It was a year full of exciting programming for the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies (CES), which hosted more than 130 diverse events on topics such as the synagogues of Habsburg Hungary, Euroskepticism, Brexit, protecting refugees, and Russian interference in Catalonia’s public debates.

Populism and contemporary developments in Poland were a focus this year. The CES Director’s Seminar brought together historians, political scientists, and sociologists to discuss the rise of authoritarianism and infringements on democracy in the country. In the spring, the annual August Zaleski Memorial Lecture in Modern Polish History was delivered by acclaimed journalist Jacek Żakowski, who shared his thoughts on whether liberal democracy in Poland can be saved.

The European Economic Policy Forum convened another year of engaging discussions by experts such as Mário Centeno, president of the Eurogroup and Portugal’s minister of finance, and Martin Wolf, associate editor of The Financial Times. Topics of the Forum’s focus in 2017-18 included deepening the integration of financial markets in the Eurozone; the potential economic effects of Brexit; Portugal’s economic recovery; and Italy’s economic challenges.

With the support of the diaNEOsis Research and Policy Institute and the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, CES hosted its fourth annual Summit on the Future of Europe. Titled “Europe and Transatlantic Relations in the Era of Populism,” the Summit fostered debate on academic freedom in Europe, European economic governance, the social and political fallout of the Greek economic crisis, and the impact of NATO and EU enlargements on Russia. Just weeks after the October 2017 Catalan crisis, Ana Palacio, Spain’s former minister of foreign affairs, and Joseph Nye, Harvard University Distinguished Service Professor, discussed the legal and political parameters of the impasse and how to move beyond it. The Summit concluded with a panel of scholars and policymakers led by former U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter of the Harvard Kennedy School that addressed shifts and disruptions in transatlantic cooperation.

Undergraduate research took center stage at the Senior Thesis Conference, where a group of Harvard College students presented their preliminary research findings after spending a summer in Europe with the support of CES. Their research spanned a breadth of disciplines and topics as varied as the lives of ayahs in London and Nigerian sex workers in Marseilles; democracy in Turkey, Chile, and Thailand; Muslims in Sweden; and an alternate history of the Orient Express. Five of these students were honored with the Hoopes Prize at the end of the year in recognition of their outstanding research. (see page 24 for details)

The seminar on The State and Capitalism Since 1800 drew attention to forthcoming research on critical questions such as the political consequences of Silicon Valley’s capitalism; voter demographics and the future of the welfare state; and “Can Democracy Survive Globalization?”

This year the Özyeğin Forum on Modern Turkey engaged the CES community in multidisciplinary discussions on topics including the reflection of European ideas of Ottoman Turkey in German, French, and Italian operas; education policy in Turkey; and impediments to strengthening the country’s relations with Europe. The Hüsnü Özyeğin Annual Lecture on Modern Turkey this year was delivered by former U.S. Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone Jr. who discussed “Resetting Turkey’s Strategic Relations West and East.”

The story of Arturo Toscanini’s political activism was the subject of the annual Gaetano Salvemini Colloquium in Italian History and Culture. Harvey Sachs, whose biography on the famous conductor had just been released, spoke to Jeremy Eichler, The Boston Globe’s classical music critic and CES Visiting Scholar, about Toscanini’s turbulent personal life and his principled stand against fascism.

The following pages highlight some of the CES-sponsored events and guest speakers who enriched the discussion on Europe this year at Harvard.
Public Officials and Policy Leaders at CES (2017-2018)

Joaquin Almunia — European Commissioner for Competition (2010-2014); Visiting Professor in Practice, London School of Economics and Political Science

Ignazio Angeloni — Member of the Supervisory Board, Single Supervisory Mechanism, European Central Bank

H.E. Gérard Araud — Ambassador of France to the United States

Moreno Bertoldi — Minister Counselor, Economic and Financial Affairs, Delegation of the European Union to the United States

Ash Carter — Director, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs; Belfer Professor of Technology and Global Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School; U.S. Secretary of Defense (2015-2017)

Mário Centeno — President of the Eurogroup; Minister of Finance of Portugal

Karen Donfried — President, The German Marshall Fund of the United States; CES Senior Fellow

Laurent Grandguillaume — President, Templiers zéro chômeur de longue durée; Deputy, French National Assembly (2012-2017)

Johannes Hahn — Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission

Robert Kuttner — Editor, The American Prospect; Meyer and Ida Kirstein Visiting Professor in Social Planning and Administration, Brandeis University

Thomas Matussek — Former Ambassador of Germany to the United Kingdom, the United Nations, and India; Senior Advisor, Flint Global

Ed Miliband — Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom; former Leader of the Labour Party

RT. Hon. Andrew Mitchell — British Conservative Party Politician, Member of Parliament

Georg Nolte — Chairman, United Nation’s International Law Commission

Ana Palacio — Member, Spanish Council of State; Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain (2002-2004)

Romano Prodi — 52nd Prime Minister of Italy; 10th President of the European Commission

Francis J. Ricciardone — President, American University in Cairo; United States Ambassador to Turkey (2011-2014)

Mark Schieritz — Economics Correspondent, Die Zeit


João Vale de Almeida — Ambassador of the European Union to the United Nations

Klaus Welle — Secretary General, European Parliament

Peter Wittig — Ambassador of Germany to the United States

Martin Wolf — Chief Economics Commentator, The Financial Times

Ana Palacio

Francis J. Ricciardone

Jutta Allmendinger

Mary D. Lewis, Grzegorz Ekiert, Briga Popeo, & Elaine Papoulias (left to right)

Joseph S. Nye & Doug Call (left to right)

Angela Stent

Mário Centeno
Event Highlights

In 2017-2018, the event series at the Center organized more than 100 events. These discussions with scholars of Europe gave students and members of the CES community an opportunity to share ideas on a wide variety of European topics. The following pages feature one event from each of these series that took place at CES during the academic year.

August Zaleski Memorial Lecture in Modern Polish History

Populism, Polish Style: Can Liberal Democracy Be Saved?

Jacek Żakowski — Director, Department of Journalism, Collegium Civitas; Journalist and Author

Wojciech Sadurski — Chair Professor in Jurisprudence, University of Sydney

Grzegorz Ekiert — CES Local Affiliate and Study Group Co-Chair, Harvard University

Contemporary Europe Study Group


Laura Robson — Professor of History, Portland State University

Kristin Fabbe — Assistant Professor, Harvard Business School; CES Local Affiliate and Study Group Co-Chair, Harvard University

Director’s Seminar

Poland at the Crossroads Between Authoritarianism and Democracy

Jan Kulib — Professor of Political Science, Rutgers University; Professor of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London

European Union Study Group

After the (Political) Earthquakes: The EU, Multilateralism, and a Volatile World

João Vale de Almeida — Ambassador of the European Union to the United Nations

Vivian A. Schmidt — Jean Monnet Professor of European Integration and Professor of International Relations and Political Science, Boston University; CES Local Affiliate and Study Group Co-Chair, Harvard University

European Union Law and Government Study Group

EU and U.S. Strategies for Competitive Tax Policies

Stephen Shay — Senior Lecturer, Harvard Law School

Pasquale Pistone — Academic Chairman; Jean Monnet ad Personam Chair in European Tax Law; International Bureau of Fiscal Documentation (IBFD)

José Nogueira — Adjunct Academic Chairman, International Bureau of Fiscal Documentation (IBFD)

Reuven Avi-Yonah — Irving I. Cohen Professor of Law, Michigan Law School

José Manuel Martínez Sierra — Jean Monnet ad Personam Professor in EU Law and Government, Real Colegio Complutense, Harvard University; CES Local Affiliate and Study Group Co-Chair

Getoano Salvemini Colloquium in Italian History and Culture

Toscanini: Musician of Conscience

Harvey Sachs — Writer and Music Historian; Faculty Member, Curtis Institute of Music

Jeremy Ellick — Classical Music Critic, The Boston Globe; CES Visiting Scholar, Harvard University

Charles Maier — Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History and CES Resident Faculty, Harvard University

Nicola De Santis — Consul General of Italy in Boston

Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History

Republican Liberty and Early Modern Revolution

Quentin Skinner — Regius Professor of Modern History Emeritus, University of Cambridge; Barber Beaumont Professor of the Humanities, Queen Mary University of London

Eric Nelson — Robert M. Beren Professor; Department of Government, Harvard University

Jews in Modern Europe Study Group

Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz

Omer Bartov — John P. Birkeland Distinguished Professor of European History, Brown University

New Directions in European History

Northern Pillars of Empire: The Baltic and the French Atlantic Colonies, 1615-1815

Pemille Rage — Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh

Ozyegin Forum on Modern Turkey

Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance

Kemal Kirişci — TUSIAD Senior Fellow and Director, Turkey Project at the Center on the United States and Europe; The Brookings Institution

Jonathan Laurence — Professor of Political Science, Boston College; CES Local Affiliate, Harvard University

Malik Mutfu — Professor of Political Science, Tufts University

Lenore Martin — Professor of Political Science and Chair of Department of Political Science and International Studies, Emmanucl College

Populism, Nationalism, and Radical Politics Study Group

The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It

Yascha Mounk — Lecturer in the Government Department and CES Local Affiliate, Harvard University

Seminar on Social Exclusion and Inclusion

Islamophobia and the Struggle for Recognition

Tara Modood — Founding Director, Research Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship, Bristol University

Natascha Warick — Associate Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education; CES Seminar Co-Chair, Harvard University

Seminar on the State and Capitalism since 1800

Populism and the Economics of Globalization

Dani Rodrik — Ford Foundation Professor of International Political Economy, Harvard Kennedy School

Bart Bonikowski — Associate Professor of Sociology and CES Resident Faculty, Harvard University

Southern Europe in the EU Study Group

Russian Attempts to Destabilize the EU: Catalonia’s Public Debate

Javier Lesaca — School of Media and Public Affairs, George Washington University

Alejandro Romero — CEO, Ato Analytics

Monika Nalepa — Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago

Karolina Wlagra — Assistant Professor, Institute of Sociology, Warsaw University; Head of Observatory of Public Debate, Kultura Libera Foundation

Bryan C. Salazar — Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of History, University of Michigan

Grzegorz Ekiert — Laurence A. Tisch Professor of Government and CES Director, Harvard University

European Economic Policy Forum

Financial Markets Union: Towards Ever De deeper Integration?

Ignazio Angeloni — Economic Mechanism, European Central Bank

Hans-Helmut Kotz — Visiting Professor of Economics and CES Resident Faculty, Harvard University

Barbara Novick — Vice Chairman, BlackRock

Christopher Smart — Senior Fellow, Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, Harvard Kennedy School; Special Assistant to the U.S. President for International Economics (2013-2015)

European Election Monitor

Italy’s 2018 Election: Immediate Impact and Future Prognosis

Gianfranco Pasquino — Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Bologna

Chiara Superiti — Lecturer in Political Science, Columbia University

Lelio Simona Taliani — Pierre Keller Visiting Professor, Harvard Kennedy School; Professor of International Political Economy, King’s College London

Daniel Smith — Associate Professor of Government, Harvard University
The moment and the movement
Mary D. Lewis speaks about the “Occupying Paris” art exhibit

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the May 1968 student protest movement, which brought Paris to a standstill during an extraordinary month of civil disobedience. Featuring posters and photographs of these dramatic events, “Occupying Paris: 1968 and the Spaces of Protest,” on display at the Jack E. Giedrojć Gallery at CES, explores the movement’s impact on French society. Much of the exhibit’s artwork was produced by students at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA). On May 15, 1968, Beaux-Arts students renamed their school the “Ex-Fine Arts Academy” and founded an Atelier Populaire, or People’s Workshop, in its place. Ceasing normal studies, they began printing posters day and night and canvassing Paris with them.

Mary D. Lewis, Robert Walton Goelet Professor of French History and resident faculty at CES, oversaw the exhibit’s construction. She spoke about the movement, the artwork, and its significance then and now.

What inspired you to put this exhibit together?
As an historian of France, I wanted to go beyond the anniversary and examine the issues that came up in May 1968 that feel relevant now: police brutality, the working conditions of immigrants, civil disobedience and its effects. Particularly the question of what protest and civil disobedience might mean for democratic societies.

Why is it important to look back at a movement whose effectiveness is still a subject of debate?
There’s a common cliché that the students who spearheaded the protests were bored, and they wanted to stir up some excitement. I wasn’t satisfied with that. There’s also the assertion that the movement didn’t have a long-term effect. If you look only at immediate politics, that seems true. Charles de Gaulle was in a position of power, and he was able to make changes. But in the long term, the effects are more apparent: for example, sexual mores changed. These protests were partly about workers’ rights, but they were also about freedom of all kinds. I think some cultural and legal changes, like the voting age, can be tied to this movement.

The media landscape also began to change. France added another TV station, so there were three stations instead of two. It’s hard for us, with hundreds of channels, to fathom a world before cable, when there were only a handful. The government gradually loosened up the state control of TV and radio, and what was put out on state-directed media. And finally, the workers received a new contract that was a huge boon to them. But many of them refused to go back to work even after that, because they wanted more say in their industries.

Exhibit Team

Mary D. Lewis speaks about the “Occupying Paris” art exhibit

Jan Kirbasiewicz

Bettina Burch

Julia Bley-Mein

saw as imperialism in Vietnam and several imperialist wars. They saw the West as imperialist and materialist.

The worker strikes and the solidarity strikes were also new. The movement wouldn’t have been as big if they hadn’t had people out on strike for weeks on end. That’s what got people thinking that maybe there was a chance at toppling this government. The strikers were taking enormous risks, much more than the students were. Those grievances were mostly resolved by the negotiations of salary and vacation increases, though there were definitely wildcat strikes that continued.

What struck you about the posters themselves?
One thing that struck me immediately was that this was the social media of the day. These students were doing what we might now call creating memes: new, catchy images or sayings that would explode and get reused. They would put the posters up in the middle of the night, and the next day the population would be confronted with new posters and new images. They were generating these images that suddenly appeared everywhere. I felt that would resonate with people — this production of memes, new, catchy images or sayings that would explode and get reused.

Do you have a favorite piece in the exhibit?
I like the poster about de Gaulle’s resignation, and the way we plastered it on the wall over other images. We were mimicking what happened to the posters at the time: the plastering over of posters by other posters. It’s talking about the bourgeois state, and it’s printed on the stock market page of the newspaper. The argument of the poster — “De Gaulle has resigned; the bourgeois state remains” — is that nothing has really changed.

How does the movement relate to the theme of democracy?
The movement is a bit confused about it. I think the students were trying to strike this balance between preserving democracy and having to hit the streets to do so. Some of the protesters cared more about their particular interests than democracy per se: worker control of factories, anti-imperialism, anti-police brutality. But they were willing to push the envelope. And that’s something we’re thinking about now: the balance between continuing to have faith in your institutions and needing to hit the streets to push things in a new direction. When is faith in institutions not enough? When do you need to break the law to help change the law?
Daniel Ziblatt, Eaton Professor of the Science of Government and resident faculty at CES, has long focused his research on the weakening of liberal democracies around the world. Recently he has turned his attention to the U.S. In his new book, How Democracies Die, Ziblatt and his coauthor Steven Levitsky argue that democracy in the U.S. faces similar threats to other nations whose democratic systems have diminished or collapsed. The ascent of President Trump is a particular focus now. Ziblatt argues that the nation’s drift toward authoritarianism, including the breakdown of political norms, predated Trump’s rise to power. In this interview with The Harvard Gazette, Ziblatt and Levitsky address their concerns regarding American democracy and what lies behind the perceived dangers.

What are some examples of countries where democracy has disappeared or markedly declined?

LEVITSKY: Few well-established democracies — fully democratic regimes that are more than, say, 25 years old — have ever collapsed. Most are in Latin America: Uruguay and Chile in the 1970s, Venezuela in the 2000s. Other democracies that have collapsed were younger, Germany and Spain in the 1930s, for example. Recently, Hungary and perhaps Poland are cases of fully democratic regimes that have backslidden into some kind of hybrid regime, a type I call “competitive authoritarian.” You might add contemporary Turkey to that list, although it wasn’t fully democratic for very long. Another case to consider is the United States. The U.S. in the 1860s did suffer a temporary breakdown. One factor that underlies most of these breakdowns is extreme polarization. That’s what worries us about the contemporary United States. We are obviously not at the level of polarization of, say, Spain in the 1930s or Chile in the 1970s. But partisan polarization in the U.S. has reached levels not seen in more than a century. According to 2016 exit polls, nearly a quarter of Trump voters viewed him as untouchable for office and yet still preferred him to the Democrats. And according to recent Gallup surveys, Republicans have a more favorable view of Russian leader Vladimir Putin than of Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. That is a troubling level of polarization.

ZIBLATT: And, bolstering Steve’s point, there is actually pretty solid empirical evidence saying the older a democracy, the higher the likelihood of democratic survival. After studying the demise of democracies in other parts of the world, at what point did you conclude it was time to turn your analysis to this country?

ZIBLATT: We began thinking about this during the 2016 campaign. During the course of the campaign, you got to watch candidate Trump threatening violence, threatening to lock up his opponents, criticizing the media so bluntly, things that we’ve seen in other countries in other places in other times, and so it was kind of this recurring dream. We realized this was something we needed to start thinking about from a comparative perspective because the United States was suddenly looking a lot more like other parts of the world than we ever had thought possible.

LEVITSKY: Three things specifically set off warning signals to us: threatening to lock up his rivals, threatening violence on the campaign trail, and calling into question the legitimacy of our elections. Those are things that we never expected to see in the United States but that we both see in democracies that were or have broken down elsewhere in the world.

In what ways is Trump fitting the pattern of an autocrat?

LEVITSKY: An important distinction has to be made. Trump as a candidate and Trump as a politician clearly possesses many characteristics of an autocrat: the way he treats the media, the way he treats political rivals, the way that he has at times threatened or encouraged or praised violence, the way that he has sought to use the Attorney General’s office or the FBI to persecute rivals. But that is not to say that Trump has been a dictator or an authoritarian in office. In fact, over the first year, Trump has been pretty systematically constrained from landing many blows against the democratic system. He’s been blocked. You argue that the threat to our democracy did not begin with Trump but dates back more than 20 years, with Newt Gingrich’s ascent to House Speaker.

ZIBLATT: It’s a long-term process. Newt Gingrich was the politician who early on recognized the dynamics of polarization that were becoming more and more present in American politics, so in some ways he rode this wave and probably exacerbated it. But it did not begin with Newt Gingrich directly.

Was the emergence of a Donald Trump inevitable?

LEVITSKY: It certainly was not inevitable. There have been over the last century numerous populist demagogues of the left and the right who gained considerable public support. It was nothing particularly new or even shocking that an important segment of the electorate would back Trump. What was new and shocking was that Trump got all the way through the primary process, and then, once he won the nomination, the Republican Party basically abandoned its democratic responsibility and backed him for the presidency.

What is propelling the erosion of our political norms?

LEVITSKY: It’s intense partisan polarization. Fifty years ago, our two political parties were in many respects similar. They were both overwhelmingly white and Protestant, evangelical Christians were more or less evenly distributed among the two, African-Americans were marginalized, and the wave of Latin American and Asian immigration hadn’t happened yet. Over the course of the last 50 years, three things have happened. One, the Civil Rights Movement has meant that African-Americans have become full citizens. Secondly, a large-scale process of immigration has made this a much more ethnically diverse place. And thirdly, since Ronald Reagan, evangelicals have moved overwhelmingly into the Republican Party.

Our parties are no longer just divided over things like taxes and government spending. They’re divided over race, religion, and culture, and those are things that are very deeply divisive. And the Republican Party’s white Protestant base isn’t just any social group: It’s a majority in decline. ... You now have a sector of the Republican Party base that perceives that the America that it grew up with is being taken away from it. And that leads to fairly extremist views. Increasingly you are seeing as a result of that, Republican politicians treating Democrats as enemies, as anti-American. Once you do that, once you begin to abandon what we call norms of mutual toleration, then politicians become tempted to abandon another key norm, which is forbearance — the use of restraint in deploying democratic institutions — and begin to basically play for keeps. That’s what is so frightening about what we’ve seen in the United States in recent years. It’s a critical point where the political norms that we have come to expect may have to be done in the context of broader consensus.

Your book cites other periods in American history when democracy faced serious challenges but survived. How dangerous are you that will be the outcome this time?

ZIBLATT: The 1850s, leading up to the U.S. Civil War, was a moment of even more extreme crisis where polarization reached an incredible level. And so there are moments in American history that we can look to and think about how we ended up in those situations. But the combination of norm erosion and the election of a president without any clear commitment to democratic norms, that is a frightening combination.

LEVITSKY: But that said, we still believe that our democratic institutions stand a good chance of muddling through. There is a challenge that’s pretty unprecedented in recent decades, but we’re not ready to write off American democracy.

This interview has been condensed from the original.
Congratulations to Daniel Ziblatt on winning four awards for his groundbreaking book *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Ziblatt received the 2018 Woodrow Wilson award by the American Political Science Association (APSA) – considered the most prestigious award in the U.S. for a political science book. In addition, the APSA awarded him two best book prizes in the sections ‘Comparative Democratization’ and ‘European Politics and Society’. Ziblatt also earned the 2018 Barrington Moore Prize for best book in comparative and historical sociology by the American Sociological Association. (see Ziblatt’s interview on his most recent book *How Democracies Die* on page 10)

Ziblatt wins four awards for 2017 book

But the greatest, there’s a lot of debate regarding the book in the sections ‘Comparative Democratization’ and ‘European Politics and Society’. Ziblatt received the 2018 Woodrow Wilson award by the American Political Science Association (APSA) – seeing places you write about. I felt, in this case, it was doubly important.

Conrad had to balance tension between his Eastern European upbringing and his life and work in the West, and sailed for some 20 years before settling down. Was the author’s identity struggle appealing as a foundation of the book? I’m drawn to people who don’t fit neatly into boxes. I wouldn’t want to put him neatly into a box. … That said, he, like many who are dislocated, was constantly navigating where he’d come from and where he’d arrived. Many people respond by putting away the first identity; some do it by doubling down and rejecting the new identity; and a third option is to do both. I come from a family of immigrants — my mom’s from India, my dad was born in America. How you fit identities together is something I’m very interested in. From my own experience, it doesn’t have a simple answer.

Conrad went back to Poland later in life and stayed in touch with relatives — it was a real part of him. He never gave that up, yet he was proudly British. He married an Englishwoman. He went back and forth between them his whole life. It’s one of the reasons he seems such a man of our times as much as his own. Today the largest foreign-born population in the U.K. is Poles. When Conrad was there, there were almost none.

Jasanoff’s world adventure into the Heart of Darkness

Maya Jasanoff, Coolidge Professor of History and resident faculty at CES, has traveled in 70 countries, the 70th being the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which she visited last year to do research for her new book, *The Dawn Watch*. Joseph Conrad in a Global World. Along with retracing Conrad’s adventures along the Congo River, Jasanoff spent four weeks aboard a French cargo ship, sailing between China and northern Europe in a time-travel-style effort to better appreciate the era in which her British-Polish subject lived and worked. In this interview, she spoke to The Harvard Gazette about her journey into the life of Conrad.

Why did you write this book?

I wanted to solve a problem for myself. I had worked a lot on the rise of the British Empire, and I was interested in what its global reach was during its pinnacle of power, about a century ago. This is the world readers know best through poems like Kipling’s *The White Man’s Burden*. But the greatest novel I had ever read, *Heart of Darkness*, offered a very different perspective on imperialism. As I thought of Conrad more, I wondered: How did the same guy who wrote about imperialism in Africa write about terrorism in London [The Secret Agent]? How did the same guy who wrote about seafaring in so many novels write about capitalism in Latin America in *Nostromo*? The puzzle was basically figuring out what Conrad’s world looked like. It was very much at odds with that Pax Britannica image.

You re-traced the 1,000-mile journey Conrad made down the Congo River more than 100 years ago. Why was it important to take the trip? Conrad wrote his books based very much on his experiences of the world as a sailor and immigrant, so I thought there was something important in capturing that experience of these things, especially his being a sailor for so long.

Writing was a second career for him. He was a sailor until his 30s. I felt like I couldn’t get insight into what made him tick without being on boats and at sea.

With respect to *Heart of Darkness*, there’s a lot of debate regarding the representation of Africa in that book, and discussion about whether he is generalizing grotesquely or capturing pretty specific historical realities. I felt one way to approach this question meant going to the place and putting the two theories in conversation with each other.

As historians we can never meet our sources. We can never talk to them, see the world they lived in. The best we can do is see the fragments left behind. What’s left behind is some of what’s there today. It is a valuable source — seeing places you write about. I felt, in this case, it was doubly important.

Maya Jasanoff

Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy

Daniel Ziblatt

Your book is part literary criticism, part history, and part travelogue. How challenging was it to write all three genres into one book? I wanted to write a book that wasn’t beginning-to-end chronological history told by an offstage narrator. I moved across these registers, in part, to deal with the competing chronologies. In my last couple of books, I looked at a historical phenomenon through individual lives, but in this book I had a whole other layer in the form of the fiction. I had two versions of a lead character: the actor and the memoirist. In general, most narrative history gets written in a linear way with an omniscient narrator, but I took a cue from Conrad, who was used to telling stories in many voices, jumping around and making a mess of narrative lines. In a sense I wanted to follow Conrad’s method a bit and give the reader a little credit. Having abrupt breaks and shifting perspectives would be fine because that’s how we follow so many film and fiction narratives now.

What did you make of the sailor experiences — his and yours — that made their way into the book? People have only lost the experience of sea travel in the last couple of generations. Until the 1960s, it’s how everyone traveled. Even my own parents did. I became aware that everyone used to travel like that. Everyone’s ever written about traveling like that. There are lots of recreational sailors today — though I had never learned to sail — but I realized that to understand Conrad I really needed to take a long sea voyage, not a recreational sailing trip. So I spent a month at sea. It gave me insight to how he wrote. Conrad has a very innovative narrative style, and it leaves you wondering, “How did he come up with that?”

Being on that ship for a month gave me insight into that. Sailors are known for spinning yarns and part of the reason for that is they spend all of this time in a very small, isolated community. The only way to bring in something from the outside is by telling stories about it. That really clicked for me in a way it wouldn’t have if I hadn’t gotten on that ship. I was also interested in how Conrad was involved in one of the foundations of our own globalized world. Nowadays sea travel is a lark, but maritime trade is happening more than ever before.

This interview has been condensed from the original.
In September 2017, the Center commemorated the semi-centennial of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Fellowship. More than a third of the fellowship’s alumni gathered at Harvard to celebrate with a reunion and conference.

“The fellowship nurtures the development of leading social scientists from Germany and stimulates an enduring exchange of ideas and friendships across the Atlantic and academic disciplines,” said Guido Goldman, the co-founding director of the Center and the Kennedy Fellows Program, at the anniversary conference.

“There have been many fellowship programs at leading universities in the world, yet there are very few that can match the impact that the John F. Kennedy Memorial Fellowship has had on German and American social sciences,” agreed Grzegorz Ekiert, Laurence A. Tisch Professor of Government and director of the Center.

Christiane Lemke, a 1983-84 fellow who is now a professor of political science at Leibniz University in Hannover said that her fellowship year “was critical in my decision to pursue an academic career. I came back to Harvard several times as a visiting professor and a researcher,” she said. “In many ways, I consider the Center my intellectual home.”

Established with the help of West German officials, Harvard representatives, and the Kennedy family and launched in 1967, the fellowship honors former President Kennedy and his legacy. It gives young, promising German scholars the opportunity to spend 10 months at Harvard for research and study, exposing them to the Cambridge intellectual community and American life.

The program also enables German journalists and policymakers to visit Harvard for short stays to exchange knowledge and perspectives with the University community.

Throughout the anniversary celebration, faculty and alumni shared thoughts on the fellowship’s impact and legacy, and engaged in discussions on contemporary Germany, the rise of populism in Europe and the U.S., and transatlantic relations. Peter Wittig, Germany’s ambassador to the United States, delivered the closing keynote address.

Over the past five decades, CES has welcomed 120 John F. Kennedy Memorial Fellows for 10-month stays: 45 political scientists, 32 historians, 24 sociologists, 14 economists, and five scholars of law and other disciplines. These fellows have received their Ph.Ds. from 39 institutions in Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, the U.K., and the U.S.

More than 60 others, including prominent German public leaders and journalists, have visited the Center for shorter stays.

Kennedy Fellows have produced research agendas and scholarship that helped create pioneering pathways in the social sciences in Germany, the U.S., and beyond. On an individual level, for many fellows, the time at Harvard had a profound impact on their professional development and future careers.

In 2016, the Kennedy Memorial Fellowship was amended to create the German Kennedy Memorial Fellowship. This program supports five European Union citizens per decade to undertake 10-month research stays at Harvard alongside their German counterparts. The inaugural recipient was Tom Chevalier, a French political scientist from the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Pol).

The Kennedy Fellowship has remained true to President Kennedy’s aim of building bridges of cooperation. It has weathered seismic changes in Germany, the U.S., and Europe, witnessing the end of the Cold War, the reunification of Germany, and the deeper integration of the European Union.

“The object of the program was not to bring American social science to Germany, but rather to provide the kind of intellectual interchange that would enrich the study of Europe on both sides of the Atlantic,” said Peter Hall, Krupp Foundation Professor of European Studies and CES resident faculty. “This is one program that is as vibrant today as it was 50 years ago.”

– Peter Hall, Krupp Foundation Professor of European Studies and CES Resident Faculty
Guido Goldman receives Centennial Medal from GSAS

For Guido Goldman ’59, Ph.D. ’69, European studies is not just an academic pursuit, but a lifelong commitment.

Guido Goldman, the co-founding director of CES, spent 40 years at Harvard helping to shape the University’s program in European studies. Last May, his work was recognized with the Centennial Medal, the highest honor granted by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). Interim Dean Emma Dench lauded Goldman’s “lifelong commitment to promoting international peace and prosperity” and “decades of impeccable leadership of the Center for European Studies and service to Harvard.”

Born in Zurich, Goldman fled the Nazi regime with his family in 1940 and immigrated to the U.S., where he enrolled in Harvard College and studied with Stanley Hoffmann and Zbigniew Brzezinski. He went on to complete his Ph.D. in Harvard’s Department of Government. His dissertation on leadership of the Center for European Studies and service to Harvard.”

“Guido Goldman’s contributions are not confined to the past,” said Grzegorz Ekiert, Laurence A. Tisch Professor of Government and the current director of CES. “They continue to benefit Harvard faculty and students, as well as relations between the U.S. and Europe every single day. As a result of his efforts, we are much better positioned to support first-rate research and graduate training on Europe than any other university in the nation.”

Peter Hall, Krupp Foundation Professor of European Studies and CES resident faculty, praised Goldman’s leadership. “It is not an exaggeration to say that, without Guido’s work, Harvard’s stellar program in European studies would not exist,” Hall said. “He was tireless in his efforts to put European studies at Harvard on a firm footing. No one has ever traveled more or worked harder in the service of that cause. Without those efforts, Harvard would not enjoy the stature it does as the leading site for European studies in the United States.”

A Life’s Work, a School’s Highest Award

Each year the Center offers affiliation to a new group of select Harvard and Boston-area faculty and graduate students from Harvard and MIT who are working on Europe. In addition, it invites distinguished European academics, journalists, and public servants for short-term stays as John F. Kennedy Memorial Policy Fellows. This year, the Center welcomed the following affiliates and fellows:

Graduate Student Affiliates
- Elena Ayala-Hurtado, Ph.D. Student in Sociology, Harvard University
- Aniket De, Ph.D. Student in History, Harvard University
- Igor Eklajtis, Ph.D. Student in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Planning, Harvard University
- Georgina Evans, Ph.D. Student in Government, Harvard University
- Yonah Freemark, Ph.D. Student in City Planning, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT
- Theo Goldring, Ph.D. Student in History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University
- Hanno Hibig, Ph.D. Student in Government, Harvard University
- Lorenzo McLellan, Ph.D. Student in History, Harvard University
- Brendan McIvor, Ph.D. Student in Government, Harvard University
- Alex Mierke-Zatwarnicki, Ph.D. Student in Government, Harvard University
- Mina Mitreva, Ph.D. Student in History, Harvard University
- Allison Myren, Ph.D. Student in Government, Harvard University
- Angyro Nicolaou, Ph.D. Student in Comparative Literature, Harvard University
- Mafalda Pratas, Ph.D. Student in Government, Harvard University
- Mikko Silliman, Ph.D. Student in Education Policy and Program Evaluation, Harvard University
- Michael Brönig, Head of the International Policy Analysis Department, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

2018 AFFILIATES & FELLOWS

Michael Brönig
John F. Kennedy Memorial Policy Fellow 2017-2018
Brönig is Head of the International Policy Analysis Department at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Dominic Schwickett
Executive Director, Das Progressive Zentrum

Local Affiliates
- Brandon Bloch
  College Fellow in Modern European History, Harvard University
- Colin Brown
  Assistant Teaching Professor in Political Science, Northeastern University
- Elizabeth Carter
  Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of New Hampshire
- Jeremy Eichler
  Classical Music Critic, The Boston Globe
- Daniel Francis
  Cimeno Fellow and Lecturer on Law, Harvard Law School
- Erik Goldstein
  Professor of International Relations and History, Boston University
- Marion Laboure
  Associate, Department of Economics, Harvard University
- Marion Labourez
  Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of New Hampshire
- Dominic Schwickett
  Executive Director, Das Progressive Zentrum

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CES offers several fellowships for graduate students whose research focuses on modern Europe. The following pages list this year’s recipients of CES fellowships.

**Dissertation Research Fellowship Recipients**

This year 13 graduate students from Harvard and MIT received CES Dissertation Research Fellowships. The grants support a year of research abroad. As the project descriptions demonstrate, the students’ work ranged widely in topic, discipline and location.

**Aleksandr Bierig** (Architecture, Landscape, and Urban Planning)  
"The Ashes of the City: Energy, Economy, and the London Coal Exchange"

**Maxim Botstein** (History)  
"Schools of Democracy: The Transformation of the University in West Germany 1945-1968"

**Kelly Brignac** (History)  
"African Indentured Labor and Slavery in the French Empire, 1822-1861"

**Duygu Demir** (History, Theory and Criticism of Art and Architecture, MIT)  
"A Syncretic Modernism: Articulations of Painting in Turkey 1933-1964"

**Igor Ekštajn** (Architecture, Landscape, and Urban Planning)  
"Nature and Planning in the European Southeast, 1850-1970"

**Hayley Fenn** (Music)  
"Breath, Gravity, Giants, and Death: Towards a Theory of Puppetry and Music"

**Sarah Grandin** (History of Art and Architecture)  
"To Scale: Manufacturing Grandeur in the Age of Louis XIV"

**Aleksandra Kudryashova** (Germanic Languages and Literatures)  
"Politics of the Reel: Urban Imagination and Production of Public Space in East and West Berlin"

**Boram Lee** (Government)  
"The Political Logic of Strange Coalitions: Origins of Post Materialist Issue Linkages in Trade Agreements in America and Europe"

**Dominika Kruszewska** (Government)  
"Dissident Successor Parties: Pro-Democracy Movements and Party Formation in New Democracies"

**Elissa Berwick** (Political Science, MIT)  
"Sub-State Nationalism in the United Kingdom and Spain"

**Charles Clavey** (History)  
"Of Happiness and Despair We Have No Measure: Quantifying Alienation in German Thought, 1920-1970"

**Stefan Beljean** (Sociology)  
"Social Reproduction, College Admissions, and the Schooling Experiences of Upper-Middle-Class Adolescents in Germany and the United States" (see profile on page 22)

**Elissa Berwick** (Political Science, MIT)  
"Sub-State Nationalism in the United Kingdom and Spain"

**Dominika Kruszewska** (Government)  
"Dissident Successor Parties: Pro-Democracy Movements and Party Formation in New Democracies"

**Dominika Kruszewska** (Government) is a CES graduate student affiliate and one of this year’s recipients of a Dissertation Completion Fellowship.

**Dissertation Completion Fellowship Recipients**

Dissertation Completion Fellowships support Harvard doctoral students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and MIT doctoral students in the social sciences. The following students received funding from CES to complete their dissertations in the coming year.

**Stefan Beljean** (Sociology)  
"Social Reproduction, College Admissions, and the Schooling Experiences of Upper-Middle-Class Adolescents in Germany and the United States" (see profile on page 22)

**Elissa Berwick** (Political Science, MIT)  
"Sub-State Nationalism in the United Kingdom and Spain"

**Charles Clavey** (History)  
"Of Happiness and Despair We Have No Measure: Quantifying Alienation in German Thought, 1920-1970"

**Dominika Kruszewska** (Government)  
"Dissident Successor Parties: Pro-Democracy Movements and Party Formation in New Democracies"

**Konrad Adenauer Fellowship Recipients**

CES in conjunction with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) awards fellowships to graduate students at Harvard interested in studying and researching at German universities. This year, two graduate students were recipients of this fellowship:

**Igor Ekštajn** (Architecture, Landscape, and Urban Planning)  
"Nature and Planning in the European Southeast, 1850-1970"

**Armanc Yildiz** (Anthropology)  
"Producing Sexuality, Race, and Value Through Refugee Integration in Germany"

**Elissa Berwick** (Political Science, MIT)  
"Sub-State Nationalism in the United Kingdom and Spain"

**Charles Clavey** (History)  
"Of Happiness and Despair We Have No Measure: Quantifying Alienation in German Thought, 1920-1970"

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**Max Coplenrud, Britta van Mildduinen, Brandon Bloch, Yukako Otori & James McSpadden**

**Eight Ph.D. Students Begin New Endeavors**

Supporting the work of graduate students is a priority for the Center for European Studies. This year, the following eight graduate student affiliates completed their Ph.Ds.

**Andrew Bellisari** (History)  
**Brandon Bloch** (History)  
**Joshua Einrich** (History)  
**Lisa Haushofer** (History, Theory and Criticism of Art and Architecture, MIT)  
**Sung Ho Kimlee** (Government)  
**Kristen Loveland** (History)  
**James McSpadden** (History)  
**Guillaume Wadia** (History)
I've done some work here in Boston and in Berlin. Tell us about your research and the fieldwork that's been great, and it helps broaden your get to know people from different departments. Graduate students recommended it as well. It's Center, and she encouraged me to apply. Other of the Center?

Stefan Beljean, a Ph.D. candidate in sociology, is a longtime CES affiliate. As a CES Dissertation Research Fellow, Beljean spent 10 months in Berlin to research schools in Germany, Stefan Beljean went to the source 10 months in Berlin – same socioeconomic class, that's often the case.”

entirely oriented toward going to the best possible college, whereas in the U.S., for students of the upper-middle-class students, much of the high school experience is geared toward preparing for college. … In Germany, there’s more of a disconnect between those two levels of education. The prospect of going to university is certainly there, but people don’t align their actions and orientation so much with it. In sociology we would say it has less of a “structuring effect” on the lives of secondary students. Their everyday lives aren’t entirely oriented toward going to the best possible college, whereas in the U.S., for students of the same socioeconomic class, that’s often the case.”

So that’s true even for more-privileged students? Yes. I found it interesting that in Berlin, students who come from a very similar social background — children of doctors or lawyers — had such a different attitude. You would think they’d be as keen as American students, facing pressure from their parents or vying for admission into competitive career fields. But instead, they say, “I would never give up my social life or sacrifice my weekends for school. I would not give up everything for it.”

There is a small group of students who are very ambitious and entrepreneurial in how they approach school. They want to go into fields that are very competitive, such as medicine and law. So certainly there’s an element of that competitiveness. But it’s not as common as with American students, many of whom are expected to go to university.

How does this relate to research on the achievement gap? There’s a lot of interest in sociology on both sides of the achievement gap. We’re asking two questions: How do people get left behind, but also how do they stay ahead? The upper class and the upper-middle class have strategies to keep getting the best possible education to convert into the best possible jobs. How do parents invest in their children by sending them to all kinds of extracurricular activities, tutoring, etc.? My research acknowledges that, but I’ve made the shift to focusing on the students themselves and how they experience this pattern. Because adolescents at some point become independent beings and might resist their parents’ efforts. Not all of them — even the Americans — are these young careerists who try to reproduce the status of their parents. Some of them say instead, “I want to have balance in my life.”

Can you talk about the fieldwork experience in Berlin? I do what is known as qualitative sociological research. I conduct interviews with students, and I also go on site at the schools to observe and participate in their lives. To do that, of course, you actually have to be there. You can’t just download a data set and try to understand what their life is like. You actually need to establish a relationship with the people running the school and build that trust so you can observe and nurture those relationships. Being in Berlin for months on end was critical for me.

I used my time in Berlin not only for actual research, but for understanding the German sociology of education. I spoke to a lot of scholars in Berlin, and they gave me great advice.

What will you focus on this year? I’ve received a Dissertation Completion Fellowship through the Center for the coming year, so I will be doing a lot of writing. And I’ll be helping to organize the Social Exclusion and Inclusion Study Group at CES.
CES provides undergraduate students at Harvard with opportunities to experience Europe and develop an enduring interest in European studies. The Center oversees the secondary field in European History, Politics, and Societies (EHPS), which offers undergraduates the chance to pursue interdisciplinary studies focused on modern European politics, economics, history, and social and cultural developments. In 2018, two students graduated with this secondary concentration: Marko Kostich (Economics) and Alexander Stevenson (Economics). The Center also provides financial resources and mentorship to Harvard students interested in a summer experience in Spain. The Real Colegio Complutense (RCC) Grant for Undergraduate Internships and Research supports Harvard students interested in pursuing a master’s degree at German universities.

In cooperation with European institutional partners, CES offers two additional opportunities for undergraduates. The Real Colegio Complutense (RCC) Grant for Undergraduate Internships and Research supports Harvard students interested in a summer experience in Spain. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation provides fellowships for Harvard College seniors preparing theses focused on Europe. Students receive grants to undertake social science research in Europe. They also participate in the Center’s annual Senior Thesis Conference, presenting their preliminary findings to faculty and fellow students. CES graduate student advisers, Hannah Callaway and Michael Tworek, help juniors and seniors develop strong theses, and this year, five of those undergraduates received the Hoopes Prize for their outstanding work. (see details below)

Promoting European scholarship through study abroad and scholarly pursuits

CES Graduate Student Advisers

Aidan Connaughton ’19
Chardonnae Deslandes ’21
Jasper Johnston ’19
Wyatt Hayden ’19
Margot Mai ’18
Cayla Lee ’21
James McIntyre ’20
Daniel Menz ’19
Darwin Peng ’20
Pablo Rasamussen ’20
Miranda Richman ’19
Maxwell Simon ’19
Chardonnae Deslandes

Prestigious Hoopes Prize goes to five CES Senior Thesis Grant Recipients

Each year, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard awards the Hoopes Prize to a handful of undergraduates who have produced outstanding senior theses. In 2017-18, five of those prizes went to recipients of CES Senior Thesis Grants. Working in different academic concentrations, these students dive into challenging subjects related to multiple European countries and topic areas.

The students and their winning theses were:

Aurian Capart ’19
(Economics)
The Alliance of European Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) – Belgium

Cayanne Chachati ’20
(Economics)
OECD, Secretary General – France

Youngsun Cho ’19
(Sociology)
UNESCO – France

Stanley H. Hoffmann Undergraduate Research and Travel Grant Recipient

Chardonnae Deslandes ’21
(Concentration undeclared)
UK Parliament, Office of MP Tom Brake – The United Kingdom

Wyatt Hayden ’19
(History and Literature)
UniCredit – Germany

Frankie Hill ’19
(Government)
The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change
– The United Kingdom

Deni Hoxha ’21
(Concentration undeclared)
Office of the Prime Minister of Albania – Albania

Jasper Johnston ’20
(Psychology)
The United Nations University Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility (UNU-GCM)
– Spain

Real Colegio Complutense Grant Recipient

Matthew Keating ’20
(Government)
United States Embassy – France

Selena Zhao ’20
(Government)
The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change – The United Kingdom

Minda de Gunzburg CENTER FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES at HARVARD

CES REVIEW 2017-2018
Margot Mai came to Harvard to pursue medicine but discovered anthropology in her sophomore year. She spent last summer in Marseille with a French NGO that works to address the needs of Nigerian sex workers. Mai’s research on displaced young women fighting for stability and better work opportunities was made possible in part by a CES Senior Thesis Grant. Mai’s senior thesis “Street Hurt: Injury and Care in Nigerian Sex Work Migration” received the Hoopes Prize. This profile was part of the Harvard Gazette’s commencement series featuring stellar graduates of 2018.

The split-second pause Margot Mai ’18 took before deciding to let her cellphone go to voicemail wasn’t just the usual. The message would reveal the fate of her caller, “Kaitlyn,” a 24-year-old Nigerian woman seeking asylum in France.

Instead of taking the call in the public gallery at the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies (CES), she waited to share that moment privately.

“The split-second pause Margot Mai ’18 took before deciding to let her cellphone go to voicemail wasn’t just the usual. The message would reveal the fate of her caller, “Kaitlyn,” a 24-year-old Nigerian woman seeking asylum in France. It is the imposition of frameworks in medicine and developmental programs, some of which hobble the ability to seek better health, that drove the student anthropologist to offer assistance to the young migrants.

“There is a moral necessity for care, and it’s important to me that health and well-being — as basic rights — are accessible. I’d like to be part of making this available to people who don’t have it, in a way that’s sensitive and consensual,” Mai said.

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Rather than perhaps impose [on them] the mentality that you’re a trafficked victim who needs to be saved from the streets, [it instead] is to understand that you are a person who found international mobility through this work, and right now you’re dependent on it. So how can we address your needs overall,” Mai said. “It’s a complex situation, focusing on an urgent need for this specific, almost displaced population.”

Mai’s interest in medicine began as a child in California, when her mother showed her a magazine article about Doctors Without Borders.
Captivated by the story as a six-year-old, her connection to the mission of providing immediate medical care developed. Although no one in her family practiced medicine, she grew up admiring her pediatricians. In high school, she volunteered in the emergency room at University of California, San Francisco, Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland.

“I didn’t choose medicine; it emerged and I couldn’t ignore it,” Mai said. “If I sense that there’s a need, or someone is suffering or is having an ugly experience, it’s hard for me to ignore, I feel compelled to attend to it.”

Mai came to Harvard to pursue biology and pre-med, only to discover anthropology; she changed her concentration early in her sophomore year. Anthropology at Harvard includes a long collaboration in medicine — specifically as medical anthropology — and she found her calling.

But it is not a straightforward path for Mai, whose secondary concentration in global health and health policy helped shape her decision to pursue an M.D.-Ph.D. The dual degree in both medicine and anthropology can be a 10-year endeavor.

“A couple of things have become clear to me during my time at Harvard: how I envision health and how I want to practice health,” Mai said. “Anthropology has been really helpful for me to view medicine as very much global and holistic, far-reaching and not just limited to physical symptoms and a biomedical report.”

It was her time in Marseille researching the social-legal integration of sex workers that solidified her ambition to become a physician-anthropologist.

Employing a Senior Thesis Research Grant from CES, Mai immersed herself in the precarious setting where migrants live in a repressive holding pattern.

Uncertain of their fate or even their identities, they are not only trying to survive, but also recover from the trauma of migration. After enduring problems are not over when they arrive in Europe. She provided volunteer street outreach, distributed risk-reduction supplies, and even spent time cooking meals and going to church services.

Mai is an incredibly brave and accomplished student of ethnography who carried out a difficult and remarkable piece of research, said Arthur Kleinman, Esther and Sidney Rabb Professor of Anthropology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and professor of medical anthropology in the Faculty of Medicine.

“She got to know these vulnerable young women extremely well and was able to come to a deep understanding of their emotional, social, and moral condition,” he said. “She became friends with them and they told her things that I suspect few people would have ever heard from them. Her ability to elicit this information to build friendships and work on behalf of these women is quite extraordinary.”

Mai’s efforts in Europe were both academic and personal. Fluent in both French and Italian, she maintains Italian citizenship through her mother, who was born in Naples.

“Europe feels like home to me because of my roots, and there is so much social change happening there. I am inspired that institutionally at Harvard, and at the Center for European Studies in particular, there is care about what is happening with the migrant crisis and people who are excluded in the European sphere,” said Mai. “It was significant to me that I could do my research there to build toward something where I can make a difference not just individually in these people’s lives, but on a larger scale one day.”

Mai intends to continue with her research, but after receiving a postgraduate Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship, is taking a gap year to practice martial arts in China. Mai, whose grandfather immigrated to the United States from China, doesn’t yet speak Chinese, but she is a black belt in Taekwondo.

“I've always wanted to visit China partially because there’s that sense of wanting to be more connected to my heritage,” Mai said. “It'll be in Beijing first, learning Chinese at a university. I don't speak Chinese, so this will be challenging.”

But not as challenging as what Kaitlyn continues to face. Her asylum application was rejected, but with the help of a French LGBTQ rights NGO, she successfully petitioned for her case to be reconsidered this fall. Waiting, Mai said, becomes your life process, and sometimes healing is not so much about processing negativity as knowing not to hold it so close anymore.

“Thank you for the outpouring of love you have given to me. I trust you've found a way to take your love for this situation and turn it into something that brings you joy and love.”

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– Margot Mai, Harvard College 2018 and CES Senior Thesis Grant Recipient 2017

“When there isn’t a lot I can do in that situation, it’s difficult to just be a witness, but you figure out how to make yourself present for the other person,” she said. “The relationships with the people there, and the deep friendships I have formed, are nothing to be taken for granted.”

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– Margot Mai, Harvard College 2018 and CES Senior Thesis Grant Recipient 2017
The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies (CES) was founded in 1969 at Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences to promote the interdisciplinary understanding of European history, politics, economy and societies. Its mission is to:

- Foster innovative research on and the study of Europe among Harvard faculty as well as graduate and undergraduate students.
- Facilitate the training of new generations of scholars and experts in European studies.
- Encourage vibrant discussions on European history and contemporary affairs which nurture the exchange of ideas across disciplines, sectors, generations, and across the Atlantic.
Where Harvard & Europe meet