



JOHNS HOPKINS  
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION  
SNF AGORA INSTITUTE

20.6.2018

## DISRUPTING POLARIZATION

THE WORK OF THE  
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION  
AGORA INSTITUTE  
AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

SNFCC / ATHENS, GREECE



ΙΣΝ / SNF

ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ  
STAVROS NIARCHOS  
FOUNDATION



## PROGRAM

### ***Disrupting Polarization: The Work of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University***

Last year, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) and Johns Hopkins University announced the joint conception of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute, a new \$150 million interdisciplinary institute committed to reinvigorating civic engagement and civil discourse—the bulwarks of healthy democracy—in the 21st century. Drawing its inspiration and name from the ancient Athenian agora, the institute seeks to replicate the agora’s role as a public space for citizens to engage in conversation, debate, and the robust exchange of ideas. As ideological division and partisanship continue to erode our collective trust in government, media, and our fellow citizens in countries and communities across the world, the need for such a space is more urgent than ever.

This June, as part of the Summer Nostros Festival in Athens, the SNF Agora Institute will host a workshop, *Disrupting Polarization*, to introduce the type of work the institute will be undertaking—from exploring the decline of modern dialogue and decision-making, to sharing lessons learned on promoting open discussion, to proposing innovative reforms to reverse the corrosive deterioration of norms. The event will bring together an international group of scholars and practitioners grappling with the problems facing modern democracy and searching for solutions in this current era of propaganda and distrust.

The day will begin by looking to the ancient past for parallels to our current crisis of democracy, and it will conclude with a conversation about innovative new venues for nurturing modern dialogue. In between, panels will probe the role education and educational institutions can and should play in bolstering civil discourse, as well as the extent to which disinformation—a widely discussed but often misunderstood phenomenon—is undermining democracy around the world.

Because this workshop is intended as an opportunity not just to share research and insights but to model what civil discourse with an engaged citizenry can look like, audience members will be encouraged to ask questions of panelists throughout the program.

The workshop is taking place as part of the SNF’s monthly series, DIALOGUES.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR JUNE 20, 2018

- 8:00 Welcoming Coffee
- 9:00 Introduction, Elizabeth Smyth, Advisor to the President on the SNF  
Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University / Stelios Vassilakis, director  
of Programs and Strategic Initiatives, Stavros Niarchos Foundation
- 9:05 Welcoming Remarks, Andreas Dracopoulos, co-president and director  
of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation
- 9:10 Opening Remarks, Ronald J. Daniels, president, Johns Hopkins University
- 9:25–10:10 **Panel 1: Disrupting Polarization: A Lesson from History —  
Ancient Parallels to Modern Phenomena**  
Moderator: Stelios Vassilakis, director of Programs and Strategic  
Initiatives, Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
Angelos Chaniotis, faculty member, Institute for Advanced Study  
George Th. Mavrogordatos, University of Athens (retired)  
Lene Rubinstein, Royal Holloway, University of London
- 10:10–10:55 **Panel 2: Disrupting Polarization: The University's Place**  
Moderator: Ronald J. Daniels, president, Johns Hopkins University  
Heather Gerken, dean, Yale Law School  
Nancy Kass, vice provost for graduate and professional education,  
Johns Hopkins University  
Deb Roy, director of the Laboratory for Social Machines, MIT Media Lab
- 10:55–11:40 Coffee Break
- 11:40–12:25 **Panel 3: Disrupting Polarization: Understanding Disinformation**  
Moderator: Garry Kasparov, scholar, humanitarian, and former world  
chess champion  
Anne Applebaum, *Washington Post* columnist and professor of  
practice at the London School of Economics  
Diego Ciulli, public policy manager, Google  
Emily Falk, associate professor of communication, Annenberg School  
for Communication, University of Pennsylvania  
Deb Roy, director of the Laboratory for Social Machines, MIT Media Lab
- 12:25–1:10 **Panel 4: Disrupting Polarization: New Forums for Dialogue**  
Moderator: Bryan Doerries, artistic director, Theater of War  
Productions  
Amar Bakshi, founder and creative director, Shared Studios  
Tracey Meares, the Walton Hale Hamilton Professor of Law and a  
founding director of the Justice Collaboratory, Yale Law School  
Vesla Weaver, Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor of  
Political Science and Sociology, Johns Hopkins University
- 1:10–1:20 Closing Remarks

## BIOGRAPHIES OF PANELISTS

**Anne Applebaum** is a columnist for *The Washington Post* and a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian. She is also professor of practice at the London School of Economics' Institute of Global Affairs, where she runs Arena, a program on disinformation and 21st-century propaganda. Formerly a member of the *Washington Post* editorial board, she has also worked as the foreign and deputy editor of *The Spectator* magazine in London, as the political editor of the *Evening Standard*, and as a columnist at *Slate* and at several British newspapers, including *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*. From 1988 to 1991 she covered the collapse of Communism as the Warsaw correspondent of *The Economist* magazine and *The Independent* newspaper. Her newest book, *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine*, was published in October 2017.

**Amar C. Bakshi** is an artist whose work focuses on how to integrate technology into environments and across pronounced distances to create new forms of digital-physical public spaces that challenge and subvert existing norms. In particular, he works to connect members of diverse communities who would likely not otherwise meet in intimate environments to create their own meanings. He created the global public art initiative Portals in 2014. As an artist, Bakshi treats the formation of institutions as, themselves, sites of creation. To explore these practices, he launched the Legal Medium. He previously worked as a reporter at *The Washington Post*, an editor at CNN, and special assistant to the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Bakshi, a Soros Fellow and Truman Scholar, has an AB from Harvard University, an MA from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and a JD from Yale Law School.

**Angelos Chaniotis** was born in Athens in 1959. He studied ancient history and archaeology at the universities of Athens and Heidelberg (PhD Heidelberg, 1984). After serving as professor of ancient history at New York University (1994–98) and the University of Heidelberg (1998–2006), and vice rector of the University of Heidelberg (2001–2006), he joined the University of Oxford as Senior Research Fellow in Classics at All Souls College (2006–2010).

In 2010, he was appointed professor of ancient history and classics at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey. Since 1998, he has been senior editor of *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, and since 1995, responsible for

the publication of the inscriptions from Aphrodisias. His books include *War in the Hellenistic World: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford, 2005), *Theatricality and Public Life in the Hellenistic World* (Irakleion, 2009; Greek State Book Award), and *Age of Conquests: The Greek World between Alexander and Hadrian* (London, 2018).

He is the recipient of many honors and awards, including honorary degrees from the Hellenic International University, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the University of Liège; the Research Award of the State of Baden-Württemberg; and the Annelise Maier Research Award of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. In 2013 he was made Commander of the Order of the Phoenix by the president of the Greek Republic.

**Diego Ciulli** is public policy manager at Google, covering Italy and Greece. He works in particular on programs to support the digitization of the local economies and initiatives to counter controversial content online. He is a visiting professor in knowledge management in the digital economy at Roma Tre University and a teaching assistant at the Luiss University in Rome. He was a Young Leader of the Council for the United States and Italy in 2014.

**Ronald J. Daniels** is the 14th president of Johns Hopkins University, America's first research university.

Since taking office in 2009, Daniels has focused his leadership on three overarching themes—enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration, individual excellence, and community engagement. These themes are the backbone of the university's strategic vision through 2020, and underscore the priorities of Johns Hopkins' largest-ever fundraising campaign, a \$5.5 billion effort.

During Daniels' tenure, the university has launched a series of multidisciplinary initiatives aimed at addressing some of society's most vexing issues; bolstered the efforts of faculty, staff, and students to translate discoveries into novel technologies; invested heavily in student access; and extended its rich community partnerships.

A law and economics scholar, Daniels holds appointments as professor in both the Department of Political Science and the Department of International Health at Johns Hopkins. He is author or editor of seven books and dozens of scholarly articles. Before coming to Johns Hopkins, he was provost and professor of law at the University of Pennsylvania and dean and James M. Tory Professor of Law of the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto.

Artistic director **Bryan Doerries** is a Brooklyn-based writer, director, and translator, who currently serves as artistic director of Theater of War Productions.

A self-described evangelist for classical literature and its relevance to our lives today, Doerries uses age-old approaches to help individuals and communities heal from trauma and loss.

During his tenure at Theater of War Productions, the company has presented diverse projects across the country and internationally. Theater of War Productions uses dramatic readings of seminal plays and community conversations to confront topics such as combat-related psychological injury, end-of-life care, police and community relations, prison reform, gun violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and substance abuse and addiction.

Doerries' book, *The Theater of War: What Ancient Greek Tragedies Can Teach Us Today*, was published by Alfred A. Knopf in September 2015, along with a volume of his translations of ancient Greek tragedies, titled *All That You've Seen Here Is God*. His graphic novel, *The Odyssey of Sergeant Jack Brennan*, an adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* as told by an infantry Marine to his squad, was published by Pantheon in April 2016. Doerries lectures on his work at cultural venues throughout the world and, in recent years, has taught courses at Princeton University, the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, and the Bard Prison Initiative.

Doerries is a proud graduate of Kenyon College and serves as a board member of the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers and Friends of the Young Writers Workshop. Among his awards, Doerries has received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Kenyon College, and in March 2017, he was named Public Artist in Residence (PAIR) for the City of New York, a joint appointment with the New York City Department of Veterans' Services and Department of Cultural Affairs. During this two-year residency, he will bring more than 60 Theater of War Productions projects to diverse communities across all five boroughs.

**Andreas Dracopoulos** is co-president of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The foundation was established in 1996 at the passing of his great uncle, Stavros Niarchos, and since its inception has made almost 4,000 grants to nonprofit organizations around the world (*SNF: History & Mission*). Dracopoulos was born and raised in Athens, Greece, and graduated from Athens College. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He lives in New York City.

Dracopoulos is a trustee of the Rockefeller University and the Dalton School in New York, the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. In addition, he serves on the Advisory Board of the Berman Institute of Bioethics at JHU and is an honorary trustee of the New York Public Library, where he was a trustee from 2003 to 2010. From 2009 to 2018 he was a member of the board of directors of the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

In 2018, H.E. the president of the Hellenic Republic awarded Dracopoulos the rank of the Grand Cross of the Order of Honor. In 2016, the Republic of France awarded him the rank of Officer of the Legion of Honor. In 2012, the Hellenic Republic awarded him the rank of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Phoenix.

In 2017, Dracopoulos received humanitarian awards from the New York Stem Cell Foundation and the Fire Department of the City of New York Foundation. The Child Mind Institute honored him in 2015 for his long-standing commitment and support of children's mental health issues. In the same year, Dracopoulos was honored during the 100th anniversary celebration of *The National Herald* for his contributions toward promoting and supporting Greek education, and he received the Person of the Year Award from the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce. In 2012, the New York Public Library honored him for his personal contributions to its educational programs.

Dracopoulos has provided long-standing personal support to many projects, mainly in the areas of education, arts and culture, and medicine. Among these activities, he provided the founding grant to establish the Dracopoulos iDeas Lab at CSIS and endowed the directorship at the Berman Institute of Bioethics at JHU. He continues to support through his personal grant-making the important work of several nonprofit organizations.

**Emily Falk** is an associate professor of communication, psychology, and marketing at the University of Pennsylvania, where she also directs Penn's Communication Neuroscience Lab and serves as a Distinguished Fellow of the Annenberg Public Policy Center. Her research examines what makes messages persuasive, why and how ideas spread, and what makes people effective communicators. Her recent work also examines how people's social networks change the way they use their brains. Falk's work has been honored by career awards from the International



Communication Association and the Society for Personality and Social Psychology as well as funding from the National Institutes of Health, including the NIH Director's New Innovator Award; the Department of Defense, including the DARPA Young Faculty Award; the National Science Foundation; and private foundations. She was named a Rising Star by the Association for Psychological Science, and has served as a PopTech Science and Innovation Fellow. Prior to her doctoral work, Falk was a Fulbright Fellow in health policy. She received her bachelor's degree in neuroscience from Brown University, and her PhD in psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Dean and Sol & Lillian Goldman Professor of Law, **Heather Gerken** is one of the country's leading experts on constitutional law and election law. A founder of the "nationalist school" of federalism, she focuses on federalism, diversity, and dissent. She has been hailed as an "intellectual guru" in *The New York Times*, and her scholarship has been featured in *The Atlantic*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, and *Time*, and on NPR.

At Yale, she founded and runs the country's most innovative clinic in local government law. Gerken is also a renowned teacher who has won awards at both Yale and Harvard and was named one of the nation's "twenty-six best law teachers."

Gerken clerked for Judge Stephen Reinhardt of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and Justice David Souter of the United States Supreme Court. She then served as an appellate lawyer in Washington, D.C., before joining the Harvard Law School faculty in 2000. Gerken came to Yale in 2006 and became the inaugural J. Skelly Wright Professor of Law in 2008. She began her tenure as Yale Law School's 17th dean, starting July 1, 2017.

Born in Baku, Azerbaijan, in the Soviet Union, **Garry Kasparov** became the under-18 chess champion of the USSR at the age of 12 and the world under-20 champion at 17. He came to international fame in 1985 at the age of 22 as the youngest world chess champion in history. He defended his title five times, including a legendary series of matches against archrival Anatoly Karpov. His famous matches against the IBM supercomputer Deep Blue in 1996-97 were key to bringing artificial intelligence, and chess, into the mainstream. Kasparov was one of the first prominent Soviets to call for democratic and market reforms and was an early

supporter of Boris Yeltsin's push to break up the Soviet Union. In 1990, he and his family escaped ethnic violence in his native Baku as the USSR collapsed. In 2005, Kasparov, in his 20th year as the world's top-rated player, retired from professional chess to join the vanguard of the Russian pro-democracy movement. In 2012, Kasparov was named chairman of the New York-based Human Rights Foundation, succeeding Vaclav Havel. HRF promotes individual liberty worldwide and organizes the Oslo Freedom Forum.

Facing imminent arrest during Putin's crackdown, Kasparov moved from Moscow to New York City in 2013.

**Nancy Kass** is the vice provost for graduate and professional education and the Phoebe R. Berman Professor of Bioethics and Public Health at Johns Hopkins, where she is also both the deputy director for Public Health in the Berman Institute of Bioethics and professor of health policy and management in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. In 2009–2010, Kass was based in Geneva, where she was working with the World Health Organization Ethics Review Committee Secretariat.

Kass received her BA from Stanford University, completed doctoral training in health policy from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and completed postdoctoral training in bioethics at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University.

As vice provost, Kass focuses significantly on issues related to the quality of PhD education, including promoting transparency about programs, diversity of the student body, career preparedness, research and professional experiences for students, and mentoring. In her faculty role, Kass conducts empirical work in bioethics, public health, and human research. Her publications are in the field of U.S. and international research ethics, HIV/AIDS ethics policy, public health ethics (including ethics and obesity prevention and ethics and public health preparedness), and ethics and the learning health care system. Kass served as consultant to the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, the National Bioethics Advisory Commission, and the National Academy of Sciences. She currently serves as chair of the NIH Precision Medicine Initiative Central IRB; she previously co-chaired the National Cancer Institute committee to develop Recommendations for Informed Consent Documents for Cancer Clinical

Trials and served on the NCI's central IRB. Current research projects examine improving informed consent in human research, ethical guidance development for Ebola and other infectious outbreaks, and ethics and learning health care. Kass served as the director of the Bloomberg School's PhD program in bioethics and health policy from its inception until 2016, and she has directed (with Adnan Hyder) the Johns Hopkins Fogarty African Bioethics Training Program since its inception in 2000. Kass is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and an elected Fellow of the Hastings Center.

**George Th. Mavrogordatos** was born in Athens and completed his undergraduate studies at the Law Faculty of the University of Athens, receiving two degrees: first in politics and economics, then in law. Thanks to a Fulbright grant, he pursued his graduate studies in the United States, receiving his MA in political science from Purdue University and his PhD in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. Since then, he has been teaching at the University of Athens a variety of courses in modern Greek history and in political sociology, as well as courses on American politics and Athenian democracy. He has also taught as a visiting professor at the University of Salzburg, the Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center, and the University of California, Berkeley. His books include *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936*, for which he received in 1984 the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award of the American Political Science Association (“for the best book published in the United States on government, politics, or international affairs”). His most recent book (in Greek) is titled *Pressure Groups and Democracy*.

**Tracey L. Meares** is the Walton Hale Hamilton Professor of Law and a founding director of the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School. Before joining the faculty at Yale, she served as a professor at the University of Chicago Law School from 1995 to 2007. She was the first African-American woman to be granted tenure at both law schools. Meares' teaching and research interests focus on criminal procedure and criminal law policy with a particular emphasis, at the moment, on policing. She has worked extensively with the federal government, having served on the Committee on Law and Justice, a National Research Council Standing Committee of the National Academy of Sciences, and the Science Advisory Board

for the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice. In December 2014, President Obama named her a member of his Task Force on 21st Century Policing. She has a BS in general engineering from the University of Illinois and a JD from the University of Chicago Law School.

**Deb Roy** is an associate professor at MIT where he directs the Laboratory for Social Machines based at the Media Lab. His lab explores new methods in media analytics (natural language processing, social network analysis, speech, image, and video analysis) and media design (information visualization, games, communication apps) with applications in children's learning and social listening. Roy is also co-founder and chairman of Cortico, a not-for-profit media technology company that is developing media technologies and services with the aim of improving the health of discourse in the public sphere.

He was co-founder and CEO of Bluefin Labs, a social TV analytics company, which *MIT Technology Review* named one of the 50 most innovative companies of 2012. Bluefin was acquired by Twitter in 2013, Twitter's largest acquisition at the time. From 2013 to 2017 Roy served as Twitter's chief media scientist. In this role, he guided Twitter's product strategy and led the transition of the Bluefin team to become a global data science capability for the platform.

An author of over 130 academic papers, his popular TED talk "Birth of a Word" presents his research into his own son's language development that led to new ideas in media analytics. A native of Canada, Roy received a Bachelor of Applied Science (computer engineering) from the University of Waterloo and a PhD in media arts and sciences from MIT.

**Lenne Rubinstein** was educated at the University of Copenhagen and the University of Cambridge. She is a professor of ancient history and co-founder and co-director of the Centre for Oratory and Rhetoric, Department of Classics at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the author of *Adoption in IV. Century Athens* (Copenhagen, 1993), *Litigation and Cooperation: Supporting Speakers in the Courts of Classical Athens* (Stuttgart, 2000), and a range of other publications on Greek oratory and rhetoric and on Greek legal and social history in the classical and Hellenistic periods.

**Stelios Vassilakis** is director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. He holds a PhD in classics and modern Greek studies from New York University. He has taught various undergraduate and graduate courses in classical literature, Byzantine culture and civilization, modern Greek literature, and modern Greek language. In 1993, he received an Outstanding Teaching Award for Excellence in Teaching from New York University, College of Arts and Science. From 2000 to 2009, he was the CEO of greekworks.com, a startup multimedia cultural, educational, and informational company in New York, and the premier publisher of Greek and Greek-related books in the United States.

**Vesla Mae Weaver** is the Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor of Political Science and Sociology at Johns Hopkins University. She is broadly interested in understanding racial inequality in the United States, how state policies shape citizenship, and the political causes and consequences of the growth of the country's criminal justice system. Her book, co-authored with Amy Lerman, *Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control*, is concerned with the effects of increasing punishment and surveillance in America on democratic inclusion, particularly for the black urban poor. Weaver is also the author of *Frontlash: Civil Rights, the Carceral State, and the Transformation of American Politics* (under contract with Cambridge), which uncovers a connection between the movement for civil rights and the development of punitive criminal justice.







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