholars and practitioners to test practical interventions. And dialogue is how we share our work with the public through teaching, training, writing, and convening in order to strengthen citizens' capacity for productive participation and leadership in democracy.

Throughout the past year, we have continued to build the infrastructure that will support this work, including establishing our Academic Advisory Board and our Student Engagement Board. We began recruiting and hiring our core faculty, while our senior and visiting fellows continued to make important contributions to their fields. Our conferences drew large audiences to discuss issues of race and organizing, civic education, and the intersection of technology, democracy, and

the COVID-19 pandemic. We worked to reach varied communities, co-hosting a conference with an evangelical church in Cincinnati, welcoming a democracy activist from Togo for a campus talk, and bringing together students, teachers, and educational leaders for a conference in Washington, D.C. Our public events, including on campus and via virtual platforms, brought leaders, activists, and experts of all backgrounds and ideologies together to share perspective and guide discourse.

One of the most significant events this year, of course, was the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on our ability to engage with students, researchers, and the broader public. In March, the university moved all functions online, including classes and events. Within a week, we had launched a webcast series called "SNF Agora Conversations: The Politics and Policy of COVID-19," making us one of the early conveners of a national and international discussion of the social sciences issues surrounding the pandemic. In response to unfurling protests against racial injustice and police violence, we devoted several of our webcast episodes to focusing on that extraordinary moment. Our webcast enabled us to both speak to current crises, and to draw on our long-term academic work that was already honed to understand and address issues like these.

The past year of events and activities has sharpened our focus and made our mission more relevant than ever. We seek to discover new ways to understand threats to global democracy, and we aim to develop solutions that lead to real change. And we are every day creating opportunities to expand the back and forth of respectful ideas that is at the root of all societal progress.

In the pages that follow, we are excited to share with you the past year's highlights of our three-pronged mission of discovery, design, and dialogue.

DISCOVERY

Coming from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, our faculty and fellows are at the core of our efforts to understand democratic decline and resilience, and to identify actionable, evidence-based solutions to the challenges we face. Their process of collaborative academic discovery is the underpinning that enables us to examine these issues broadly and in context, and to engage in truly transformative inquiry. Our faculty offer expert insight into the issues of the day while providing exciting educational opportunities for Johns Hopkins students and community members. They are active participants in our campus events, as well as strong voices on the national and international stage.



MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

HENRY FARRELL

Henry Farrell is a scholar of international and comparative economies and the editor-in-chief of the *Washington Post* blog “The Monkey Cage.” His most recent book, *The Twilight of America’s Financial Empire*, co-authored with Abraham Newman, was published in January 2020.



ADAM SETH LEVINE

Adam Seth Levine’s scholarship focuses on the role of collaboration and civic engagement in democracies. He is the author of *American Insecurity: Why Our Economic Fears Lead to Political Inaction*, and is president and co-founder of research4impact, a nonprofit organization that connects researchers, practitioners, and policymakers with similar interests.



CORE FACULTY

This year, as we began our search for our permanent faculty, we created an Academic Advisory Board to help establish our recruitment vision and initial screening efforts. With their guidance, we mounted searches in three strategic categories—Challenges of Multi-Ethnic Democracy, Race, and Inequality; Political Psychology; and Institutions Under Stress—with three separate internal and interdisciplinary search committees. Across all searches, we had 184 unique applications and 11 nominations.

So far our searches have resulted in three new faculty members: Henry Farrell, who joined SNF Agora as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute Professor of International Affairs at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS); Adam Seth Levine, who joined us as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute Associate Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Bloomberg School of Public Health; and Martha S. Jones, who serves as the Society of Black Alumni Presidential Professor and Professor of History and SNF Agora Institute.

ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD

Archon Fung, Winthrop Lafin McCormack Professor of Citizenship and Democracy, Harvard Kennedy School

Martha S. Jones, Society of Black Alumni Presidential Professor and Professor of History and SNF Agora Institute

Margaret Levi, Sara Miller McCune Director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University

Robert Lieberman, Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University

Alondra Nelson, President of the Social Science Research Council, Harold F. Linder Chair, School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University

Alexander Szalay, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, and Director of the Institute for Data Intensive Engineering and Science (IDIES), Johns Hopkins University

MARTHA S. JONES

Martha S. Jones, who was already a member of our Academic Advisory Board and previously served on the search committee for our director, joined SNF Agora in a new capacity this summer. She is a legal and cultural historian whose work examines how Black Americans have shaped the story of American democracy. Jones will collaborate with SNF Agora to launch an initiative to examine Johns Hopkins University’s history of discrimination. This initiative, which complements the *JHU Roadmap on Diversity and Inclusion*, was announced in July by President Ronald J. Daniels and Provost Sunil Kumar.



“We are thrilled to have SNF Agora’s new faculty join us. Each faculty member brings a unique voice and perspective on some of the most pressing problems confronting democracy. We look forward to learning from and working with them.”

Hahrie Han
Director of the SNF Agora Institute

TEACHING FACULTY AND FELLOWS

SNF Agora’s teaching faculty and fellows enable us to expand our reach, broaden our scope, and foster our research and teaching efforts. These scholars—who come from a range of domains, including academia, civil society, and media—play a vital role in advancing our work, promoting ideas and discussion on the national and international stage, and providing engaging educational experiences for students.

1. **Anne Applebaum**, Senior Fellow
2. **Ashley Berner**, Visiting Fellow
3. **Bryce Corrigan**, Lecturer
4. **Peter Levine**, Visiting Fellow
5. **Yascha Mounk**, Senior Fellow
6. **Peter Pomerantsev**, Senior Fellow
7. **Scott Shane**, Visiting Fellow
8. **Dana Wolfe**, Visiting Fellow



PETER POMERANTSEV JOINS SNF AGORA TEAM AS SENIOR FELLOW

We are often described as being in a “post-truth” world, where facts are drowning under a steady stream of propaganda and disinformation. Peter Pomerantsev is an expert on this topic, having worked as a TV producer in Moscow and traveled the world to explore where, why, and how propaganda gains a foothold.

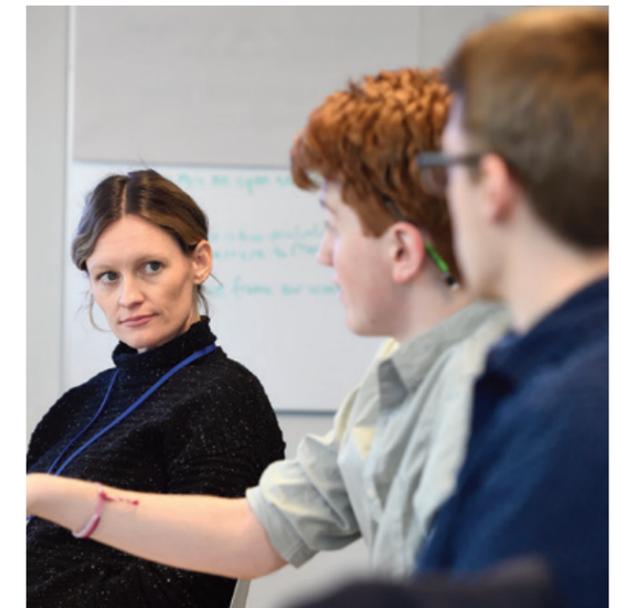
He has been published in the *Financial Times*, *Politico*, and *The Atlantic* and is the acclaimed author of *This is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality*. Pomerantsev teaches the course *This Is Not Propaganda*, an exploration of how the information environment has transformed and what can be done to create a model where deliberative democracy can flourish.



STUDENT FELLOWS

Part of SNF Agora’s mission is to develop ambassadors of the institute’s approach and ethos. Student fellowships offer exposure through careers and research projects within the academy. This year, we had four graduate students and five undergraduate students working on SNF Agora research projects as fellows. We also brought on our first SNF Agora postdoc as we began developing a program of cultivating young scholars.

Elizabeth McKenna (far left), a postdoctoral scholar at the SNF Agora Institute, co-taught the intersession course *Practicing Democracy* with Hahrie Han.





INAUGURAL DIRECTOR HAHRIE HAN'S FIRST YEAR

“Democratic institutions are only as strong as the public allows them to be; when institutions fail, it is up to people to become the guardians of democracy,” Han wrote in a recent *New York Times* op-ed piece. As the director of the SNF Agora Institute and the leader of our efforts to advance dialogue, research, and education around democratic decline and resilience, Han brings substantial expertise in this area and is an advocate for others working in similar and complementary fields.

During the last year, in addition to leading the institute’s effort to develop our strategic plan, Han has focused on recruiting and hiring our core research faculty; creating the relationships that will help integrate the institute with departments throughout the university; growing our fellows program; and launching a pilot case study program.

She has also been moving her own research forward, as she continues to direct the P3 research lab. Her lab raised \$1.2 million in grants, had peer-reviewed articles accepted or published in *JAMA*, the *American Journal of Public Health*, the *Journal of Experimental Political*

Science, the *Journal of Community Psychology*, and elsewhere. And she has been a frequent contributor to prominent publications including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

Han was also involved in several Johns Hopkins-based research efforts surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, including partnering with colleagues at the Berman Institute of Bioethics, the Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at SAIS. (See “SNF Agora Responds to COVID-19,” page 10.)

Outside of Johns Hopkins, she also participated in more than two dozen academic forums, university-based talks, public events, and strategy sessions. This included participating in the Realizing Democracy project, which is a community of researchers, philanthropists, and practitioners dedicated to realizing the full promise of an inclusive, multi-ethnic democracy in America, as well as speaking or participating in panels at Cornell University, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Open Society Institute.

DESIGN

Part of SNF Agora’s mission is to bring empirical research to bear on core questions facing governments, policy leaders, civil society leaders, and others. By collaborating with these practitioners, we can test practical interventions and translate our academic work into usable knowledge. During the last year, we saw the foundations of this work begin to unfold.

One way we will bring together scholars and practitioners is through working groups or “action tanks.” Modeled on Harvard Kennedy School’s “executive sessions,” the assumption underlying our action tanks is that to solve the most complex problems confronting our democracy, the challenge is not just for scholars to develop insights, but also to figure out how to make those insights actionable for the real world.

In November, we convened the Civic Education Working Group, which generated a set of case studies that show how civic and political actors navigated real-life challenges related to democracy. (See “SNF Agora Advances Civic Education,” page 8.) We are creating case studies as a tool for practitioners, teachers, organizational leaders, and trainers working with civic and political leaders, students, and trainees to deepen their skills and to develop insights about how to approach strategic choices and dilemmas.



SNF Agora co-hosted a forum on Digital Media in the 2020 Election that was held in November 2019. The panel included SNF Agora Visiting Fellow Scott Shane and stemmed from an ongoing research effort on digital political ethics led by Adam Sheingate, a JHU professor of political science.

This year, we also began to explore the parameters of and possible partners for an open data source project on civic indicators. Working in partnership with the Institute for Data Intensive Engineering and Science (IDIES) at Johns Hopkins University, we developed code for obtaining data on the universe of civic associations in the United States, and built a digital classifier for this data. We will continue to refine this project with the goal of developing a set of indicators that can be used to map the civic landscape across the United States. With the hiring of Bryce Corrigan as our senior statistician, we will focus in the coming year on launching the pilot program.

Finally, our faculty research labs work to advance both knowledge and practice. Director Hahrie Han brought her P3 Lab to SNF Agora. P3 seeks to understand how to make the participation of ordinary people in democratic processes possible, probable, and powerful. Using a wide range of social science methods, the multi-disciplinary group in the lab has generated research to inform this goal, including research into collective action, social movements, and organizing; research on civic and political participation; research on environmental advocacy and health; and research on polarization and elections. SNF Agora Senior Fellows Anne Applebaum and Peter Pomerantsev brought their Arena lab to the institute as well. Arena is a research lab dedicated to overcoming the challenges of disinformation by understanding best practices and then disseminating them to journalists and civic groups.



The P3 Lab team, led by Hahrie Han, includes faculty, postdocs, and SNF Agora student fellows, as well as undergraduate students. The group, pictured on a recent team Zoom call, works to understand how ordinary people’s participation in public life can become possible, probable, and powerful.



SNF Agora Advances Civic Education

Civic education is a term often used but infrequently defined—just what is meant when we call for “civic education,” and what should it look like in a primary school, university, or community setting? SNF Agora tackled this question on many fronts this year.

In November, we teamed up with *The Atlantic* to host a conference called “Civics and the Future of Democracy.” The event, held in Washington, D.C., attracted a standing-room-only audience and featured thought leaders from education, business, and government discussing civic education—what it looks like now, what its potential could be, and how important teaching young people to be responsible citizens is to the future of our democracy. A series of panels featured students, teachers, and educational institution leaders—including Johns Hopkins University President Ron Daniels—covering the range of what it means to receive, guide, and foster civic engagement in today’s educational world.

In conjunction with that conference, SNF Agora hosted an afternoon Civics Education Working Group session, which invited scholars and practitioners for an intense conversation about developing case studies that can be used by civic educators, researchers, and leaders to understand real-life challenges faced by social movement participants to gain skills, dispositions, and ideas to improve their own participation and leadership. SNF Agora has produced several of these case studies to date and will make them available on our website.

Aiming to serve educators looking for immediate and direct help in advancing civic education, SNF Agora also collaborated with colleagues from the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy on resources for school teachers and administrators. The Social Studies Knowledge Map is a one-of-a-kind instrument that can analyze a school’s social studies curriculum in terms of the knowledge it helps students learn and apply; whether a given unit includes more than one perspective; and whether the teacher-facing materials encourage deliberation and disagreement. “Election 2020: Engaging Students in Civic Discourse” is a guide for school teachers and administrators on how to manage political discussion and promote civil dialogue in the classroom. With these tools in hand, educators have concrete guidance as they look to inform the next generation of thoughtful citizens.



DIALOGUE

Created as a forum for broad engagement, deliberation, and education, the SNF Agora Institute shares our work with students, policymakers, and the broader public through teaching, writing, conferences, workshops, and other events in order to strengthen citizens’ capacity for productive participation and leadership in democracy. Over the last year, as our faculty and fellows worked to promote discovery and design new ways to enact these ideas, we have also broadened our capacity to introduce and advance dialogue. We have expanded our academic offerings; launched a new program of trainings for engagement in civic life; created more formalized student engagement opportunities; offered a variety of public events, from large conferences to single speakers; and launched a new webcast series.



PARTNERS IN ACADEMIA, INDUSTRY, AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

As part of our mission, we are always looking for potential partners whose work is complementary to our own. Some of our partners on exciting ventures this year included:

- [The Atlantic](#)
- [Johns Hopkins Krieger School of Arts and Sciences Centers for Civic Impact](#)
- [The Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life at UNC Chapel Hill](#)
- [Crossroads Undivided](#)
- [The Hopkins Population Center](#)
- [Hopkins Votes](#)
- [International Development program at Johns Hopkins SAIS](#)
- [Johns Hopkins University](#)
- [21st Century Cities Initiative](#)

Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics

[The Department of Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#)

[The Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at SAIS](#)

PUBLICATIONS

In addition to regular columns in *The Washington Post* and *The Atlantic* by our senior fellows, the institute’s work was featured this year in the following publications:

- [The New York Times](#)
- [The Washington Post](#)
- [The Baltimore Sun](#)
- [Chronicle of Philanthropy](#)
- [Diverse Issues in Higher Education](#)
- [Christianity Today](#)
- [Brookings](#)
- [Journal of American Medicine Association \(JAMA\)](#)
- [American Journal of Public Health](#)
- [Journal of Experimental Political Science](#)
- [Journal of Community Psychology](#)

SNF Agora Responds to COVID-19

In the earliest weeks of 2020, COVID-19 was—for most people in the world—a problem that was happening far away. Then, by March, the world found itself at the mercy of a pandemic operating on a level not seen in a century, as schools, offices, and entire sectors of the economy were shuttered.

In response to this crisis, the SNF Agora Institute mobilized its resources to develop insight into the ways democratic norms and processes can be protected during the pandemic, creating of-the-moment resources, engaging in dialogue with experts around the world, and partnering with other organizations to identify solutions. This was all undertaken as students, faculty, and staff affiliated with the SNF Agora Institute and Johns Hopkins University worked, studied, and continued their outreach efforts virtually from home in accordance with physical distancing requirements.



“SNF AGORA CONVERSATIONS: THE POLITICS AND POLICY OF COVID-19”

The Johns Hopkins University cancelled all in-person classes and events in mid-March. By the following week, the SNF Agora Institute had launched a weekly live webcast series, “SNF Agora Conversations: The Politics and Policy of COVID-19.” We convened experts from across Johns Hopkins and from institutions throughout the country to explore social science issues related to the pandemic and its resulting impact on individuals, governments, and democracy. Topics included “Climate, Food Insecurity, and COVID-19,” “Protecting Both Public Health and Civil Liberties,” and “Imagining a New Moral Economy.” Livestreamed to the university’s Coronavirus Resource Center website, our webcast was viewed by thousands of people around the country and the world.

Throughout this series, we produced

15 webcasts.

In total, we had

5,165

unique viewers tune into the live webcasts, and more than

66,000

viewers have since watched the recorded webcasts on the CRC website and our YouTube channel.

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

During the weeks and months after the pandemic struck, Hahrie Han partnered with colleagues across the university on several projects aimed at understanding the effects of the pandemic and to propose solutions. These included:

- A partnership with the Berman Institute for Bioethics to develop a framework that lawmakers can use to consider the effects of pandemic policy decisions on questions of ethics (such as fairness, liberty, and justice) and questions of democratic legitimacy (how will the pandemic response affect democratic processes and norms). In May, the team of scholars released a working paper, “Grappling With the Ethics of Social Distancing: A Framework for Evaluating Reopening Policies,” that guides users through a six-step ethical assessment of reopening policies.
- A collaboration with the Bloomberg School of Public Health to develop the “Johns Hopkins COVID-19 Civic Life and Public Health Survey,” which examines ways in which intermediary institutions of democracy—such as media,

civil society organizations, faith institutions, and policy/science experts—condition people’s responses to the pandemic, and the things we can do to develop a more resilient public response. The team published a research letter, titled “Psychological Distress and Loneliness Reported by US Adults in 2018 and April 2020,” on JAMA Network, and the work was covered by *The New York Times*.

- Participation in the “World Order after COVID-19” public forum, organized by the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins SAIS. Over the course of the two-day virtual event, held June 30-July 1, six panels explored multiple topics related to the global effects of the pandemic. Han, along with SNF Agora’s Anne Applebaum and Henry Farrell, participated in a panel called “Global Politics and Governance after COVID-19.” As part of the forum, panelists contributed scholarly papers, which were collected in a book of the same name and published in fall 2020.

TECHNOLOGY, DEMOCRACY, AND COVID-19 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The SNF Agora Institute was once again honored to be a part of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation’s Summer Nostos Festival. Though the format was virtual because of the pandemic, the event remained a highlight of the year and was an exciting way to connect with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and with a worldwide audience. This year, the SNF Agora Institute partnered with SNF Dialogues to host an online webcast discussion examining the impacts of COVID-19 on society, democracy, and our future in relation to the role of technology. Titled “The Interplay Between Technology and Democracy: Potential and Limitations,” the webcast offered a dynamic and engaging conversation, which featured panelists Alondra Nelson, president of the Social Science Research Council and Harold F. Linder Professor at the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, and George Zarkadakis, leader of Willis Towers Watson’s consulting practice in Great Britain. Anna Kynthia Bousdoukou, co-founder of iMedD, Incubator for Media Education and Development,

and Hahrie Han, professor of political science and director of the SNF Agora Institute, served as moderators.



STUDENT EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The SNF Agora Institute was once again able to offer a wide variety of curricular offerings to students seeking to explore, expand, and advance their understanding of democracy, dialogue, and civic engagement. Throughout the year, students explored topics like the history of democratic organizing, the politics of conversation, and the nature of populism. Educational offerings ranged from small seminars throughout a semester, to focused intersession courses, to hands-on trainings students may not encounter anywhere else.

The launch of our inaugural Student Engagement Board was a highlight of the last year. Founded in fall 2019, our first board comprised 13 Johns Hopkins students, both graduate and undergraduate, from a range of academic backgrounds including applied mathematics, chemistry, education, engineering, international studies, neuroscience, political science, public health, and sociology. The board met once a month through the fall and spring semesters, and members served a one-year renewable term. The Student Engagement Board was created to work with SNF Agora faculty, staff, and leadership to raise awareness about and participate

in the development of the SNF Agora mission. During the first year, in addition to helping us engage with the larger student community at Johns Hopkins, the student board was able to participate in a Student Roundtable Dinner as well as pre-event dinners with featured speakers.

The Student Engagement Board also helped us to design and roll out our inaugural SNF Agora Student Grant Program. Johns Hopkins students can apply twice a year for grants up to \$1,000 to support work that is complementary to the institute's mission, including research, unpaid internships, group projects, or travel to academic events. We received 14 grant proposals in spring 2020 and awarded four grants over the summer, for use in the fall 2020 semester.

Finally, SNF Agora continued working with an array of student groups on campus by providing resources and support for events, speakers, and other activities. New groups we met with this year and supported include the Black Student Union, Foreign Affairs Symposium, JHU Global China Connection, JHU Model UN, Multicultural Leadership Council, and the Milton S. Eisenhower Symposium.



TRAINING TO FIND THE TRUTH

Two truths and a lie is a popular ice-breaker, asking players to identify the lie among the truths their friends are sharing. But this party game does not prepare us for the high stakes that occur when this formula plays out on the national stage and we are forced to figure out in real time what is true and what is a fabrication. Enter our February 2020 disinformation training, "Facts or Fakes?" The workshop was led by Scott Shane, an SNF Agora Institute Visiting Fellow and an esteemed investigative journalist who spent his career chasing down the truth. During the hands-on session, participants got to practice identifying truth from lies using real-life case studies and interactive scenarios. Participants particularly appreciated the use of examples from across ideological perspectives and practical tips about how to spot disinformation.

One participant said, "Loved the variety of left- vs. right-leaning examples with no definitive answers—ambiguous sources of misinformation/disinformation, distortion of disinformation through multiple accounts."



EXPLORING PROPAGANDA, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND CONVERSATION: SNF AGORA COURSES

Fall 2019

- **Authoritarianism, Democracy and Economic Development: Korea, Indonesia and Myanmar**
- **Democracy and Development: Theory and Cases**
- **Dictatorship, Dissidence and Democracy: Central Europe in the 20th Century**
- **Nationalism and the Politics of Identity**
- **The Politics of Conversations**

Intersession 2020

- **Do Democracies Need Universities?**
- **In Search of Intelligent Debate**
- **Practicing Democracy**
- **Russia, 2016 and the Future of Information Warfare**
- **This is Not Propaganda**

Spring 2020

- **Populism and Politics**
- **Populism and Politics free online mini course**





DINNER AND DISCUSSION

Practice makes perfect—and the SNF Agora Institute is providing a testing ground for students to learn how to engage in useful dialogue with opposing viewpoints. In December, we launched a new Student Roundtable Dinner series, co-organized in partnership with Steven Teles, a Johns Hopkins professor of political science. These dinners are meant to provide a private, respectful forum where JHU students can participate with experts in discussions across ideological and other boundaries. Our first dinner focused on the Green New Deal and featured Leah Stokes, a professor of political science at UC-Santa Barbara, and Jerry Taylor, the president of the Niskanen Center. While the public discussion on climate change is often framed as a fight between supporters of action and those who deny the reality of global warming, our discussion focused instead on the debate between advocates of the Green New Deal (Stokes) and supporters of the carbon tax (Taylor), which is as much about political strategy as it is about economics.

“This was exactly the kind of collegial and meaningful debate we all dream about when it comes to climate,” one student wrote about the dinner. “I thought the back-and-forth was terrific (both substance and tone-wise), and that both speakers brought a terrific perspective that makes me think more deeply and strategically about conversations unfolding right now. I was very, very impressed.”

EVENTS, CONFERENCES, AND WEBCASTS

Over the last year, the SNF Agora Institute hosted a number of events, in a variety of formats and locations, both in-person and virtually, enabling us to reach new and broader audiences. We held public conferences in Washington, D.C., and Cincinnati, Ohio. We launched our highly-attended weekly webcast series that addressed issues surrounding the pandemic as well as police

violence and racial injustice. And we hosted or sponsored special events, including two speakers who were part of our ongoing Democracy Dialogues series, as well as book talks and panel discussions. Through these forums and more we created a variety of opportunities for our community to learn from and partake in respectful dialogue.



DEMOCRACY DIALOGUES SERIES: ACTIVISM IN EXILE WITH FARIDA NABOUREMA

For many of us, the entry point for activism is fairly easy: you can sign a petition on your lunch break, attend a protest on the weekend, or speak up during a casual chat with a friend. But would you be able to hold strong to your values if you were exiled from your country as a result of them?

Farida Nabourema can and does. A prolific activist and writer who promotes democracy for her home country of Togo, Nabourema’s life has been devoted to her cause: serving as a leader of the civil resistance in Togo, fighting against a corrupt dictatorship, and working to promote female and youth engagement to counteract anti-democratic sentiments. In the latest of our Democracy Dialogues series—which hosts discussions by scholars, policymakers, journalists, practitioners,

and others about democracy in crisis and possible solutions—Nabourema shared her story with the Johns Hopkins community, inviting faculty, students, and community members to learn from her example and benefit from her insight.

“In Togo we are fighting for the right to have rights,” Nabourema said during her talk. “We do not even have rights yet. My advice to people with the luxury to speak their mind is to not waste that opportunity.”

SNF AGORA PARTNERS WITH 4TH LARGEST EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN AMERICA

In a world of troubling polarization, SNF Agora Institute takes particular interest in highlighting pockets of democratic resilience—stories of people coming together to bridge divides, and working together to make democratic progress happen. Take the case of Undivided, a racial reconciliation program created by Crossroads Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. The church began its Undivided program to help heal their community through difficult yet catalytic conversations. But the community wanted to turn that experience into action, and so they organized behind Issue 44, a local ballot initiative for a new tax to fund universal pre-kindergarten.

In January, SNF Agora headed to Cincinnati to co-host “Faith, Race, and Politics” with Crossroads Church. Using Undivided and Issue 44 as a springboard, the daylong conference brought together community leaders, elected officials, congregants, scholars, faith leaders, philanthropists, and others to discuss what people of faith, civic leaders, and community organizations can learn about democratic participation and faith-based convening.



FEATURED SPEAKERS

SNF Agora hosted more than 80 speakers for our public, virtual, and on-campus events and programs over the course of the year:

Danielle Allen – James Bryant Conant University Professor, Harvard University; Director of Harvard’s Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics

Yoni Appelbaum – Ideas Editor, *The Atlantic*

Jesse Baldwin-Philippi – Associate Professor of Communications and Media Studies, Fordham University

Chris Bail – Professor of Sociology, Public Policy, and Data Science, Duke University; Director of the Polarization Lab

Naazneen H. Barma – Associate Professor, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School

Colleen Barry – Fred and Julie Soper Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Beth Blauer – Executive Director, Centers for Civic Impact, Johns Hopkins University

Martin Bloem – Robert S. Lawrence Professor of Environmental Health Sciences, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Hal Brands – Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies

Angus Burgin – Associate Professor of History, Johns Hopkins University

Stephanie Byrd – CEO of American Red Cross, Cincinnati-Dayton Region

Dave Campbell – Packey J. Dee Professor of American Democracy, University of Notre Dame

Erica Chenoweth – Berthold Beitz Professor in Human Rights and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School

Erin Aeran Chung – Charles D. Miller Associate Professor of East Asian Politics, Department of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University

Lisa D. Cook – Professor of Economics and International Relations, Michigan State University

Molly Crockett – Assistant Professor of Psychology, Yale University

Ronald Daniels – President, Johns Hopkins University

Kathleen Day – Lecturer, Johns Hopkins Carey Business School

Rev. Dr. Frances Murphy Draper – Founding Pastor, Freedom Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Louise Dubé – Executive Director, iCivics

Ruth Faden – Founder, Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics; Philip Franklin Wagley Chair in Biomedical Ethics, Johns Hopkins University

Jessica Fanzo – Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor of Global Food and Agriculture Policy and Ethics, Johns Hopkins University

Henry Farrell – Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, George Washington University

Paul Finkelman – President, Gratz College

Wayne Frederick – President, Howard University

April Glaser – Journalist, *Slate*

Nina Hall – Assistant Professor of International Relations, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies

Carolyn Heck – Founding Member, Undivided Justice Team

Susan Hennessey – Executive Editor, *Lawfare*

Elizabeth Hopkins – Issue 44 Advocate

Ho-fung Hung – Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University

Sasha Issenberg – Author, *Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*

Troy Jackson – State Strategies Director, Faith In Action

Allen Kachalia – Senior Vice President for Patient Safety and Quality, Johns Hopkins Medicine

Jeffrey Kahn – Andreas C. Dracopoulos Director, Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics

Matthew E. Kahn – Director, 21st Century Cities Initiative; Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Economics and Business, Johns Hopkins University

Kathleen Koch – Author and Journalist

Daniel Kreiss – Associate Professor, Hussman School of Journalism and Media, University of North Carolina

Margaret Levi – Sara Miller McCune Director, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences; Professor of Political Science, Stanford University

Robert C. Lieberman – Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University

Gary Lindgren – President, Cincinnati Business Committee

Jessica Marshall – Doctoral Student, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy

Jamila Michener – Assistant Professor, Department of Government, Cornell University

Barbara Mikulski – Former United States Senator; Professor of Public Policy, Johns Hopkins University

Bishop Douglas Miles – Pastor, Koinonia Baptist Church

Chuck Mingo – Oakley Community Pastor, Crossroads

Vivek H. Murthy – Former Surgeon General of the United States

Farida Nabourema – Executive Director, Togolese Civil League; Author of *La Pression de oppression (The Pressure of Oppression)*

Jonas Nahm – Assistant Professor of Energy, Resources, and Environment, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies

Alondra Nelson – President, Social Science Research Council; Harold F. Linder Professor, Institute for Advanced Study

Brendan Nyhan – Professor of Government, Dartmouth College

Imam Mohamed Omar – Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center

Carol Quillen – President, Davidson College

Mira Rapp-Hooper – Schwarzman Senior Fellow of Asia Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Michael Rebell – Professor and Executive Director, Center for Educational Equity at Teachers College, Columbia University

James Robinson – Author, *The Narrow Corridor*

Doran Schrantz – Executive Director, ISAIAH

Nancy Scola – Senior Technology Reporter, POLITICO

Ahmed Sesay – Classical High School, Class of 2019

Scott Shane – Former Reporter, *The New York Times*

Josh Sharfstein – Vice Dean of Public Health Practice and Community Engagement, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Robbie Shilliam – Professor of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University

P.G. Sittenfeld – Cincinnati City Councilman

Anne-Marie Slaughter – CEO, New America; Bert G. Kerstetter '66 University Professor Emerita of Politics and International Affairs, Princeton University

Cameron Smedley – Justice Team Coach, Undivided

Leah Stokes – Professor of Political Science, UC-Santa Barbara

Jake Sullivan – Former National Security Adviser for Vice President Joe Biden

Stephanie Summerow Dumas – Hamilton County Commissioner

Jerry Taylor – President, Niskanen Center

Rabbi Miriam Terlinchamp – Temple Shalom

Brian Tome – Senior Pastor, Crossroads

Adam Tooze – Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of History, Columbia University; Author of *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*

Natalie Tran – Executive Director, Creative Artists Agency Foundation

Rev. Mark Tyler – Pastor, Mother Bethel AME

Rev. David J. Ware – Rector, Church of the Redeemer

Shelina Warren – Social Studies Teacher, Dunbar High School

Lynn Watts – Spiritual Growth Site Director, Crossroads

Vesla Weaver – Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Johns Hopkins University

Alia Wong – Staff Writer, *The Atlantic*

Mohamed Younis – Editor-in-Chief, *Gallup News*

George Zarkadakis – Writer, Science Communicator, Artificial Intelligence Engineer, and Digital Innovation Professional

Daniel Ziblatt – Eaton Professor of the Science of Government, Harvard University

Strategy and Operations

Under the leadership of Director Hahrie Han, the SNF Agora Institute honed its vision this year and developed the strategic plan that will guide us in the years ahead—a process that involved conversations and research with faculty, stakeholder groups, and institutes within and outside of Johns Hopkins. We made our strategic plan available to the public via our website this August.

We continued to refine our operations in several areas. We updated our staff organization to better align with our programs and structures, including hiring a

new project manager and administrative specialist, and launching a search for a finance director. As we have gained momentum and are better able to illustrate our capabilities, we have also worked to expand our reach with alumni and other potential donors, while exploring current and future gift opportunities.

With key elements of a strong infrastructure now in place, and our new building in progress, the SNF Agora Institute will be able to move forward with our ambitious mission in the months and years to come.



EXPANDING THE SNF AGORA INSTITUTE'S REACH

The last year has seen tremendous growth in the reach and audience of the SNF Agora Institute:

50,000

unique page views on website since January 1

1,200

followers on Twitter

4,500

subscribers to the e-newsletter

500%

increase in e-newsletter subscribers



With feedback from students, faculty, and community members, the architecture and landscaping teams for the SNF Agora Institute building plan to break ground in fall 2021. Images of the new SNF Agora Institute building are renderings and subject to change. Design drawings by Renzo Piano Building Workshop/Ayers Saint Gross.

A Guiding Voice Through a Year of Change

During the past year, our country and our world faced daunting challenges, which led us to adapt and grow in ways we could not have foreseen. The SNF Agora Institute was proud to be able to rise to these challenges by creating space for conversation, opportunities to consider positive change, and ways to explore the future in a thoughtful and proactive way.

As we move forward in an increasingly divided political landscape, continue to navigate a global pandemic, and see democracy in flux around the world, these efforts are more urgent than ever. So is our message that the strength of democracy lies in the fact that all of us—no

matter our identities, affiliations, ideologies, or creeds—have an ongoing role to play in the civil society that undergirds it. Only by learning how to come together to share, understand, and contest opposing values, without writing off those who hold them, can we begin to build a sustainable agora for the modern era.

In the coming year, we will focus on increasing the number of SNF Agora faculty and fellows; growing our design offerings to translate research into actionable solutions; and broadening our programming to ensure that we are welcoming diverse voices from across the aisle and around the world.

With a strong strategic plan in place, faculty and fellows who are leading national and international dialogues, students who are eager to take on the mantle of defending democracy, and programs and events that are challenging the status quo while guiding toward a better way, the SNF Agora Institute is well positioned to forge ahead and make a lasting impact.



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