

James Garvin D'Angelo

Political scientist focused on inequality, climate and the improved design of legislatures

Professional Profile

Optimizing Representation

The idea is so simple: In a *representative* democracy, representatives should represent their constituents. Or, as John Adams said, a legislature should resemble “a *portrait* of the people” – they should think, look, earn, and *live* like the people they represent. Further, these representatives should be free from all outside pressure as they craft our laws. These issues are the focus of my research. I look to build institutional frameworks that allow governments to better address inequalities, racism, climate change, overspending and injustice.

Experience (this pdf has live links)

Congressional Research Institute

2013 - present

Founder and lead researcher of a DC-based think tank focused on the institutional design of legislatures. Goal is to improve democratic outcomes with respect to race, justice, income and wealth. CRI investigates three central ideas: representative ratio, legislative transparency and proportional representation in the US Senate.

Harvard Research Associate

2014 - 2017

Investigated the pitfalls of legislative transparency in partnership with Harvard Senior Lecturer David King and Boston College Instructor Brent Ranalli. Ongoing research has featured talks at Harvard, MIT, University of New Orleans, University of Florida, the League of Women Voters and an April 2017 presentation at the MPSA in Chicago.

Government Researcher

2006 - 2016

Worked with various organizations in developing countries around the world including: Gabon, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Duties involved research, data analysis, implementing identity tech for refugees, etc. Sample subjects/research projects included: parliamentary transparency, refugee care, global climate change, etc.

SnoCaps – Developer

2012-2014

MIT award-winning project. A global cap-and-trade solution based on distributed networks and decentralized governance.

Contact

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Recent Publications/Talks

How Sunshine Drives Inequality

Inequality Magazine August 2020

Investigates the rise of inequality through the downfall of Congressman Wilbur Mills and the rise of transparency.

The Dark Side of Sunlight

Foreign Affairs Magazine May/June 2019

The 1970 sunshine reforms were meant to make Congress more accountable to the public by making it more transparent. Instead, they achieved the opposite by exposing lawmakers to the pressures of lobbyists and interest groups. Article was endorsed by Stephen Pinker, Francis Fukuyama, etc.

Transparency is a Weapon

Fulcrum July 2019

Transparency reforms of the 1970s enabled a new form of partisan warfare that drives gridlock, closed rules and chaos in the US Congress.

The Absurd Math of Accountability

CRI 2018

Considered by Jane Mansbridge and others to be an important contribution to notions of democratic representation.

Recent talks include West Point, University of New Orleans, Harvard University, European Union DC, Represent.Us etc.

Education

Boston University – NASA Grant

Masters Computer Science/Statistics/Electrical Engineering 1991 • Advisors: A.Lazarus (MIT), A.Mavretic (BU). POLAR/WIND spacecraft launched 1994. Native English speaker. Fluent in five languages. Instructed at university level in cryptography, programming, data analysis (STATA), hardware.