



## **NICD Awards Grants to Scholars Paired Up with Their Philosophical Opposites to Research Polarization & American Civic Life**

The National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD), in conjunction with the Charles Koch Foundation, is pleased to announce the grant recipients of the Institute's "Creating Research Projects across Disciplinary and Ideological Lines" program. After a competitive bidding process, NICD awarded five grants to scholars with different ideologies and from different disciplines who seek to come together to research core concepts and institutions that are vital to American political and civic life.

"One of NICD's major goals is to encourage conversations among citizens from different walks of life and with different points of view" said NICD Research Director Robert Boatright. "I am very excited that we now have the chance to do the same thing in the academy. These projects will be strengthened by the diverse points of view the researchers bring to them, and we hope they will serve as a model for how colleges and universities can create better, more inclusive conversations."

The recipients of the five grants are:

- *Joan McGregor and Tracy Fessenden (Arizona State University), "Recovering our Moral Capital"*

This project is a collaboration between a moral philosopher and religious studies scholar to study moral capital. What constitutes moral capital in America? Have we ever have had it? Are we in danger of losing it? Is moral capital a moral good in a pluralistic democracy? Finally, what role do universities play in developing and sustaining it?

- *Molly Brigid McGrath (Assumption College) and Robert Boatright (Clark University), "Corruption and Corruption Talk"*

This project explores the different ways in which the term "corruption" is used in political discourse, the confusions that result from conflicting definitions, and proposals for clarifying the meaning of the term.

- *Diana Mutz and Ani Nenkova (University of Pennsylvania), "Identifying and Quantifying Uncivil Political Discourse in Audio-Visual Media"*

This project entails the creation of pilot experiments for a larger project to computationally quantify the incivility of political discourse in audio-visual political discourse. The analysis will combine clues from video, voice and text to accurately capture emotional and attitudinal content.

- *Kate Kenski, Steve Bethard, Steve Rains, & Yotam Shmargad (University of Arizona), and Kevin Coe (University of Utah), "Detecting Incivility in 2020 Presidential Primary Candidate Social Media Posts"*

This project explores different methods for identifying incivility in social media posts, focusing on communication from the of major party presidential primary candidates during the pre-primary and primary phases of the 2020 U.S. presidential campaign.

- *Joshua Grubbs (Bowling Green State University), Sean Stevens (New York University), Lee Jussim (Rutgers University) and colleagues, "Effects of Perceived Moral Grandstanding on Public Discourse"*

This project examines the role of moral grandstanding in social and political discourse. Specifically, it examines how people may attribute grandstanding to others and how such attributions might shape reactions to its role in asserting social status.

Upon completion of the research in the fall of 2020, the scholars will present their findings as well as reflections on their collaboration. Some of these scholars will also present preliminary details of their work at NICD's third biennial research convening, to be held at the University of Arizona in September 2019.

"Our work to bridge divides must include bringing together disparate fields of study," said Charles Koch Institute director of free expression Sarah Ruger. "NICD and the scholars they're funding through this project are engaging across disciplinary, institutional, and philosophical differences. It's just as much about the discovery that comes from their research as it is a better understanding of what benefits and innovation come from exploration with a diverse group."

These projects are being overseen by Robert G. Boatright, NICD Research Director, and Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, NICD Executive Director Emerita.

The National Institute for Civil Discourse is NICD is a nonpartisan center for research, advocacy, and policy affiliated with the University of Arizona. NICD has developed a network of over fifty scholars from a range of institutions, disciplines, and political perspectives who study civility. The NICD Research Network serves as a forum for encouraging discussion of how scholars might broaden their understandings of the role of civility in their research and teaching.

This grant is made possible through the support of the Charles Koch Foundation, as part of their [Courageous Collaborations](#) initiative.