

RESEARCH WORKSHOP ON OPEN CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

August 26-27, 2026

University of Lausanne, Switzerland

As part of the Trans-Atlantic Platform project “[Open Constitutional Democracy: Reconciling Deliberation and Constitutional Democracy](#)” hosted by the Universities of Warwick, Ottawa, and Lausanne, we are inviting applications from early career scholars for a research workshop that will take place at the University of Lausanne on Wednesday, August 26 and Thursday, August 27, 2026.

Objective

This workshop addresses the broad question of how deliberative democratic innovations (including sortition-based deliberative mini-publics, open-democratic as well as lottocratic proposals¹) can be reconciled and integrated with the foundational institutions and principles of constitutional democracies, which are necessary for the protection of individual rights and good government (e.g., judicial review, the rule of law, the separation of powers, and bills of rights).

We invite abstract submissions that address the following (and related) issues:

- the relationship between democratic backsliding or fatigue and the rise of deliberative democratic innovations;²
- whether, and if so how, the “lottocratic mentality” can be reconciled with more classic democratic values and principles;
- whether, and if so how, deliberative democratic innovations could be incorporated into existing constitutional frameworks;
- the compatibility of deliberative democratic innovations with existing constitutional institutions and principles (incl. judicial review, the rule of law, bicameralism, federalism, etc.);
- the conditions under which deliberative democratic innovations can be institutionalized (including real case studies as well as hypothetical, ideal contexts);
- the potential obstacles to the institutionalization of deliberative democratic innovations.

We welcome contributions from early career scholars working in constitutional and public law, legal and political philosophy, political science, legal or political history, and related fields.

¹ See for example: Curato, N., Farrell, D. M., Geissel, B., Grönlund, K., Mockler, P., Pilet, J.-B., Renwick, A., Rose, J., Setälä, M., & Suiter, J. (2021). *Deliberative Mini-Publics: Core Design Features*. Bristol University Press; Gargarella, R. (2022). *The law as a conversation among equals*. Cambridge University Press; Guerrero, A. (2024). *Lottocracy: Democracy Without Elections*. Oxford University Press; Lafont, C., & Urbinati, N. (2024). *The Lottocratic Mentality: Defending Democracy against Lottocracy*. Oxford University Press; Landemore, H. (2020). *Open Democracy: Reinventing Popular Rule for the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press.

² Including deliberative mini-publics (citizens’ juries, citizens’ assemblies, citizens’ initiative reviews, deliberative polls, etc.), open-democratic as well as lottocratic proposals.

Format

The workshop will bring a small group of early career scholars together with leading senior scholars globally from various disciplines for an intense and rewarding two-day academic exchange. Each early career scholar will be given a time slot of approximately one hour, beginning with a brief presentation of their paper followed by comments from senior scholars as well as a Q&A discussion open to all participants. All papers will be pre-read. Subject to the quality and fit of the selected papers, and conditional on the interest and consent of participants, the organizers may prepare a special issue for submission to a journal. A public roundtable with the invited senior scholars will take place on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, after the workshop.

Eligibility

This call is open to early career scholars globally (including PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, lecturers, and professors within 5 years of their PhD). Papers should be unpublished and not have been accepted for publication at the time of submission.

Application process

Interested scholars should submit the following documents to chiara.valsangiaco-balmelli@unil.ch by **December 19, 2025**:

1. **extended abstract** (word limit: 1,000 words excl. footnotes and references);
2. **curriculum vitae**.

By applying, interested scholars commit to attending the entire workshop, should their paper be accepted.

Travel and accommodation

There is no registration fee to participate in this event. Travel and accommodation funding is available for workshop participants. Instructions about financial support will follow in our invitation email to the accepted participants.

About the organizers

The workshop is funded by the [Swiss National Science Foundation](#). It is organized by Odile Ammann (University of Lausanne) and Chiara Valsangiacomo-Balmelli (University of Lausanne) in collaboration with the non-profit, non-partisan association [DemocracyNet](#).

The event is part of a broader Trans-Atlantic Platform project, “[Open Constitutional Democracy: Reconciling Deliberation and Constitutional Democracy](#)”, led by the principal investigators David Vitale (University of Warwick), Michael Pal (University of Ottawa), and Odile Ammann (University of Lausanne).

General questions concerning the workshop should be sent to chiara.valsangiaco-balmelli@unil.ch.