

**How to hold conversations across political lines in order to bridge polarities/create connectivity.**

**Project description (draft)**

The starting point is the concern of the members of the workshop (and more people in STS) on the polarization in our countries – especially the rise of very right wing/ populist parties and/or persons (Trump, Le Pen in France, Wilders in the Netherlands for example). They give a vote or platform to people that are most of the time not real racist or very right wing themselves; but lots of them feel worried about their own (uncertain) future and don't feel that they are being heard by the 'traditional political parties'. Nevertheless, if these populist parties or people get very powerful, it can be or is a danger for our democratic values.

We therefore will try to contribute in bridging this polarization by **finding ways to listen and talk to the people who feel not 'seen and heard'**, without approving the ideas of their spokesmen or legitimizing racism or intolerance. That is the reason **we start by searching 'good practices'**. In various countries with a huge (and sometimes institutionalized) polarization, there have been initiatives to bridge the gaps (for example in Northern Ireland between the IRA and the protestants, in South Africa by the 'truth-commission'). We will analyze these practices, and on that basis we are going to discuss our strategy and activities'.

**Current Project Members:**

|                   |                  |                |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Cricelia Calderon | Daniel Laskero   | Phela Townsend |
| Hao Gong          | Benedicte Monroe | Bert Painter   |
| Charles Heckscher | Ike Overdiep     | Rick Vanasse   |
| Lavinia Hall      |                  |                |

| What   | Who   | When                           |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <p><b>1. Looking for cases/ 'good practices':</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hong Kong-issues</li> <li>• Northern Ireland</li> <li>• US</li> <li>• The Netherlands ('city-talks')</li> <li>• South Africa</li> <li>• ....</li> </ul> <p>Send them to everyone as an inspiration. Charles (?) will write a 1 à 2 pages draft that we can use to present the cases a bit similar</p> | <p>Hao<br/>Phela<br/>Phela, Charles, Daniel<br/>Ike<br/>Phela (?)<br/>All of us</p> <p>Charles(?)</p> | <p>September/ October 2017</p> |
| <p><b>2. Themes document:</b> analysis of the cases, what do they learn us?</p>  | <p>??</p>   | <p>November/ December 2017</p> |
| <p><b>3. Strategy: discussion on our strategy</b> (e.g. 'reclaim truth, role of intermediars, social media (what is the relevant eco-system ☺), etc): possible to discuss in a webinar</p>   | <p>??</p>   | <p>January 2018</p>            |