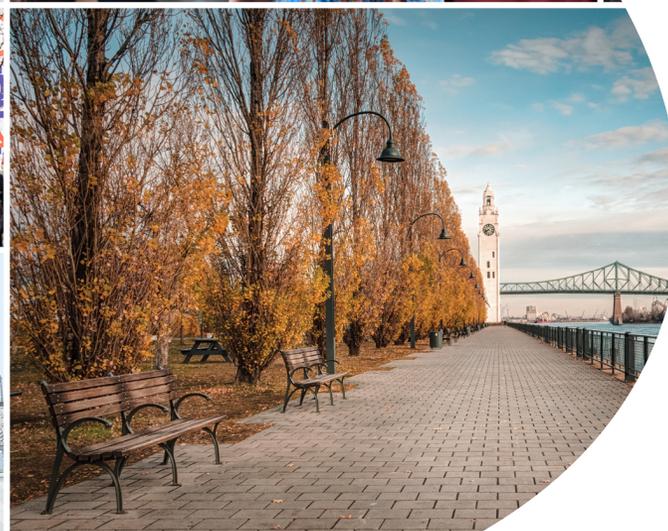




CIRM
CRIM

Centre for Interdisciplinary
Research on Montreal
Centre de recherches interdisciplinaires
en études montréalaises



ANNUAL REPORT

ABRIDGED VERSION

APRIL 2019 - 2020

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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR



Pascal Brissette

Director, Centre for Interdisciplinary
Research on Montreal (CIRM)

Associate Professor, Département des
littératures de langue française, de
traduction et de création

In a few weeks, Montréal has gone from “world AI capital” to “national COVID-19 hot spot.” Every day, we receive more and more—generally bad—news, while statistics and graphs from health authorities in support of social distancing measures leave us aghast. As of April 20th, 2020, 46.1% of Québec’s confirmed cases are in Montréal. [The world organization of United Cities and Local Governments](#) has been struggling to grasp the effects and impacts this pandemic will have on urban populations around the globe. How will this pandemic affect Montréal narratives? What impact will the increasing number of images from our metropolitan CHSLDs have on Montréal’s ranking among prosperous cities where life is good? Will Montrealers want to return to public transit after the pandemic? Will active transportation, on foot or by bike, become more important than ever, or will commuters prefer the individual cabins of cars?

Our Montréal specialists will conduct important observation and analysis work over the next couple of years. We will study what effect weeks of forced confinement and mandatory telework will have had on Montrealers' work habits. We will look at the economic, social, demographic, political, cultural, and community consequences of the historic event through which we are currently living. While it is true that the entire world is at war with this pandemic, researchers will be the strategists and guiding lights our societies need to rebuild a more just, resilient, and cleaner world than before.

CIRM intends to be at the forefront of this revitalization. In 2019-2020, our Centre has asserted its capacity to unite researchers and proponents of social innovation in Montréal. We now have 67 members, from fifteen local and international universities.

Along with our partners at the City of Montréal (the Urban Innovation Lab, Centraide of Greater Montréal, the Foundation of Greater Montréal, the Direction régionale de la santé publique, the Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale de la Ville de Montréal), we won Canada's Smart Cities Challenge (\$50m). Over the next five years, we will be coordinating the Social Data Hub and establishing an Observatory of Montréal's Narratives for its partners. Despite the interruption of some of our activities, CIRM will continue to coordinate the team working on the Policy on Children and to collaborate with the Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal (SHDM) and Chez Doris to implement the "Loger et verdir" project. This report is a testament to the intense activity of CIRM over the 2019-2020 year. Even in confinement, our team continues to work and is making plans for post-COVID-19. We, and all our members, will be ready to help Montréal regain its vitality and momentum.

CIRM'S MISSION

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Montréal (CIRM) brings together researchers from Quebec and international universities whose work pertains to urban life, especially in Montreal. CIRM's mandate is twofold:

- 1. STIMULATE** emerging research in Montréal studies and unite the research being conducted within various disciplines and universities;
- 2. DEVELOP** partnerships, sets of themes, and fundamental and applied research projects on the economic, social, cultural, and governmental spheres of Montréal.

CIRM's objective is thus to contribute to a better understanding of the city through the intersection of research disciplines, and to encourage the establishment of concrete projects, which—while benefitting from the knowledge produced in universities—will affect the daily life of Montrealers. In doing so, CIRM intends to be a catalyst for knowledge on Montréal and indispensable to city development. The different disciplines represented at CIRM are history, architecture, literature, translation studies, communication studies, philosophy, law, political science, urban planning, geography, social work, and environmental studies. Research conducted at the Centre falls under one or more of the six axes presented in the following table.

SIX RESEARCH-ACTION AXES

AXES	DIRECTION
1. Digital Culture, Art, Literature, and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Erin Hurley – Associate Professor, Department of English (McGill University) ▪ Will Straw – Full Professor, Department of Art History & Communication Studies (McGill University)
2. Language, Belonging, and Plurilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wim Remysen – Associate Professor, Department of Literature and Communication Studies (Université de Sherbrooke)
3. Economy, Social Innovation, and Social Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Richard Shearmur – Professor & Director, School of Urban Planning (McGill University)
4. Mobility, Urban Planning, and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Juan Torres – Associate Professor, School of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture; Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Urban Planning (Université de Montréal)
5. Governance, Institutions, and Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hoi Kong – Full Professor, Peter A. Allard School of Law (University of British Columbia) ▪ Kevin Manaugh – Associate Professor, Department of Geography and School of Environment (McGill University)
6. Immigration, Living Conditions, and Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frédéric Dejean – Professor, Department of Religious Studies (UQAM) ▪ Annick Germain – Full Professor, Centre Urbanisation, Culture et Société (Institut national de la recherche scientifique)

CIRM IN NUMBERS



68 Members



+ 25 Disciplines



15 Universities
and Organizations



6 Research-Action axes



1 McConnell Professor of Practice



1 BMO Doctoral Fellow

1 BMO Postdoctoral Fellow



6 Resident Scholars

- ❖ Imen Ben Jemia, Université de Montréal
- ❖ Steven Lapidus, Concordia University
- ❖ Marie Leconte, Université de Montréal
- ❖ Mary Anne Poutanen, McGill University
- ❖ Paul-Etienne Rainville, UQTR
- ❖ Béatrice Rea, Oxford University



4 Visiting Scholars

- ❖ Matthew Claudel, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- ❖ Anna Giaufret, Genoa University
- ❖ Fabio Scetti, Paris Descartes University
- ❖ Mariona Tomas Fornés, University of Barcelona



15 Employees including...

1 Project Manager

10 Research Assistants

* For a complete list of our teams and committees, please refer to the [Appendice 2](#)

EVENTS

The **events** organized by CIRM and its members constitute CIRM's most visible work. This work is also deployed in other directions. Training and induction of emerging researchers into the workplace and the research community are very important aspects of CIRM's mission, too.

In 2019–2020, CIRM mentored its BMO doctoral and postdoctoral fellows¹, offered them support in carrying out their research and field projects, and ensured that they could benefit from its network of local partners. CIRM has also supported several of its junior members in obtaining positions in academia and in the private and public sectors.

¹ For a detailed portrait of the BMO fellows, please refer to Appendix 1.

Over the past year, CIRM has planned, organized, and participated in a total of **22 public events**, 17 of which took place prior to the national confinement order given by our governments. The few figures below detail this event programming.



3 Workshops

Two workshops devoted to the development of the Social Data Hub, as well as an interdisciplinary workshop for CIRM members.



2-time participant at *RDV Je fais Mtl*

CIRM participated in two events on civic engagement and collaboration with institutions and foundations.



Nearly 600 people ...

took part in the events orchestrated by CIRM this year.



2 Conferences

Designed in partnership with the Quartier de l'innovation, these participatory meetings explore issues of urban planning, neighborhood identity, and citizen participation.



9 Seminars

An opportunity for researchers as well as community and municipal representatives to meet and discuss the most recent publications dealing with Montréal and urban issues.



6 *Montréal as seen by ...*

A series of meetings during which Montrealers shared their impressions of the city with students and citizens.

PARTNERSHIPS

In parallel with the work it does for its members, CIRM also works to nurture and enrich relationships with many local (non-academic) partners by means of concrete collaborative action and projects, as the data below confirm.

+ 140 meetings

with community, municipal, private, and university partners.

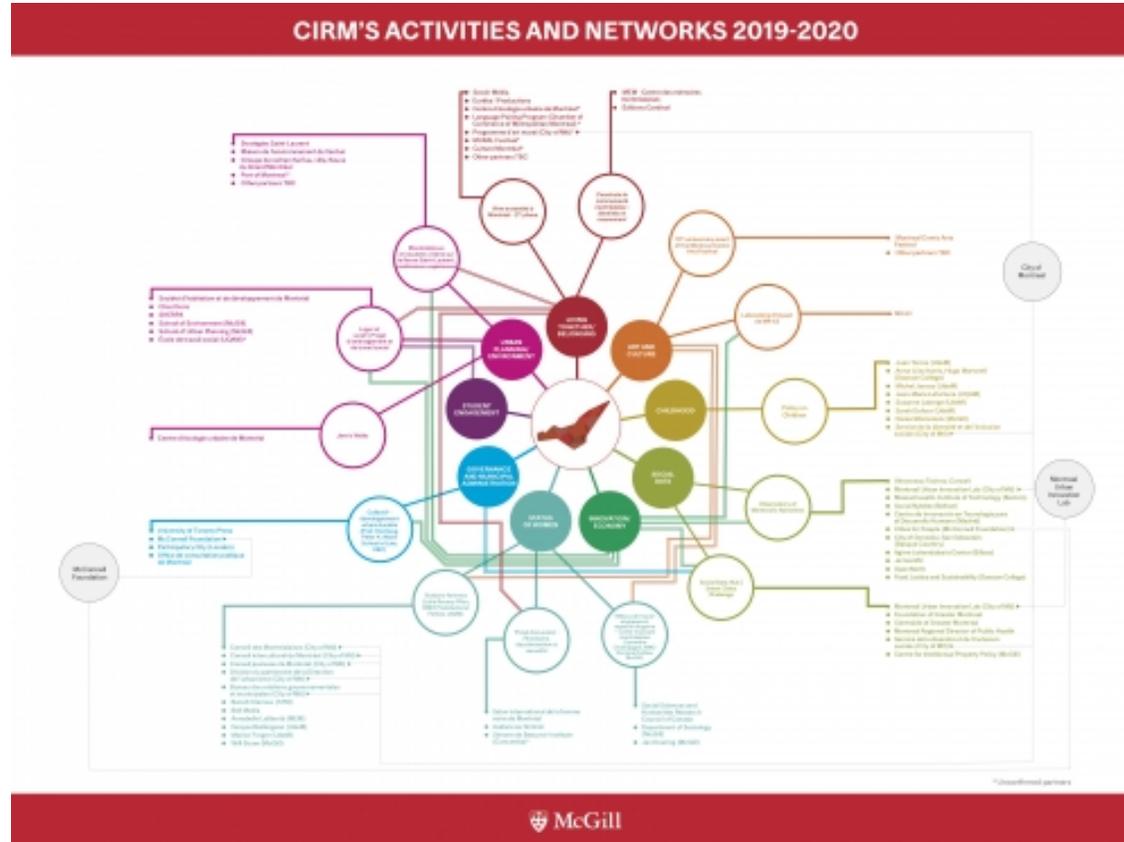
+ 90 partners

involved in CIRM's activities and research this year, including the the City of Montréal, the Maison de l'innovation sociale (MIS), the Montreal Urban Innovation Lab (MUIL), the Quartier de l'innovation, the SHDM, Chez Doris, the Montrealers' Memory Centre (MEM) , and MR-63.

30 letters

of support provided to our partners to help them obtain funding (Centre d'écologie urbaine de Montréal, Montréal Comic Arts Festival, MR-63).

Our **2019–2020 map of partnerships** includes a list of local organisations and collaborators with which CIRM works on projects. This dimension is central to CIRM's.



To consult a larger version of the 2019–2020 map of CIRM's activities and partnerships, please visit our [website](#).

COMMUNICATIONS

Since 2018, CIRM has been taking advantage of social media to reach citizens and researchers. The broadening of its audience is ongoing, and the recent establishment of a dedicated communications team will make it possible, over the next year, to increase the impact of its action. The data presented here are the result of the strategy put in place for the 2019–2020 year.

WEBSITE

- ❖ **12,998** visits
- ❖ **11,862** users
- ❖ **35,308** page views

SOCIAL MEDIA (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn)

- ❖ **1,461** followers across
social media accounts

NEWSLETTER

- ❖ **480** subscribers

SOCIAL MEDIA and NEWSLETTER

- ❖ **312** publications
(May 2019 to April 2020)

DEVELOP — PROJECTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS



BUILDING THE MONTRÉAL COMMUNITY: IDENTITIES IN MOTION

In 2018, CIRM and the Centre d'histoire de Montréal developed a collaborative project around the notions of “narratives” and “identities.” An initial research team composed of three historians was formed in June 2018. From multiple sources and varied corpuses, its mandate is to identify landmarks and key elements that, over time, make up the identity of Québec's metropolis. This exploratory research process was in line with the strategic priorities of both institutions. CIRM is currently developing an Observatory of Montréal's Narratives, infrastructure for data consumption and analysis on Montréal that will provide an in-depth understanding of key community issues (see the Social Data Hub project below).

For its part, the Centre d'histoire de Montréal wishes to redefine its institutional and museum position in Québec and will convert, in the fall of 2021, into the Centre des mémoires montréalaises (MEM). In this context, it has a major interest in issues of community identity. The team of researchers brought together by CIRM has thus reflected on the best possible way to synthesize the knowledge accumulated by historians, sociologists, political scientists, and literary scholars, and to give this synthesized information a form that will lead to both a publication for the general public and original museum programming. In this case, this synthesis takes the form of “interpretation keys” providing access to the multiple narratives and identities of the Montréal population. The book that will emerge from this collaborative research will be published in the fall of 2021, when the inauguration of the MEM will take place. It will be published in English and French and will be the inaugural publication of this new Montréal museum institution. For CIRM, this is an opportunity to highlight the bicentennial of McGill University and its long and rich contribution to a better understanding of Montréal and Québec.

POLICY ON CHILDREN

Approved on October 22, 2019 by Montréal's City Council, the research project "Naître, grandir, s'épanouir à Montréal" has led to the formation of an advisory council and research team around the Policy on Children. This team's task is to develop, around each of the five axes² of the policy, a participatory research project with the City of Montréal's Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale. The research question guiding the researchers concerns the role that the municipal administration should play in meeting children's needs in terms of safety, food, play, culture, and education. As pointed out by Professor Juan Torres, one of the team's researchers and head of the "Safety and Accessibility in the Urban Environment" axis: "The goal of the interdisciplinary team involved in this approach is not to conduct studies on the Policy on Children, or on its implementation, but rather to generate, with partners in the municipal milieu, a space to reflect on how a municipality like Montréal can be more effective, or even innovative, in its public policies and, more specifically, in its support for children. This approach constitutes a very promising precedent for considering city-university partnerships as perennial and structuring relationships, valuing different types of knowledge (academic, professional, citizen...) and stimulating the production of knowledge."

²Axis 1: Security and Urban Environment Accessibility; Axis 2: Nutrition and Food Security; Axis 3: School Perseverance and Educational Success; Axis 4: Culture, Sport and Recreation Access; Axis 5: Families and Communities.

COORDINATION OF THE SOCIAL DATA HUB

On May 14, 2019, the Montreal Urban Innovation Lab along with fifty other project leaders, including CIRM, won the grand prize in Infrastructure Canada's Smart Cities Challenge on behalf of the City of Montréal. Aiming to make use of the data produced on the city, Montréal's proposal focused on citizens' and social development actors' capacity to use their expertise to contribute to the development of a city on a human scale, capable of inclusion and resilience, particularly in terms of mobility and food.

As coordinator of the Social Data Hub of Montréal's project, CIRM's mandate is to make their Observatory of Montréal's Narratives a reality. This tool will be able to gather and create an inventory of data and research results—thematically organized, geo-localized, time-stamped, and grouped into a dashboard—and to analyse them with the help of tools that will allow the city's social innovation actors to make better-informed decisions.

Since December 2019, thanks to our partners at the Hub (Centraide of Greater Montréal, the Direction régionale de la santé publique de Montréal, the Foundation of Greater Montréal, and the Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale de la Ville de Montréal), CIRM has launched a series of workshops aiming to identify exemplary practices in terms of management, governance, and data sharing, as well as to create a prototype for safe, open, and intuitive technological infrastructure. Between 2020 and 2025, CIRM will: 1) coordinate the Social Data Hub; 2) create the prototype of the data sharing and analysis tool; 3) create regulatory mechanisms and regulations for matters concerning data sharing and analysis.

The coordination of the project will provide CIRM with the opportunity to highlight research done by its team, its members, and its scientific collaborators. This project will also allow organizations and citizens to develop their literacy on data usage, particularly regarding the sharing of educational resources, methodology, and technology. Ultimately, taking on this responsibility, combined with the results of the project, will contribute to enriching the conversation about data usage for the common good on the local, national, and international (France, Spain, Basque Country) scales.

LOGER ET VERDIR – TACKLING WOMEN’S HOMELESSNESS

Whether visible or hidden, homelessness is a complex and worrisome issue in many cities across the country. Québec’s metropolis is no exception, as the different facets of homelessness—especially women’s—outlined in the municipal administration’s *Plan d’action montréalais en itinérance 2018-2020*. Together with its partners Chez Doris and the *Société d’habitation et de développement de Montréal* (SHDM), CIRM wanted to provide stimulating and innovative solutions to address this problem. Dedicated to women at risk of homelessness, the apartment block currently being built by the SHDM in the East end of Montréal features 26 single-occupancy studios, including 4 adapted housing units. This new building will include communal spaces as well as a green courtyard and be managed by the charitable organization Chez Doris in order to ensure adequate follow-up with the occupants.

In consultation with the SHDM and Chez Doris, CIRM has identified two research-action initiatives that tie in with the housing project and that will have a concrete impact on the latter's operation and development. They will solicit the commitment of some fifteen students and four professors from two different universities, over a period of just over two years. The first project, led by social work professors and students, aims to identify the best management practices for this new living environment and to determine the selection criteria for its future residents. It will also seek to establish internal regulations that promote both fair and inclusive access to housing and reflect the cultural, sexual, and social diversity of women at risk of homelessness in Montréal. The second project will co-create and co-design the green yard. Students, professors, and residents will contribute to the discussion and construction of this urban garden in order to create a space that meets the specific needs of its users, embodies the principles of sustainable development, and integrates meaningful therapeutic elements (native plants, furniture layout, etc.), all the while respecting the neighbourhood.

**STIMULATE –
BMO FELLOWSHIPS
2019-2020**





Lysandre Champagne
BMO Doctoral Fellow
2019-2020

Lysandre Champagne, a PhD student in Sociology at McGill University, is interested in the recognition of skills and talent in relation to gender in Montréal's artistic community.

Favoring ethnographic methods, her doctoral research examines the organizational and institutional conditions for the inclusion, or lack thereof, of women in emerging musical scenes. Thus, she bridges the complex and little-studied realities of music artisans and different sociological traditions: work, culture, and gender.

Since obtaining her doctoral fellowship, Lysandre Champagne has been a guest speaker at one of CIRM's seminars (*Nuits légendaires à Montréal : La femme aux cartes postales*) in November 2019, all the while organizing her own seminar on the music industry in Montréal, which also took place in November. Thanks to the BMO bursary, she can now focus on preparing for her doctoral examination, scheduled for June 2020.



Julie Ravary-Pilon
BMO Postdoctoral Fellow
2019-2020

Julie Ravary-Pilon is currently pursuing a postdoctoral fellowship at Université de Montréal. Her research project tackles the issue of women's underrepresentation in Montréal's toponymy, with a focus on the metro.

In her research-action project, ***For Inclusive Montréal Stories: Feminist Research-Action on the Montréal Metro***, Dr. Julie Ravary-Pilon proposes to revisit the map of Montréal's underground train. To that end, she develops an intersectional feminist toponymy stemming from narratives that highlight women's contributions to Montréal's history.

Dr. Ravary-Pilon will collaborate with social actors in order to produce a revisited map of the metro, which will culminate in an exhibition set in the urban space. Such a study adds to the multiple theoretical engagements with the various modes of representation of pluralist identities and forms of belongings existing in the public sphere. Ultimately, this project also aims to turn Montréal's public transit system into a more inclusive and egalitarian space shared by all its citizens.

Since obtaining her postdoctoral bursary, Dr. Julie Ravary-Pilon has published a total of four articles and chapters, as well as acting as co-director for two scientific publications. She has also participated in two events as a guest speaker, attended several colloquiums, and served on three committees. You will find attached to this report a detailed list of the various accomplishments and projects mentioned here (French only).

THE MCCONNELL PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE PROGRAM



L'expertise d'**Ana Brandusescu** réside dans les technologies civiques, les données ouvertes et les droits numériques. Sa présence à Montréal et au CRIEM amène une perspective internationale sur les dimensions économiques, politiques et sociales des technologies émergentes dans la ville.



Ana Brandusescu
Professor of practice
McConnell Foundation
program
2019-2020

En tant que professeure praticienne de la Fondation McConnell du CRIEM, Ana Brandusescu mène présentement une étude sur la gouvernance de l'intelligence artificielle (IA), et ce, afin de mieux comprendre les implications économiques, politiques et sociales de cette technologie à Montréal et au Canada. Cette étude vise à explorer l'écosystème de l'IA, ceux·celles qui y participent activement ainsi que ceux·celles qui la gouvernent. Elle examinera d'autant plus les processus juridiques et politiques d'innovation technologique, particulièrement le financement du secteur public.

Pour la prochaine année universitaire, Ana Brandusescu continuera à développer son programme de recherche sur la gouvernance de l'IA au Canada, en plus de poursuivre son travail au sein de différents comités et de travailler au développement du Pôle d'analyse de données sociales que coordonne présentement le CRIEM.

Pour un portrait plus détaillé quant à ses différents travaux de recherche et collaborations, veuillez visiter [la page qui lui est dédiée](#) sur le site Web du CRIEM. De plus, est joint en Annexe 3 du présent document son premier rapport quant au financement de l'IA par le secteur public.

APPENDIX 1 – JULIE RAVARY-PILON'S ACHIEVEMENTS



CHAPITRES DE LIVRE

- RAVARY-PILON, Julie. « Médiation de la femme politicienne : Figure de la Femme-Polis dans *Pays* (2016) de Chloé Robichaud », dans *Les personnifications du Québec : entre fiction et théorie*, Louis-Daniel Godin-Ouimet et Martine-Emmanuelle Lapointe (dir.), Édition Nota Bene. (accepté)
- RAVARY-PILON, Julie. « L'Euguélienne » et « Métaféminisme », dans *L'Atlas littéraire*, dirigé par Bernard Andrès et Pierre Hébert, Édition Fides, 2020.

ARTICLES DE REVUE AVEC COMITÉ DE LECTURE

- RAVARY-PILON, Julie. « Entre *Prized Content* et *Lesbian Multicasting* : étude comparative entre la saison 1 et la saison 2 de la web série québécoise *Féminin/Féminin* », *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*. (sous presse).
- RAVARY-PILON, Julie. « Digital Rip Tide or Point Break: Discourses on Feminism's Fourth Wave and New Media Art », *Feminist Media Studies*. (sous presse).

DIRECTION D'OUVRAGES SCIENTIFIQUES

- CONTOGOURIS, Ersy et Julie RAVARY-PILON (dir.), *Être femmes* dans les médias audiovisuels au Québec : Cinéma, télévision, web et jeux vidéo*, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2020 (à venir).
- SAINT-MARTIN, Lori et Julie RAVARY-PILON. « Femmes et cinéma québécois : 35 ans plus tard », *Nouvelles vues*, no 20, 2019.

CONFÉRENCIÈRE INVITÉE

- 2020 – Chercheuse en micro-résidence au centre *Arttexte*. « Art vidéographique féministe au Québec durant les années 60 et 70 ».
- 2020 – Conférence invitée dans le cadre de la Journée internationales des femmes, Syndicat de la Sûreté du Québec, « Femmes et médias au Québec ».

PARTICIPATIONS À DES COMITÉS

- 2019-2020 – Présidente du comité scientifique du projet Stations-Femmes (3 rencontres).
- 2019-2020 – Codirectrice de la revue universitaire *Nouvelle vues*.
- 2019-2020 – Comité scientifique du colloque annuel de l'Association canadienne d'études cinématographiques.

COMMUNICATIONS LORS D'ACTIVITÉS SCIENTIFIQUES

- 2019 – « Les Réalisatrices équitables: Herstory of Political Mobilisation by a Collective for Gender Parity in the Film Industry in Quebec and Canada », *25th Biennial Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States*, Montréal.
- 2019 – « Présentation du projet Stations-Femmes », *Savoir urbains*, Université de Montréal.
- 2019 – « Prized Content and Multicasting in Quebec Web Fictions: The Production and Distribution of the Queer Web Series *Féminin/Féminin* (Chloé Robichaud, 2014-2018) », *Two Days of Canada 2019: Canadian Screens*, Brock University.

PRÉSENTATIONS AVEC INVITÉ·E

- 2019 – Présentation sur les nouvelles salles de cinéma et les entreprises de postproduction avec Alexandre Domingue (directeur de Post-moderne Postproduction et du Cinéma Moderne), *Observatoire du cinéma au Québec*, Université de Montréal.
- 2019 – Présentation sur le Talent Lab de Netflix Canada avec Stéphane Cardin (directeur des politiques publiques à Netflix Canada), *Observatoire du cinéma au Québec*, Université de Montréal.

CONFÉRENCES ET JOURNÉES D'ÉTUDE ORGANISÉES

- 2020 – (à venir, journée de recherche subventionnée par une subvention Connexion du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada) *État des lieux de la recherche et de l'enseignement en cinéma québécois*, Université de Montréal.

APPENDIX 2 – WORKING TEAM AND COMMITTEES



WORKING TEAM	
Pascal Brissette	▪ Director
Stéphan Gervais	▪ Scientific Coordinator
Audray Fontaine	▪ Knowledge Mobilization Coordinator
Elissa Kayal	▪ Administrative assistant and McConnell Foundation Professor of Practice Program Coordinator
Karolyne Arseneault	▪ Project Manager
Ana Brandusescu	▪ McConnell Foundation Professor of Practice
Ottilia Scott	▪ Community manager
Julie Levasseur	▪ Community manager and research assistant for the Data Society Hub
Julien Vallières	▪ Research assistant for the Data Society Hub
Karolina Roman	▪ Editorial Assistant

BOARD MEMBERS	
Antonia Maioni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dean of the Faculty of Arts at McGill University and Chairwoman of the Board
Leigh Yetter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Office of the Provost representative
Nancy Ross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Associate Vice-Principal Research and Innovation
Michèle Dagenais	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CIRM's Regular Member
Anouk Bélanger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CIRM's Regular Member
Lysandre Champagne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Member
Violaine Desrosiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Member

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	
Frédéric Dejean Annick Germain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immigration, Living Conditions et Religion
Wim Remysen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language, Belonging and Plurilinguisme
Erin Hurley Will Straw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Digital culture, Art, Literature, and Performance
Juan Torres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobility, Urban Planning, and Environment
Richard Shearmur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economy, Innovation et Social Transformations
Hoi Kong Kevin Manaugh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governance, Institutions and Citizen Participation

APPENDIX 3 – RESEARCH SUMMARY BY ANA BRANDUSESCU



THE GOVERNANCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CANADA

Artificial intelligence (AI) and governance are nebulous terms that warrant a closer examination. Governance determines who has power, who makes decisions, who participates, and what counts. AI is the ability of a machine (e.g. a computer) to imitate intelligent human behavior. Two important subfields of AI are machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL). ML and DL are at the core of the way this technology is designed, deployed, and implemented, especially in automated decision making (ADM) and ADM systems.

There has been significant public sector financial investment made in AI by governments at all levels in Canada, both in its investment and seeding of talent in industry and research institutions. Take, for example, Montreal, a city considered to be an internationally renowned AI hub, with the world's largest concentration of academic researchers in deep learning. Yet, there is opacity in AI technology and its algorithmic black boxes that can and often do discriminate and cause harm to women and people of colour. This opacity, discrimination and harm extends to the ways entities procure, build, and/or use ADM systems and products.

Yet, to date, there has been little research conducted across Canada on the ways and implications of how AI and ADM systems are publicly funded. Therefore, this initial scoping research, conducted through McConell Foundation Professor of Practice program, aims to chip away at the institutional opacity and start to uncover these organizational black boxes.

That is, to examine structural governance mechanisms that drive the AI ecosystem—public sector financial flows and public procurement practices -- and its governance. The research project includes:

- Mapping the AI ecosystem: entities and key people.
- Mapping financial flows of public sector funding for AI in Montreal.
- Exploring how power is convened within the political economy of AI.

This research will identify and examine both public and private entities in the AI ecosystem, and their structural governance mechanisms, in the hopes that it will be made more transparent and accountable to the public. In turn, the public will have the opportunity to better question how public policy decisions in relation to AI and ADM systems are currently made. There will also be an opportunity to rethink how these public policy decisions can be made more inclusive and equitable, especially to the communities on the margins of current AI governance structures.

Overall, the research aims to advance public and open knowledge for the benefit of more inclusive, public interest technology in Montreal and across Canada. Academics, nonprofits and policymakers can use research outputs to advocate for transparency and accountability in AI and ADM systems. This includes greater availability and access to public sector funding data, and improved public consultation, engagement, and participation processes.



CIRM Centre for Interdisciplinary
Research on Montreal

CRIEM Centre de recherches interdisciplinaires
en études montréalaises