# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Letter from the Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SIPA Celebrates 70th Anniversary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EU and U.S. Thought Leaders Discuss “Tax Avoidance and Privacy in the Digital Age”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew Joins SIPA as Visiting Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>José Antonio Ocampo Named to Board of Colombia’s Central Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Q&amp;A with Guillermo Calvo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Q&amp;A with Dirk Salomons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>London Panel Considers Globalization and Its Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Panagariya Explores India’s Economy under Modi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Winners of the 2017 CDEP Faculty Research Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Women in Finance: Toward Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Federal Reserve Vice Chairman Discusses Central Bank Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Experts Consider Key Trade Issues at Conference Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>International Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ban Ki-moon Discusses United Nations’ Role in a Changing World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Emmanuel Macron Advocates “Reforging Transatlantic Bonds”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Shlomo Ben-Ami Speaks on “Politics of Conflict in the Middle East”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Q&amp;A with Michael A. Nutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Student-Organized Symposium Addresses Forced Displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>In Wake of Election, Experts Consider U.S.-Mexico Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cyber Espionage, Propaganda, and Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Saltzman Institute Hosts Experts on the Military and Diplomacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Energy and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The New Geopolitics of Declining Oil Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Cod and Climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Alumni at UN Examine 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Can Coal Make a Comeback?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Isaac Wilkins: An Environmental Justice and Sustainability Calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>On the Future of Energy and Environmental Policy under Trump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>2017 Columbia Global Energy Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Fashioning the Streets: Collecting Data to Clean Up New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Speak Up for What’s Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Fernando Haddad Discusses Challenges of Urbanization in Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Q&amp;A with Alexander Hertel-Fernandez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>SIPA Courses Examine Issues at the Forefront of Urban and Social Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Technology and Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Ester Fuchs Honored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>How Does Tech Enrich Urban Policy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>SIPA Receives Nasdaq Grant; SIPA Announces Challenge Grant Winners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>SIPA Receives Nasdaq Grant; SIPA Announces Challenge Grant Winners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Why Is Cybersecurity Relevant for International Development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>MPA-DP Students Survey Digital Media in Cuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Students Win Honors at GPPN Paris Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Global Digital Futures Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Reframing Fake News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Jared Cohen Discusses Cyberpower and the New Digital Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Global Muckraking: Investigative Journalism and Global Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Capstone Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Raphael Smith Prize-Winning Essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Refuge or Prison: The Reason for Hopelessness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cover: SIPA EPD Workshop students visiting a rapid mass transit site in Jakarta, Indonesia (see page 62)

Photo: Natasha Ardiani MPA ’17
Letter from the Dean

This issue of SIPA News comes at a time of significant global tension and uncertainty. Events such as Brexit and the election of Donald J. Trump, the refugee crisis in Syria, regional tensions in Asia, the Middle East, and South America, and ongoing questions about U.S. alliances and leadership on the global stage have contributed to a sense that profound changes are taking place in the world. These changes and others have the potential to reshape public policy for years, if not generations, to come.

During the 2016–2017 academic year, SIPA students, alumni, and faculty actively engaged these changes and are having an impact along numerous dimensions, whether it is in the classroom and in the field, at home and abroad, or in our core fields and adjacent disciplines. As a school, this year was also marked by many activities: we launched important new initiatives, convened major conferences and public forums, undertook a broad range of student projects, contributed to policy debates through our faculty research, and concluded our yearlong 70th anniversary celebration.

In these pages, you will see that we brought key figures from around the world to engage our community, including then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who discussed the UN’s role in a changing world; Federal Reserve Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer, who gave a talk on central bank communication; then-candidate Emmanuel Macron on reforging transatlantic bonds; and Congressman John Lewis, who spoke about the importance of fighting injustice at our annual Dinkins Forum.

Our new initiatives also served to leverage the passion of our students and the expertise of our faculty. Building on our successful Tech and Policy Initiative, for example, we implemented a new program on entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital technology that will bring together students, scholars, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and private sector leaders to explore the conditions and means that give rise to entrepreneurship globally.

Our students addressed policy challenges through a variety of activities, including Capstone projects, start-up competitions, and international conferences. They participated in and helped organize major conferences on energy, the environment, and other policy areas. In all, SIPA students participated in more than 80 Capstone workshops in areas such as urban infrastructure, solar energy, displaced youth, and digital technology. As part of the fourth year of the annual Dean’s Public Policy Challenge Grant, students developed innovative technology projects to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

SIPA faculty continued to create and share powerful new knowledge, while, at the same time, training the next generation to lead and serve. Faculty publications covered a wide range of topics, e.g., macroeconomic theory, global energy markets, international politics, and other important topics. Several took public service leaves to accept senior roles in foreign governments. They led our SIPA centers, producing first-rate scholarship on issues such as global economic governance, economic development, energy policy, war and peace, and the Indian economy. And SIPA was also able to add exceptional new faculty this year, including Jacob Lew, the former U.S. treasury secretary.

Capping a productive year, we concluded our observance of SIPA’s 70th anniversary. As part of our 70th, we hosted more than a dozen events in cities around the world, welcomed 20 global thinkers to campus for conversations on critical policy issues, and raised funds for 80 new student fellowships. At the end of the year, we brought together more than 900 members of our community for a special weekend that featured a daylong substantive policy forum, alumni events, and our annual Global Leadership Awards gala. It was a special moment for our community and a fitting tribute to SIPA’s seven decades of policy impact.

We thank you for your support of the School and our students. We hope you will enjoy reading this edition of SIPA News and learning about the remarkable work that is being done at SIPA and the impact that we are having in this time of significant global complexity and consequence.

Merit E. Janow
Dean, School of International and Public Affairs
Professor of Practice, International Economic Law & International Affairs
Columbia University
SIPA marked its 70th anniversary with a historic celebration that drew guests from around the world to Morningside Heights. Hundreds of alumni and friends joined faculty, staff, and students for an extended weekend filled with exciting programming. Among the many highlights were the SIPA Forum, the Global Leadership Awards Gala, and the David N. Dinkins Leadership and Public Policy Forum (see page 44), as well as alumni-centered activities including a welcome reception, student presentations, cultural tours, and more.

The weekend began on March 30 with the 20th annual Dinkins Forum, keynoted by Congressman John Lewis, the civil rights icon who has represented Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives for 30 years. Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger, SIPA Dean Merit E. Janow, and Professor David N. Dinkins, the former mayor, delivered welcoming remarks at the Forum. Following Representative Lewis’s keynote speech, a panel discussion featuring faculty and guests examined questions of economic and political citizenship.

The festivities continued the next day as SIPA’s Program in Economic Policy Management celebrated its 25th anniversary.
The day’s activities included a series of panels featuring alumni, faculty, and leading experts in economic policy management; Chief Economist Maurice Obstfeld of the International Monetary Fund spoke at lunch. A networking reception for PEPM alums preceded a welcoming reception at Low Library for alumni of all programs.

On Saturday, attendees gathered for the SIPA Forum, an all-day event that brought together expert scholars and global policymakers for robust discussions about today’s pressing challenges. Janow moderated a keynote panel on global challenges of the 21st century. Taking part were Antony Blinken, the former deputy secretary of state and national security adviser; Arvind Panagariya, vice chairman of the Indian planning agency NITI Aayog; Mari Pangestu, former trade minister of
Indonesia; and Ambassador Zhang Qiyue, China’s consul general in New York. Lunchtime sessions provided the chance for alumni to network or listen to presentations by current students on a variety of subjects, including student-led cyber initiatives, the experience of students of color at SIPA, and the evolution of the School’s capstone workshops. Graduates of the International Fellows Program gathered for a lunch featuring guest speaker David Ottaway IF ’63, a renowned journalist, foreign correspondent, and Wilson Center Fellow.

On Saturday afternoon, distinguished experts and alumni took part in six different panel discussions moderated by SIPA senior faculty. The panels covered core areas of SIPA’s expertise including climate change, economic development, international security policy, social transformation, migration crises, and global economic outlook.

The day culminated with the Global Leadership Awards Gala at Morningside Heights’s own Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. Secretary-General António Guterres of the United Nations gave opening remarks, saluting the School and welcoming almost 700 guests. The evening’s highlight came when SIPA honored Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brazil’s Fundação Lemann (Lemann Foundation) for their extraordinary
contributions to the global public good. Brzezinski served as national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter and was the Herbert Lehman Professor of Government at SIPA from 1960 to 1989.

Fundação Lemann is a Brazilian nonprofit organization that focuses on improving education through innovation, management, and policy.

Six alumni and friends also received special recognition for their contributions to SIPA: Roger R. Baumann IF ’84, MIA ’85; Anuradha T. Jayanti, Vladimir V. Kuznetsov IF ’90, MIA ’91; David B. Ottaway IF ’63; John H. Porter IF ’82, MIA ’83; and Maria Teresa Vivas de Mata IF ’03, MIA ’03.

All proceeds from the gala will be used to fund student fellowships.

The Celebration Weekend concluded on April 2 with a choice of guided tours for alumni. Some opted for a walking tour of Historic Harlem, while others visited the first Whitney Biennial since the Whitney Museum of American Art moved downtown. A whirlwind of activity spanning 70 hours had finally drawn to a close.

Serina Bellamy MIA ’17 concentrated in Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy.

Matt Terry MIA ’17 concentrated in International Finance and Economic Policy.
The first corporate responsibility of companies is paying their fair share of taxes,” 2001 Nobel Laureate in Economics and University Professor Joseph E. Stiglitz told an audience at SIPA on September 21, 2016. His comment was made during the first Transatlantic Citizen’s Dialogue and referred to the European Union’s order to Ireland to collect $14.5 billion in unpaid taxes from Apple.

Participants in New York and Milan, linked by video, engaged in a debate on competition, tax avoidance, and privacy in the digital age, from both the U.S. and EU perspective. Cosponsored by SIPA, the European Commission, and Bocconi University in Milan, the discussion featured European Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager, along with Stiglitz in New York, and Senator Mario Monti, the former Commissioner for Competition and former Prime Minister of Italy in Milan.

The concept of Citizens’ Dialogues builds on the model of “town hall meetings”; the audience comprised around 900 people: 700 in Milan and 200 in New York. More than 2,000 people from 39 countries watched the live broadcast.

Anya Schiffrin, director of SIPA’s Technology, Media, and Communications specialization, made introductory remarks and Dean Merit E. Janow moderated the panel.

Vestager launched the conversation by noting how the rule of law and fair competition binds open societies together. “The benefits of the open market are not being felt by everyone,” she said. “It’s important to make sure that people don’t feel left out.”

To achieve this goal of inclusivity, Vestager said it’s “crucial” to enforce competition law.

“The U.S. and EU both have mechanisms for antitrust and merger control,” she added, “but the richest, biggest, and most willing member states shouldn’t give incentives and aid to big companies that will allow them to outcompete their competitors.”
From Milan, Monti observed that conflicting decisions between the European Commission in Brussels and U.S. antitrust officials are not common, but not surprising in this case. He recalled a 2001 case during his own term, in which the EU Commission blocked a GE-Honeywell merger that had been blessed by United States regulators. The EU, he explained, thought the merger would harm consumers.

Despite occasional differences of opinion, “the U.S. should not believe [the EU takes] pleasure in going after U.S. nationals,” Monti emphasized. “We do this even against our own companies and states.”

Stiglitz addressed the Apple-Ireland case head on. “Multinationals use globalization to avoid paying taxes,” he said. “There needs to be reform. The OECD and the G20 recognize this. But transfer pricing is a problem. The distortionary effects of the tax loophole illustrates the power imbalance.”

Stiglitz said companies like Apple want to decide for themselves what they should be paying to the government—without oversight from citizens at large. But, he reminded the audience, Apple wouldn’t exist without government research.

“What’s disturbing about this case is the secrecy of it,” he said. “Deals are being done so that the citizens of a country don’t know what’s going on. If everyone were doing this, it would totally erode the tax regime.”

[After alluding to the downsides of globalization,] Stiglitz said that globalization is ultimately a force for good because it provides additional checks on governments to capture instances of secrecy and democratize competition policy.

The panelists later took questions from audience members in New York and Milan and from viewers online.

Responding to an inquiry about the statute of limitations in the Apple case, Vestager and Stiglitz agreed that retroactive enforcement would be limited.

“U.S. law allowed us to recover only 10 years of unpaid taxes, but the Apple tax deal went on for 20 years,” Vestager said.

In 1997, Monti added, EU member states called on the Commission to define when tax competition is state aid. A group was set up to review tax schemes with preferential elements.

Asked to elaborate on issues of globalization and competition and how they affect average citizens, Vestager described the paradox of globalization that creates a more open world with trade that creates more prosperity, but then individuals can lose their jobs and wonder what the benefit is to them.

“Transparency in trade issues is important for the acceptance by citizens,” she said.

Stiglitz emphasized the importance of a good policy framework that would provide job assistance and retraining to lessen the blow of these impacts of trade.

“Without adequate social protections, everyone can lose from globalization,” he said.

“Globalization must be accompanied by good governance,” noted Monti. “We don’t want integration to see increasing dominance by large companies that have abusive behavior.”

Addressing the challenge of harmonizing taxes across jurisdictions, Stiglitz said the process could start by getting rid of tax havens such as Panama, the British Virgin Islands, and the Cayman Islands. He said the international system of attracting businesses with tax incentives is a destructive race to the bottom.

Vestager agreed, underscoring the point with clarity: “Europe is open for business,” she said. “Our point is that it’s not open for tax evasion.”

Ginger Whitesell MPA ’17 concentrated in Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy.
Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew Joins SIPA as Visiting Professor

Former Secretary of the Treasury Jacob “Jack” Lew joined the SIPA faculty as a visiting professor in February 2017. He will lecture, teach graduate students, and work with faculty members at the School and across the University on the subjects of international economics, fiscal and trade policy, and a range of other public policy issues.

“As a school committed to the highest level of both academic scholarship and producing leaders in public policy and international relations, we are delighted to have someone with Secretary Lew’s unique government leadership experience join us,” said Dean Merit E. Janow.

Lew led the Treasury Department from 2013 to 2017. He took office as the U.S. economy was struggling to regain its footing after the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. He helped lead the U.S. economy to its current foundation of economic growth and declining unemployment.

“At a time when we are all concerned with issues of global economic growth, trade and finance, our federal budget, tax system, and the challenge of creating economic opportunity, Jack Lew brings insights borne of years of experience from the academy and the most senior decision-making roles in the U.S. and global economy,” said Janow.

In the spring, Lew taught his first course, “Leadership and Policy Development,” which focused on contemporary U.S. and international economic policy issues such as managing the U.S. debt limit and responding to financial crisis in Puerto Rico.

“SIPA is at the forefront of tackling critical policy challenges facing the global community. I am delighted to have the opportunity to share my experience with talented young people who aspire to engage in the world of public policy and international affairs. I am impressed with the strength of Columbia’s faculty, students, and thought leadership and look forward to making a contribution to the education of a new generation of leaders,” said Lew.

Prior to serving as treasury secretary, Lew was White House chief of staff and director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a position he also held from 1998 to 2001. As chief of staff, Lew advised the president on issues from politics to policy. Before joining the Obama administration in 2009, initially as deputy secretary of state for management and resources, Lew served as a managing director and chief operating officer at Citigroup and executive vice president and chief operating officer of New York University, where he was also a professor of public administration.

As OMB director from 1998 to 2001, Lew led the Clinton administration’s budget team and served as a member of the National Security Council. He was special assistant to the president from 1993 to 1994. From 1979 to 1987, he was a principal domestic policy adviser to House Speaker Thomas P. O’Neill Jr.

A graduate of Harvard College and Georgetown University Law Center, Lew is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the National Academy of Social Insurance.
José Antonio Ocampo, a professor of professional practice at SIPA, has been named to the board of directors of the central bank of Colombia, the Banco de la República. President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia announced the appointment on February 28, 2017.

Ocampo, who will take public-service leave from the University at the end of the current academic year, joined SIPA as professor of professional practice in 2007. He has served as director of SIPA's concentration in Economic and Political Development since 2008, and he teaches courses including Global Economic Governance, Economic Development of Latin America, and Multidisciplinary Approaches for Development.

“Professor Ocampo is a vital member of the SIPA faculty, and his service on the board of Colombia’s central bank will only add to his already extensive expertise in economic and financial policy,” said Dean Merit E. Janow of SIPA.

Ocampo is a member of Columbia University’s Committee on Global Thought and copresident of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue. He also chairs the Committee for Development Policy for ECOSOC and the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and he previously held other positions at the UN.

A native of Colombia, Ocampo has been called his home country’s “best-known economist.” As finance minister from May 1996 through November 1997, he acted as the central bank’s chairman of the board. Ocampo served previously as the nation’s planning minister (August 1994–May 1996) and agriculture minister (March 1993–August 1994).

In 2013 he received an honorary doctorate from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in recognition of his outstanding record of scholarly achievement and public service on the world stage. He also received an honorary doctorate from Universidad Complutense in Madrid, Spain’s largest University, in 2014.

Among Ocampo’s many additional academic distinctions are the 2012 Jaume Vicens Vives award from the Spanish Association of Economic History—for the best book on Spanish or Latin American economic history, the 2008 Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought, and the 1988 Alejandro Angel Escobar National Science Award of Colombia.

Ocampo has published extensively on macroeconomic theory and policy, international financial issues, economic and social development, international trade, and Colombian and Latin American economic history. He holds a doctorate in economics from Yale University.

Eugenia (Jenny) McGill, a lecturer in international and public affairs who is currently associate director of the Economic and Political Development concentration, will serve as interim director while Ocampo is on leave.
Guillermo Calvo is a professor of international and public affairs at SIPA who has directed the School’s Program in Economic Policy Management (PEPM) for almost a decade. A specialist in the macroeconomics of emerging market and transition economies, Calvo, in October 2016, published Macroeconomics in Times of Liquidity Crisis, which examines how liquidity factors cause financial crises.

What is the intended audience for this book?

The audience is very wide—from laypeople to professional economists who are trying to make sense of what happens in emerging markets and developed economies.

What do you want people to take away from your book?

That there are some basic malfunctions in the payment system that should have made them expect that, sooner or later, the type of crisis we are in was going to happen. In advanced economies, the last time we saw something like this was in the 1930s. Economists had concluded this wouldn’t happen anymore because we knew how to run the economy to avoid these accidents. The other reason is that economists were not looking closely at what happened in emerging markets.

Since the 1990s there have been crises in emerging markets that look very similar to what we have here. For example, in

By Serina Bellamy MIA ’17
1998 there was a crisis in Russia—which at the time represented less than 1 percent of the world’s GDP—that still caused a big impact in most of the emerging markets, taking the world by surprise. Since it had happened in an emerging market, the easy conclusion was that once emerging markets developed further they would no longer experience shocks like that. What we know now is that this kind of crisis can happen anywhere.

What separates your book from others about the financial crisis?

There are two types of books that you can read about the crisis: one gives you details about the crisis, while the other tries to give you a broader picture about the basic issues within the economic system. Is it that we are living in a world of crooks, or is there something wrong with the capitalist system? I lean toward the latter notion that there is something wrong in the capitalist system, and I identify what’s wrong with it in the title of the book: liquidity problems.

I try to make some basic observations to make the reader think critically about why we use paper money when it is useless for consumption and production. I found that John Maynard Keynes also thought about this and provided an explanation, which is covered in Chapter 2 in plain English. Economists missed that the crisis was coming because we missed basic observations about paper money or, more generally, liquidity.

What are you working on now?

In 1993, I coauthored a paper arguing that interest rates in the United States could have a severe impact on emerging markets, particularly in Latin America. We said to be careful because, in those days, the U.S. interest rate was unusually low. Unfortunately, our concerns were validated by Mexico’s “Tequila Crisis” of 1994–95, as the Fed interest rate increased by about 3 percentage points in 1994. We can observe some parallels between then and now. The Fed is talking about raising interest rates. President Trump has been saying that he wants to invest in infrastructure, which will increase the fiscal deficit and most likely increase interest rates. I would expect that to have a negative effect on emerging markets, and that is already happening.

I’m going to Uruguay and Argentina to talk about these issues and about what they can do.

When interest rates start to rise in the United States, short-term capital will flow back to the U.S. and possibly produce a “sudden stop.” This is what happens when the flow of credit dries up very suddenly and in very large amounts. It’s a very costly shock—immediately you will have unemployment, output will fall, and the political apparatus will get reshuffled. I’m trying to alert these countries to that fact that something serious may be about to happen and to be prepared. They will need to join forces and present a solid front to handle the coming shock. But cooperation will be difficult because of politics and populist waves that usually accompany these episodes.

What keeps you teaching at SIPA?

I left the Columbia economics department in 1986, and when I was invited to SIPA in 2007, I thought I would be here for three years. It’s been about 10 years now, and I’m having a ball because I direct a program with around 50 students from more than 20 countries. These are mid-career policymakers and economic practitioners; they come from the private sector, central banks, finance ministries, etc. I can open up the Financial Times and point at an article and everyone will jump in and have an opinion. It’s extremely interesting.

It’s rewarding to send so many PEPM students to summer internships and hear things from their employers like, “Wow, they hit the ground running,” and, “They really know what’s going on.” The students also keep in touch with us and among themselves. This year [we celebrated] the 25th year of PEPM together with the 70th anniversary of SIPA. So what more can I ask for?

It’s wonderful that you have developed such a strong bond with your students.

That’s what we do at SIPA. The advantage of PEPM is that these people are 30- and 40-year-olds who are experienced and have a good background in economics. They are very motivated people, and I don’t have to start from the basics. Of course, teaching anyone is a great privilege. At this stage in my life, where I have a whole career behind me, I want to transmit as much as possible.
AFTER YEARS OF TURMOIL, ARGENTINA’S ECONOMY SEEMS TO BE GETTING ON ITS FEET. ACCORDING TO THE COUNTRY’S FINANCE MINISTER, ALFONSO PRAT-GAY, “ARGENTINA IS GRADUATING FROM POPULISM AFTER ONE TOO MANY SPRING BREAKS.”

Prat-Gay visited SIPA on October 10, 2016, to discuss policy changes in the South American nation. His talk was sponsored by the Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum (OMFIF), SIPA’s Initiative on Central Banking and Financial Policy, and the Program in Economic Policy Management.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE FOR ARGENTINA’S TRANSITION AWAY FROM POPULISM? NOT THE GOVERNMENT, SAID PRAT-GAY. “DO NOT THINK FOR A MINUTE THAT PRESIDENT [MAURICIO] MACRI IS THE ENGINE OF CHANGE,” HE NOTED. “IT IS THE PEOPLE. THEY VOTED FOR THIS CHANGE. THEY VOTED TO END POPULISM. AND BECAUSE OF THAT, CHANGE, THIS TIME, IS FOR REAL.”

Prat-Gay went on to explain that the Macri administration inherited policies that were not sustainable: Argentina was running out of reserves due to an overvalued exchange rate; fiscal deficit was close to 6 percent of GDP; the economy had not grown for the previous five years but still ran at 25 percent average annual inflation, and poverty impaired 32 percent of the population.

In order to turn the economy around, he said, the government had to make major changes to its financial, monetary, fiscal, and trade policies, including rapidly dismantling exchange rate controls and disentangling debt disputes fairly.

Among other goals, the government is working to launch inflation targeting and eliminate subsidies to the rich to reduce its fiscal deficit. Regarding trade, it is working at dismantling tax distortions and administrative barriers. At the same time, it is empowering the statistics agency and increasing ties with the rest of the world.

The ability to obtain credit also proved essential because it allowed the Argentine government to cover its debts. “Had we not had access to credit, we would have had to cut spending or increase taxes to cover debt,” Prat-Gay explained.

While access to credit was an important factor in Argentina’s recovery, Prat-Gay emphasized that restoring public faith in the government was key.

“Our plan was to tidy up the mess by establishing macroeconomic consistency, care for the vulnerable by assuring social sustainability and, most importantly, restore credibility by laying the ground for sustainable growth,” he said.

Asked how he would ensure the success of his reforms for the next four years, Prat-Gay said that it was “still a learning process, but whatever change we make will be more robust, legally and socially.”

Prat-Gay also said that one of the government’s goals is to end subsidies to the rich.

“People demanded this,” he added. “So we are going to cut subsidies to the point that we no longer subsidize the rich.”

Prat-Gay closed the discussion with explicit advice for policy students: “Credibility is the matter around which you build your policies,” he said. “It’s what makes it work. Other people have to believe in what you are doing. Deliver on your promises. Don’t overpromise if you are not going to overachieve.”
The fallout from Brexit and the persistent fragility of the international financial system have led to increased concerns about the effects of globalization. At a September 28, 2016, event for alumni and friends in London, SIPA brought together three experts for a timely discussion on the state of globalization and its future.

Taking part in the panel discussion were Professor Jan Svejnar, director of the Center on Global Economic Governance; Martin Wolf of the Financial Times; and Tina Fordham MIA ’99, managing director and chief global political analyst at Citi. Dean Merit E. Janow moderated.

“The world system is more wobbly than it used to be,” Svejnar suggested.

The cause of this instability? Bad leadership and growing mistrust in governments, said Wolf.

“We have done a miserable job [with globalization]. Inequality is on the rise and large portions of populations in the developing world have stagnant incomes,” he said. “The immense financial crisis has led people to believe that those running the financial system are corrupt and incompetent.”

Fordham disagreed with the implication that growing inequality has contributed to negative attitudes about globalization. “When you look at data, some of the most unequal societies have the most positive attitudes toward globalization,” she said. “Studies have shown that someone in China, with a much lower income per capita than someone in the U.S. or the UK, has more positive feelings toward globalization.”

Fordham offered a warning that public mistrust in appointed officials can have devastating consequences. “Historically, low-trust societies produce conspiracy theories and have revolutions. We are not experiencing the lowest levels of trust in the U.S. and Western Europe,” she noted.

Wolf said that states have not only lost the trust of their people, they have also lost legitimacy.

“If states are not seen as legitimate, then the global order will flounder,” he said. “We have failed to manage it because we have failed to convince the population that the way we are running the system is good.”

Wolf nevertheless suggested a simple way that state leaders could restore public faith in their legitimacy: “We can fix it by enforcing rules. A global system needs rules enforced by states,” he added.

“Things are cyclical, conflict and ideology are cyclical. We are not going to see revolutions in advanced economies; we are going to see orderly adjustments. Change is inevitable.”

In response to a question about policy recommendations that address this weakness in the system, Svejnar claimed that inclusive policies, which bring people who feel marginalized by globalization into the system, is key. He also called for small levels of well-regulated migration because “mass migration in the short run is not feasible.”

In a similar vein, Wolf described mass migration as a “gone cause” and emphasized that corporations such as Apple cannot be allowed to continue to avoid paying taxes because it was “corrosive.” Conversely, Fordham implied that the system might be able to correct itself given time.

“What if what we are experiencing is equivalent to a political, social, and economic market correction?” she asked. “This could be an adjustment. Things are cyclical, conflict and ideology are cyclical. We are not going to see revolutions in advanced economies; we are going to see orderly adjustments. Change is inevitable.”

Is the response to globalization, then, a simple market correction? What will the world look like at the end of it? Wolf cited a lesson from an early economics class to suggest that if things continue as they have been, the result will not be favorable.

“When we were talking about free trade, the lesson we learned is that everything is okay if the losers are compensated,” he said.

Right now, “not only are losers not being compensated, they are being reduced to states of deep insecurity.”
Panagariya Explores India’s Economy under Modi

By Matt Terry MIA ’17

When controversial yet popular Narendra Modi was sworn in as India’s prime minister in 2014, he inherited a weak and sputtering economy. Growth had been uncharacteristically low since the 2008 financial crisis, but Modi’s ambitious plans for reform, development, and liberalization promised to recharge India’s economic potential. Would his policies prove effective?

Indeed they would, concluded Arvind Panagariya, who spoke at a February 6, 2017, event sponsored by Columbia’s Deepak and Neera Raj Center on Indian Economic Policies. Panagariya—a SIPA faculty member who is on leave while serving as a cabinet minister in the Modi government—was joined by University Professor Jagdish Bhagwati, director of the Raj Center, who presided over the event.

Panagariya set the stage by giving a brief account of India’s recent economic history. Beginning in the early 1990s, India had embraced market liberalization and jettisoned its past policies of government planning and ownership. This proved effective, he explained, as India soon saw GDP growth rates previously unknown for a democracy: more than 8 percent per year.

However, this strong swell did not last. In the years following the financial crisis, recounted Panagariya, India struggled to regain its footing, as growth declined, double-digit inflation took hold, current account deficits reached 4 to 5 percent, and poor lending practices prevailed.

Since Modi took office, though, economic metrics have significantly improved. Panagariya said that growth rates have jumped back up, the rupee is strong, foreign direct investment has been opened up, and budget deficits have shrunk. He attributed much of this success to an extensive menu of reforms encompassing 11 different policy areas, intended to accelerate development and liberalize overregulated industries.

Under Modi’s administration, observed Panagariya, more than 1,100 laws have been repealed, helping to encourage entrepreneurship and decrease regulatory frictions in areas such as bankruptcy, microlitigation, and financial investment. Modi has also been successful at lowering both corporate and personal tax rates, he said.

Panagariya noted that building up India’s infrastructure has been a primary focus, with significant work being accomplished on bullet trains, ports, civil aviation, rural roads, energy access, and more. And in the social sector, one of the most important reforms has been to distribute biometric ID cards to citizens, which has helped plug widespread leakages in social programs.

“The government is responsible for doing a lot more than just changing laws and policies,” Panagariya added, underscoring that implementation and administration are also critical factors.

Under Modi, for example, the implementation of a ranking system for states has helped incentivize them to compete in areas such as health, education, and ease of doing business.

In concluding, Panagariya touched on Modi’s most well-known and controversial reform: demonetization. He noted that this was “not a step in isolation” but rather part of a larger strategy. While it’s obvious some things didn’t go as planned, he said, it was a necessary step toward reform. It also sent a strong signal that the Indian government was serious about combating black money. (The term “black money” refers to untaxed earnings from the black market, sometimes from criminal activity.)

Overall, Panagariya’s lecture described Modi’s policies as far-reaching and ambitious, with many positive effects contributing to a revival of India’s economy.
The goal of the Center for Development Economics and Policy (CDEP) is to promote microeconomic research in development at Columbia and to help bring that research to a broader audience. CDEP announced winners of its Faculty Research Grant Program, made possible by a generous gift from Anuradha Jayanti. The Faculty Research Grants program is part of CDEP’s broader commitment to provide students and faculty at Columbia with seed funding for projects that are at an early stage.

**CDEP Faculty Affiliate:** Rodrigo R. Soares, Lemann Professor of Brazilian Public Policy and International and Public Affairs, SIPA

**Coauthors:** Mateus Dias (São Paulo School of Economics-FGV) and Rudi Rocha (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro)

**Title of Project:** Impacts of Glyphosate Use in Agriculture on Human Health

**Overview:** Glyphosate is the most used herbicide in the world today. Developed in 1970 by Monsanto and first commercialized in 1974, under the name Roundup, its suitability for use with genetically modified crops explains its rapid adoption by farmers over the last few decades. Despite public controversy over its widespread use, and some laboratory evidence on the damaging effects of glyphosate on human cells, there is currently no direct evidence on whether the use of glyphosate at the levels typically seen in agriculture is harmful to human populations, particularly to individuals not directly involved in its handling.

The goal of this project is to assess the impact of glyphosate use on the health of human populations. In Brazil, the use of glyphosate is concentrated in the production of soybeans and increased with the expansion of soybean-planted areas following the adoption of genetically modified seeds in the 2000s. This analysis presents empirical challenges. First, the effect of glyphosate on health may be cumulative and vary over time. For this reason, the researchers will focus on the health of newborns, for whom the period of exposure is well defined. Second, expansion of soybean production and glyphosate use may impact health through other channels, such as increased income, and may also be related to other characteristics of local farmers. Therefore, the researchers will explore the municipalities sharing the same water resources and examine how the use of glyphosate in neighboring municipalities affects a given municipality that shares water resources with them.

**CDEP Faculty Affiliate:** Paul Lagunes, Assistant Professor of International and Public Affairs, SIPA

**Title of Project:** The Andean Way? Understanding Corruption and Inefficiency in Peru

**Overview:** A large portion of the developing world was recently rocked by a corruption scandal that originated in Brazil. The nation’s largest construction group was colluding with government officials in order to inflate the costs of public infrastructure. For instance, in Peru, as reported by The Economist, the Brazilian firm would “win contracts by making low bids and then corruptly secure big increases in costs through addenda—in some cases when the ink on the contract was barely dry.” This maneuver, of course, came at the expense of the usual victim: the taxpaying public. Thus, in view of this troubling issue, the goal of the project is first, to uncover the frequency with which this corrupt maneuver appears across Peru’s districts over time. The second aim seeks to reveal the political dynamics that make this unfortunate practice more or less likely. Understanding how politics relates to corruption is an important step toward curbing the problem in Peru and beyond.

Grants were also awarded to the following faculty projects:

**CDEP Faculty Affiliate:** Jonas Hjort, Columbia Business School

**Coauthors:** Anders Jensen (Harvard Kennedy School) and Golvine de Rochambeau, (Columbia University)

**Title of Project:** The Anatomy of Tariff Evasion in Liberia

**CDEP Faculty Affiliate:** Anja Tolonen, Barnard College

**Coauthors:** Eeshani Kandpal (The World Bank) and Carolin Sjoholm (University of Gothenburg)

**Title of Project:** Asymmetric Information in the Household: Fathers, Children, and Peer-Pressure
Women in Finance: Toward Equality

By Matt Terry MIA ’17

On March 9, 2017, SIPA’s inaugural workshop on “Women in Finance: Toward Equality” convened scholars, students, and professional practitioners for a day of wide-ranging discussion about the intersection of women and finance.

Organized by Yasmine Ergas, director of the Gender and Public Policy specialization, Ailsa Röell, professor of international and public affairs, and Patricia Mosser, director of the Initiative on Central Banking and Financial Policy, the workshop was supported by SIPA’s Center on Global Economic Governance and the CFA Institute.

Ergas described the new workshop as perhaps the first major initiative to bring together scholars and practitioners to discuss the factors that affect women’s participation in the financial-services industry, both as professionals and as customers. She viewed it as a possible model for future forums that would regularly bring together participants from finance, government, and academia.

Over the course of the day, participants examined the world of finance through the lens of gender equality. Drawing on substantial research, participants discussed the role women play as financial professionals, including obstacles they face in furthering their career and leadership goals and possible avenues for change. They also explored the role of women as customers of finance, with discussion focusing on topics such as access to credit and financial literacy.

A paper by Laurie Goodman, for example, compared women’s and men’s access to mortgages and their repayment performances. It turned out that, while women have a harder time obtaining mortgages, they may actually be better mortgage risks. Other researchers discussed the factors that affect women’s comparative lack of confidence in their own financial competence. A panel of high-level participants in the financial sector provided their perspectives on the dynamics that affect female participation, from life-cycle factors related to care responsibilities to the internal organization of firms.

Dean Merit E. Janow introduced the keynote speaker, Mary J. Miller, former undersecretary of the U.S. Treasury. Miller analyzed the state of gender diversity and its relation to the performance of financial firms, in a context marked by the limited number of women in positions of responsibility and by women’s limited access to financial capital. She nonetheless discerned some potentially positive trends.

The workshop concluded with a discussion led by Karen L. Miller of Women’s World Banking on the ways in which banking institutions can learn from experiences aimed at promoting women’s inclusion as clients of financial services. It was noted that inclusion can lead to innovation.

One important purpose of the workshop, Ergas said, was to discuss the current state of research in the field. More and more academic attention is being paid to issues surrounding women, equality, and finance, she added, and it is important to understand the nature of these issues, look at the specific factors, and figure out where to go from here.

The event also featured multiple panel discussions, with scholars from SIPA, Columbia, and other universities who were joined by researchers and practitioners from organizations including TIAA and Oliver Wyman, to discuss the future trajectory of research in the field.

Panelists spoke about how developments in microfinance and women’s banking have generated innovations for finance in general, how gender diversity can contribute to business success, how the gender bias and pay gaps manifest themselves in finance firms, and how women fare in financial literacy.

“Gender is an important dimension of all sectors,” Ergas noted. “Taking into consideration gender dynamics leads to better policy, and that is fundamental. But it is important to remember that gender equality is a goal in itself.”

Mary J. Miller, former undersecretary of the U.S. Treasury
Federal Reserve Vice Chairman Discusses Central Bank Communication

By Matt Terry MIA ’17

Stanley Fischer, vice chairman of the Federal Reserve System

But avoiding surprises isn’t always easy, Fischer said. To illustrate why, he recounted the story of the “taper tantrum” of 2013, and why markets reacted so strongly to a move that was considered unsurprising to the average observer.

Fischer explained that the Fed may have relied too heavily on surveys of market participants who were already close Fed-watchers. This narrow survey data was not representative of wider expectations.

Citing an argument by economist Jeremy Stein, Fischer emphasized that the “market” is diverse and can often hold “widely divergent but perhaps strongly held beliefs at the individual level,” and that the reaction of these participants fueled the taper tantrum.

The Fed has learned from this, said Fischer, and has improved its information-gathering methods and survey questions to more accurately measure both the dispersion of beliefs and how firmly held those beliefs are. He also emphasized that clear communication by the Fed is essential to manage the market’s expectations and avoid surprises.

However, quoting Stein again, Fischer stressed, “There are very real limits to what even the most careful and deliberate communication strategy can do to temper market volatility. This is just the nature of the beast when dealing with speculative markets, and to suggest otherwise—to suggest that, say, ‘good communication’ alone can engineer a completely smooth exit from a period of extraordinary policy accommodation—is to create an unrealistic expectation.”

Assessing the Fed’s renewed efforts to improve its information-gathering and communication strategies, Fischer commented: “My tentative conclusion from market responses to [reducing the size of our balance sheet] is that we appear less likely to face major market disturbances now than we did in the case of the taper tantrum.”

In closing, Fischer noted that the Fed—in its pursuit of unsurprising policies—can also risk becoming too predictable. If the Fed is too path-oriented and does not incorporate enough uncertainty about the economy into its projections, then its policies will not respond adequately to unexpected market shocks.
Experts Consider Key Trade Issues at Conference Panel

By Ginger Whitesell MPA ’17

There are so many arguments for protectionism,” said Jagdish Bhagwati at a Columbia University conference examining the world trade system. “The TPP [Trans-Pacific Partnership] and TTIP [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership] are at risk. If we can’t revive the multilateral trade organizations, what would be the agenda we could embrace?”

Bhagwati, the renowned economist and University Professor at Columbia, was moderating the keynote panel at the September 30, 2016, conference “Trade Issues Today.”

Bhagwati turned first to Ernesto Zedillo, former president of Mexico who now leads the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization. The trading system has been performing relatively well overall, Zedillo said. Its failures occur, he explained, “because the countries calling the shots have not been willing to make it more advanced.”

For Zedillo, the biggest priority for global trade lies in protecting and strengthening the World Trade Organization through direct foreign investment.

Bhagwati and Zedillo were just two of several distinguished participants in the event cosponsored by SIPA, the Jerome...
A. Chazen Institute for Global Business at Columbia Business School, and SIPA’s Center on Global Economic Governance.

Other panelists included Swedish Consul General Leif Pagrotsky, a former industry and trade minister; Arvind Panagariya, a member of India prime minister Narendra Modi’s cabinet who is on leave from SIPA; and economist Alan Krueger of Princeton University, former chairman of President Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers.

In discussing Sweden’s history of successful trade, Pagrotsky explained how his country kept itself open, “through allowing less excess for the upper class and more for the lower 30 percent. The Sweden example shows that countries can handle globalization,” he said. “Trade is not a zero-sum game.”

Pagrotsky underscored three strategies that benefited Sweden: abolishing tariffs and prompting democracy and eight-hour workdays.

For his part, Panagariya offered a perspective on how open trade spurs growth. “Historically, any rapidly developing country does so with outward-oriented policies,” he said.

Panagariya said India should follow the example of South Korea, where open trading policies and tariff reductions led to rapid growth. While he said that India is “15 years behind China,” he noted that the country had opened significantly to foreign investment.

Noting persistent gaps in education and wages within the United States, Krueger expressed support for moderate increases in the minimum wage; he ventured that doing so would lead to “more jobs, more spending, and less poverty.”

He also emphasized the importance of generating safety nets for citizens through open trade policies and systems like the Affordable Care Act. Such policies are particularly timely, he said, as nontraditional work opportunities with few protections supersede more secure jobs.

He identified a gap in understanding among some Americans: “It’s hard for the public to understand that safety measures and transfers are not a handout.”

An audience member asked about climate change and whether environmental protections should be a part of trade policy. “The short answer is no,” Zedillo said. “But the largest emitters of carbon should have mandatory participation in offsetting carbon.” Panagariya agreed, suggesting that the single instrument of trade agreements “cannot be used to solve too many objectives.”

Another question asked about U.S. trade agreements in the context of the major presidential candidates’ proposed policies.

Bhagwati discussed the dangers if the United States were to step back from its trade commitments. “China is the Gulliver in the world economy. If you shut it off, you lose the gains from trade,” he said.

Ernesto Zedillo recalled President Nixon’s action to significantly increase inspections on the U.S.-Mexico border in September 1969: “It was so costly to the United States that it was lifted in 10 days.” “In countries where people are afraid of change, they are also afraid of trade,” Pagrotsky observed. “Nationalism does this too.”

“Leadership is important,” said Panagariya. “A forward-looking approach must be taken, and public opinion will follow.”

“Leadership is important. A forward-looking approach must be taken, and public opinion will follow.”
Inaction in Syria and the resurgence of nationalism in the West have led many to question the relevance of the United Nations in today’s global landscape. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon—who gave SIPA’s Gabriel Silver Memorial Lecture on October 26, 2016—argued that, despite its limitations and need for restructuring, the UN still has a vital role to play in addressing global issues such as climate change, economic upheaval, and humanitarian crises.

Having served as Secretary-General for ten years, Ban identified the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the COP21 Paris agreement as major steps forward in addressing these issues. “The SDGs are the answer and guide to addressing rising pressures and challenges facing the UN,” he said. “We also have momentum for climate action; no one thought that we would be able to deliver on a climate agreement so fast.”

Ban said the recent agreement among 200 nations in the Montreal Protocol to phase out the use of hydrofluorocarbons—potent greenhouse gases—represents a
great commitment by the international community to take collective action in addressing global warming.

He also cited the success of the International Criminal Court in promoting the legality of international human rights law and argued that strengthening the court is the best way to build an effective international criminal justice system.

“The ICC has become a fundamental and strong legal institution. It has established groundbreaking convictions. Now world leaders have to think twice before committing human rights violations,” he noted.

Ban also expressed dismay over the decision of some African countries, especially South Africa, to withdraw from the court.

“South Africa has been at the forefront of the global fight against impunity. Withdrawing could send the wrong message on its commitment to justice,” Ban said. “I hope they will reconsider their decision.

“Deterring future atrocities, delivering justice for victims, and defending the rules of war across the globe are far too important to risk a retreat from the age of accountability that we have worked so hard to build and solidify,” he added.

Ban said the UN has made great strides during his tenure but also acknowledged that it is handicapped by an ineffective decision-making process.

“There’s confusion between consensus and unanimity; we can’t expect everyone to have the same opinion,” he said. “While there may be some cases in which full support is needed, most decisions are made by the majority. However, the UN has been sticking to this model of unanimity. I’ve been making the case to member states to change that. It undermines progress on major threats and gets in the way of UN reform.”

Similarly, Ban pointed to the pursuit of self-interest by member states as another reason for the UN’s inability to act decisively on issues such as Syria and refugee migration.

“There is clear division among UN member states. Some people say you can’t expect complete unity, but when member states adhere to the charter, they have to be united,” he said. “I thought if we could reduce this division, we could deliver a stronger force to parties in conflict. But we weren’t able to reduce the division,” he added.

“Change depends on broad alliance,” Ban continued. “Individual leadership is just as important, but we have seen a shocking lack of empathy towards people from their leaders. The problem starts from the top, not from the people.”

Despite the UN’s limitations, the secretary-general maintained that the UN has bettered the lives of those suffering from conflict and poverty. He recounted the help that the organization provided him as a child affected by war.

“My hometown was destroyed, but the UN brought everything that we needed,” he said. “It was a beacon of hope to me and most Korean people. Without the UN, I wouldn’t be standing here. That’s why I am trying to give a sense of hope to refugee people.”

Ban said young people are a potential catalyst for change within the organization.

“I’m humbled by what the UN has achieved, but there is still much to be done,” he said. “I’m asking young leaders to be a part of process and to carry on the torch.

“I hope you will do this with global passion and global compassion,” he added.

“You need both, because if you don’t have compassion for others, then your leadership will not be balanced.”
Emmanuel Macron Advocates “Reforging Transatlantic Bonds”

By Serina Bellamy MIA ’17

The relationship between the United States and Europe has been a source of great stability in the years since World War II but now appears to be fraying, noted Emmanuel Macron, who served as France’s minister for the economy, industry, and digital affairs from 2014 to 2016. “During the past decade, the historical relationship between the U.S. and the European Union seems weaker,” Macron said in remarks at SIPA on December 5, 2016. “From a geopolitical point of view, the U.S. has stopped being a security umbrella, and in terms of trade the U.S. and the EU are now more active with Asia than each other. For the very first time, our relationship is at risk,“ he said.

Macron, founder of the French political movement En Marche! and then a candidate in the 2017 presidential election, recalled the moment he realized that the bond between continents was in jeopardy. [Macron was elected president of France on May 7, 2017.] “Obama’s declaration that he will become the first transpacific president shocked me because it represented a shift from the transatlantic relationship to a transpacific one.”

He also identified globalization, climate change, and advancement of technology as the three causes for what he called the “marginalization of the Western world.”

Even as globalization increased inequality in the West, suggested Macron, technology has rendered many middle class jobs obsolete, leading to an embittered working class.

“Our market economy is putting democracy at risk because it is threatening the middle class,” he said. “It’s a part of the explanation for Brexit and Trump and the rise of demagogues and extremists in Europe.”

Macron said climate change poses a similar economic and political challenge. “We have to find new ways to produce and innovate and organize our diplomacy,” he noted.

If the transatlantic bond is to be rebuilt, Macron added, both parties must remember their shared history and values. “We have common values forged from centuries of revolution that are a part of our common DNA. Our political relationship is based on these values, so our top priority should be to rebuild on our common values,” he said.

In conclusion, Macron suggested that the actions of the Trump administration would be a key factor in the future direction of the transatlantic relationship. “The new administration will have to choose,” he said. “Do they want to be a part of this successful history or do they want to enter into a new, unpredictable, unknown relationship where values are not the most important things and economic and personal friendships are more important?”

Sheri Berman, a professor of political science at Barnard College, introduced Macron and moderated the event.
Shlomo Ben-Ami Speaks on “Politics of Conflict in the Middle East”

By Kasumi Takahashi MPA ’17

The historian and former Israeli politician Shlomo Ben-Ami gave this year’s George McGovern Lecture, “The Politics of Conflict in the Middle East,” at SIPA on November 1, 2016. Ben-Ami is SIPA’s current McGovern Professor of International and Public Affairs, a one-year visiting position for scholars who show a deep commitment to international peace and cooperation.

The lecture was preceded by remarks from Dean Merit E. Janow and Provost John H. Coatsworth, who introduced Ben-Ami as a “scholar, educator, diplomat, and champion of cooperation and peace.”

Ben-Ami opened his talk by asking, if the Middle East will make peace with itself anytime soon. He then discussed the role of diplomacy in peacemaking. “History suggests that diplomacy produces results only when backed by power,” he said. “Diplomatic solutions only work when parties get trapped in deadlocks.”

Ben-Ami called the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “a clash of rights and memory,” in which both parties long for the same landscapes and “compete for the ethos of exile.” This makes the situation irreconcilable, he added.

He said we are now in an “era of rising mass emotions, fear, and humiliation of communities and civilizations,” adding that globalization has also propelled group adherence to identities.

This sense of external threat to group identity has been presented by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an excuse for certain actions, said Ben-Ami, but—citing “the morally corrosive effects of the occupation of the Palestinian people”—he suggested that the real threat to Israel is internal.

Looking at conflict across the region, Ben-Ami also noted that autocracies have an existential problem with peace processes that would lead to domestic political change.

In the case of ISIS and other extremist groups, Ben-Ami said, the only “true antidote” is the existence of strong and functional states. “There is nothing more dangerous in international relations than a powerful nation that is insecure,” he noted.

Asked for a recommendation for making peace between Israel and Palestine, Ben-Ami said that there needs to be a distinction between trust and respect in the peace process. “In Israel and Palestine there is a lack of seeing the other side as equal to you with equal needs,” he explained. “Building trust between the occupied and the occupier is impossible; what is important is respect.”

Kasumi Takashi MPA ’17 concentrated in Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy.
Q&A with Dirk Salomons

By Coralie Martin MIA ’17

Professor Dirk Salomons, a special lecturer in international and public affairs, has been a SIPA faculty member since 2002. From 2009 to 2015 Salomons served as director of the School’s Humanitarian Affairs focus area (within the Human Rights concentration) and International Organization specialization. Though he retired on December 31, 2015, Salomons returned in fall 2016 to teach the foundational course on international organization and one of his signature courses on humanitarian policy. Salomons describes his long career as a “mix of design and opportunity.” This is a condensed and edited version of his conversation with SIPA News.

You’ve said that you entered the field of development with naïveté and innocence. What did you mean by that?

When I joined the UN in my late 20s, it all seemed very simple. The world had gone through a period of decolonization, and many countries had emerged [from that process] with enormous hopes. It seemed a technical problem to build capacities that would allow them to flourish. But we found out very quickly that technical assistance would run into important blockages: difficulties finding partners to work with, difficulties getting used to governance systems that had no tradition of democracy. In that context, “bringing in development” seemed very naive.

My real insights came later when I was asked to be the executive director of peace operations for the United Nations in Mozambique, in 1992. Before that, I had done a lot of management work, trouble-shooting, and internal work with the UN. But during and after Mozambique, I saw that we really had to move from thinking top-down to bottom-up in development. We had to start seeing the communities as building blocks for development, instead of governments.
How did you apply this insight to your next assignments?

In my consulting roles and years in the UN, I focused on developing models to move resources to communities and allow them to develop merit-based leadership. It was done mainly by allowing UN agencies to work more closely with NGOs, with a higher level of autonomy from government donors. I have worked on initiatives such as pooled funds, where governments no longer individually manage their own programs. Instead, they give authority to the UN to use their money when there is a particular need. This way, the UN can channel funds to NGOs, to communities.

You have worked extensively on supporting peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict. Could you share an example of successful postconflict recovery?

A successful example of postconflict recovery is hard to come by. But I can find a few examples where things would have been much worse if the international community had not made a major effort. [In the nineties,] the UN developed a model in Namibia, which had been a South African colony since World War I, based on a mandate that was no longer valid. Martti Ahtisaari, [a UN mediator and Nobel Peace Prize laureate] who later became the president of Finland, made an enormous effort to think through what the UN could do when the country would gain its independence. I was part of the team that gathered information and analyzed the situation. Namibia became a model of setting up elections, creating a response program for short-term needs, developing political parties with their own platforms, and their own conflict resolution models.

With Cambodia, the UN scaled up and managed to maintain some stability in a very difficult context. In Mozambique, I went in with an annual budget of [U.S.] $300 million in 1992. The country was just coming out of a civil war that killed a million people. It gave us a chance to plan elections, mobilize humanitarian aid, analyze where the seeds of development were, and how to get markets functioning again.

Those were the beginnings. But what was developed was later carried over to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Balkans.

You wrote recently that “Humanitarians are contrarians. They go where reason tells them not to.” What did you mean by that?

The first challenge for humanitarians is that they have to accept that there are no good solutions; otherwise, they would not be there. They are working in highly traumatized situations, with severe lack of resources, in environments that are threatening, among people who do not normally trust them. So why go in there at all?

It may be out of some kind of revulsion at the hypocrisy of modern-day politics, which demonstrates one thing: people can know all about human suffering, and they don’t care. I believe that during World War II, if the statistics of the number of Jews gassed had been available, it would not have made any difference in the policies of the Allied forces. We cried “never again” routinely after every major crisis. Every time, we had all the information we needed—like in Rwanda or Congo, where 3.5 million people died.

I really look at my generation, and the generation of the people after me, as the ones who have betrayed humanity. And I look at the humanitarians—the ones who went there, set up tents, dug latrines, looked for water, and looked people in the eyes and said, “We are here to witness and to help.” I look at them as the contrarians, those who tried to live out, act out some kind of moral values, knowing well that it was not going to make a global difference.

Have you ever felt a sense of discouragement?

Not discouragement, but, rather, anger. I get angry all the time. But if you stop getting angry, then you get depressed. So it is better to retain your fury and acknowledge that the uphill battle is still being continued by new generations, who are a minority, as we were a minority in our days.

What, then, would be your message to the next generations?

We should continue the battle, even without expecting that the world is actually going to change. As is said in the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, “If you save one life, you save humanity.” All you can do as an individual is to wonder what challenges are right in front you, and what you can do about them. You might make a marginal difference, but it is still better than just sitting there and doing nothing.

My years as a professor at SIPA have given me a lot of hope in the next generation, which I consider as the “last chance generation.” The people who are in their late 20s today will have to find solutions to the issues of climate change, resource scarcity, and poor governance. Otherwise, my sense is that we are going to face major consequences.

Coralie Martin MIA ’17 concentrated in Economic and Political Development.
On October 5, 2016, SIPA’s Migration Working Group hosted a symposium to discuss the lessons learned from two recent landmark summits for refugees and migrants and to consider visions for the road ahead.

The first panel, moderated by Michael Doyle, University Professor and director of Columbia’s Global Policy Initiative, featured distinguished speakers including Masud Bin Momen, ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations; Noel Calhoun, Office of the Special Adviser for the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants; Andrew Painter, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR; and Christopher Richter of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

“Since 9/11, only three refugees resettled in the United States have been arrested on terrorism charges, but 28 percent of Americans believe that 100 were charged,” Doyle said in his opening remarks.

The year 2016 has proven to be the deadliest year to date for migrants in the Mediterranean, and panelists cited several root causes for the tragedy. Bangladesh’s Bin Momen spoke of the failures of states to manage safe and orderly migration, which invites exploitation from traffickers. These issues extend beyond the Mediterranean theater, he said, to refugee and displaced persons around the world.

Panelists called for concrete pledges from states in resettlement and humanitarian aid and for the international community to account for the development needs of countries hosting large numbers of refugees. Citing the necessity for a responsibility-sharing mechanism that states can support, Calhoun noted that 86 percent of the world’s refugees are hosted by developing countries, and that only eight countries are hosting half of the world’s refugees.

There was consensus across the symposium that all states must share responsibility, and that scaling up responsibility-sharing should be a thoughtful process, finding an accommodation between an ideal plan and a realistic one to get governments on board.

Bin Momen, Calhoun, and Richter agreed that there was regrettably little movement on issues of migrant rights,
stalled by concerns from states over national sovereignty.

Painter and Richter said there were positive gains from the summits even if there was little progress toward responsibility-sharing. For example, they noted that the summit produced a declaration that strongly affirmed the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and upheld the principle of “non-refoulement”—the practice of not forcing refugees to return to a country in which they were likely to be persecuted. The unanimous reaffirmation of these protections should not be taken for granted, they said.

“Migration has become one of the most divisive and politically sensitive issues of our time,” said Richter, citing the need to bring the voices of refugees and migrants into the process.

Other ideas emerging from the panel were alternative pathways beyond resettlement, such as opening up labor mobility schemes for refugees.

A second panel addressed those alternatives. Led by Professor Daniel Naujoks, an adjunct at SIPA and the New School and an adviser to several multilateral organizations such as the UNDP and World Bank, the panel included Mais Balkhi of Syria Relief and Development; Sarah Krause of Church World Service; Sayre Nyce of Talent Beyond Boundaries; Charlotte Alfred, managing editor of Refugees Deeply; and Bill Frelick, director of Human Rights Watch’s refugee program.

Naujoks opened the panel by emphasizing the importance of how we frame forced migration issues. Words matter, he said, and the refugee narrative has been increasingly securitized.

With the rise of populism in the United States and Europe, negative narratives of “cultures under attack” and “threats on sovereignty” are exploited. As a result, Krause noted, the states of Kansas, New Jersey, and Texas have all withdrawn from the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. Refugees have been painted as security risks, burdens, drains on resources, and competition for resources such as jobs.

To address this issue, Nyce outlined her organization’s vision for matching the diverse skill sets of asylum seekers to the needs of destination communities through a “talent catalogue.” This allows for a new, economically positive, and more welcoming narrative to emerge. Arriving on work visas gives refugees dignity and helps them integrate, she said. It reminds them they have valuable skills and talents needed by their host community.

Considering a media perspective, Alfred spoke to the importance of not shying away from complexity, not defining refugees only by the worst thing that happened to them, but to tell the stories that traditional outlets may overlook.

Frelick also looked deeper at migrants who may not fit the terms of the 1951 Convention, yet are still under threat and in need of protection and dignity. He noted the lack of an analysis of key drivers of contemporary migration at the UN summit such as climate change and hoped to see an expansion of rights for those not included in the 1951 definition.

Balkhi, a refugee herself, spoke to root causes of displacement and how these must be better understood in order to change the narrative.

“There is always an assumption that this is a temporary crisis,” said Balkhi. If we do not address root causes, “it will swallow us whole.”

Lucia Savchick MIA ’17 concentrated in Economic and Political Development.
In Wake of Election, Experts Consider U.S.-Mexico Relationship

By Kasumi Takahashi MPA ’17

On November 16, 2016, one week after the U.S. presidential election, the Columbia University Alumni Club of Mexico and SIPA convened a panel of experts to discuss the potential effects of the incoming Trump administration on U.S.-Mexico relations.

Joining 85 alumni and guests who gathered at Mexico City’s Club Poso 51 were viewers who watched the discussion in real time from international locations via Zoom, a new video platform. The viewers watching remotely also had the opportunity to participate in the Q&A with the panelists in both New York and Mexico City.

Panelists included moderator Aurora Adame MIA ’99, a political and economic analyst and former director of the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (COMEXI); Beatriz Leycegui MIA ’90 of the consulting firm SAI Law & Economics; Luis Rubio, president-elect of COMEXI and director of CIDAC, a think tank that focuses on development; and SIPA Vice Dean Eric Verhoogen, codirector of the Center for Development Economics and Policy, who joined via the video link from New York.
"We say here at SIPA that we are the most global policy school," Verhoogen noted in his opening remarks. "Events like this make me feel that it’s true, not hyperbole."

Alejandro Osorio SIPA ’01, president of the Mexico alumni club, agreed: "We often have important speakers at our events here, but to have this broadcast live, and to have SIPA alumni and Dean Verhoogen join us is very exciting. At such an important moment in U.S.-Mexican relations, it is great to see SIPA take the initiative in dialogue on these complex issues [and] know that the debate held at our club will be available to SIPA alumni worldwide."

In Mexico City, panelists shared their views on possible economic trajectories for the United States and Mexico in the years ahead. The importance of the economic ties between the two countries was a major theme of the evening.

Rubio said economic reality is changing dramatically, with the technology revolution and globalization as two key drivers. While he emphasized that governments and institutions are slow to change, he observed that people are also often unable or unwilling to adjust. This difficulty was seen in Mexico over the past years, he said.

"NAFTA became the solution to the lack of trust and confidence in Mexican economic reform efforts," said Rubio. "The loss of NAFTA would mean a dire scenario for the region economically, but also because of security and geopolitical challenges."

Mexico and the United States "trade together and produce together," Leycegui observed, noting that Mexico is the second-most important trading partner of the United States after Canada.

The panelists commented on the feasibility of some of Trump’s economic campaign promises. "There are conservative businesspeople who support Trump, but there is a limit to how long they will stand in his corner," Verhoogen said.

The panelists did agree, however, that it was highly likely Trump would try to renegotiate the terms of NAFTA and considered what Mexico could do in such a situation.

Leycegui said that Mexico could potentially propose new agreements with the United States to promote anticorruption efforts, e-commerce, trade facilitation, and border improvements. She said investment promotion, technology transfer, and increases in accountability would be key to any additions or revisions.

For Mexico, Leycegui said, cooperation and mobilization of the government and the private sector are necessary to be prepared for a potential renegotiation of NAFTA.

"The loss of NAFTA would mean a dire scenario for the region economically, but also because of security and geopolitical challenges."
Growing concern over Russia’s role in the 2016 U.S. election has led many to question how the U.S. should address and guard against cyber espionage conducted by foreign states.

“We have to look at [hacking] as war,” said Toomas Ilves, former president of Estonia, in March 2, 2017, remarks. “Just because the threat is digital does not mean it is not aggression.”

Ilves went on to argue that the Internet has contributed to the global trend toward populism.

“The Internet is being instrumentalized by the Russians,” he said. “The tool that we thought would promote democracy is being used to manipulate the electorate.”

With three and a half billion Internet users, the Internet presents a threat that is no longer geographical.

Following Ilves’s speech, Dean Merit E. Janow moderated a panel discussion with Columbia faculty experts Timothy Frye, Kimberly Marten, and Jason Healey.

Healey said that the cybersecurity threat posed by Russia is not new. “The U.S. has failed to translate knowledge into policy,” he noted. “We know the Russian mode of operations—i.e., propaganda—but we have become worse at dealing with it.” He later suggested that the Obama administration’s belief that a Democrat would win the election affected how it dealt with Russia.

“Obama thought that we had another four years to deal with Russia. He thought we could outwait the Russians, but it turns out that Putin has outwaited them,” he said.

Frye offered more insight into Russia’s motivation for the use of covert cyber operations.

“The domestic political goal within Russia is to demonstrate that elections in the West are fraudulent,” he said. “The government wants to show its public that open societies are flawed, too, so there is no point in becoming a democratic state.”

He added that it is important for the United States to stop this idea from taking root in Russia and other autocratic states.

Marten proposed the creation of a cyber accord to limit the public release of personal information gained through hacking.

“Limiting hacking is not reasonable,” she said. “Governments will engage in espionage if they have the tools to do so. However, Putin and Trump should sit down and come to an agreement to not do so.”

Ilves expressed some reservations about the idea of such an accord.

“It is always worthwhile to get an agreement, but the question is how effective it will be and how long will it take,” he said.

“Unfortunately,” said Marten, “we have a lot more to lose than Russia does if the release of civilian information continues to happen.”
Saltzman Institute Hosts Experts on the Military and Diplomacy

Strategic Deterrence: The State of the U.S. Air Force


Lt. Gen. Weinstein provided an assessment of the current landscape of nuclear armament and discussed how the service can best approach modern strategic deterrence. He addressed a number of critical issues, including U.S.-Russia military relations, the increasing prominence and importance of cyberoperations, and emerging threats from new technologies. While the discussion centered on major themes in military policy, General Weinstein also offered a candid perspective on his experience in the military, from his first assignment at Vandenberg Air Force Base to his time as head of Global Strike Command. He emphasized the tremendous resiliency and passion of those serving in Air Force nuclear operations and underscored that the Air Force was unique among the Armed Forces in its role and ability to continue to ensure strategic deterrence for the last few decades.

Radicalism in the Middle East: Perspectives from Egypt

On April 6, 2017, Ambassador Ahmed Farouk, Consul General of Egypt in New York, discussed the long-standing struggle in Egypt between competing ideologies: reformers who champion the notion of a modern nation state and radicals who call for the establishment of a theological state. Farouk considered the contemporary manifestation of this struggle and the way forward.

Ambassador Farouk is a career diplomat with 32 years of diplomatic experience in service with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously, he was ambassador to Slovenia and deputy head-of-mission to Japan. He was also deputy assistant foreign minister for inspection and director of the international legal affairs and international treaties department at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry.

Stuart Gottlieb, adjunct professor of international and public affairs at SIPA, moderated the event, with introductions by Dr. Mona El-Kouedi, visiting scholar at the Saltzman Institute for War and Peace Studies and assistant professor at Cairo University.
For decades, the prospect of peak oil—that supply was running out—loomed as a doomsday scenario over the global economy, until the shale revolution ushered in a new era of plenty. The idea of peak oil is still alive and well, however, but these days it means something completely different: the idea that demand for oil may peak far sooner than expected, driven by policy after the Paris climate agreement, technological innovations like electric vehicles, and structural economic shifts as seen in China.

Although declining global oil consumption could be welcome news for the environment, it also has great potential to upend existing geopolitical relationships, foster instability in key regions, and present new geopolitical risks that are critical for policymakers to consider.

Even if peak oil demand does not mean the world is getting off oil any time soon, expectations that oil demand would gradually decline over time would have seismic impacts on the market. Prices are set on the margin, so slight changes in demand can cause big shifts in price. Seeing the looming end of the Oil Age, petrostates would ramp up output to sell what they could while they could, further depressing prices. Any possibility that OPEC might reassert itself would be put to rest. The collapse of expectations of future oil prices could lead companies to sell off inventories as well. At the same time, new investment would dry up, even though new supply is needed just to offset current decline rates of around 5 million barrels a day, which could cause increased price volatility.

With the end of the Oil Age in sight, declining oil demand would severely undermine the economies of major oil producing countries. Today’s oil price collapse is a harbinger of the instability that might result. Venezuela is teetering on the brink of economic collapse, with shortages of basic goods and medicine, hyperinflation, and a vicious cycle of declining production. In Nigeria, the economy has careened into recession. The cash-strapped government of Muhammadu Buhari has cut back payments to militants, worsening the security situation in the Niger Delta, and struggled to pay the military, undermining the effort to battle Boko Haram in the north. Libya, Iraq, Algeria, and others are facing similarly increased instability and risks.

A future of declining oil demand would significantly exacerbate risks to states that have relied on oil revenue to maintain a social contract based on generous benefits and patronage. Domestic political instability in states with deep ethnic and sectarian divisions can cause geopolitical ripple effects far and wide. Those risks would be especially pronounced in a region like the Middle East already struggling with security issues like...
the Syrian civil war, the battle against the Islamic State, the political turmoil in Yemen, and the fracturing of Iraq. Closer to home, the end of the oil era would pose hardships for neighbors and allies pursuing reform agendas like Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia.

A long-term outlook of declining oil demand would give greater urgency to efforts to diversify petrostate economies. Several Persian Gulf countries have such plans in the works already, such as Saudi Arabia’s ambitious Vision 2030 and National Transformation Plan to reduce dependence on oil revenue, grow the private sector, and attract foreign investment. Even though Saudi Arabia is a very low cost producer at less than $10 per barrel, it requires a price many times higher to balance its budget.

An outlook for declining oil use would also change long-standing geopolitical relationships. What would underpin the already-strained U.S.-Saudi relationship if one element of the historic “oil-for-security” bargain might soon be obsolete? Reduced oil needs may also free up foreign policy options, like sanctions against oil-rich countries. Consider how the U.S. and Europe limited sanctions against Russia to restricting future growth in oil supply without curtailing its current supply. And less need for oil might also reduce geopolitical tensions in frontier areas for oil exploration, like the Arctic and South China Seas.

Since the Oil Age began, oil has been intimately tied to global geopolitics, power, and foreign policies. And for nearly every one of those years, global oil use has gone up, and governments have built up experience to deal with the ensuing risks.

The geopolitical implications of falling oil demand will also depend on the substitutes. If vehicles were electrified, for example, demand would rise for other fuels that may carry their own risks, as Europe knows all too well from its reliance on Russian gas. Reliance on electricity in the transport sector would create new cybersecurity risks and exacerbate the effects of a blackout, especially since electricity cannot be stored as oil, gasoline, and diesel can. A shift to electrification may also increase dependence on the small group of nations in the Andes that currently dominate the global supply of lithium. Other options to decrease oil use, whether biofuels, hydrogen, or something else, also carry new and different geopolitical risks and benefits.

Since the Oil Age began, oil has been intimately tied to global geopolitics, power, and foreign policies. And for nearly every one of those years, global oil use has gone up, and governments have built up experience to deal with the ensuing risks. If we are indeed on the verge of a new energy era, foreign policymakers will need to pay heed to the new geopolitical risks and realignment that will result.

Jason Bordoff is professor of professional practice in international and public affairs and founding director of the Center on Global Energy Policy at SIPA and former energy adviser to President Obama.

This piece was first published in The Wall Street Journal’s Experts Blog in 2016. Reprinted by permission of the author.
In recent decades, it has been hard to miss the alarming front-page stories detailing the plight of the Atlantic cod off the coast of New England, one of the most important and iconic fisheries in North America.

Since the 1980s, in particular, the once seemingly inexhaustible stocks of Gadus morhua have declined dramatically. In 2008, a formal stock assessment forecasted that stocks would rebound, but by 2012, they were once again on the verge of collapse, and in 2014 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration instituted an unprecedented six-month closure of the entire Gulf of Maine cod fishery to allow stocks to recover.

Overfishing has been one culprit, but a new study coauthored by researchers at UC Santa Barbara and Columbia University and published in the journal *PLOS ONE* finds that the climatological phenomenon known as the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) also contributes—and in a predictable way that may enable fishery managers to protect this cod fishery from future collapse.

The NAO is a periodic climatic phenomenon that, like El Niño, causes changes in water temperatures, though the mechanism is different and the NAO affects the North Atlantic rather than the Pacific. And like El Niño, the NAO may also be affected in terms of both strength and frequency by climate change. The researchers Kyle Meng, assistant professor of environmental economics at the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, University of California, Santa Barbara, and a 2013 graduate of the PhD program in Sustainable Development; Kimberly Oremus MPA-ESP ’11 and a 2017 graduate of SIPA’s PhD Program in Sustainable Development; and Steve Gaines, dean of the Bren School found that since 1980, NAO conditions have accounted for up to 17 percent of the decline in New England cod stocks.

“The Atlantic cod fishery has been the poster child of fishery science and the challenges in the field,” says Oremus.

The study arose out of an opportunity presented by a climatological anomaly. “In the 1980s, the North Atlantic was stuck in a positive phase of NAO,” explains Meng, an economist. “We show not only that positive NAO conditions diminish a few consecutive cohorts of cod larvae, but also that this effect follows a cohort as it matures.”

“This study does something new in that we followed the effect of climate variability on cod throughout their life cycle,” Oremus adds. “We also find evidence suggesting how, through fishing, human actions might be exacerbating the effect.”

As Gaines, a fish ecologist, explains, “Fishery managers face big challenges in predicting how many new fish will come into the fishery each year. They use models to predict the average, but actual values vary wildly. Climate variation is one of the big challenges, especially if the recruitment forecasts turn out to be repeatedly too high, as we saw following NAO events. Then the mistakes compound, and yields can be compromized for a long time.”

Because the cod stock is well defined over a large but specific area and has been studied extensively for more than a century, the researchers had access to abundant data that enabled them to establish that warmer NAO conditions reduced cod larval recruitment by 17 percent, resulting in fewer young fish. The authors write that while the NAO-induced population decrease persists until the fish are six years old, it affects cod catch for up to two decades.

That empirical link means that NAO can be used to predict the future size of the stock, which would allow for improved management. “It would provide us with an early warning, before the declines appear,” Meng says. “So we now know to expect that 17-percent drop in adult fish during a positive phase of NAO, giving management enough time to adjust practices.”

“We’re not just saying that the climate is part of the problem; we’re showing how it can be used to forecast and respond in an appropriate and cheap way,” says Gaines. “Many papers show that cod are in bad shape and identify climate as part of the problem,” he continues. “But what they don’t do is give us a management solution.”

Fishery closures, like the one in 2014, are controversial and hugely disruptive to fishing communities and local economies.
“If we know the state of the NAO, managers can respond by reducing catch appropriately in the short term to avoid long-term closures,” Gaines notes.

Gaines praised his coauthors’ expertise in econometrics, saying, “That is what really solved this. People haven’t applied these kinds of approaches to this problem previously. Climate change may have costs for fisheries, but you don’t have to make bad choices that accentuate it for decades.”

Thanks to James Badham of the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, who prepared this article.
Alumni at UN Examine 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

By Kasumi Takahashi MPA ’17

Three distinguished alumni who hold high-level positions at the United Nations visited SIPA on January 31, 2017, for a panel discussion on opportunities and challenges presented by the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

José Antonio Ocampo, a professor of professional practice at SIPA who chairs the United Nations Committee for Development Policy, moderated the conversation. Taking part were Cristina Gallach MIA ’86, UN under-secretary-general for communications and public information; Tegegnework Gettu MIA ’83, under-secretary-general and associate administrator for the United Nations Development Program; and Navid Hanif MIA ’91, director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination in the UN’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The participants offered insights based on their extensive experience inside the United Nations system.

Gallach, a communications expert, was optimistic about the positive impact the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can make for communities around the world. She said that the 2030 Agenda provides the “best opportunity we can ever have on our hands,” as it encompasses a long-term, comprehensive vision that is unanimously agreed upon and accompanied by applicable modern technology.

The “SDGs in Action” app, for example, can help people across the globe track progress toward the goals and hold their governments accountable. This type of public engagement, along with effective communication of the 2030 Agenda to civil society, is crucial. “We need to be sure that this is owned by all the citizens of the world,” Gallach said.

Gettu spoke of the challenges we face on local, national, and global levels as we work for progress, including slow economic growth, natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies, and global inequality. He advised that we seek balance between advancing the way of life for people and sustaining the life of our planet.

In agreement with Gallach, Gettu emphasized the importance of civil society and national governments in implementing SDGs. The UN system has a significant role in helping countries to build partnerships, mobilize resources, manage risk, share information, and monitor progress together. He noted that the United Nations Development Programme is already supporting 100 countries in mainstreaming their national development plans with the 2030 Agenda.

The interconnected nature of the SDGs was a theme throughout the conversation. Policy integration is necessary across sectors, argued Hanif. Policies to address issues in one area, such as water, need to be developed with consideration of how they will affect other sectors like energy and agriculture.

Hanif also spoke of institutional integration. The United Nations and national governments must work together, as should development agencies, humanitarian assistance organizations, governments, and their citizens.

“This time, accountability measurement is part of the document,” Hanif said, returning to the theme touched on by Gallach and Gettu—that every person needs to be involved in this effort in order for it to succeed.

“Without inclusion and localization of the agenda,” he said, “we won’t see the future we want.”

From left: Professor José Antonio Ocampo and Cristina Gallach MIA ’86
Can Coal Make a Comeback?

The Center on Global Energy Policy released a report by Trevor Houser, Jason Bordoff, and Peter Marsters, which offers an empirical diagnosis of the causes of the U.S. coal industry collapse over the last six years. The rapid decline has been marked by bankruptcy filings from three of the four largest U.S. miners and plummeting employment in the sector. The authors assess the global coal market outlook and examine the prospects for a recovery in coal production by modeling the impact of President Trump’s executive order to review or rescind Obama-era environmental regulations. The report concludes with recommendations that the federal government can pursue to safeguard the pension and health security of current and retired miners and their dependents and support economic diversification.

Key findings from the report include:

• U.S. electricity demand contracted in the wake of the Great Recession and has yet to recover because of energy efficiency improvements in buildings, lighting, and appliances. A surge in U.S. natural gas production due to the shale revolution has driven down prices and made coal increasingly uncompetitive in U.S. electricity markets. Coal has also faced growing competition from renewable energy, with solar costs falling 85 percent between 2008 and 2016 and wind costs falling 36 percent.

• Increased competition from cheap natural gas is responsible for 49 percent of the decline in domestic U.S. coal consumption. Lower-than-expected demand is responsible for 26 percent, and the growth in renewable energy is responsible for 18 percent. Environmental regulations have played a role in the switch from coal to natural gas and renewables in U.S. electricity supply by accelerating coal plant retirements but have had a much smaller impact than recent price reductions for natural gas and renewable energy.

• Changes in the global coal market have played a far greater role in the collapse of the U.S. coal industry than is generally understood. A slowdown in Chinese coal demand, especially for metallurgical coal, depressed coal prices around the world and reduced the market for U.S. exports. More than half of the decline in U.S. coal company revenue between 2011 and 2015 was due to international factors.

• Implementing all the actions in President Trump’s executive order to roll back Obama-era environmental regulations could stem the recent decline in U.S. coal consumption, but only if natural gas prices increase going forward. If natural gas prices remain at or near current levels or renewable costs fall more quickly than expected, U.S. coal consumption will continue to decline despite Trump’s aggressive rollback of Obama-era regulations.

• While global coal markets have recovered slightly over the past few months because of supply restrictions in China and flooding in Australia, we expect this rally to be short lived. Slower economic growth and structural adjustment in China will continue to put downward pressure on global coal prices and limit the market opportunities for U.S. exports. Indian coal demand will likely grow in the years ahead, but not enough to make up for the slowdown in China. The same is true for other emerging economies, many of which are negatively impacted by decelerating Chinese commodities demand themselves.

• Under the best-case scenario for U.S. coal producers, our modeling projects a modest recovery to 2013 levels of just under 1 billion tons a year. Under the worst-case scenario, output falls to 600 million tons a year. A plausible range of U.S. coal mining employment in these scenarios ranges from 70,000 to 90,000 in 2020, and 64,000 to 94,000, in 2025 and 2030—lower numbers than any the U.S. experienced before 2015.
Isaac Wilkins: An Environmental Justice and Sustainability Calling

By Laura Piraino

Isaac Wilkins, a student in the MPA in Environmental Science and Policy program, has a calling—advocating for environmental justice issues that impact communities of color. And he is expanding his mission to help solve diverse issues across various sectors within the environmental movement.

Wilkins’s involvement in community activities began at an early age. He co-founded the Plainfield Youth Organization for Unity in 2010 when he was in high school in Plainfield, New Jersey. Living in an area with a high crime rate, Wilkins and his friends had too many experiences related to loss and death. Empowered to make a change, they started an annual Youth Summit designed to spread unity. The event attracted more
than 1,000 attendees by its third year and was later adopted by the city.

“The best things come from passion, not building a resume,” said Wilkins, who won the New Jersey School Board Anti-Violence Award for his work in Plainfield.

A Bill Gates Millennium Scholar, Wilkins began his studies as a chemistry major at Howard University. While at Howard, he founded the Men of George Washington Carver Brother-Hood to help freshmen males matriculate into university life, teaching brotherhood and community service, while also promoting scholastic enrichment and education on African culture.

Serving as an organic chemistry research assistant at Howard and in the summer at UCLA, Wilkins was on a path to becoming a scientist. What really spearheaded his interest in environmental and policy issues, however, was his experience attending the UN’s Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) climate talks in Paris in 2015.

At COP21 as a student delegate for HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), Wilkins raised awareness of climate change issues, successfully mobilizing youth through social media for the international youth workshop—and gained the attention of the White House. Creating a blueprint for change, the workshop also gave Wilkins an opportunity to highlight environmental justice issues, including advocating for loss and damages related to climate disasters.

As a chemistry major, Wilkins was able to explain the science related to the health issues experienced by vulnerable communities. He learned that “combining the natural and political sciences created an impact. Small communities and common people had voices loud enough to get the attention from the climate negotiators.”

Inspired to become more involved in policy issues, Wilkins volunteered for the Obama presidential campaign and also served as a congressional intern for U.S. Senator Cory Booker on Capitol Hill. It was a “very fast-paced, realistic D.C. experience,” he said. “You come in one day working on one issue, and the next day it’s something else, but you are expected to know what you were talking about, offer advice, and make sound recommendations.”

Since becoming an MPA ESP student, Wilkins has worked with community organizations, schools, and scientists to develop a testing kit and mapping project centered on empowering New York City residents about their environment. Specifically, working with local residents, including high school students, they will map and create a database that will determine areas with high lead soil concentrations and push for policies to solve these environmental issues.

In the fall semester of 2016, Wilkins received a travel grant from The Earth Institute to attend the UN Conference of the Parties 22 climate talks in Morocco, to learn more about how minorities are affected by climate change. He gained an understanding while attending the talks that climate issues are a natural extension of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

With the new Trump administration, Wilkins will continue to focus on environmental justice and sustainability. Undeterred, he said: “Americans need to pay attention to issues, stay informed, and use the power of the people within our democracy to solve issues. We rely on government too much to make these decisions for us.”

Wilkins noted the role of the private sector in fueling sustainability: “There is already momentum . . . as many companies have invested in renewable energy, and [that] will continue,” he noted. There will also be a focus on the more global issues and pressure from other countries to continue reducing carbon emissions.

After graduation, Wilkins plans to use science to effect policy and drive change in innovative ways. He would like to work for a company or organization, preferably in California, to creatively integrate and/or expand social, sustainable, and environmental initiatives in its core.

“Science is unknown, you can explore it and can be creative,” he said. “Policy is unknown, but it is more about understanding people and procedures and bringing it together.”

Laura Piraino is assistant director of SIPA’s MPA in Environmental Science and Policy program.

“You come in one day working on one issue, and the next day it’s something else, but you are expected to know what you were talking about, offer advice, and make sound recommendations.”
On the Future of Energy and Environmental Policy under Trump

By Matt Terry MIA ’17

When it comes to energy and the environment, what kind of policies is the Trump administration likely to pursue? How might policymakers be constrained by their predecessors’ actions?

A recent forum at the Center on Global Energy Policy at SIPA asked three experts who served as senior officials under President George W. Bush to consider these questions and more. Taking part were Jim Connaughton, former chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality; Jeff Kupfer, former deputy secretary of energy; and Bob McNally, former senior director for international energy on the National Security Council. The event, held on January 23, 2017, was sponsored by the Center on Global Energy Policy.

Moderator Jason Bordoff, director of the Center, began by asking what each panelist was watching most closely, and whether they saw any widespread misunderstandings about future energy policy.

Kupfer emphasized the difficulty of large, unilateral changes: “It’s always easier for something not to happen in the government than for something to happen.” The formulation of energy policy is surprisingly convoluted, Kupfer said, and much of what determines it will not change just because of a few political appointees.

Kupfer also commented on the new administration’s removal of the climate section of the White House website, cautioning observers not to read too much into changes in such policy statements. It takes a lot to actually affect underlying trends in climate policy, he said, and some of the White House’s omissions may also simply reflect disagreement about policy goals within the new administration.

At the end of the evening, the panelists did provide a list of what they considered to be the most-at-risk regulations. McNally emphasized the effective death of the Clean Power Plan, a bipartisan easing of the biofuels mandate, and the depoliticization of infrastructure permits (e.g., streamlining pipelines). Connaughton noted a likely acceleration of the EPA decision process to help capital planning and a reevaluation of fuel economy standards.

Kupfer concluded by predicting further support for clean energy R&D as well as continued tax credits for solar and wind. All told, the consensus seemed to be that the new administration will bring several wild cards to the table, but that overall U.S. energy and environmental policy will remain relatively stable.

“It’s always easier for something not to happen in the government than for something to happen.”
On April 13 and 14, 2017, the Center on Global Energy Policy hosted its annual Global Energy Summit. More than 600 people gathered at the Low Library Rotunda on the Columbia University campus to hear about the most important issues facing the energy sector today.

Keynote conversations and panels featured energy leaders from around the globe, including Jacob “Jack” Lew (former treasury secretary and SIPA faculty member) discussing economics and trade; Lisa Jackson (former EPA administrator and head of energy and environment at Apple) examining technology’s role in the clean energy transition; Columbia faculty members Dr. Alissa Park and Dr. Peter Kelemen discussing their research on carbon capture, utilization, and storage; Dr. Daniel Yergin and Jeff Holden (chief product officer at Uber) talking about the future of transportation; and Amin Nasser (Saudi Aramco CEO) discussing oil markets and changes in the Saudi Arabian energy sector and economy.
Taking to the Streets: Collecting Data to Clean Up New York City

By Kasumi Takahashi MPA ’17

Ashley MacQuarrie MPA-DP ’17 has been thinking about trash in New York City quite a lot over the past year. With Debashree Poddar MPA ’17, ten other SIPA students, and several data scientists, MacQuarrie has been investigating the trash situation throughout the city in a project for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection—"Stop Trash Where It Starts." Their goal: to learn more about what causes trash in the streets, why some areas of the city have more trash than others, and why so much trash gets in the water.

Professor Ester Fuchs, director of the Urban and Social Policy concentration at SIPA, is leading the research, along with Professor Patricia Culligan of Columbia’s Data Science Institute. Previously a special adviser to Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Fuchs has played a pivotal role in strategic planning initiatives in New York City. She was excited to get her students involved in creating policy, quite literally from the ground up.

Last summer, MacQuarrie and Poddar walked the five boroughs to collect data on the type, source, and quantity of litter lining the streets and sidewalks. They found that going to neighborhoods and seeing the trash for themselves was a critical input for comprehensive data analysis.

“You can’t just rely on data,” Poddar explained. “It has to be a combination of data and anecdotal evidence and your observations, hypothesizing in real time.” For example, she asked herself, “Why is it that this street has a lot of personal hygiene products, while another street has a lot of food products?”

MacQuarrie said that looking at the data after they collected it “was absolutely rooted in walking those streets, in what we’d seen.” The experience enabled them to recognize when data accurately represented what they saw on the streets and when it wasn’t telling the full story.

Fuchs emphasized how important this was. “That’s often . . . how you can make big mistakes in policy, by not understanding the data, by assuming a lot about what the data means.”

The team’s policy proposal for New York is to target interventions and education at a micro level, specific to different sectors and neighborhoods. Poddar noted the influence of public-private partnerships; Business Improvement Districts, for example, had the least amount of trash.

One of the key findings from the data analysis was that plastic items comprise the majority of trash—41 percent of all trash surveyed. Fourteen percent of the plastic trash was composed of plastic bags. Previous studies estimated that city residents use 9.37 billion carryout bags per year, and plastic bags make up an average of more than 1,700 tons of residential waste per week, which costs the city $12.5 million annually to transport to landfills in other states.
In 2016, the city was on its way to passing the Plastic Bag Law, which would have implemented a five-cent fee for every plastic bag shoppers wanted for carrying their purchases. The policy was designed to incentivize the use of reusable bags; the fee could be avoided simply by shoppers bringing their own bags.

The law is not yet in effect. In February 2017, the State Assembly passed a bill to postpone its implementation. Officials opposed to the law argued that it would create too much of a cost burden on lower-income residents.

According to Fuchs, however, the plastic bag fee policy would not only improve the conditions of the local environment, it would actually save taxpayers money. Nor would it be disproportionately hard on those with fewer means: the city has been providing free reusable bags to New Yorkers in lower-income neighborhoods, and food stamp recipients would be exempt from the fee. The poorest neighborhoods in the city would also be the ones to benefit most from a plastic bag fee policy, as they have fewer resources available to keep their streets clean.

The debate over whether plastic bag fees should be used is a lively one and extends far beyond New York City. The answer, of course, depends on the users’ perspective: are we concerned about the environment? Grocery store owners? Residents’ litter-filled neighborhoods? Politicians? Washington, D.C., has had a five-cent charge on both plastic and paper bags since 2010, and the results so far are quite positive. A study done by the District Department of the Environment found that since the policy was implemented, there has been a 60 percent decrease in household bag use.

Debashree, who has lived and worked in Delhi and Bombay, believes that the lessons learned from the study and the skills she used will be applicable there and in cities around the world.

Fuchs noted that the team’s research would directly impact public policy, by being used by a New York City agency. An app was even being created based on their survey to encourage data collection by citizen clients.

“With data . . . we can really improve the conditions and lives of ordinary people through the work that we do,” Fuchs concluded.
Speak Up for What’s Right
By Matt Terry MIA ’17

SIPA’s 70th Anniversary festivities kicked off on March 30, 2017, as a selection of boldface names from New York City’s political world joined students, faculty, and alumni at Miller Theatre for this year’s David N. Dinkins Leadership and Public Policy Forum. Headlining the event was keynote speaker John Lewis, the civil rights icon and U.S. congressman whose home district is centered in Atlanta, Georgia.

The annual forum, which marked its 20th year, is named for the SIPA professor who served as New York City’s first African American mayor. The event continues to provide a platform for analysis and dialogue that addresses many of the challenging issues facing urban policies, programs, and initiatives.

Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger opened the evening, saluting Lewis’s experiences in the civil rights movement and his lifelong support of equal rights. Without such a “lived sense of where we have been,” Bollinger said, “we cannot really understand where we are and where we must go.”

Dean Merit E. Janow of SIPA introduced the forum’s namesake, David Dinkins, who spoke briefly about the history of the forum and past speakers such as Charles Rangel, Al Gore, and Hillary Clinton.

In welcoming Lewis, Dinkins noted that he had “stood on [Lewis’s] broad, strong shoulders for the last 50 years, along with Americans of all races, ages, and creeds. “And so have you,” he added, addressing the audience.

Relating some of the congressman’s life experiences, Dinkins described how Lewis—the son of Alabama sharecroppers—was active in protesting for freedom, as he participated in sit-ins, bus rides, and marches. Most significant was the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery known as “Bloody Sunday,” in which Lewis suffered a fractured skull at the hands of police troopers. Lewis would go on to be arrested 40 times between then and today.

Taking the stage, Lewis spoke about how he was told as a child that segregation at the time was just “the way it is” and not to get in the way. However, with encouragement from a schoolteacher, Lewis read everything he could, he said—about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr., and others.

He was inspired, he noted, to “find a way to get in the way, to get in good trouble, necessary trouble. And I've been getting in trouble ever since.”

Using the cadences of a preacher and alternating between quiet and booming tones, Lewis said his philosophy is that “when you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation—a mission and a mandate—to speak up, to speak out, and get in the way.”

Lewis recounted his memory of the march in Selma, where he thought he was going to die. But he was taken in by sisters at a nearby Catholic hospital, who took care of him. Recently, he reconnected with three of them, who recognized him, and they hugged.

“We must never, ever forget the bridges that brought us across,” he said.

“Sometimes you’re called to turn things upside down, to set them right side up,” Lewis added, as he concluded his remarks. “Teach the students, teach the young, because the young will teach us. And they will lead us to a better place [where] no one is left out or left behind.”

The forum also featured a panel discussion on “Reframing Economic and Political Citizenship,” moderated by Professor Ester Fuchs, director of SIPA’s concentration in Urban and Social Policy. Participants included Michael A. Nutter, David N. Dinkins Professor of Professional Practice in Urban and Public Affairs; David Goodman, president of the Andrew Goodman Foundation; Verna Eggleston, head of the Women’s Economic Development, Bloomberg Philanthropies; and Michael Waldman, president of the Brennan Center for Justice, NYU School of Law. The panelists discussed the transformations U.S. citizens are experiencing in their civil, economic, and political identities under the Trump administration, and what we need to be doing to preserve the hard-fought victories of the past and expand our vision of rights for the future.
The mass migration in Brazil of people from rural to urban areas has overburdened the nation’s public services and aging infrastructure. As citizens have expressed growing dissatisfaction with these and other negative effects of rapid urbanization, recent protests have drawn international attention.

Fernando Haddad, who served as mayor of São Paulo from January 2013 to December 2016, discussed his response to such challenges at SIPA’s Global Mayors Forum on April 10, 2017. With almost 12 million residents, São Paulo is the largest city in Brazil, and in all of South America.

The former mayor suggested that politics are a major barrier to improving Brazil’s infrastructure.

“Brazil has to restructure itself to be sustainable,” Haddad said.

“Mayors who say that they don’t have the budget to fix roadways are running away from politics,” he explained. “They understand that the economic costs in the short term are small, and the real cost is political. Unfortunately, Brazil doesn’t have the environment suitable for political debate.”

Haddad also argued that rising living costs are causing low-income people to leave the city.

“It’s much more expensive to bring labor in to serve the city, [but] poor people are being forced out,” he said. “It’s bad business economically to put poor people out of the city.”

Haddad noted that the nation’s judiciary played an important role—by allowing him to implement policies that addressed these issues.

“It was challenging to pass policies because federal law dictated certain [inefficient] practices, so we were surprised when the judiciary helped us,” he explained.

“There was no decision where the judiciary did not agree with us. Without it I would not have been able to do anything.”

Bolstered by Brazil’s legal system, Haddad said, he was able to pass policies aimed at improving the economic situation of vulnerable populations such as the LGBT community and drug users.

An audience member asked Haddad how to combat growing antigovernment sentiment.

“If you want a good country, you have to recognize who plays well,” he said. “You can’t say that the entire team plays bad. People need to understand that.”

Editor’s note: Haddad spoke in Portuguese; the quotes in this story come from the simultaneous translation.
The Honorable Michael A. Nutter served as the 98th mayor of Philadelphia from January 2008 to January 2016. During his time in office, he was widely recognized as a reformer, leading changes in policing, economic development, taxation, sustainability policy, and other areas. Nutter joined SIPA’s faculty in March 2016 and soon thereafter was named as the inaugural David N. Dinkins Professor of Professional Practice in Urban and Public Affairs.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

You recently marked your one-year anniversary at the School. How’s life at SIPA?

It’s been a fantastic experience. I love it here. Dean [Merit E.] Janow, Professor [Ester] Fuchs, Professor [David] Dinkins, and many other faculty members and the administration made it very easy for me to adjust and transition from mayor to faculty member. Folks have been tremendously welcoming. The faculty are also highly accomplished. I’ve been on [several] panels, and it’s all I can do to hold my own. The institutional focus is where it should be, on the students. Students at SIPA are smart and focused on work. They all have laptops and will fact check you in a second, so you’d best know what you are talking about.

Tell us more about the course you’re currently teaching, Leadership and Urban Transformation.

I start out walking students through the big questions: Do I want to be a public servant? Will I run for office? Then we go through how to put together a campaign team, making speeches, what happens if you win, and how to make the transition from campaigning to governing.

We also discuss how to keep moving forward with policy if you don’t have the resources, how to deal with tragedy, and how to make change and sustain it. I also bring in guest speakers to give life to what we talk about.

How have you become involved in diversity initiatives at SIPA?

I’m chairing the Diversity Task Force and have been working with SIPA Students of Color (SSOC) to advocate for more need-based financial aid and greater diversity in the faculty and student body.

The response has been tremendously positive: Faculty are committed to increasing diversity by race and gender, and everyone agrees that we need more students and faculty of color. In order to do this, we need to conduct extensive outreach—to engage students and faculty of color and figure out how to get more students of color interested in applying to SIPA.

The current student body and alumni should be a part of recruitment efforts in order to encourage students of color to apply. Also, we have to ensure that students can pay for this incredible education. Many students who have been admitted and are qualified can’t afford to come. I plan to be actively engaged as the administration addresses this serious issue of financial aid and comprehensive plans for recruitment of students of color.

You’re also the faculty adviser for another student group.

SIPA Policy Dialogue is a new group whose members want to bridge the gap demonstrated by the last election. If everyone’s in their own bubble, Policy Dialogue wants to bring people together who wouldn’t normally talk.

I’m proud of the young people who have created this model. They took a field trip to Syracuse and met with Mayor Stephanie Miner and had facilitated discussions with local high school students.

Do you have a special motivation in pursuing these activities?

I do not take the view that my singular responsibility is to come to class, see my students, and then leave. Both SIPA Students of Color and SIPA Policy Dialogue have been doing well, and if they need something, it’s my responsibility to fight for them.

I want to be involved, and young people help to keep me young. Much has been given to me, and I have much to give back. This is a different way of being publicly engaged to me. It’s also just a lot of fun.
SIPA Courses Examine Issues at the Forefront of Urban and Social Policy

By Kasumi Takahashi MPA ’17

SIPA’s Urban and Social Policy (USP) concentration addresses the changing parameters of policymaking at the local, state, and national levels in the United States and in societies around the world. The curriculum includes courses on increasingly critical and challenging issues: the impact of technology and big data, the deeply rooted ramifications of race, and the innovations that contribute more broadly to social welfare.

Professor Francesco Brindisi’s work with the Social Science Research Council on the “DATA2GO.NYC” project turned into a fascinating, hands-on course for SIPA students, Using Big Data to Develop Public Policy. DATA2GO.NYC is a free public tool with which people can access a wealth of data on New York City, including local census data and economic and social indicators related to education, environment, health, housing, and more.

Using Big Data to Develop Public Policy is a unique class that gives students the opportunity to work with large data sets, unlike many other classes at SIPA, which focus more on the later steps of quantitative analysis.

One popular research project with students in the class was a study on the relationship between the number of Airbnb listings in a neighborhood and the number of rental market listings, which was analyzed using data extracted from the website insideairbnb.com. Students also looked at the influence of NYC’s “Vision Zero” policies on speed limits within city borders and the effect that the Second Avenue subway line could have on property prices on the Upper East Side.

Professor Brindisi is excited about the opportunity for big data to help policymakers improve the lives of people they serve. The massive number of observations in big datasets such as DATA2GO.NYC offers freedom for analysis, as outliers will have little effect; but he notes that big data is not everything. Refining and preparing the data for a particular study takes time, and the data cannot always speak for itself—the qualitative and scholarly analysis emphasized in other USP courses is necessary as well.

Race Policy and American Politics, a course taught by Professor Christina Greer, came into being after a SIPA student lobbied the administration to offer a course on race policy, an important subject that was missing at the time from SIPA’s curriculum.

Although the course originally was focused on city politics, the elections in fall 2016 often pushed the focus toward federal policy and politics and how they directly affected what state and city governments were able to do—for example, threatened losses of funding to sanctuary cities or the cost incurred to New York City for increased security around Trump Tower.

Each week, students discussed a new issue, such as prison reform or racial justice, often with expert practitioners who brought in examples of their work on those issues within New York City. The combination of practitioners’ perspectives, a scholarly approach from the readings, and a diverse set of students from across Columbia—from Teachers College, the School of Social Work, and the Journalism School, as well as SIPA—led to rich class discussions. Many students have developed thesis ideas or connected with job opportunities through the course, and all have left with a deeper understanding of how race affects politics and policy outcomes in the United States.

In Comparative Social Welfare Policy, a core course taught by Professor Yumiko Shimabukuro, students looked beyond the United States to get a broad overview of how social policy varies across the globe. In the course, students discussed several different welfare policy models and how they could be applied to different contexts according to cultural, political, and other aspects. Case studies, roundtable competition, and panel presentations helped students to better understand the effects of various policy solutions worldwide.

They looked at how democracy and labor organizing can push social welfare forward in states with well-established welfare systems and how lesser-established welfare states are trying many types of policies, such as noncontributory social insurance or “do-it-yourself” welfare policies. Students also examined innovative ideas, such as Japan’s long-term elderly care insurance, a policy that could be adapted and used successfully in many other countries with aging populations.
Q&A with Alexander Hertel-Fernandez

By Matt Terry MIA ’17

Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, an assistant professor of international and public affairs, studies the political economy of the United States with a focus on organized interests, government, and social policy. The Indiana native, who earned a PhD in government and social policy from Harvard University, joined SIPA in fall 2016. He recently spoke to SIPA News about his current work.

What is your academic focus? What kind of research are you engaged in?

I study how organized interests shape public policy—at the national and especially the state level. I also study the interaction between wealthy donors and democracy.

My current research encompasses a few areas. The first is employer recruitment into politics, which is where managers mobilize their workers to participate in politics to help company bottom lines. I also study business coalitions and interest groups involved in lobbying, at both the state and national level. I’m looking at how the political network directed by the two wealthy industrialist “Koch brothers”—Charles and David Koch—has developed, the way they’ve made decisions about what to focus on, and their effect on policy, elections, and the parties. And I’m comparing Koch efforts with a similar left-wing network that’s developed more recently—the Democracy Alliance—a donor consortium of left-leaning millionaires and billionaires.

Lastly, my research looks at the labor movement and how public sector labor unions have come under fire in their ability to bargain and participate in politics in recent years. I’m studying both how conservatives have changed the opportunities available to the labor movement and how unions have responded to those changes.

What are some of your findings?

There is a growing trend of employers recruiting their employees into political involvement and even pushing them to adopt specific political stances. I have just finished a book on this topic called Politics at Work, which uses new survey and interview data to answer questions about how common employer recruitment is across the American economy, how workers interpret such efforts, and what it means for American elections and public policy.

In my other research, I’ve studied coalitions of business groups and political activists that lobby across all 50 states at once. These interest groups impact legislation across the country by focusing their efforts at the state level rather than the federal level. Conservative organizations have had a head start with these efforts and have invested more in developing their infrastructure. The left has been less successful historically, but that may be changing very soon as liberals realize that they are losing ground across the states. It depends on whether they can learn from their own mistakes as well as learn from the right’s successes.

What have you been teaching here at SIPA?

I teach Politics of Policymaking: American Institutions in Comparative Perspective, which is a core course in the MPA program. This class looks at how policymaking is done in the United States and other advanced democracies. The goal of the class is to help students to see how the structure of the policymaking process in a country sets the incentives for, and preference of, political actors—and how those institutions ultimately affect practical policy outcomes. We also focus on developing students’ policy analysis and policy memo-writing skills.

I teach another course called U.S. State Politics and Policy: The Promises and Pitfalls of American Federalism, which examines policymaking at the state level in the United States.

These courses both include units on the labor movement, but going forward I will be teaching a new seminar about labor policy and the workplace in the United States.

You’re affiliated with the Urban and Social Policy concentration. Why is SIPA a good place for that?

The USP concentration is a great place to have an academic home. Ester Fuchs, the director, is very supportive, and having former practitioners like Mayor [Michael] Nutter on the faculty is a terrific resource.

There is a practical perspective that SIPA students bring with them to class dis-
discussions. A lot of them are thinking about state and local politics, or about how they relate to federal policy, given their future career interests. That helps to ground our conversations every week.

The concentration also provides great opportunities for collaborating with other disciplines. I love having the chance to be surrounded by political scientists, economists, and lawyers alike. It’s fantastic to get perspectives on my research from such a diverse group of scholars and practitioners.

You’re finishing up your first year at SIPA—tell us about the experience of teaching and being here generally. How do you like New York City?

As teacher, it’s great to have master’s students who have a clear sense of purpose and mission, as well as past work experience. It really focuses our discussions on the practical elements of public policy.

The Trump dynamic also makes for an interesting teaching experience. I lectured the day after the 2016 election in the Politics of Policymaking class, and we held an open discussion about what we can expect from this election based on the history of politics, institutions, and populist uprisings. Even though we were tired—many of us had stayed up till the wee hours of the morning, myself included—it was a great opportunity to apply material we had learned in real time.

In general, my experience here has been great. I love meeting and working with the students, the faculty, and SIPA’s terrific array of political practitioners. Attending a lunch with former Treasury secretary Jacob “Jack” Lew, for instance, was a great opportunity. I also am trying to enjoy everything New York has to offer—running in Riverside Park, Broadway shows and plays, and the museums. I feel fortunate to be living in a such a great city!

Interview has been edited and condensed.

On May 8, the Bella Abzug Leadership Institute honored Professor Ester Fuchs with its 2017 Bella Award. Established in 2005, the Institute runs mentorship and training programs to inspire girls and young women to become leaders in creating positive social and economic change.

Speaking at the ceremony, Fuchs thanked guests for supporting the Institute’s work and thanked her friends and family for supporting her in her own career. She also recalled the Institute’s namesake:

“Those of us who had the good fortune to meet Bella or just follow her extraordinary career can still hear her speak with wit and wisdom,” Fuchs said, “and we can conjure the images of Bella, not just shattering glass ceilings, but climbing up the steep walls with her hat firmly on her head and literally walking through the glass. Not just stopping there and declaring victory, but calling after us to join her. And we did, because Bella’s work created a safer and easier path for the rest of us.”

Fuchs ended her remarks with what she called a “prescient” passage from Abzug’s 1984 book, Gender Gap: Bella Abzug’s Guide to Political Power for American Women:

“Today in our vaunted democracy, we have government that does not represent us and actually works against policies favored by a majority of Americans. We women must get used to thinking of ourselves as a mighty multitude with important allies among men. . . . We can learn to become political leaders and activists. . . . It’s up to us.”

“It is still up to us,” Fuchs concluded.

The previous month, City & State magazine named Fuchs among 25 of New York’s most remarkable women in business, health care, education, advocacy, and government.
Tech and Policy Initiative Pursues Cutting-Edge Activities

By Ginger Whitesell MPA ’17

What does policymaking look like in the 21st century? Now in its third year, SIPA’s Tech and Policy Initiative tries to answer that question by pursuing a variety of cutting-edge activities in the areas of cybersecurity, Internet governance, digital economy, and civic tech.

Professors and scholars such as Dean Merit E. Janow, Jason Healey, Laura DeNardis, Hollie Russon Gilman, and Eli Noam are helping SIPA lead a lively—and ongoing—conversation around these issues. So is SIPA Cyber Fellow Hugo Zylberberg, who joined SIPA in fall 2016 to coordinate the Initiative.

The Tech and Policy Initiative was launched in 2014 with critical support from Carnegie Corporation of New York. Since that time, SIPA has acted as a convener, using its position at Columbia and in New York City to engage young scholars and tenure-track professors and working to bridge the gap between policymakers, business leaders, and academics. In 2016, SIPA published its first Tech and Policy Working Paper Series, aggregating the work commissioned over the initiative’s first two years. Carnegie Corporation of New York has renewed its support for the initiative for two more years, beginning in January 2017, enabling SIPA to further consolidate and institutionalize its efforts.

“We created the Tech and Policy initiative because each of the core fields we engage at SIPA is being transformed by digital technology,” said Janow. “Our students are already seizing the policy, research, and entrepreneurial opportunities created by digital technology and data, and we believe SIPA’s research on complex geopolitical and economic challenges must include consideration of digital policy developments around the world.”

Interest in tech and policy topics has continued to increase at SIPA and throughout Columbia’s campus. In the last two years, SIPA has added classes that deal with cyber issues and seen the formation of student clubs such as the Digital and Cyber Group at SIPA. The School has also intensified its collaboration with the law, business, engineering, and journalism schools in this area.

“Ten to fifteen years ago, no one was talking about cyber conflict. Now nearly every newspaper—not just in its technology sections but also on the front page—is talking about cybersecurity on a weekly basis,” said Healey, a senior research scholar at SIPA. “The field is unique because it is so fast moving. . . We want SIPA to be a big player and positioned as an expert in this field.”

The Carnegie grant also allows SIPA to bring on research fellows such as Gilman, Healey, and Zylberberg.

“Tech and policy isn’t just about international security. It can be just as meaningful to students studying economic governance, trade, development, or human rights,” said Zylberberg. “We want to help make those connections.”
How Does Tech Enrich Urban Policy?

By Jackie Burns Koven MPA '17 and Matt Terry MIA ’17

How does tech enrich urban policy? SIPA’s Entrepreneurship and Policy Initiative joined Alphabet’s Sidewalk Labs to answer that very question, convening experts in policy, technology, and entrepreneurship on February 23, 2017, to discuss the ways in which technology and public policy are intertwined.

Dean Merit E. Janow introduced the participants: Rohit Aggarwala, Sidewalk Labs’ chief policy officer; Noelle Francois, CEO of Heat Seek NYC; Miguel Gamiño Jr., New York City’s chief technology officer; Maria Gotsch, president and CEO of the Partnership Fund for New York City; and moderator Andrew Rasiej, founder and CEO of Civic Hall.

The panel considered the tensions between private technology and the public good while addressing the role of universities, industry, and nonprofits in developing a more robust technology ecosystem within cities.

Rasiej noted the complexity of this relationship, outlining several different types of public technologies: “civic tech” (used to provide public goods), “gov tech” (used for administrative tasks), and “city tech” (used to meet urban needs).

Gamiño said that government has a role in each of these areas—although not necessarily the same role—and that each brings unique privacy concerns. He noted that when tech appears on the scene suddenly, as it often does, government is often forced to address the concerns that result. This means that to avoid problems we need to find ways to involve government much earlier in the tech development process, he added.

Gotsch disagreed, saying that government should not be involved as a player in the development of public tech because it would be disruptive. Rather, she said, the government should play the role of referee.

Such a role is important in urban environments, where aggregate consequences can be much worse even when externalities remain the same, Aggarwala said. He also stressed the importance of public involvement in tech, reminding fellow panelists to not overlook the fact that private companies often fail to act in the public’s interest.

The discussion also addressed data collection and security, debating the difference between public and private records, as well as the cost-benefit tradeoffs we make as a society. Aggarwala noted the importance of trust in cultivating a healthy business environment, while Gotsch emphasized the relevance of consumer watchdogs.

Francois shared her experience with underprivileged clients of tech services, observing that many are not even in a position to understand data security issues. They are vulnerable, she added, and not by choice.

In the Q&A session that followed, the panelists addressed how tech and privacy policies are made within organizations. Gamiño stressed that cities need a scalable way to organize privacy policies, rather than have them decided ad hoc by each department. Francois said that if an organization is driven by the profit motive, it can expand more easily, but its product and policies will reflect those profit concerns. Gotsch suggested that benefit corporations, or B-corps, can be a good way to address this concern, as they aim to find a middle way between scalability and public benefit.

Collaboration and coordination were the catchwords of the evening, as the speakers emphasized the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to keep pace with emerging technology and ensure that its benefits are disseminated among citizens in an equitable and trustworthy way.

Jackie Burns Koven MPA ’17 concentrated in International Security Policy.
SIPA Receives Nasdaq Grant

SIPA is expanding its focus on entrepreneurship, innovation, digital technology, and public policy thanks to a multiyear grant from the Nasdaq Educational Foundation.

SIPA will use the grant support to engage scholars, entrepreneurs, and leaders from the public and private sectors to advance understanding of the conditions and means to promote innovation and entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship.

The series of initiatives funded by the grant will emphasize entrepreneurship and innovation stemming from both information and communications technology (ICT) and digital technology and their intersection with public policy globally. Programming began in fall 2016 and will last through spring 2019.

The grant will support a variety of programs and initiatives. Most significantly, SIPA will:

- Create a global ideas forum including a University-wide seminar on entrepreneurship.
- Foster thought leadership through global fellows in residence.
- Promote innovative approaches for educating the next generation of entrepreneurs.

SIPA Announces Challenge Grant Winners

The SIPA 2017 Challenge Grant was awarded to three teams this year:

- HelmetSmart, a technology company whose mission is to encourage motorcyclists in India to wear helmets to eliminate preventable traffic-related injuries and deaths. Not pictured: Michael Alvarino, Wayne Kunze, Sukumar Muramula

- FiveOne Labs, an online startup incubator that will empower a new generation of refugee and conflict-affected entrepreneurs to create sustainable livelihoods.

- I-Care, an online platform that utilizes technology and medical data to provide disabled senior citizens and their families with more and better care choices. Not pictured: Seungwook Kim, Yue Wang, Sihan Zhang
Why Is Cybersecurity Relevant for International Development?

By Hugo Zylberberg

On March 28, 2017, Ian Wallace, co-director of the Cybersecurity Initiative at New America; Olivier Alais, an affiliate at the Berkman-Klein Center at Harvard; and Ronaldo Lemos, visiting professor at Columbia SIPA, gathered to discuss how cybersecurity was relevant in the context of development and how to take this conversation forward.

Dean Merit E. Janow introduced the session by remarking that SIPA had been conducting work on both development and cybersecurity until recently in separate silos. The School engages with foundations such as New America to measure the economic consequences of cybersecurity, as well as with the World Bank on important research such as the Digital Dividends report, but linkage between these two issues has been limited. Through its Tech and Policy Initiative, coordinated by Hugo Zylberberg, who moderated the panel, SIPA is trying to create these linkages along with new areas of interdisciplinary research.

Significant expertise in governance has been missing in global capacity-building efforts on cyber issues, while cybersecurity has been largely kept out of international development projects for political reasons. However, Ian Wallace said that, “international development increasingly relies on information systems that are fundamentally insecure—hence development will increasingly rely on solid cybersecurity foundations.” On the other hand, cybersecurity issues could very well benefit from integrating some of the objectives of, for instance, the Sustainable Development Goals.

The panelists discussed three reasons why these conversations have happened in separate silos. First, the development community prioritizes other topics such as food or water security. Second, there is a need to build capacity for public-private cooperation in development projects, because the private sector plays a major role in providing connectivity in these areas. Third, historically, cybersecurity has been associated with the military sector, which might explain why such issues were kept at arm’s length of development projects.

Olivier Alais insisted that “the role of telecommunications operators is fundamental, since one of the first issues is Internet penetration.” For instance, relying on the data held by these operators or other projects such as Google Loon to understand better how the Internet is used might help in tailoring both access and security practices.

Ronaldo Lemos added that, if “the security-development nexus is still nonexistent in developing countries, the objectives of these two communities might align on topics related to the Internet of Things.” Furthermore, securing the Internet of Things would help build capacity for local governments to cooperate with the private sector.

The panelists then discussed various ways to jumpstart this conversation. “There is a cost issue,” argued Lemos. “Cybersecurity is still expensive, and it is not a priority, so we will have to rely on external funding and investments.”

Another issue that the panel considered is the narrative: “How do we make it easy for countries to justify their investment in cybersecurity?” asked Lemos. “We need new narratives for cybersecurity,” proposed Ian Wallace, that are “focused more on trust and reliability and less on cybersecurity.”

Finally, there was consensus that measuring outcomes and relying more on data would be a fundamental step forward. Wallace argued that “the development community is driven by data, while the cybersecurity community is driven by stories.” Indeed, “opening the telcos data would enable us to conduct research on access, use, and develop a better understanding of the specific cybersecurity issues that the developing world faces,” Alais added.

In order to make cybersecurity decisions more data-driven, Lemos claimed, “we need to start measuring outcomes both in the developing as well as in the developed world. What we need,” he added, “is a Kyoto protocol to start building an ecology of the Internet.”

All participants agreed that schools like SIPA, with a deep expertise on both development and cybersecurity issues, will play a crucial role going forward, both as a convening power as well as in building a talent pipeline.

Hugo Zylberberg is a cyber fellow at SPA.
A team of students from the MPA-DP program took part in an innovative, collaborative research project to survey the use of digital media in Cuba. The study, known informally as ICT4Cuba, sought to provide an overview of the use of information and communication technologies in contemporary Cuba. It examined issues of connectivity, mobile telephone penetration, and digital platforms and explored the implications of digital technology in three areas of Cuban society: arts and culture, public health, and sustainable agriculture.

The project was conducted under the auspices of a research seminar on digital media infrastructure in Cuba designed and led by Anne Nelson and Debi Spindelman MPA-DP ’13. Nelson, an adjunct associate professor, is a specialist in media development and has published widely on Caribbean issues, while Spindelman is a capacity development specialist and former MPA-DP program practice manager.

“The MDP program was the perfect home for this research, given its emphasis on practical projects that address underserved populations,” Nelson said.

The idea for the project originated following an initial research trip Nelson took to Cuba in 2013. She and Spindelman advanced the project in consultation with Mariela Machado Fantacchiotti MPA-DP ’16. Machado, a Venezuela native and telecommunications engineer, had begun to research Cuban telecommunications in the summer of 2015 after an injury thwarted her plans to conduct fieldwork in East Timor.

Six additional MPA-DP students were selected to join the project based on their field experience and own expertise. Four of them (Machado, Ana Carolina Diaz, Laura Lehman, and Emily Sylvia) graduated in May 2016, while three students (Chiara Bercu, Tricia Johnson, and Gary Verburg) returned to SIPA in the fall for their second year of study.
Beginning in January 2016, the students conducted two months of research and interviews in preparation for a March trip to Havana, where they carried out 10 days of field research in the Cuban capital and surrounding region. There the students surveyed more than 200 Cubans, from government officials to ordinary citizens, on their use of the Internet and mobile phones, the expense of subscriptions plans, how they accessed data, and more.

“We were able to offer a unique update to the official story of Cuba’s digital media, and report what is actually happening on the ground,” Nelson said.

The team members began by surveying various aspects of Cuba’s telecommunications infrastructure. They then explored the access to ICTs and the potential of digital media in the three designated areas (arts and culture, public health, and agriculture). Drawing on past work by previous students in other countries, they conducted interviews with leading figures in each field and prepared recommendations for innovations in ICT for Development, or ICT4D, that could support each sector.

For Nelson, the findings underscored that “we need to understand the baseline of telecommunications infrastructure and behaviors before we can discuss future approaches.”

The project builds on SIPA’s growing contributions to the field of ICT4D (Information and Communications Technologies for Development). The Cuba research reinforces previous findings that, while advanced apps and Internet solutions serve areas where modern ICT infrastructure is in place, regions that lack such infrastructure can benefit from basic SMS services to deliver critical information on topics such as public health issues, weather conditions, and transport.

The Cuba research results were highlighted in a pair of articles on the Foreign Affairs website—one written by Nelson and Spindelman and another by the students. Perhaps most impressively, the students have catalogued the extensive project findings and related materials, including links to the articles and photographs, using Columbia’s Wikischolars tool.

The project also benefited, Nelson said, from a partnership with Omar Z. Robles, a prominent dance photographer who accompanied the team to explore how Instagram could broaden global awareness of Cuba’s vibrant dance culture. Robles’s project photos have gone viral, appearing on Mashable, the Huffington Post, Univision, and other websites around the world.

Harold Cárdenas Lema, who is considered one of the leading independent bloggers in Cuba, was enthusiastic about the results of the research. “Many of my friends shared the articles published by the SIPA team, and the pictures of Omar Robles were seen by many people on the island,” he said. “I was really proud that I could give them some tips, because they were really professional and achieved a lot. Is not easy to catch the pulse of an island in few days, but these Columbia students did it!”

For Machado, who is now working on technology for development at the New York-based NGO Engineering for Change, the project was a special one because of her passion for and expertise in ICT4D—and her involvement early on.

“This project gave us the freedom to explore and find out what is really happening in terms of ICTs in Cuba,” she said. “To be published in Foreign Affairs before even graduating, and have the opportunity to add to the conversation about such a hot topic as Cuba, has opened so many doors for me.”

MPA-DP program director Glenn Denning said that the Cuba project’s practical outputs and widespread recognition are further validation of his program’s unique approach to problem-solving. “This is precisely what we prepare our students to understand and apply through their course work and field practice,” Denning noted. “We stress the importance of context, relevance, and impact of new technologies. We stress issues of scale—global, national, and local. And we increasingly emphasize the need for partnerships within and across the public and private sectors, and with communities.”

Marcus Tonti is editorial director in SIPA’s Office of Communications and External Relations.
The Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) is an alliance of seven leading public policy schools around the world—SIPA among them—that provides a platform for institutional partnerships, research collaboration, and student exchange.

This year’s GPPN Conference, hosted by the Sciences Po School of Public Affairs in Paris on February 17 and 18, 2017, convened 32 student teams from member schools—including six from SIPA—to present data-driven solutions to the UN’s current Sustainable Development Goals.

Six teams were ultimately selected to make presentations to a panel of judges comprising deans from member schools, including six from SIPA—to present data-driven solutions to the UN’s current Sustainable Development Goals.

Members of another SIPA team, Sun Community, proposed the creation of an online market platform to improve access to solar energy for low-income households in Chile. Team members Anders Engild MIA ’18 and Gabriel Guggisberg MPA ’18 agreed that the conference presented a valuable opportunity to hear about the unique challenges facing different countries.

“Most students presented solutions to problems that were specific to their country—issues we had never experienced in our country,” wrote the team members in response to a SIPA News inquiry. “It was valuable to see how much local knowledge counts in entrepreneurship.”

The project of another GPPN participant, Lidia Cano Pecharromán MIA ’17, sought to improve the current monitoring process of the SDGs. “It was great to get in touch with people from different backgrounds and see how students from other schools approach policy,” she said.
Global Digital Futures Forum

On May 5, 2017, SIPA held its third annual Global Digital Futures Forum, a signature event of the School’s Tech and Policy Initiative. Each year the Forum convenes leading policymakers, academics, emerging and established scholars, experts, and technologists from around the world to discuss the complex issues related to digital technology, globalization, and public policy.

This year’s Forum addressed the issue of whether the Internet will continue as an open global system or begin to “fragment” into separate entities, each with its own rules, governing bodies, and infrastructure. Over several framing conversations, keynote discussions, and expert panels, the Forum considered the future of the Internet as a network that is global in nature and ambition, as well as the challenges and limits to its future growth.

SIPA welcomed more than 200 attendees and featured over 30 speakers at this year’s Forum. Some of the panel discussions focused on what Internet fragmentation could mean for the digital economy, global governance, and global trade. Other sessions examined sources of and responses to cyber conflict and threats to democratic institutions—including potential hacking of elections—as well as risks to financial institutions and financial stability.

In a featured keynote conversation, Dean Merit E. Janow and Alphabet Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt examined the broad trends affecting globalization and fragmentation, as well as the societal consequences of artificial intelligence and further technological breakthroughs. Schmidt explained why he sees these technological advancements as net advantages, with economic benefits outweighing the downsides.

SIPA Cyber Fellow Hugo Zylberberg, who organized this year’s Forum, noted that the event provided a chance for an open and genuinely new dialogue about some contentious issues.

“The goal of the Tech and Policy Initiative at SIPA is to find the areas where technological change will matter most from a policy perspective,” he said. “A couple of years ago, the narrative around Internet fragmentation was that we should avoid Internet fragmentation at all costs. Coming out of this Forum we want to ask: Where does fragmentation matter most, and how can we manage it? That’s the kind of nuanced conversation that a school like SIPA is able to foster.”

“Globalization and technological change are causing major changes across systems and also raising new policy challenges for governance and cooperation,” argued Janow, “SIPA faculty and affiliated experts are considering the national and global responses aimed at making societies safer, more inclusive, and responsive to these trends, and seizing the innovation opportunities. New frameworks and approaches are clearly needed, at home and internationally. Trust will be key and hard to achieve.”

More information about the Global Digital Futures Forum, including video of each session, is available on the conference website: sipa.columbia.edu/node/30849.
SIPA NEWS

TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Reframing Fake News
Panelists explore role of targeting-and-convincing infrastructure in the fake news phenomenon.

By Serina Bellamy MIA '17

Since the 2016 U.S. presidential election, “fake news” has become a hotly debated topic. While there is no general consensus on the meaning of the term, it is undeniable that technology aids its proliferation. At a March 20, 2017, panel discussion at SIPA, experts Jonathan Albright, David Carroll, and Professor Robert Y. Shapiro explored the technological underpinnings of the fake news phenomenon.

After opening remarks by Dean Merit E. Janow, Albright described his findings from using networking mapping techniques to unveil the digital architecture of fake news. “Middlemen like Reddit are major players in the digital ecosystem,” he said. “For example, information from WikiLeaks is being moderated through Reddit and then showing up in Wikipedia. I also found that the leftwing media is cut off from the news ecosystem.”

Carroll blamed the spread of fake news on the greed of technological giants. “Fake news is a symptom of the inherently fraudulent nature of Silicon Valley. It is profiting from surveillance capitalism. Hundreds of companies are bidding on your browser history.”

“A lot is being assumed in regard to the effect of fake news,” Shapiro said. “But it actually may be a lot of smoke and not necessary a fire.”

The moderator, SIPA Cyber Fellow Hugo Zylberberg, closed the event by challenging the panel to offer some non-data solutions to the problem of fake news.

In response, Albright called for the introduction of media literacy classes in elementary schools that would enable young people to identify fake news.

“Media literacy needs to be brought into schools at an earlier age,” said Albright. “People need to be able to discern what is clearly being misrepresented as the truth.”
Jared Cohen Discusses Cyberpower and the New Digital Age

By Matt Terry MIA ’17

In a visit to SIPA on May 3, 2017, Jigsaw CEO Jared Cohen explored the “new digital age” and how it is radically changing the nature of global problems and their solutions. Jigsaw is an incubator within Alphabet—best known as Google’s parent company—that builds technology to tackle some of the toughest global security challenges facing the world today.

Cohen began with an illustrated presentation and then joined Dean Merit E. Janow of SIPA for an extended conversation in which he expanded on how Jigsaw is helping to address many of these challenges.

In his remarks, Cohen described how the next decade will be defined by the ubiquity of technology and data and suggested that machine learning will define our next generation. Touting inventive artificial intelligence, or AI, as a game changer, he described humanity’s future as moving from treating machines as assistants to interacting with them as dynamic consultants, where the machines proactively learn to predict needs and solve problems.

Cohen then described how these changes are beginning to affect geopolitics. “Data is the new oil,” he said, and countries will likely pursue it with the same “voracious appetite” with which they pursue natural resources. These technologies have also altered the nature of conflict, Cohen continued. “The ubiquity of technology now means that all wars will begin as cyber wars, and, more often than not, they’re not going to spill over into the physical domain,” he said.

In addition, the rise of these ambiguous “cyber skirmishes” is leading to the marriage of traditional hacking with attempts to hack the public discourse. Cohen detailed three main strategies used to hack the conversation: patriotic trolling (the digital assassination of someone’s character); digital insurances (using fake accounts to move online debate); and fake news as a weapon (using it either as a distraction or as a motivator).

He also stressed the absence of rules governing how states engage with each other in the cyber domain. There is no doctrine of proportional response, Cohen said, and as a result there’s no deterrence. Similarly, since a lot of cyber activity is covert, attribution is difficult. The takeaway, he noted, is that all of us need to take our cybersecurity seriously because we are getting hit with the equivalent of digital shrapnel.

Cohen also discussed whether the surge of populism today is a mirage, in which we can’t separate the signal from the noise. In the digital age, he said, it’s much easier to start a movement than to finish one. “It’s easy online to get a lot of people to agree to be against something, but literally rebuilding something requires real leadership.” He expressed concern that this accelerated pace is contributing to a lack of leadership development globally.

Despite the chaos and fragmentation of the digital era, however, these technologies offer new opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving. For example, said Cohen, geographically small or isolated countries can now punch far above their weight: recently Estonia played a very important advisory role in the development of China’s electronic health care system.

Cohen also discussed his work at Jigsaw, which focuses on developing technologies to make people safer in the digital age. He talked about one example, in which Jigsaw worked closely with Syrian dissidents who were afraid of accidentally giving their passwords to the opposition. As a result, Gmail now has a feature that lock your account if you type your password anywhere other than where you’re supposed to.

Another problem Jigsaw has been working to solve is toxicity in online discourse, which often spills over into sectarian violence. To address this, the incubator has developed machine learning models that can measure the toxicity in a conversation. Some companies have used this technology to help moderate online comments, and other applications are even using it to help people “spell-check” their own conversations for civility.
Global Muckraking: Investigative Journalism and Global Media

By Anya Schiffrin

When Peter Kaufman from the Center for Teaching and Learning first approached me about making a MOOC (massive open online course) on global muckraking, I was intrigued by the idea but assumed the topic would have niche appeal. However, when we finally launched the new, five-week Global Muckraking course in early February 2017, more than 5,000 people from 156 countries signed up to participate.

Many may remember the role of the U.S. muckrakers of the early 20th century, such as Upton Sinclair and Ida Tarbell, who wrote about food safety issues, quack patent medicines being sold all over the country, overcrowding and poverty in America’s rapidly growing cities, brutal working conditions, child labor, corruption in local government, and the large “trusts” dominating oil, sugar, steel, and other markets.

But not many people know about the muckraking that was done all over the world. The stories written about problems overseas and the impact the journalism had were the subject of a book I edited in 2014 that came out of a course I cotaught with historian Richard John in the Communications PhD program at Columbia’s Journalism School.

Preparing for the course, I learned that for more than 150 years, muckraking reporters have attempted to shine the light on government and corporate misbehavior in nearly every corner of the world. Journalists in the 19th century were writing about trafficking, labor abuses, military brutality, and women’s rights in Latin America, Asia, and Africa—many of the same causes that journalists write about today. I wanted to know how and when such journalism made a difference.

The aim of the Global Muckraking course was to look at the fascinating trajectory of global muckraking and use case studies to explore its big themes. We focused on questions such as how does journalism change the world? What are the difficulties journalists face? What is happening today to the media, and what is the future of global muckraking?

The MOOC included interviews with guest speakers such as Steve Coll, dean of Columbia Journalism School, about his book on Exxon. Other guests speakers included Adam Hochschild, author of King Leopold’s Ghost, who spoke about the role that journalist E.D. Morel played in raising awareness about brutality in the Congo. SIPA adjunct Jason Ng discussed digital surveillance of journalists. Joel Simon, director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, talked about physical threats to journalists. Economist Luigi Zingales focused on the research he has done on how congressional voting patterns changed in response to muckraking reports in the U.S. in the early 20th century. Maria Teresa Ronderos, an investigative journalist from Colombia who now runs the Open Society Foundation’s Program on Independent Journalism, discussed the importance of foundation money and the world of non-profit media.

Making a MOOC turned out to be far more work than I had imagined. It took hundreds of hours to write entertaining scripts instead of class lectures, and we had to research and clear copyright for hundreds of images from all over the world. Getting used to appearing in front of a camera and lecturing to a void instead of a classroom of enthusiastic students was hard. Ultimately, though, making the MOOC made me think clearly about what I know and how I teach it and how to speak in an interesting way about a subject that I find compelling.
Our objective was for students to learn about the legacy of the global muckrakers and the role that journalism can play in changing the world. The course also addressed the media today and how digital technology has changed journalism for better and for worse.

Conducting the initial research for Global Muckraking and designing the MOOC became a learning project for students and alumni, as they got involved in various stages of the MOOC: Marie von Hafften (SIPA 2017) was the teaching assistant and helped research and clear the copyrights for nearly 700 photos from around the world; Andrea Gurwitt (Journalism 2000) helped write the scripts and direct the shooting. SIPA adjunct Christopher Booker edited the video, and Susanna de Martino (Barnard 2018) also assisted.

As one student summarized it in the discussion board:

“Digital technology is reshaping the way societies consume, produce, and—perhaps most importantly—prioritize information. . . . As we’ve learned, it’s not so much that the problems global muckrakers face now are necessarily new; the "manipulators" (states, companies, and demagogues) have always employed public relations/propaganda tactics to combat the efforts of investigative journalists who seek to expose their exploitations, excesses, and falsehoods to the public, but rather what is new is the media landscape and the new digital arena in which this battle now takes place.”

Anya Schiffrin is director of the Technology, Media, and Communications specialization and a lecturer in discipline of international and public affairs.
IPA workshops apply SIPA students’ practical skills and analytical knowledge to a real-world issue. Students work in teams, under faculty supervision, on a policy-oriented project with an external client. Workshops give students a chance to refine their skills and knowledge, make a positive contribution, and build a network. In a given year, SIPA students participate in more than 80 workshops in 25 countries. This is just a sample of recent Capstone Workshops.

(From top to bottom.)

Policy Path to Improve Urban Air Quality in Medellín, Colombia
Client: La Ciudad Verde
Adviser: Adam Hinge
This Capstone project reviewed the current air quality situation in Medellín, along with any available projections of significant emissions changes, with an aim toward evaluating the social and economic externalities of urban air quality in Medellín.

Prioritizing Urban Infrastructure Projects in Asia: A Framework for Assessing Investment Impact
Client: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
Adviser: Akbar Noman
In spring 2017, SIPA students visited Indonesia’s first-ever rapid mass transit construction site in Jakarta. The first corridor is planned to be completed in 2019. The visit was part of an EPD Workshop project to develop criteria for assessing the potential impact of urban infrastructure projects, with the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Exploring Pay as You Go Solar as a Means to Combat Energy Poverty
Client: Solar Sister
Adviser: Ellen Morris
Solar Sister is a network of African women bringing affordable clean energy to their communities. This Capstone project aimed to identify and analyze how different pay as you go (PAYG) models can be adapted to Solar Sister’s operations to provide diversified financing options to Solar Sister entrepreneurs/customers. SIPA students met with local women in Tanzania.

Engaging Refugee and Displaced Youth in the Middle East as Partners in Change
Client: Mercy Corps
Adviser: Sarah Deardorff Miller
This Capstone project looked across public, private, and civil society actors to recommend successful strategies to engage and empower youth as designers and decision makers of their own future. As part of their research, SIPA students conducted a focus group with Syrian refugee youth in Azraq camp, Jordan.
When I found out I would be doing field research in Liberia during my summer, I was ecstatic. The fact that I would spend my summer break interviewing people and learning their stories instead of in an office was precisely what I had been looking for upon coming to SIPA: real and practical experiences that went beyond a classroom.

Liberia was nothing like I expected. It was, in almost every sense, a land of contrasts. The big SUVs of politicians and misery just next door. The desire to act and change of the young, and the disapproval of the elders toward youth. The horrible past, but the kindness of almost everybody who interacted with us, openheartedly telling their stories, trusting and welcoming us. At times, in a strange way, Liberia felt more like home than New York City.

But the most life-changing experience that I would go through was still to come. The truth is that, being from Brazil, a developing country full of contrasts itself, I had seen poverty before in many forms—but I had never seen hopelessness. This changed during my stay in Liberia.
Our team insisted that we needed to get out of the capital and find interviewees from the counties as much as possible. Our research was all about civil society participation, and it was absolutely impossible to conclude anything if we didn’t reach the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. So, toward the end of our trip, we took a plane to the border of Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire.

At the border, we decided it would make sense to interview Ivorian refugees—they would have an important perspective on border issues—so we scheduled a trip to the camp. The next day, we arrived at a very precarious, slum-like village that I could have taken as any impoverished neighborhood if it weren’t for the sign and gate in the front indicating a refugee camp. Feeling as if we were invading as everybody stared, we talked to the camp manager, asking him to help us gather interviewees in groups of two or three, and to find us a place for interviews.

He left us in a little room next to his office, which resembled an unused classroom, and came out a few minutes later with around 20 refugees. Trying not to look terrified—to be honest, I hadn’t spoken French in months, and he brought way more people than we were expecting—I started what would be possibly the most difficult interview of our experience.

As we listened, the Ivorian refugees told us in a calm and resigned voice how they had no faith that peace could ever be sustained, because refugee children and teenagers were never taught peace. All they knew, the refugees claimed, was war, and waiting—waiting for more than six years, in that camp. They reminded us that some marginalized are more forgotten than others: “Everybody knows Syrian refugees, but nobody knows us. We’re forgotten. Liberia forgot us, the UN forgot us, and we have nowhere to go. We’re stuck here.” Feeling guilty, I realized I might have done that, too.

A while after that, at a certain point close to the end of the interview, I stood up and moved forward to understand better their comments in the rough Ivorian accent, as some of the shyest refugees began to talk. As protocol mandated, I asked them if there were any questions they would like to ask, wrapping up the interview.

A man with the warmest eyes stood up. “I’ll stand up and speak louder, so you can sit down,” he said. I smiled back and sat, as he continued:

“I don’t have a question, I have a request.” I breathed in, ready. Other interviewees had asked how would our work help them directly—which was close to nothing, as it was a deliverable for UNHQ—so I was preparing the French version of our horrible “I’m sorry there is nothing we can do” speech. His reply, however, took me by surprise: “Could you please go back and tell our story? Go back to the U.S. and to your American university, and tell our story. If you tell it, and understand how we feel, then you will graduate with honors, because you will have truly understood Africa.”

I felt honored, indeed, that I could take on that simple, yet meaningful, endeavor. Telling their story is the least I can do for them. Because their story is not only theirs, and refugees did not start with the Syrian crisis. In Africa and elsewhere, for decades, countless refugees haven’t and won’t have a chance to achieve their potential, or live up to their dreams, only because they are stuck, waiting, at a refugee camp.

That night, the feeling of impotence sank in. Refugees weren’t a novelty to me: I had worked with them before in São Paulo, integrating them into Brazilian society. I had been so used to showing refugees the way forward. Enrolling them in Portuguese lessons, sending them off to job interviews, helping them organize cultural events to talk about their traditions and cultures. Giving them hope as they rebuilt their lives was never easy, but it was energizing.

Interviewing the Ivorian refugees, however, might have been the toughest reality check I have ever been through. I never thought camps were an ideal situation, but I guess I never really comprehended the lack of freedom, perspective, and hope that they entailed until that day. I felt stuck for them, and I felt hopeless, too. I couldn’t help them; there was nothing I could do that would change their lives.

Those were amazing people. It takes strength to run, to start your life from scratch, and leave everything behind. Refugees have so much to contribute, they can do so much—but they won’t, because they are stuck. As long as we maintain the camp policy, as long as we close our borders, many other people like them will be there, hopeless. So I tell their story as our world takes a turn toward hatred and builds higher and higher walls, in the hope that one day I will live in a society with less fear and more freedom and justice.

Isabela Messias MIA ’17 concentrated in Economic and Political Development.

The Raphael Smith Prize is given in memory of Raphael Smith, a member of the class of 1994 who died in a motorcycle accident while retracing his stepfather’s adventure of motorcycling from Paris to Tokyo. The prize, established by his family and friends, is awarded annually to two second-year SIPA students for travel articles that exemplify the adventurism and spirit of SIPA. The winners of this year’s contest are Isabela Messias and Alexander Cox.
The Bridges of Rakhine State—Violence and Reconciliation in Western Myanmar

By Alexander Cox

“We need a new bridge,” he said, the group around him silently nodding in agreement. Every summer, during the rainy season, the river that separated Ah Htoke from neighboring villages would swell and wash away the wooden bridge that had been built to replace the last one. It was like clockwork. Frustrating, labor intensive clockwork.

Two colleagues and I sat in a circle of chairs, speaking with a dozen villagers who had gathered in the shade of a house raised high on stilts. Steam rose from our cups of green tea, each doing its small part to contribute to the plush cushion of humidity that embraced all of Rakhine, a state in the western corner of Myanmar bordering Bangladesh. We were there to check on the progress of a UN project that aimed to help a group of villages recover from devastating floods the previous year. With small loans to open businesses or purchase livestock, training in skills such as carpentry and tailoring, and assistance on community infrastructure projects, villagers in this remote region were reconstructing their lives piece by piece.

As slits of sunlight streamed through woven bamboo flaps, we exchanged stories and questions about the project’s successes and failures.

“How do you feel about your relationship with the villagers in Yai Thei?” I asked the group. An older man spoke up. “It’s good. There’s no problem,” he offered, tersely.

The ongoing flood recovery effort, in truth, tells only half the story of why the UN project exists at all. Yai Thei is the one village on the same side of the river as Ah Htoke, accessible without having to traverse the notoriously failing bridge. Its 3,000 residents, all of the Rohingya Muslim ethnic minority, live within walking distance of Ah Htoke’s roughly 800 Rakhine Buddhists. Despite this proximity, the two villages had avoided all contact with each other for four years.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Rohingya are the world’s largest stateless population. Although many Rohingya families have lived in Myanmar for generations, and evidence of Muslims in Rakhine dates back to the 15th century, the government does not recognize them as one of the country’s indigenous ethnic groups. On that basis, they are denied the protections of citizenship and are frequently targeted by Buddhist nationalists. The estimated 1.2 million Rohingya living in Myanmar represent only two percent of the country’s population. But in Rakhine their proportion reaches 40 percent. In 2012, tensions over economic opportunity and cultural supremacy erupted in a series of riots and attacks on Rohingya villages. Today, 120,000 Rohingya still live in makeshift camps throughout Rakhine as a result.

Many buildings in Yai Thei are made of concrete. After groups of young men from Ah Htoke burned down Yai Thei’s traditional bamboo structures in 2012, rebuilding with concrete promised to offer more resistance—for next time. The village was relatively lucky, large enough that its residents weren’t entirely displaced. Four years later, still facing the constant threat of conflict, its concrete structures reflect residents’ determination to remain exactly where they are.

“Before the crisis, we would go to Ah Htoke to work in the fields and sell our products in the market,” explained one resident. “All of that stopped with the crisis, we had no jobs and we were scared to go to Rakhine villages.” The symbiotic tolerance that had long existed between the two villages was quickly replaced by fear and distrust.

I clung tightly to the back of a motorcycle as a boy no older than 15 navigated across ruts and rocks along the road to Yai Thei, rebuilt under the UN project after years of neglect. We emerged from the canopy of tall, skinny betel nut palm trees that surrounded Ah Htoke onto a sunbaked landscape of uncultivated rice fields. A military post marked the halfway point, built there to monitor the area. Within 10 minutes we reached the edge of the village.

The boys from Ah Htoke who had driven us there held back, fidgeting uncomfortably as a group of men emerged from a small concrete building to greet us.

We had crossed some imaginary dividing line in that short distance. The people of Yai Thei looked different—darker skinned, the men with beards and curly hair, the women wearing headscarves adorned with colorful patterns. They were more reserved with their comments, a hesitation rooted in lingering distrust of outsiders. As I listened, sporadic silences were filled with joyful shrieks and singing from the nearby elementary school, built after Yai Thei’s chil-
Children could no longer safely attend school in Ah Htoke as they had for years.

“How do you feel about your relationship with the villagers in Ah Htoke?” I asked once again.

A young woman in the back stood up to speak. “This is the first opportunity I have had to meet my old friend,” she said, telling a story of how she reunited with her best friend from middle school, a girl with whom she hadn’t spoken since the practice of mixed schools ended.

The project purposefully paired people from both villages for skills trainings and infrastructure works, slipping opportunities for cooperation into the package of flood recovery aid. “Whatever happens next with this project, the only thing we ask is for more activities together with Ah Htoke,” responded an older man. “This has built trust between us again, something we still don’t have with other Rakhine villages.”

Rather than ask for more loans or much-needed livestock, the villagers of Yai Thei focused on social cohesion, perhaps the least tangible benefit of all. But for the first time in four years, jobs in Ah Htoke’s rice fields were opening up to them again and youth from both villages texted each other to keep in touch. In this small corner of a state where the narrative of conflict shows no sign of abating and the poverty rate remains stuck at 78 percent, crucial social and economic ties were slowly being restored.

The motorcycles dropped us off on a muddy riverbank as we waited for a lone canoe to come and slowly ferry us across. It’s true, a new bridge was desperately needed here. But perhaps an even more important bridge was already being built behind us, one spanning deep cultural differences and a painful history of violence and marginalization. I had no doubt that future waves of tension would test the fragile relationship between Ah Htoke and Yai Thei. And each time they would have to build it back a little stronger than before. Like clockwork. Frustrating, labor intensive, and ultimately transformative clockwork.

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