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# SIPA

## MAGAZINE

VOL. XXXIII / 2020



## TOWARD A MORE JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

SIPA faculty scholars and practitioners are working across disciplines to tackle the most complicated social issues of our day.

**SIPA MAGAZINE Vol. XXXIII • 2020**

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## Letter from the Dean

In many ways, this issue of *SIPA Magazine* tells two stories: the remarkable activities that constitute the “ordinary” course of life at SIPA during the academic year, and the impressive research and activities that have been undertaken by our students, faculty, and alumni in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has disrupted lives and livelihoods around the world, and the full magnitude of its consequences are still unfolding. As a leading global policy school, SIPA has a special role to play during this historic period: to broaden awareness and understanding of our changing world, to train future leaders to conceptualize and create policy solutions, and to find ways to support implementation.

In the pages that follow you will find inspiring SIPA stories related to the COVID-19 crisis. Even as our students have dedicated their energies to adjusting to online learning, they have found creative ways to support pandemic responses in New York City and in their home cities and countries. Our faculty members have developed projects to help track the virus’s spread and assess its impact on public health, the economy, and many other areas. SIPA alumni have led response efforts by governments, firms and institutions, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as within their own communities.

Also contained within these pages are stories of SIPA’s dynamic and vibrant community addressing a remarkable range of complex global challenges well beyond the pandemic. Whether through our expansive Capstone program, unique cyber competitions, or new research on pollution and public health, our students continue to undertake a robust set of activities. You will see examples of faculty research—in education policy, climate change, corruption, the US and global economy, and, in our cover story, creating a just society. Our faculty also has been enriched by two new tenured members—Keren Yarhi-Milo, a scholar of decision-making in foreign policy, and Sandra Black, a prominent labor economist—both profiled in this issue. This year SIPA alumni also took on important leadership roles. Examples include the historic election of Claudia Lopez MPA '03 as mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, and promotion of Roula Khalaf MIA '89 as editor of the *Financial Times*. Also profiled is Karen Attiah MIA '12, editor to the late Jamal Khashoggi at the *Washington Post*.

Among our distinguished keynote speakers during the year, we welcomed Robert Zoellick, former US deputy secretary of state and former president of the World Bank, who delivered this year’s Gabriel Silver Memorial Lecture on the topic of US trade policy, and Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, who gave SIPA’s first-ever virtual commencement address.

Whether in our core fields or in direct response to the pandemic, our community continues to make significant contributions. We are proud of their achievements. We hope you enjoy this look into our memorable year and find some inspiration in these uncertain times.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Merit E. Janow". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Merit E. Janow  
Dean, School of International and Public Affairs



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Brent Feigenbaum MIA '84, new chair of the SIPA Alumni Association.

# IN BRIEF

GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

## SIPA Delegation Attends 2020 GPPN Conference

From February 29 to March 1, the London School of Economics (LSE) School of Public Policy hosted the 2020 Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) Annual Conference: “Global Innovative Public Policy Solutions.” The SIPA delegation had the opportunity to present their public policy solutions to the deans of seven of the top public policy schools from around the world, as well as network with students from across the globe.



GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

## SIPA Alumna Is First Female Editor of *Financial Times*



In January, the *Financial Times* named **Roula Khalaf MIA '89** as the first female editor in its 131-year history.

Khalaf told *British Vogue* in June that the current volatility of world events is “great for the journalism. Nobody saw the coronavirus coming, and that’s had a massive impact on business and the economy, a massive impact on everything that we write about. That’s in addition to monetary policy, that’s in addition to the US election — a very exciting US election — and Brexit and trade deals and the trade war, which has calmed down a bit recently but will come back.”



HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

## Evan Hill Wins Pulitzer for Russia Reporting

**Evan Hill MPA '19**, a member of the *New York Times* Visual Investigations team, was lead reporter on an investigation into the Russian bombing of Syrian civilians that received a George Polk Award for international reporting on February 19 and a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting on May 4.

The Pulitzer jury recognized the Visual Investigations team for two stories that proved, for the first time, that the Russian Air Force was responsible for a series of attacks on hospitals and other civilian sites in opposition-held Syria. The investigation has been cited in the United Nations Security Council and US Congress.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In March, SIPA was again ranked as the #1 International Global Policy School by *U.S. News* in its 2021 Best Graduate Schools rankings.



# PROMOTIONS

**Maryam Banikarim '89BC, MIA '93, '93BUS** joined Nextdoor as head of marketing. Banikarim was also a recipient of a 2019 Columbia Alumni Medal.

Mongolia's parliament named **Lkhagvasuren Byadran MPA-EPM '99** as governor of Mongolbank (the Central Bank of Mongolia). Before the appointment in November 2019, he had been the bank's deputy governor.

**Margaret Huang MIA '95** was hired as the president and CEO of the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York announced that **Lorie Logan MPA '99**, a longtime executive at the bank, became the manager of the central bank's asset portfolio. Logan oversees the bank's \$4 trillion securities portfolio and open market operations, advising on and implementing Fed officials' interest rate decisions.

The Nature Conservancy named **Jennifer Morris MIA '97** as its CEO.

Pakistan's government appointed **Mohammad Sadiq MIA '93**, former ambassador to Kabul, as its special representative on Afghanistan, a new position created to spearhead the country's efforts for the Afghan peace process.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

### 12 SIPA Students and Alumni Selected as Presidential Management Fellows for 2020

Congratulations to the eight SIPA students and four SIPA alumni selected to join the Presidential Management Fellows Class of 2020!

This year's SIPA-affiliated finalists include current students (*back row, L-R*) **Katherine von Ofenheim MIA '20**, **Morris McGinn MPA '20**, **Perry Landesberg MIA '20**, **Ryan Henderson MIA '20**, **Stuart Caudill MIA '20**, (*front row, L-R*) **Rebecca Federman MIA '20**, **Jennifer Keltz MPA '20**, and **Kelly Fagerman MIA '20**. They are joined by alumni **Damon Blacklock MIA '18**, **Andrew Chang MPA '19**, **Jade Luo MIA '19**, and **Kendall Silberstein MPA '18**.



Photo by Brian Miller

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

### MIA Students Travel to Turkey for SIPA's Inaugural Global Immersion Course



During winter break, MIA students traveled to Turkey for SIPA's inaugural global immersion course, Beyond the "Refugee Crisis": Refugees in Turkey and Global Public Policy. Designed and led by Professor Daniel Naujoks, interim director of the International Organization and UN Studies specialization, the course offers a unique learning option within the SIPA MIA program's new enhanced curriculum.

Students in the course spent 10 days in Turkey. They were based in Istanbul and convened at the Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul for classes on refugee law and policy in Turkey and the world, multilateral cooperation, and how displacement-centered efforts link to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Participants also took a two-day trip to the southeastern city of Gaziantep, which has absorbed a large number of refugees from Syria and elsewhere in the region.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

### SIPA Students Visit White House During Career Conference



During SIPA's 44th annual Washington, DC, Career Conference in January, a few lucky students visited the White House and Eisenhower Executive Office Building, where they met **Ludovic Hood MIA '06, IF '06** (*fifth from right*), the Middle East adviser to Vice President Mike

Pence; **Ryan Arant MIA '12**, who works on the Middle East peace process between Israel and Palestine; and **Caitlin Welsh MPA '09** (*left*), the lead coordinator for G7 and G20 summits.



**Claudia López MPA '03** was elected mayor of Bogotá in October 2019. She is the first woman and the first openly gay person to lead Colombia's capital.

## GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

### Babban Gona Capstone Project Wins Inaugural Isaac Anderson Rauch Award



The winner of the inaugural Isaac Anderson Rauch Award for Excellence in a Capstone Project is the project for the Babban Gona Agricultural Franchise in Nigeria.

Team members **Simeon Abel MPA '20**, **Walker Higgins MPA '20**, **Qendresa Krasniqi MPA-DP '20**, **Dohun Na MPA '20**, **Aparna Priyadarshi MIA '20**, **Urmi Ranchandani MPA '20**, and **Pranav Singh MPA '20** produced a Python-based machine-learning model to evaluate membership applicants, a step-by-step guide for Babban Gona to utilize the model, and data gathered from a comprehensive survey they designed. The team's faculty adviser was **Ragini Dalal**.

The award was made possible by a generous donation by **Lisa Anderson**, former dean of SIPA, and **Marc Rauch** in memory of their son, **Isaac Rauch MPA '17**. The winning team was selected on the basis of analytical rigor, quality of final deliverables, and the potential impact of the project.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

### SIPA Team Wins First-Ever Virtual Cyber 9/12

SIPA's Couldn't Hack It 2.0 student team — **John Patrick Dees MIA '20**, **Sarah Husain MIA '20**, **Sarah Quirk MPA '20**, and **Virpratap Vikram Singh MIA '20** — finished first at the first-ever virtual Cyber 9/12 Strategy Challenge on March 20–21.

The event was originally slated to take place in Washington, DC, but moved online as a result of COVID-19-related shutdowns. All told, 23 teams took part, including eight in a professional track and 15 in a student track.



## SIPA's Gitelson Award Winners Donate Funding to COVID-19 Relief for Myanmar Refugees

The winners of SIPA's Dr. Susan Aurelia Gitelson Award for Human Values in International Affairs — **Samara Ahmed MIA '20**, **Amna Akhtar MPA '20**, **Amira Dhalla MPA '20**, **Kaitlin Hansen MPA '20**, **Cecilie Kern MIA '20**, and **Jiajia "Jorja" Ma MPA '20** — donated funding to COVID-19 relief for Myanmar refugees.

"Our Capstone team collaborated with Equality Myanmar (EQMM) to support their campaign around Myanmar's third Universal Periodic Review (UPR), conducted under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council, and develop supporting advocacy materials," Dhalla wrote.

"As a team, we understand the importance of civil-society organizations in mobilizing movements and the support they need to convene stakeholders, attend advocacy meetings, and access resources. An organization like EQMM often faces more difficulty than most in obtaining such support."



## KUDOS

**Hagar Hajjar Chemali MIA '04** is hosting a new weekly show on YouTube and Instagram TV called *Oh My World!* She covers leading world news stories in 10 minutes or less — in a "quick, fun, easy-to-understand, and entertaining way."

The Conference of Parties (CoP) of African Risk Capacity (ARC) elected **Ibrahima Cheikh Diong MIA '94** of the Republic of Senegal as the new director general of the ARC Group.

Congratulations to **Camille François MIA '13**, chief innovation officer of Graphika, and **Roya Rahmani MPA '09**, Afghanistan's ambassador to the US. Both were named among *TIME*'s 100 Next 2019.

**Solomon Hsiang PhD '11** was named among the 2020 Andrew Carnegie Fellows. Hsiang is the Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Ryan Kaminski MIA '11**, **Daniella Urbina MPA '17**, and **Daniel E. White MPA '20** were named among the Truman National Security Project's Class of 2020. Kaminski and White were selected as security fellows, and Urbina as a political partner.

One Health cofounder **Christina Lopes MIA '06** was named to *Inc.*'s list of 100 Women Building America's Most Innovative and Ambitious Businesses.

Easy Solar — a social impact venture cofounded by **Nthabiseng Mosia MPA '16**, **Eric Silverman MPA '16**, and **Alexandre Tourre MPA '16** — was recognized by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship and the World Economic Forum as leaders in social innovation. Easy Solar was the winner of the 2016 Dean's Public Policy Challenge competition.

Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS) named **Maryum Saifee MIA '07** its January Woman of the Month.

New America recognized **Lauren Sprott MIA '14** and **CJ Dixon MIA '19** among the 2020 Black American National Security & Foreign Policy Next Generation Leaders and **Sherman Chu MIA '17** and **Wardah Khalid MIA '14** among the 2020 Asian American Pacific Islander National Security & Foreign Policy Next Generation Leaders.

**Rahel Tekola MPA '18** and **Niara Valério MPA '18**, cofounders of the edtech startup Learnabi, were named among *Forbes*'s 30 Under 30 Class of 2020. Learnabi was founded to bring students across the US access to personalized learning and a student-centered approach to education directly via a mobile app.

**Eduarda Zoghbi MPA '21** was awarded the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) 30 Under 30 Prize for her efforts to raise awareness of climate change in schools in Brazil and Kenya through the youth-led NGO Engajamundo.

# FACULTY BRIEFS



GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

## José Antonio Ocampo Named to High-Level UN Panel

SIPA's **José Antonio Ocampo** was named to the High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda (FACTI Panel), which was created jointly by the president of the United Nations General Assembly and the president of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Ocampo returned to SIPA in January after serving on the board of directors of Colombia's Banco de la República, the country's central bank, since 2017.

He also celebrated the publication of *The Palgrave Handbook of Development Economics*, which he coedited, in August 2019.



"A change toward a warmer world will not only increase the ambient temperature; it will make the climate more variable, meaning more unpredictable."

**John Mutter** discussing his book *Climate Change Science: A Primer for Sustainable Development*

GLOBAL ECONOMY / TRADE / DEVELOPMENT / FINANCE

## Paola Valenti Wins Presidential Award for Outstanding Teaching

**Paola Valenti**, a senior lecturer at SIPA who has taught microeconomics to thousands of MIA and MPA students in her 11 years on the faculty, received one of Columbia University's Presidential Awards for Outstanding Teaching at May's Commencement ceremony.

Each year only five professors University-wide receive the award, which was established in 1996. Valenti is just the third SIPA faculty member to be so honored; SIPA's **Andrea Bubula** and **Glenn Denning** won the award in 2008 and 2014, respectively.



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

## Unpacking Latin America

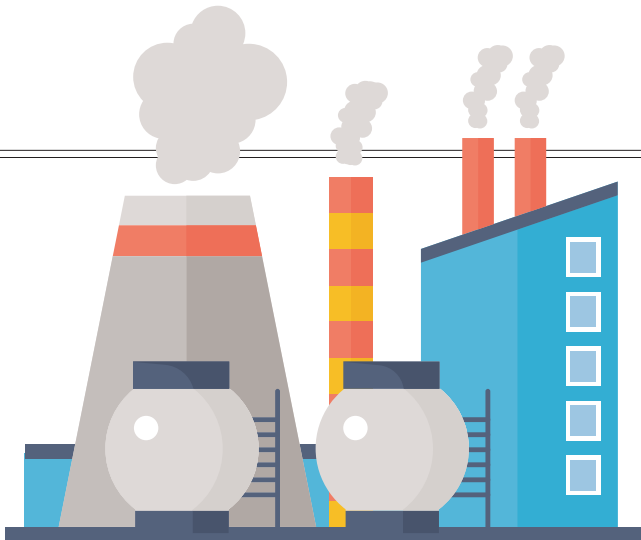
The Institute of Latin American Studies launched *Unpacking Latin America*, a monthly podcast hosted by Professor **Maria Victoria Murillo**. The podcast focuses on exciting research produced by Columbia scholars about Latin American history, culture, and politics to help better understand the contemporary challenges of the region.

TECH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Mapping Data Flows

In his new research project, Mapping Data Flows, serial entrepreneur and SIPA senior research scholar **John Battelle**—with student researchers **Natasha Bhuta MPA-DP '20** and **Zoe Martin MPA '20** and 2019 Journalism alumni Matthew Albasi and Veronica Penney—developed an interactive visualization that helps users understand how large technology companies collect, use, and share user information across the internet.





ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

## A New Approach for Setting Carbon Prices

In a new article in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, Center on Global Energy Policy research scholar **Noah Kaufman** and research associate **Peter Marsters** (with Alexander R. Barron, Wojciech Krawczyk, and Haewon McJeon) introduce a simple, practical way to tax carbon emissions as part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce global greenhouse-gas emissions and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The near-term-to-net-zero approach ties the price to short-term environmental and social goals to bring us closer to reaching net-zero by 2050.



“The US is ‘great’ at generating inequality, and this is true in the educational sector as well, particularly as it relates to research performance. What you have in the US is a small number of highly prestigious schools, like Stanford or MIT, that account for a small share of enrollments but enjoy an enormous amount of wealth and talented students and professors.”

**Miguel Urquiola** discussing his book *Markets, Minds, and Money: Why America Leads the World in University Research*

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

**Willem Buiter**, who served as Citigroup’s chief economist from 2010 to 2018, joined SIPA in January. He’ll teach a new course, *The Theory and Practice of Central Banking and Fiscal Policy*, and advance policy-oriented research.

**Glenn Denning** gave the keynote address at the inaugural One World festival in Northern Ireland, calling for investment by governments to ensure farming of the future is guided by “climate-smart practices.”

**Keiko Honda**, former CEO and executive vice president of the World Bank Group’s Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, joined SIPA in January as an adjunct senior research scholar and adjunct professor. In the spring semester, she taught the course *Environmental, Social, and Governance Investment*.

**Takatoshi Ito**’s most recent book, *Managing Currency Risk: How Japanese Firms Choose Invoicing Currency* (with Satoshi Koibuchi, Kiyotaka Sato, and Junko Shimizu), received the Nikkei Award for Excellent Books in Economic Science 2019.

**Patricia C. Mosser** coauthored (with William B. English) a chapter in *First Responders: Inside the U.S. Strategy for Fighting the 2007–2009 Global Financial Crisis* (Yale University Press, 2020) that discusses the failed and more successful policy actions as the Federal Reserve became the “lender of last resort” to the financial system, the rationale behind policy-maker decisions, and the ultimate inadequacy of traditional Fed lending authorities to manage a systemic crisis.

The Deepak and Neera Raj Center on Indian Economic Policies debuted a new podcast, *Transforming India*, in summer 2019. SIPA’s **Arvind Panagariya** hosts with Pravin Krishna of Johns Hopkins SAIS.

**Mari Pangestu**, an adjunct senior research scholar at SIPA who served as George Ball Adjunct Professor in fall 2015, joined the World Bank as managing director of development policy and partnerships.

# SIPA RESPONDS TO CORONAVIRUS

When the coronavirus that leads to COVID-19 emerged, SIPA responded. As the spread of this virulent disease continues to disrupt life around the world, our faculty, alumni, and students remain deeply engaged in the public dialogue about crucial events that will shape the future.

## SIPA's Ester Fuchs and USP Students Help Launch CovidWatcher

Professor **Ester Fuchs** and Urban and Social Policy students helped launch CovidWatcher, a project led by Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) to collect information that will aid New York City communities in addressing health concerns now and support recovery efforts after the pandemic subsides.

"We can use this data to direct resources during the pandemic, both to the most vulnerable communities now and to those neighborhoods where we expect to see the next concentration of cases," Fuchs said. "Later on, we can use the data to address secondary effects after the pandemic—to target resources in support of social-service needs, mental-health needs, job assistance, and more."



Photo by Muhammad Wajihulla

## SIPA Student Assists Migrant Workers Affected by India's Lockdown

From her home in Jersey City, **Shruti Kedia MPA '21** and her friends from India volunteered to organize food packets and hand sanitizer for migrant workers and daily-

wage laborers who were trying to return back home, raising \$2,500 and feeding 3,300 people.

"These are those individuals who earn less than \$80 a month and work in the informal sector in Delhi's National Capital Region in India," Kedia said. "They have no other modes of transportation during the 21-day lockdown period and are forced to either walk 200 to 300 kilometers to reach their hometown or take a bus, few of which are running at the moment."



## SIPA Class Analyzes Media Coverage of COVID-19

Students in **Anya Schiffrin's** Global Media: Innovation and Economic Development course combined their efforts to conduct a comparative analysis of media

coverage in order to understand what narratives and frames were being adopted and how they changed over time.

"Working on a class project using data scraping and IBM Watson analysis helped me gain insight into Chinese state media's messaging strategy in the time of a global pandemic," said **Lei Zhu MIA '21**. "Though living in isolation, participating in a class project like this gave me a sense of belonging. We are not lost in isolation."

## Dean Janow Convenes Webinar Series to Discuss Implications of COVID-19

In a series of virtual events moderated by **Dean Merit E. Janow**, scholars from SIPA and across Columbia convened to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on policy and the economy.

- "Echoes of 1918? COVID-19 and the Spanish Influenza Pandemic" featured research and insights from SIPA professors **Douglas Almond** and **Scott Barrett**.
- "US Economic Fallout and Policy Responses to COVID-19" featured Columbia Business School dean emeritus **R. Glenn Hubbard** with SIPA's **Jacob J. Lew** and **Patricia C. Mosser**.
- "US and China Relations in the Era of COVID-19" gathered SIPA's **Thomas J. Christensen** and **Shang-Jin Wei**, Columbia Law School's **Benjamin L. Liebman**, and **Roberta Lipson '77BUS**, CEO of New Frontier Health.

## Gendered Dimensions of the Pandemic: Implications of COVID-19

An April 17 webinar convened by Professor **Yasmine Ergas** with **Michele Bornstein MIA '15**, **Aizhan Kamidola MPA '21**, and **Jazgul Kochkorova MIA '20** investigated the intersection of gender and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speakers from Africa, Canada, Central Asia, Europe, Japan, Latin America, and the United States discussed issues ranging from the dangers associated with authoritarian instrumentalizations of the pandemic to the importance of adopting gender-based perspectives in disaster prevention.



A group of SIPA alumni from China was able to secure a total of 6,000 masks (including N95 medical surgical masks and KN95 masks), 65 protection gowns, and 5 medical goggles for Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) and personally delivered the items to the medical campus. *Pictured: Elise (Song) Zhao MIA '19* with Louis Berger, Operations Manager, Columbia Doctors

## SIPA Alumni in Taiwan Staff Front Line in Coronavirus Fight

Two Taiwanese SIPA alumni have been on the front line fighting this global pandemic. **Alan Ching-Tsung Wei MPA-DP '19** is a senior policy adviser for the New Taipei City Government Secretariat, whose director-general is **Chingyu Yao MIA '03**.

Their team has published their city's control measures and shared them with officials in New York City and Boston. Taiwan has been lauded by public health officials for its response. As of early September, the island of almost 24 million people located just over 100 miles from mainland China has had only 495 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and seven deaths.



*“The global pandemic of COVID-19 has shown itself to pose a simultaneous, existential threat to all nations. It is whimsical to argue that states should not use their intelligence services to mitigate its dangers.”*

JASON HEALEY AND VIRPRATAP VIKRAM SINGH MIA '20, “USING COVID-19 TO DOUBLE DOWN ON CYBER NORMS,” COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

*“Now, more than ever, we need public servants who believe in science, understand that inequality is growing, and are willing to stand in the gap and hold communities together.”*

CORI FAIN MPA-DP '19, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PROGRAMS FOR BIRMINGHAM STRONG, AN AGILE PUBLIC-PRIVATE COVID-19 RESPONSE VEHICLE IN THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, AL

*“COVID-19 has weakened two crucial mechanisms for democratic accountability in Latin America — elections and protests — and strengthened presidents who acted decisively and concentrated power to coordinate the response.”*

MARIA VICTORIA MURILLO IN SSRC'S *ITEMS*, A DIGITAL FORUM FOR INSIGHTS FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

*“The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the risks of unhealthy diets and the extreme fragility of the global food system. But the economic reconstruction that will follow the pandemic represents a perfect opportunity to provide better nutrition and health for all.”*

VISITING SENIOR RESEARCH SCHOLAR MAURICIO CÁRDENAS IN “THE PANDEMIC MUST TRANSFORM GLOBAL AGRICULTURE” FOR *PROJECT SYNDICATE*



# FULL CIRCLE

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KEREN YARHI-MILO RETURNS TO HER  
ACADEMIC HOME AS THE NEW  
DIRECTOR OF THE SALTZMAN INSTITUTE.

INTERVIEW BY MARCUS TONTI

PHOTO BY SHAHAR AZRAN

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**Keren Yarhi-Milo focuses her research and teaching on international relations and foreign policy, with a specialization in international security, including foreign policy decision-making, interstate communication and crisis bargaining, intelligence, and US foreign policy in the Middle East.**

**Yarhi-Milo is teaching her first class at SIPA this fall, having left Princeton a year ago to join Columbia's faculty as a professor of political science and international and public affairs. On July 1 she also became the new director of the Saltzman Institute for War and Peace Studies and the Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of War and Peace Studies.**

**This conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity.**

### **ON HER TIES TO COLUMBIA**

I graduated from the School of General Studies in 2003. One could say that I fell in love with international relations here at Columbia. I especially remember taking classes with Robert Jervis, who was my undergraduate adviser, and War, Peace, and Strategy with Richard Betts. These courses had a huge impact on my interest in studying international security. I even enrolled in the joint GS-SIPA program and completed the first year, which was my senior year of college. And then I had to make a decision to stay for a fifth year and graduate from SIPA, or pursue a PhD immediately. It was a difficult decision, but I chose the PhD route at UPenn.

Honestly, I didn't really understand what it meant to write a dissertation or have a career in academia, but I knew I wanted to learn more about political science theory and produce foreign-policy-relevant work that was grounded in original theoretical thinking. I needed that for myself before I was comfortable writing policy papers. But even when I was at Penn, [Jervis] sat on my dissertation committee and I visited Columbia often. I was living in New York by my third year, and then as a Princeton professor, I basically wrote my second book while on sabbatical at Saltzman. So I've had a long relationship with Columbia, and I have always considered this place my academic home. You can imagine, then, how special it is to now be here officially and to work with some of the very people who are truly responsible, for better or worse, for getting me into this business in the first place!

### **ON HER ACADEMIC SPECIALIZATION**

I incorporate insights from behavioral economics, psychology, and organizational theory, so my work kind of pushes against a pure rational-

choice model of decision-making. In addition to crisis decision-making, I write about the psychology of leaders, intelligence and foreign policy, the use of secrecy and deception in world politics, and face-to-face diplomacy.

I always start with an empirical puzzle that does not sit right with what standard theoretical expectations would lead us to observe. And then I try to use this puzzle to generate a theory that is generalizable, rigorous, and to the extent possible, parsimonious. I aim to really think about how these puzzles are part of a larger pattern: if you look creatively to the right places, you will find the similarities across time and space. In terms of methodology, I love going to presidential and national archives and using primary documents and historical material to get insight firsthand. What were leaders thinking? What were they saying? But I use a combination of methods to test the theories I put forth—I look at diaries and the records of NSC meetings, but I also conduct statistical analysis, and even survey experiments.

What I care most about in my work is that both the questions that I ask and the answers that I offer have clear and important policy implications. I love engagement with the policy and intelligence community, and I get satisfaction from learning how and why they find my work useful to them. I cannot do academic work that is divorced from policy, and I cannot do policy work without engaging in true academic research first.

### **WHAT'S NEXT FOR SALTZMAN?**

In addition to continuing our engagement with traditional topics of security that we do very well in the institute—like studying conflict and cooperation, terrorism and political violence, civil-military relations, military analysis, and so on—there are a set of topics with implications for

security that I think we should engage with more forcefully. These include the relationship between security and climate, security and gender, how we think about race in traditional international security literature, how cyber warfare affects our understanding of signaling, escalation dynamics, and so on. Right now, we're learning a lot about the impact of a pandemic on national security, and I think this will be a topic Saltzman will try to engage with more in the next couple of years as well. I would also like to partner with different centers and initiatives—within Columbia and perhaps elsewhere—to engage these topics.

In terms of activities, we want to make sure we're getting students—both SIPA students and undergraduate and graduate poli-sci students—more involved with Saltzman. Crisis simulation, speaker series, workshops on different issues—it's important to try to engage our student body and also to remain a space for members of our University community and surrounding communities to consider the most pressing questions of the day.

I believe that a good research institute is one that seizes the moment and embraces the opportunity to adapt to new realities. Especially for an institute that speaks to issues of war and peace, we need to make sure we remain relevant—that we offer fresh and rigorous input for the policy community, yes, but also that our work is not only grounded in historical perspective but also sensitive to the nuances of the present moment. We can and must anticipate, even shape, trends and not just respond and react to them. The community at Saltzman has done this through the years, both during and after the Cold War.

### **CHALLENGES AND CHANGES**

I think I'm the first woman to direct the Saltzman Institute, and certainly the vast majority of directors at our competitor [institutes] are male—white males—and somewhat older. I want to attract more female students and students of color—again, both at SIPA and at Columbia political science—to study in this area and to know that they belong and, more to the point, have unique value to add. This field has not been especially diverse for generations, and it's very important to show to the younger generation that its members, in all of their great diversity, can and must reach new heights in this area of study. Being in this privileged position, I take it as a real opportunity and will try to be the best role model I can. [@kymilo](#)

# SOMETHING IN THE AIR

An aerial photograph of Mexico City, showing a dense urban landscape with various buildings and a prominent blue skyscraper (Torre Latinoamericana) in the center. The sky is a clear, bright blue, and there is a slight haze or smog over the city, particularly in the background.

PHD CANDIDATE SANDRA AGUILAR-GÓMEZ INVESTIGATES THE ECONOMIC, POLICY,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL-JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS OF MEXICO CITY'S AIR-QUALITY WARNINGS.

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BY BRETT ESSLER

**MEXICO CITY'S REPUTATION FOR POOR AIR QUALITY IS NOTORIOUS. THROUGHOUT THE 1970S AND '80S, THE METROPOLIS'S RAPIDLY EXPANDING POPULATION, INCREASED AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC, AND GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION IN A HIGH-ALTITUDE VALLEY SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS RESULTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS NAMING IT "THE MOST POLLUTED CITY ON THE PLANET."**



Sandra Aguilar-Gómez

Policymakers took steps to curb the pollution—reducing automobile traffic, imposing stricter emissions standards, improving access to public transportation, and instituting an air-quality-alert system.

The Mexico City Environmental Alert System now publishes pollution warnings and implements a series of strong measures to reduce emissions, including driving restrictions and closing schools, government offices, gas stations, and factories.

For Sandra Aguilar-Gómez, a PhD candidate in Sustainable Development at SIPA, the air-quality warnings posed a number of interesting research questions. So she began digging into the data to look at the economic impact of the policy on factors including pollution and public health. Her findings thus far (the research is still in progress) could have implications for policy both in Mexico and in other countries with pervasive air-quality problems.

"There is established evidence of how one day of very bad pollution can have massive health impacts," Aguilar-Gómez explains from Mexico City during a July interview. "So, one day of pollution changes the rate of hospitalization, changes the rate of overall mortality, and specific mortality on cardio and respiratory diseases."

Aguilar-Gómez says that given these strong impacts on health, governments needed to take a short-run policy to protect people on very polluted days, as measured by ozone levels.

Aguilar-Gómez's research so far has shown that the policies have had only a modest effect on air pollution. Drivers, over time, have found ways to adapt and subvert driving restrictions. The greater impact, she says, is from regulating high-pollution industries like refineries and thermoelectric plants.

"I think that there should be more emphasis on this kind of policy, shifting responsibility from individuals to industries, and specifically, to these very dirty state-owned plants," Aguilar-Gómez says. "The government took steps in this direction last year."

"When you implement a pollution control policy," she continues, "you may be shifting the geographical dispersion of pollution, so good policy design has to consider this. So potentially, for this particular policy, you stop pollution in some parts of the city, but then you generate a cockroach effect—that people go to places with less enforcement."

## “INEQUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IS DEFINITELY SOMETHING THAT HASN’T BEEN LOOKED AT A LOT IN MEXICO. AND I THINK THAT NEW FIELD OF RESEARCH IS FASCINATING.”

She found that the health effects are also modest. When traffic restrictions are in place, Aguilar-Gómez explains, another health hazard emerges.

“If people can’t drive and they’re [using] public transportation, then they’re walking more on those days,” she says. “And they’re spending a lot of time in bus stops [exposed to pollution]. It looks like these kinds of changes in exposure are counteracting the changes in pollution. That’s where this discussion of policy objectives enters into play.”

“By looking at how the policy was designed in response to the fluctuations in pollution, the policy is always triggered by ozone,” Aguilar-Gómez explains. “But ozone varies throughout the day and reaches its maximum around 4 p.m. The policy is almost always declared late in the day, at the time when many other pollutants are already decreasing anyway.”

Aguilar-Gómez’s research into these policies began before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the public health risks the pandemic has exposed are very much related to the air-quality policy.

“It resonates a lot with what is happening with COVID, that some people can stay home,” she stresses. “Those are the people for whom the policy is going to be more effective.”

As Aguilar-Gómez — who studied economics at Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) and has an MA in sustainable development from Columbia — continues fine-tuning her dissertation remotely from Mexico City, she has also found time to present her findings on correlations between COVID and air quality.

“More research has to be done on this important topic,” she says, “but the places that saw the first and worst outbreaks were also the most polluted places.”



Aguilar-Gómez’s research interests have always lived at the intersection of economics, public policy, and social justice — from the impact of cigarette taxes on mortality rates in low-income areas to the influence of boys on destigmatizing menstruation in Tanzania.

John Mutter, director of the PhD program at SIPA, says Aguilar-Gómez’s work is “flawless.”

“She has a keen eye for novel and important areas of research that have been neglected by others,” he says. “Her dedication to work in her home country of Mexico is laudable.”

“I will definitely, in the future, start looking at environmental justice in Mexico and other developing countries, linked to these kinds of policies,” says Aguilar-Gómez. “Right now, I’m centered around Mexico City, but I would like to use satellite data to measure pollution to extend these analyses to other regions. Environmental justice is a topic that is gaining traction in the US, but in my view, it is still neglected in other parts of the continent that also present large historical inequalities in exposure to pollution and other forms of environmental degradation.

“Inequality and environmental justice is definitely something that hasn’t been looked at a lot in Mexico. And I think that new field of research is fascinating.” [🔗](#)





## Capstone Workshop Recommendations for Brazilian Judiciary AI Transformation Have the Potential to “Reshape” Governance

With a current backlog of 78 million lawsuits, the Brazilian judicial system operates with substantial challenges in case-flow management and a lack of resources to meet this demand. In order to address these issues, the Brazilian National Council of Justice (CNJ) has enabled the 92 courts it administratively oversees to develop their own artificial intelligence models, resulting in a seemingly uncoordinated algorithmic universe in the judicial system.

In spring 2020, a SIPA Capstone team partnered with the Institute for Technology and Society (ITS)—a nonprofit research institute based in Rio de Janeiro—to design a collaborative governance structure to strategically integrate all AI initiatives in the Brazilian judiciary.

The team—Katie Brehm MIA '20, Momori Hirabayashi MPA '20, Clara Langevin MPA-DP '20, Bernardo Rivera Muñozcano MPA '20, Katsumi Sekizawa MPA '20, and Jiayi Zhu MPA '20—interviewed a sample of experts in the field, conducted a literature overview of AI and electronic processing systems in the Brazilian judiciary,

developed a comparative analysis on both national and international case studies, and, ultimately, compiled a list of strategies and recommendations for the CNJ.

“The quality of the report is impressive,” says Ronaldo Lemos, director of ITS Rio and a SIPA adjunct senior research scholar. “Their research skills are outstanding, and the level of detail with which they analyzed the case studies is evidence of their analytical rigor. The potential impact of this work is enormous, since it may be used as a guidance to reshape the entire Brazilian judiciary system.”

The report’s recommendations include adoption of an agenda regarding the use of AI tools within the Brazilian judiciary, creation of an AI and assessment tool, increasing the judicial system’s transparency through the use of open-source software, improving AI interoperability among courts’ systems, increasing court collaboration, and building and disseminating a framework for the provision or procurement of AI tools from the private sector by courts.

“The Brazilian judicial system is quite complex, and the project team managed to reach a high level of understanding of its reality, its configuration, and its major problems and challenges faced nowadays,” adds Luiz Antonio Mendes Garcia, chief information officer at the CNJ.

The workshop, *The Future of AI in the Brazilian Judicial System: AI Mapping, Integration, and Governance*, was advised by MPA-DP assistant director and adjunct associate professor André Corrêa d’Almeida.

“As a Brazilian, it was a great opportunity to work directly with both the judicial branch and a renowned research institute,” Langevin says. “I am proud of the work that we did and hope that it will continue to inform the use of AI in the public sphere, especially at this moment where the country is seriously considering a national-level AI strategy.” [👉](#)



L-R: Bernardo Rivera Muñozcano MPA '20, Clara Langevin MPA-DP '20, Momori Hirabayashi MPA '20, Katie Brehm MIA '20, Katsumi Sekizawa MPA '20, and Jiayi Zhu MPA '20

# TOWARD A MORE JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

SIPA faculty scholars and practitioners are working across disciplines to tackle the most complicated social issues of our day.

BY STEPHEN KURCZY



## I. 'CRISES CREATE OPPORTUNITIES'

It's an iconic photograph: peaceful protestors, all sitting and some literally holding their fingers in a peace gesture, being tear-gassed by a police officer wearing riot gear and a gas mask.

Sounds like 2020 in cities across the US. It was actually 1999 in Seattle, when a loose collective of more than 50,000 environmentalists, labor rights advocates, indigenous groups, and other activists demonstrated together during a World Trade Organization summit. Suresh Naidu was in the thick of it all — many years before he would become a professor in economics and international and public affairs at SIPA.

Then a young protester from the Canadian island of Newfoundland on the far opposite side of the continent, Naidu was tear-gassed while helping form a human barricade to block WTO officials from entering a building. When a suited economist yelled at him, "I've spent 20 years of my life studying trade!" Naidu had an epiphany: he would become an economist who investigated the issues he cared passionately about, such as worker rights, union labor, and wealth disparities.

Two decades later, Naidu's research is shining a light on the very issues he vowed to examine. With the COVID-19 pandemic throwing the US economy into recession and reform protests sweeping the country, scholarship from Naidu and his SIPA colleagues into the most complicated social issues of our day — inequality, discrimination, race, and democracy — helps to explain what is happening now as well as how society can move forward in a positive way.

Building on a theme across his research, Naidu believes the current crisis can help push the US and the world to become a more democratic society on a path to stronger economic growth. There's a caveat, he warns: the country could also fall backward.

"Crises create opportunities for societies to change themselves from the paths they were on," says Naidu, "and that can be good or bad."

## II. 'A JUST SOCIETY OWES MUCH MORE'

The crises of 2020 have forced a reckoning. The pandemic has claimed more than 200,000 lives in the US, with Latinx and Black Americans three times more likely to become infected and twice as likely to die as white people. Tens of millions of US workers have lost employment, with women losing more jobs and Hispanic women experiencing the greatest job losses. Concurrently, nationwide demonstrations sparked by the police killing of George Floyd have spotlighted how Black people are disproportionately subject to police force and nearly three times as likely to die at the hands of police officers.

These harsh realities sparked the beginnings of a serious policy discussion on labor rights and race issues.

"Before you develop a policy, you have to know what problem you're trying to solve, and that's a discussion in and of itself," says Michael Nutter, the David N. Dinkins Professor of Professional Practice in Urban and Public



**"Crises create opportunities for societies to change themselves from the paths they were on, and that can be good or bad."**

SURESH NAIDU

Affairs and former two-term mayor of Philadelphia. "You have to have data, look at the data, and think how you translate data into policy and programs."

SIPA research is helping reveal the inequities with hard data. In a study this past spring to take the pulse of America's essential workers amid the pandemic, Naidu and his colleague Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, an associate professor of international and public affairs, conducted a national survey with Columbia University faculty Adam Reich and Patrick Youngblood. They found Black essential workers were nearly twice as likely as white essential workers to express concern about infection risk.<sup>1</sup> Black, Latinx, and younger workers were also more likely to go to work with a fever because of financial insecurity and lack of paid sick leave — findings with direct policy implications.

"We think that really demonstrates that paid sick leave isn't just a nice thing to have or perhaps a moral responsibility," Hertel-Fernandez says, "it's a public health imperative."

**"Before you develop a policy, you have to know what problem you're trying to solve, and that's a discussion in and of itself."**



MICHAEL NUTTER

Their study also discovered that wages for essential workers had been stagnant, underscoring how the market was failing to compensate for what had become a deadlier job overnight. That finding informed an op-ed for the *Washington Post* in which Naidu questioned "whether extreme economic circumstances have turned the workers we call heroes into something closer to forced labor. If so, that realization ought to shape our public policies: a just society owes much more than minimal pay and a few plexiglass shields to the citizens — and noncitizens — it compels into service."



**“My research points to ways in which our democracy is shaped by inequalities of economic resources.”**

ALEXANDER HERTEL-FERNANDEZ

Part of the problem of today’s stagnant wages is a lack of worker bargaining power, which is a research focus for both Naidu and Hertel-Fernandez. In a working paper based on hourly-wage data from three US states,<sup>2</sup> Naidu has found that more laborers are paid \$10 than any other number, which essentially means that—even before the pandemic—workers were not being fairly compensated by the market for their productivity. Through another poll conducted this year, Hertel-Fernandez found that many American workers are seeking greater voice and representation in management decisions<sup>3</sup>—for example, whether customers will be mandated to wear face masks amid a pandemic.

Hertel-Fernandez and Naidu have previously found growing support for unions and labor action,<sup>4</sup> based in part on positive public reactions to the 2018 teachers’ strikes in the US. This new interest in worker voice can also be explained as a public backlash to the defunding of social programs in recent decades, a trend detailed in Hertel-Fernandez’s 2019 book, *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation*. The book, which won the American Political Science Association’s Robert A. Dahl Award, documents how money has influenced policy in ways playing out amid the pandemic, particularly when it comes to gutted unemployment insurance systems. Hertel-Fernandez’s forthcoming book, *Millionaires and Billionaires United*, will further document the rise and impact of wealthy-donor networks.

“My research points to ways in which our democracy is shaped by inequalities of economic resources,” says Hertel-Fernandez. “It also points to ways in which that could change. Strikes play an important role in conveying grievances and creating economic and political power for people who might otherwise not have it through the ballot box.”

### III. ‘WE TEACH WITH NEW YORK’

SIPA is also trying to empower people at the ballot box. Since 2013, the SIPA-based nonprofit Who’s on the Ballot has informed New York City residents on their polling place, voting date, and nonpartisan information about candidates. Funded by a Columbia College alumnus and staffed by SIPA graduate students, the project has been assisting with voter-registration efforts and updating residents about mail-in voting procedures.

Who’s on the Ballot engages SIPA students on issues of race, equity, and democracy—which is integral to being a part of “Columbia University in the City of New York,” says political science professor Ester Fuchs, executive director of Who’s on the Ballot and director of SIPA’s Urban and Social Policy concentration.

SIPA provides its students with quantitative and qualitative tools to evaluate policy, but part of its core mission is for students to evaluate policy through the lens of fairness and equity, according to Fuchs. “It’s a much broader view of how you implement and evaluate policy,” she says. “It includes questions that

consider race, civic engagement, poverty, economic opportunity, inequity, and disparity. All those words which have now gained currency in our political discourse are essential to a SIPA education and are especially important in understanding as well as improving urban policy outcomes.”

Fuchs points to a recent research study by four graduate students who analyzed arrests in New York City for fare evasion on subways and buses. Their resulting paper demonstrated that this policy had a disproportionate negative impact on Black New Yorkers. Earlier this year, New York State attorney general Letitia James (a former SIPA student) launched an investigation into the matter.

“We ask students to be part of this city while they’re here,” says Fuchs, a former special adviser on governance and strategic planning for part of Michael Bloomberg’s term as New York City mayor. “We ask them to volunteer, to be part of research efforts, to intern, to explore the city’s neighborhoods, and to learn firsthand what it means to live in a diverse multicultural city, [and] not just to focus on the challenges of the diversity and poverty that you often find in a city, but also the strength that comes from the diversity—the economic, political, and cultural contributions of every community.”

The pandemic has highlighted the special challenges many communities face. In New York City, as of July 2020, Black, Latinx, and low-income neighborhoods have suffered the highest rates of virus deaths. Over two months in the spring, of 40 police arrests in the borough of Brooklyn for social-distancing violations, all but one person was Black or Latinx, underscoring how race and ethnicity factored into who police targeted. Citywide, 92 percent of arrests for social-distancing enforcement were Black or Latinx.

**“All those words which have now gained currency in our political discourse are essential to a SIPA education.”**



ESTER FUCHS

Patients at hospitals in lower-income communities have been three times more likely to die than patients in the wealthiest parts of the city, the result of disparities in staffing, equipment, and access to drug treatments, according to a *New York Times* analysis in July. In an op-ed for *Newsweek*, Nutter called attention to how majority-Black counties were seeing nearly six times the death rate as white communities, underscoring the need for monitoring.

“We’re living in a moment in which it’s really fundamental to ask ourselves questions about inequities and inequalities and how resources are distributed,” says Yasmine Ergas, director of SIPA’s specialization on Gender and Public Policy and coeditor of a new book, *Reassembling Motherhood: Procreation and Care in a Globalized World*, which looks at inequality and discrimination in relation to reproduction.

Ergas highlights how women have also been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. With women filling a majority of service-sector and health-care jobs, they have greater exposure to the virus. And because women on average spend more time than men caring for children, the closure of day-care centers and schools increases women’s caretaking burdens and makes working more difficult if not impossible, resulting in a sharp decline in female workforce participation.

Lurking behind the health and economic crises is the slow-moving crisis of climate change, which also disproportionately affects women and minorities, notes Ergas, who has advised New York City as well as the United Nations on women's rights and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people. Black mothers — who are already two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women — are more likely to have children who are premature, underweight, or stillborn as a result of exposure to rising temperatures and air pollution.



**“We’re living in a moment in which it’s really fundamental to ask ourselves questions about inequities.”**

YASMINE ERGAS

Engagement on these issues also means bringing practitioners into the classroom, which fuels “a blending of academics and public service,” in the words of Nutter, who chairs SIPA’s Diversity Committee alongside 16 student representatives. He is also coleading — with Fuchs — a new committee formed in light of this year’s events to review SIPA’s curriculum and programming as they relate to social justice and race.

Nutter created a fall course called Leadership and Urban Transformation, which aims, he says, “to have the students experience what it’s like to be an elected or appointed official with a serious public policy job.” He also teaches the spring course Critical Issues in Urban Public Policy, which was formerly taught by David N. Dinkins, the only African American to be elected mayor of New York City. Guests have included former secretary of homeland security Jeh Johnson and former New York City Department of Investigations commissioner Rose Gill Hearn. Among part-time faculty who also bring a first-person view on race and public policy are Karine Jean-Pierre MPA ’03, who has worked for MoveOn.org, NBC News, and the Obama White House and in August became chief of staff to vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris; and John C. Liu, former New York City comptroller and City Council member.

And of course, Nutter brings his extensive experience into the classroom. This past spring, he was simultaneously teaching and serving as national political director for then presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg — because, not to be overlooked, this year the US is holding what is widely considered the most important election in a generation.

“Four significant events have occurred at the same time: COVID-19, the fiscal implications of recessions, racial tension and civil unrest, and a presidential election,” says Nutter, adding that he’s been revamping his course curriculum in light of it all. “Those four things certainly could and should shape any public policy discussion that anyone is having in the fall of 2020 and beyond. And all of them are tied together. That is the story of this year.”

#### IV. ‘A BETTER PATH’

With so much happening at once and all of it advancing unpredictably, it can feel dismayingly overwhelming. For Naidu, having studied crises across history, such moments of turmoil are full of potential. Crises create oppor-

tunities for a society to become more democratic, he says, and democracy almost invariably leads to higher economic growth over the long term. In one of his most-cited papers, an economic and political analysis of 175 countries from 1960 to 2010 found that a nation that transitions after a crisis from non-democracy to democracy achieves about 20 percent higher GDP per capita over the next 25 years relative to a country that experiences a crisis but remains nondemocratic.<sup>5</sup>

Why does a crisis create opportunities for democratic progress? Such moments spur “regular people” to rise up and demand representation, Naidu says. When the world is crumbling, a person has less to lose from taking action. Consider this year for many people: unemployed, quarantined at home with children, awaiting a potential stimulus check that won’t cover all the expenses. “In that moment, people say, ‘Who are these idiots in charge?’” says Naidu. “It gives you political openings that you don’t have in normal times.”

Naidu’s prime example is the dual crises of the Great Depression and World War II in the 1930s and ’40s. His research reveals this as the one time in 20th-century US history that income inequality fell<sup>6</sup> and the economic fortune of a generation significantly improved.<sup>7</sup> The Great Depression created a political opening for passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, which guaranteed the right of workers to organize, and World War II then facilitated union growth to its highest density in American history. “There’s no other moment in the US 20th century where you had this kind of giant reduction in inequality,” notes Naidu. In other words, it took two major crises to make the American dream of upward mobility a reality.

Of course, progress isn’t a given. Many crises have not changed politics and policies for the better. The point is that now there’s an opening, a crack in the door to a more just and democratic society. While the pandemic, recession, and widespread protests have caused upheaval, we can emerge economically stronger and socially more equitable by taking this chance to look at the data and address the glaring problems of racial and economic disparity, says Naidu. “We might look back and say, ‘That was really tough, but it set us on a better path.’” [🔗](#)

1. “Understanding the COVID-19 Workplace: Evidence From a Survey of Essential Workers,” by Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Suresh Naidu, Adam Reich, and Patrick Youngblood. June 2020. Roosevelt Institute.
2. “Monopsony and Employer Misoptimization Explain Round Number Bunching in the Wage Distribution,” by Suresh Naidu, Alan Manning, and Arindrajit Dube. Working Paper.
3. Memo: “What Americans Think about Worker Power and Organization—Lessons from a New Survey.” May 2020.
4. “Schooled by Strikes? The Effects of Large-Scale Labor Unrest on Mass Attitudes Towards the Labor Movement,” by Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Suresh Naidu, and Adam Reich. 2020. *Perspectives on Politics*.
5. “Democracy Does Cause Growth,” by Suresh Naidu, Daron Acemoglu, James Robinson, and Pascual Restrepo. 2019. *Journal of Political Economy*.
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# But We Knew That!

By  
Catherina  
Gioino  
MPA '20

**Economist Sandra Black confirms what you already know — and she quantifies it.**

Sandra Black and her fellow economist Jay Shambaugh made their way through the meandering hallways of the West Wing. They had just been invited into the Oval Office to brief the president on why wages for low-wage workers have been stagnating in recent decades.

It wouldn't be the first time Black had met Obama. She had joined the three-member Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) the previous year and periodically discussed the monthly labor reports or unemployment numbers with the president. But this time was different, as it was just the two of them and the president talking about economic research and what economists thought about the relative decline in wages of low-wage workers. Importantly, how were technology and the adoption of artificial intelligence going to affect these workers in the future?



Perhaps Black, who joined the SIPA faculty in fall 2019 (with a joint appointment in Columbia's Department of Economics), got her start researching labor economics because her mother was an educator. Or maybe she was inspired by a math problem that presented a character with an implausibly high number of apples. It may well have been the unceasing arguments between her and her sister—arguments over their parents' leniency toward the other.

Whatever it was that led Black to conduct research, her curiosity has sparked countless studies in one-upmanship. Eldest children may claim they were most likely to become successful;

Black has examined the notion empirically. You may remember a childhood friend who was always willing to accept a challenge or an audacious dare, but it's Black who conducted the study on nature versus nurture and risk aversion. And while it may seem obvious to some, Black has repeatedly quantified overwhelming racial and ethnic discrepancies in the college application and admission processes.

"My husband makes fun of me sometimes because I will show what people already knew to

be true," Black says during a Zoom session in late March. In her doctoral dissertation, for example, she demonstrated that people were willing to pay more for homes in good school districts. "People would say, 'But we knew that,'" she jokes, "and I would say, 'But I have quantified it.'"



The elder of two daughters of a lawyer father and her teacher mother, Black didn't set out to become the prominent researcher in labor economics that she is today. In fact, she didn't realize her passion for economics until she turned a blind eye on mathematics altogether.

"I was not one of those people who always knew what I wanted to do," says Black. "So when I went to college, I thought because I was really good at math that I was going to be a math major."

But Black found that solving problems in a vacuum wasn't entirely satisfying. It was an economics class, instead, that provided the context she was looking for. Moving from mathematics to economics, Black found a rationale for the problem-solving that had previously left her dissatisfied.

"It was the perfect balance: math and logic, and thinking through puzzles that we care about, problems that we care about as a society," she says. "That really resonated with me."

Upon her graduation from University of California, Berkeley, Black worked as a research assistant at Charles River Associates, an economic consulting firm, before heading to Harvard. Several grants, fellowships, and research projects and one dissertation (the one on home prices and education) later, Black now had a PhD in economics. The world was hers, and so she left Boston for what seemed like the most important place on earth—New York City.

Beginning her career with a four-year stint as an economist and later a senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Black turned to research topics she found most interesting—and knew the greater public would as well.

"What inherently interests me is thinking about how people behave and how people respond," Black says. "I was really happy to see economists can do really interesting work on the topic. When you think of labor economics, a lot of people just think of unemployment insurance and those types of topics, but what we study is just a lot broader than that."

One of her recent studies that comes to mind is "Poor Little Rich Kids," a look at wealth inequality across generations. In it, Black and a team of researchers looked at data from Sweden and found reasons for the high correlation between the wealth of parents and the wealth that their children would go on to accrue as adults. To compare the effects of what is often called nature versus nurture, they studied adoptees—who have one set of biological parents but are raised by another set of parents, which makes it possible to distinguish the effect of the biological parents (nature) from that of the adoptive parents (nurture).

The answer, again, provides evidence in "I-told-you-so" fights: wealthy people are not inherently predisposed to become wealthy; rather, they have more access to different types of opportunities, resulting in greater opportunities for their children, and so on.

"That's the most important part, since it suggests wealthy people aren't wealthy because they're better people. They're wealthy because they have better opportunities growing up from their families," Black says, putting her 80-page study in a nutshell. "I think that's such a cool way of thinking about it and trying to answer a question that we think is kind of fundamentally important from society's perspective."



Black, Shambaugh, and Obama discussed the latest economic research on technological change in the bright light of the Oval Office.

"We're sitting there in the Oval Office, and the president, who is supersmart, was asking what we thought and what we knew about skill-biased technological change and what the research has shown," Black says with glee. "In a geeky way, [it was] the coolest 10 minutes that we've ever spent."





“When Jay and I left the office, we just stood there and looked at each other,” Black says between laughs. “We were like ‘that was so cool!’ So there were really plenty of great opportunities like that.”



After Black left the Federal Reserve, she became a professor at UCLA and eventually the University of Texas, where she was quite content with her life conducting research and teaching economics. She knew the chance to join the CEA was not one to pass up lightly but couldn't imagine that something else would give her the same sense of purpose as her work in Austin.

“As a professor, you think about one thing very deeply and you become an expert in that particular field,” Black says. “When you're in DC, you have to be a lot broader and you have to know less about more things.”

Black ended up jumping in with both feet, deciding to embrace the challenge as another research topic—a chance to consider why people take such a position to begin with.

Working at the CEA turned out to be highly challenging and even more rewarding.

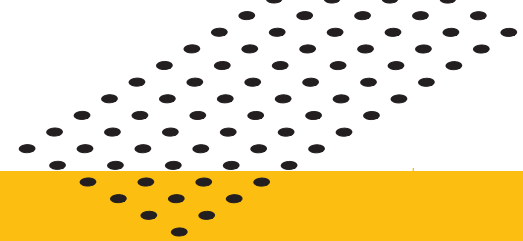
“You're doing things that matter on a day-to-day basis, even hour to hour,” she says. “It was really life-changing in a lot of ways.”

Black had long considered her research to be quite relevant to public policy, but the visceral experience of seeing how research influenced real-world decision-making was striking: Every time she briefed the president, she knew it could result in policy change that could affect the country.

“Our job, partly, was to disseminate what new research is saying to the policymakers and the people in the White House,” she says. “And it was really eye-opening to see how they incorporated that research into their thinking.”

One such example was the Ban the Box campaign, which proposes to remove a check box asking job applicants if they have a criminal record. While the initiative seemed like a progressive move forward, Black discovered new research by other economists showing that the policy could have unintended negative effects on minority applicants. The research suggested that, in the absence of information on criminal justice involvement, employers would simply assume (based on race and ethnicity) that minority applicants had prior contact with the criminal justice system, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the policy. To date, 35 US states and more than 150 cities and counties have passed Ban the Box laws.

“When we summarized the research for the president and the White House staff, it was our job to evaluate the quality of the work to assess how good it is—does it seem solid?—and then circulate it to the people involved in the policy work,” Black says of the process. “And I really appreciated the conversation that people had as a result of it, and how you can use research to design good policy.”



**“I love the constant activity and the feeling that so much is going on. People say that about New York City, but I think it is also true of Columbia.”**



After her father died seven years ago, Black was looking for a new hobby when she came across some metalworking classes in Austin. “I had all this mental space that freed up from not worrying and thinking about that and I didn't know how to fill my time,” she says, “so I took a class on jewelry-making, and since then I have been making jewelry.”

In addition to her jewelry-crafting techniques and Pilates workouts, Black squeezes in enough time to read plenty of books—crime fiction is her favorite genre—and avoids checking the news compulsively.

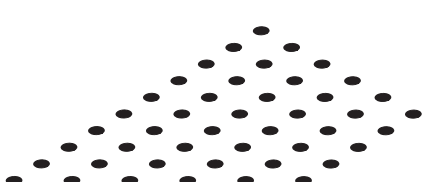
She joined SIPA last fall, she says, “because of the environment—I love the constant activity and the feeling that so much is going on. People say that about New York City, but I think it is also true of Columbia.”

“I'm looking forward to working with students on a Capstone project, which seems like a great opportunity for students to get hands-on experience working on projects that are important for our community.”

In parting, Black says she hopes others will join her in using analytical tools to tackle societal problems that might seem to have obvious answers. “What happens when workers' rights are afflicted every day?” she asks, or “What questions have been brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic?”

“I'm really interested in how workers are being hurt by the fact that unions are declining and workers have a declining voice in our society and that wealthy people have a disproportionate voice in our public policies,” she says, offering a teaser of what perhaps could be her next research topic. Still, Black hopes others will likewise be curious about the questions she asks every day.

“Being a part of the SIPA community gives me the chance to incorporate both my research as well as my policy experience from my time on the Council of Economic Advisers into my teaching,” she says, “and I can't wait to share these experiences with the students.” [🔗](#)





# Q & A

“ALL I CAN  
DO IS TELL  
MY TRUTH.”

## WITH KAREN ATTIAH MIA '12

BY ANYA SCHIFFRIN

Karen Attiah MIA '12 was known at SIPA for her early adoption of Twitter, her vast network of accomplished friends, and her activities in support of African journalism and investigative reporting. Less than 10 years after graduating from SIPA, Attiah has become a high-profile advocate of free expression, writing extensively about her experience editing the late Jamal Khashoggi, the subject of her forthcoming book.

Today, Attiah — a Ghanaian American writer who was raised in Houston — is the global opinions editor at the *Washington Post*, where her work centers around international affairs and social issues including race, gender, and politics, with a particular focus on Africa. Before joining the *Post* in 2014, Attiah was based in Curaçao, freelancing for the Associated Press. In 2019, the National Association of Black Journalists named her its journalist of the year; the previous year,

she won a George Polk Award, with David Ignatius, for their writing about Khashoggi's murder.

Anya Schiffrin — the director of SIPA's specialization in Technology, Media, and Communications and one of Attiah's former professors — caught up with Attiah by phone in July. The conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity, with assistance from Sofia Bennett.

PHOTO BY DENYS MEAK

**Q** You started out as a straight news reporter and spent time with AP in Curaçao. How did you transition to being an opinion editor at the *Washington Post*? And what is the role of an opinion editor and op-ed section in a media landscape where everyone is expressing an opinion these days?

I remember a journalist that you invited to speak with students about freelancing. He said we should be prepared to go somewhere no one else is and try to become the specialist of that region or country. I took it to heart. Several months after graduating from SIPA, I went to Curaçao. I saw the island was going through changes. It was finally becoming independent from Holland. There were issues of race and racism between the Black inhabitants and the white Dutch minority. Curaçao was a meeting point for so many cultures from around the world. I wanted to listen to people's stories firsthand to really understand them and eventually maybe influence policy and action. I talked my way into a freelancer gig with the Associated Press and was covering Curaçao's hard news.

A year later, I came back to Washington, DC. I was referred to the opinions department of the *Washington Post*, where I produced and worked on social media. Eventually, that turned into more editing and copyediting with writers. Luckily, I was also able to write about things that interested me, including writing about international affairs, particularly in Africa. I've been doing that ever since.

That's how I transitioned from not being allowed to have an opinion to being encouraged to have my own opinion and encouraging others to have strong points of view. Opinion journalism should still be based in fact, careful inquiry, and engagement with other points of views, even ones you disagree with. A lot of people have opinions, but what is lost right now is the art of persuasion. The best pieces are the ones that make you think.

We don't discuss enough the role of power, who gets a platform, and who gets freedom of speech. Whose voices are getting amplified and whose are not? Journalism has incredible power to shape discourse and people's views of reality. The power to have an opinion should come with a huge sense of responsibility. Responsibility comes with being based in fact and fact-checking. In the fast-paced, 24-hour beast of the digital news cycle, it is increasingly difficult to be responsible. I still believe in good persuasion, rhetoric, and advocacy. Good opinion journalism is still out there among all the noise.

**Q** You've become famous for your advocacy of Jamal Khashoggi, who you edited at the *Washington Post*. Since then you've become a leading voice for freedom of expression. Can you tell us how you see things right now?

When it comes to attacks on journalism and crackdowns on dissent, in many ways the playbook is the same. Even while Jamal was working for the *Post*, he was experiencing all sorts of online attacks on his work in Arabic and English. He was getting attacked, then wooed back by those in power and those he had previously worked with. I never expected anything like this would happen to him. I was working with other writers who I was more worried about. I knew exile was difficult emotionally for Jamal and I did what I could to check on him. Saudi Arabia is an ally of the US, part of the G20, and part of the global liberal order as an oil supplier. Whether it's going up against Saudi Arabia or against systems of white supremacy and racial oppression, the playbook is the same. Journalists are not immune to backlash when challenging systems of power.

After Jamal's death, so many people said, "America is a country that respects freedom of expression and protects journalists. We cannot let Saudi Arabia get away with this." And yet, I am seeing colleagues harassed on Twitter by coordinated right-wing campaigns, people getting hit by rubber bullets and tear-gassed in the streets. I've also been the target of coordinated intimidation campaigns and have seen my share of death threats. As a Black woman journalist, power does not like to be challenged. Dominance is often upheld by intimidation and violence, as we're seeing with federal troops being sent into American cities. It is a perilous time to be on the front lines and challenging these things. It is dangerous out there now, particularly for investigative journalists and outspoken Black journalists.

Media institutions need to recognize that and be extremely vocal and committed to protecting their journalists. The word "harassment" isn't enough to describe the current digital violence, threats, intimidation, and doxing occurring. This is the playbook and we are experiencing it.

**“THE WORD ‘HARASSMENT’ ISN'T ENOUGH TO DESCRIBE THE CURRENT DIGITAL VIOLENCE, THREATS, INTIMIDATION, AND DOXING OCCURRING.”**



Photo courtesy of the *Washington Post*

**Q** Your book on the Khashoggi murder, *Say Your Word, Then Leave*, will be published in the spring of 2021. How was it writing about something so personal?

Writing the book was the hardest thing I have ever done. It was very personal and political. I needed to put aside being a journalist and dig deep into how to make scenes come alive, by putting humanity, color, detail, and emotion onto a page—which we often can't do in a short op-ed. I had to learn to understand the power of a personal narrative. I tried to tell the truth about what I know of Jamal's experience and what I learned about power, America, Saudi Arabia, and freedom of expression. I also discuss the missteps and mistakes when it comes to advocacy. All I can do is tell my truth and hope that will be enough. There's so much more work to be done on Jamal's case.

**Q** How do you view the Black Lives Matter movement and calls to diversify journalism in the US?

A measure of hope is that it's become global. We're two months after George Floyd was killed, and it seems that white people, non-Black people, have finally woken up. We're beginning to have the outlines of what Black people have been asking for: change and action.

America has a habit of turning a blind eye, but the manner in which George Floyd was killed—tortured to death for eight minutes, while everyone was sitting at home watching—made it impossible to look away. It was bloodcurdling.

There is a lot of energy to right so many wrongs that are so baked into America and Europe and ideas about Blackness and the Black world. We cannot call ourselves a democracy until Black people are given the parity, representation, and safety that our white neighbors, coworkers, and friends enjoy. This is a human rights issue, a labor rights issue, and a security and policing issue. Fundamentally, it's about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That is all we are asking for—still asking for, 400 years later.

**“THERE IS A LOT OF ENERGY TO RIGHT SO MANY WRONGS THAT ARE SO BAKED INTO AMERICA AND EUROPE AND IDEAS ABOUT BLACKNESS AND THE BLACK WORLD.”**

**Q** You were an early adopter of Twitter. How do you feel about the platform today?

I came to SIPA after a Fulbright Scholarship in Ghana, where I researched how phones and radio were being used for public expression. At the time it was a major innovation. Now social media has become similar to what those phone-in radio shows were in Ghana: something that allows people to express themselves and bypass traditional gatekeeping.

I still deeply believe in using Twitter as a tool for good despite the terribleness it can bring. If you look at Black Lives Matter and #MeToo, these movements were made possible through social media platforms, particularly for people who haven't been able to have their voices heard. And I've met some of the most amazing people who've become professional contacts and friends.

**Q** Which courses and professors at SIPA made a difference?

The media courses at SIPA were instrumental to my philosophy as I approach commissioning and editing pieces. It comes down to being critical of dominant narratives, questioning how a narrative becomes dominant. The statistics and economics courses supplemented our qualitative learning about human rights and media, arming us with tools to fight disinformation. Your classes set me on the trajectory I am on today. You pointed me to Twitter. I also remember Anne Nelson's course in which we mapped influence networks and who was interacting with who on Twitter, Tom Lansner's minicourse about media and conflict reporting, and Paola Valenti's introduction to economics.

**Q** I understand that you still keep up with some of your classmates.

The Class of 2012 now has a massive WhatsApp group chat. Sometimes on weekends we have Zoom DJ catch-ups. We are still sharing information and opportunities and having discussions. The ability to go to school with people from around the world and different walks of life, to be enriched by the students, and perhaps enrich other people's experiences was a utopia I miss. [👑](#)

THE  
RAPHAEL  
SMITH  
MEMORIAL  
PRIZE  
2020

# TAXI TO TERANGA

BY JAMES COURTRIGHT MIA '20

The warm, rich air of West Africa embraced me as I walked down the jetway and across the tarmac at the westernmost tip of the continent. It was the end of the rainy season; the atmosphere was hot and muggy. Everything was moving in slow motion—until I walked out the terminal doors and into the teeming streets of Dakar, Senegal. A dozen hawkers, in a fierce bid to sell phone credit, exchange currency, and offer “bargain” deals for taxis, rushed me at once. Blindsided at first, I swiftly recovered and reached out to a tall man offering taxi services. He started the negotiation:

“My friend, ten thousand is good!”

“Ten thousand,” I countered, “Are you crazy? Two thousand is a better price.”

He looked at me as if I had insulted his mother. “That is not good.”

After an especially brutal bargaining session in which accusations of tight-fistedness and scamming were exchanged, I followed Amadou to his car, my wallet significantly lighter. We loaded my baggage into his bashed-up yellow taxi—a relic right out of 1980s Paris festooned with stickers of Senegalese religious leaders and colorfully painted praises to Allah in Arabic, Wolof, and French.

As the car sputtered to life I wondered if the haggling had damaged any potential friendship, but after a brief moment he asked:

“Where are you from?”

“The United States.”

“Ah, America is very nice! I want to go there.”

“I hear Senegal is nice too.”

He smiled. “You speak truth. Senegal is the land of *teranga*.”

Suddenly, we jerked off the tarmac and onto a narrow sand path. My heart skipped a beat.

“Amadou, is this the road?” I asked, an unmistakable hint of panic in my voice.

We sat in silence for a moment as the taxi struggled through the sand, weaving between half-finished houses with rebar sticking out the roofs slicing the soft moonlight. After a minute Amadou informed me of our new schedule: “We’ll go to my house, eat food, then I’ll take you to the garage.”

I was slightly unsettled. We had just met 10 minutes ago, and I had to catch a bus soon.

“Your bus won’t leave until 5 a.m.; we have two hours. Come eat, then wash before your next voyage.”



## ABOUT THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE

The Raphael Smith Memorial 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 adventurousism and spirit of SIPA. The winners of this year's contest are James Courtright and Lukas Feldhaus.



As I started to protest he cut me off: “Also, *teranga* means hospitality.”

*Teranga*, I was soon to discover, is taken very seriously in Senegal. Anyone within shouting distance of a household in the hours around lunchtime will be given a spoon and fed until full. A stranger in a village at sunset will be offered a bucket to wash, food to eat, and a bed for the night.

We pulled up outside the unfinished wall that enclosed Amadou's house and walked through the corrugated metal door. On the left we passed a squat concrete structure I assumed was the bathroom area, and on the right an open-air kitchen protected from the elements by a jumble of sheet metal and wooden posts. In the far back, a bare grey building of two rooms provided a crowded sleeping space for eight people. In the center of the compound an old man was fast asleep on a thin mattress shrouded by a mosquito net.

While Amadou lacked material comforts, I soon discovered he was rich in kindness and generosity.

Amadou presented a well-worn plastic chair. “Sit down,” he insisted. “We'll eat now. Let me get my wife.”

I objected, not wanting to wake his wife at 3 a.m., but he ignored me and rushed into her bedroom.

“Come meet my new friend! Also, we are hungry, is there any leftover dinner?”

Amadou's wife, a tall, gracious woman named Aissatou, introduced herself before stumbling half-asleep to the kitchen to heat leftovers. Meanwhile, Amadou drew water from the well and fetched his prayer rug. As Aissatou blew the dull red coals under her cooking fire back to life, Amadou washed his hands and feet, then looked at me.

“Tonight, you will eat *ceebu jen*.”

Aissatou brought out a large metal bowl and placed it on a stool in front of me. Inside was rice cooked in a broth of oil, onions, and tomato and topped with an assortment of fish and vegetables. Meanwhile, Amadou had unfurled his prayer rug and oriented his body, and soul, towards Mecca.

Aissatou presented a spoon and insisted I start eating. After Amadou finished praying, he sat across from me and began eating from his side of the bowl. Aissatou brought cups of cold water and a tray of chilled mango slices. Minutes later I happily slurped down the last slice of mango and broke into a wide grin. Amadou laughed, then looked at my hands sticky with mango juice and motioned towards the bathroom.

“Wash your whole body if you want,” he chuckled as I closed the door. In the simple bathroom area, a bucket of water, soap, and a towel were waiting for me. I smiled, overwhelmed by their hospitality.

After my bucket bath, Amadou said it was time to go. I started thanking them profusely for their hospitality and reached into my pocket to grab my wallet, but Aissatou interrupted me.

“Stop. We are together. This is Senegal, the country of *teranga*.” 



THE  
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MEMORIAL  
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2020

# ASK AND YOU MAY BE HELPED

How I Befriended an Iranian Border Guard at 2 a.m.

BY LUKAS FELDHAUS MIA '20

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A tender touch on my shoulder pulled me out of an uncomfortable sleep in an Iranian airport's plastic chair. Behind me, two Moroccans fought angrily about whose fault it was that their visas weren't valid, while the young man who had woken me up walked around the table I had rested my head upon. He sat down and looked me in the eyes. His suit was too elegant for this shabby waiting hall and he looked younger than me. Yet, a little needle with the Iranian flag he had pinned to his tie commanded authority.

A sense of subtle compassion appeared on his face as he said in Persian: "My dear, dear friend, we will have to deport you."

There I sat in Tehran's Emam Khomeini Airport at 4:30 a.m., afraid of the morning and of this young man. I cursed myself for having brought myself into this situation.

Two months before, I had decided to go to Iran and dive deeper into its culture, its religion, and its history, and study Persian at Tehran's only language school, the Dehkhoda International Center for Persian Studies. I had studied at the same school two years prior and knew the processes to get an education visa in Iran. I applied. Yet after one and a half months and many frustrating emails, the school kept telling me that my visa was still in some unknown government office.

Alas, not many people travel to Iran these days, and those who do seldom want to study Persian. The language school's courses thus begin and end in a fixed, six-week rhythm. The trouble was, it was already early April, and I only had time for one specific course that would end in May.

Never mind, I thought. Germans can get a tourist visa on arrival in Iran, so I hoped I'd just get one of those and then charm my way through the spiderweb of Iranian bureaucracy. Two weeks before the beginning of the course, without a visa but with a lot of hubris, I bought myself a plane ticket.



It was 2 a.m. when I arrived in Iran. The late spring night was already warm as I entered the country with a large group of Iranians. We were alone in the vast airport. Just one lonely cleaner in a dark blue uniform mopped the white tiles covering every floor, wall, and ceiling.

I handed my passport to an immigration officer and exchanged the usual bouquet of courtesies with him in the Persian ritual of saying hello. He then guided me to a waiting room which could have been adopted right from a Wes Anderson movie. Everything was orange: the tiles, the chairs, the desks, and the sofas. Dim halogen lamps tried badly to lighten the unicolor setting. I knew that I wouldn't leave this room without permission.

By now, my thoughts were racing even more quickly than they had been on the plane. Would they let me into the country? Would I be imprisoned?

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*“The young border guard saw my shocked expression and assured me that I would only be sent back to Germany. It calmed my fears of visiting an Iranian desert prison, but I still felt anxious. I wanted to stay. Why wasn't that possible? I looked up at him and said: ‘I am a friend of Iran and am here simply to learn your language. Can you help me?’ His eyes pierced me for a mere second, his face expressionless: ‘I will.’”*

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So early in the morning, the only other person waiting was a Russian language teacher who had come to Iran to visit a friend. Her long blond hair was flowing out from under the mandatory veil.

After half an hour of waiting, the young and well-dressed man entered our orange hall. He welcomed us to Iran and announced that he would first question the Russian teacher, then me.

“Why are you in Iran? Why Iran? But why?”



After 30 minutes of apparently satisfying answers to his repetitive questions, he stood up, calmly walked over, and sat down right in front of me. He was so close he could have touched my knee without extending his arm. “My friend, I am tired. Let's speak Persian,” he ordered and switched from Oxford English to Tehran Farsi.

I just hoped my charm wouldn't suffer from having to speak in a language I only knew 500 words of. “There already is an education visa application under your name. Why?” he asked with a wry smile.

I had decided before that I was going to be completely honest and explained to him my situation. I stuttered and took what felt like several lifetimes searching for the right Persian words. Yet, the more I struggled, the friendlier my counterpart became, speaking slowly and clearly, but never switching to English. “I will see what I can do for you, Lukas, my friend.” Then, I laid my head on my arms and fell asleep.

As I woke up and heard the word “deport,” my mind froze and my sleepy eyes grew sharp in an instant. In Persian, English, and German, “deport” is pronounced and written the same way. But in German, it carries with it the sound of screeching train wheels, of shouting German soldiers, and the whispering wind carrying away the ashes of deported and murdered people in our dark and unforgotten past.

The young border guard saw my shocked expression and assured me that I would only be sent back to Germany. It calmed my fears of visiting an Iranian desert prison, but I still felt anxious. I wanted to stay. Why wasn't that possible? I looked up at him and said: “I am a friend of Iran and am here simply to learn your language. Can you help me?” His eyes pierced me for a mere second, his face expressionless: “I will.”

Sometimes, your future is decided in just one moment. Had I not asked, I would have been sent back to Europe on the next flight. Had I not asked, I would not have seen people's fear when the American aircraft carrier arrived on its shores, would not have had tea at the British ambassador's residence, and would not have spent joyful nights driving through Tehran's packed streets, breathlessly singing along to Guns N' Roses and Iranian hip-hop with newly found Iranian friends. Had I not asked and had this young man at the airport, whose name I never knew, not helped me. [👑](#)

## 1 2019 GABRIEL SILVER MEMORIAL LECTURE

In the annual Silver Lecture on October 11, 2019, former World Bank president **Robert Zoellick** (*center*) offered a historical perspective on American trade policy. He was joined by **Dean Merit E. Janow** and European Institute director **Adam Tooze** (*right*).



## 2 INAUGURAL CEEP CONFERENCE

On October 18, 2019, SIPA's Center for Environmental Economics and Policy (CEEP) hosted its inaugural conference, highlighting research findings of five alumni and three current students in SIPA's PhD program in Sustainable Development. *Pictured: Anna Tompsett PhD '14.*



## 3 MOVING FORWARD

On December 5, Move On national spokesperson and former NBC/MSNBC commentator **Karine Jean-Pierre MPA '03** (*left*, with SIPA professors **David N. Dinkins** and **Ester Fuchs**) visited SIPA to discuss her new book, *Moving Forward: A Story of Hope, Hard Work, and the Promise of America*.



## 4 WASHINGTON, DC, CAREER CONFERENCE

SIPA's 44th annual Washington, DC, Career Conference was capped by a January 17 discussion of foreign policy that featured **Stephen Hadley**, who served as national security advisor during President George W. Bush's second term.



## 5 PANEL DISCUSSION ON CENTRAL BANK INDEPENDENCE

On February 3, SIPA's **Patricia C. Mosser** moderated a panel on central bank independence with (*from left*) **Stanley Fischer**, former vice-chair of the Federal Reserve and former governor of the Bank of Israel; **Ilan Goldfajn**, former governor of the Central Bank of Brazil; **Kathryn Judge**, professor of law at Columbia Law School; and **Simon Potter**, former executive vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.



**6 GEORGE W. BALL LECTURE**

**Toomas Ilves**—a former president of Estonia and SIPA's George Ball Adjunct Professor for spring 2020—delivered the George W. Ball Lecture, “Cybersecurity, the Digital State, and Democratic Governance,” as part of the Niejelow Rodin Global Digital Futures Policy Forum on February 21.



**7 COLUMBIA'S WORLD LEADERS FORUM**

On March 6, **Maria Jimena Rojas Mendez MPA-DP '21**, **Avantika Thakur MPA-DP '21**, and **Ali Nasrallah MPA-DP '20** had the opportunity to meet Finland's prime minister, **Sanna Marin** (*second from right*), when she spoke as part of Columbia's World Leaders Forum.

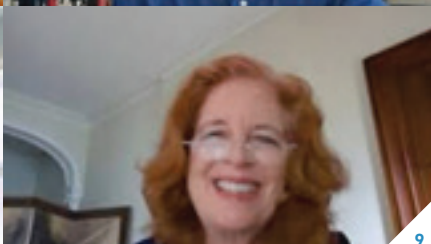
**8 DARREN WALKER ADDRESSES SIPA CLASS OF 2020**

On May 17, SIPA honored 727 graduates representing 69 nations with a virtual celebration. Featured speaker **Darren Walker**, president of the Ford Foundation, delivered his address via video: “I find hope in both the promise of your tomorrows and the promising work that you are doing already. You are already meeting this moment with fearlessness, courage, and fortitude.”



**9 THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

On July 1, SIPA professors **Willem Buiter** (*top left*), **Guillermo Calvo**, **Takatoshi Ito** (*top right*), **Patricia C. Mosser** (*bottom left*), and **Jan Svejnar** (with an introduction from **Dean Merit E. Janow**) discussed the economic impact the global market is facing due to COVID-19, focusing on such issues as liquidity, central bank independence, international supply chains, the stock markets, and oil prices.



**10 RIGHTING THE WRONGS—PUBLIC POLICY, CIVIL UNREST, AND COVID-19**

On July 9, the David N. Dinkins Leadership and Public Policy Forum featured **Van Jones** (*left*), CEO of REFORM Alliance, CNN host, and *New York Times* best-selling author, in conversation with **Michael Nutter**.



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# SIPA Launches Kent Global Leadership Program on Conflict Resolution

**A \$6 million gift from Muhtar Kent, former chairman and CEO of the Coca-Cola Company, will support a practical, innovative leadership-education program, visiting scholars, fellowships, and research.**

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**S**IPA has inaugurated an innovative program to train leaders in the field of conflict resolution as a result of a \$6 million gift from **Muhtar Kent**, the former chairman and CEO of the Coca-Cola Company.

The Kent Global Leadership Program on Conflict Resolution will prepare the next generation of global practitioners to meet the increasingly complex challenges posed by increasing uncertainty and conflict. The centerpiece of the program is an intensive training session for rising professionals from governments and intergovernmental institutions, to be held annually in New York City beginning in 2021.

The Kent Global Leadership Program will also sponsor programming throughout the academic year, a visiting professorship, and fellowships for outstanding SIPA graduate students, in addition to providing support for policy research.

“Officials working to ensure international peace and security today face new and complex threats—including the forced displacement of millions, gender-based violence, terrorism by non-state actors, and environmental changes—that require fresh thinking and better solutions,” said Dean **Merit E. Janow** of SIPA. “At a time when effective conflict resolution is more needed than ever, we thank Muhtar Kent for his farsighted vision and generosity in establishing this program.”

“This is an absolutely great initiative,” said conflict mediator **Lakhdar Brahimi**, a former United Nations and Arab League diplomat and a founding member of the Elders, a group of world leaders working for global peace. “Conflicts keep changing, and the bad guys seem to adapt their tactics—and perhaps their strategies too—faster if not better than governments, the UN, and regional and subregional organizations. We need to keep learning and adapting too.”

“We must always look for ways to make positive change in the world, no matter how daunting the challenge,” said Kent. “Addressing the world’s most demanding problems will require collaboration among governments, the private sector, and civil society, and I believe this innovative program will play a vital role in furthering this important work.”

Kent retired as chairman of Coca-Cola’s board of directors in April 2019 after a 41-year career with the company. He served as chairman and CEO from 2009 to 2017 and as president and CEO from 2008 to 2009. He joined the company in 1978 and contributed to its success for more than four decades, holding a variety of leadership positions in marketing and operations around the world. Kent is also active in the international business community and has served on the boards of a number of nonprofit organizations and institutions, including the Special Olympics and Emory University. He has chaired the US-China Business Council, the US-ASEAN Business Council, and the Consumer Goods Forum. He also received one of SIPA’s 2019 Global Leadership Awards in recognition of his contributions to the global public good.

“Addressing conflict around the world is an international imperative, and this unique program will leverage Columbia and SIPA’s immense strengths and expertise to broaden understanding of the problem and advance effective solutions,” said President **Lee C. Bollinger** of Columbia University. “We are grateful to Muhtar Kent for his commitment to engaging this challenge in collaboration with SIPA.”

Serving as the program’s inaugural director will be **Edward C. Luck**, the Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of Professional Practice in International and Public Affairs at SIPA. Luck also directs the specialization in International Conflict Resolution for students in the School’s MIA and MPA programs. Given SIPA’s “long contributions to knowledge, insight, and practice,” he said, “this is the right time and place for this exciting initiative.”

**Ernesto Zedillo**, the former president of Mexico and current Elders member who now directs the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization, congratulated SIPA on the new initiative. “The multidisciplinary approach is extremely important at this time when violent conflict not only continues to cause much human suffering but also impedes the political, social, and economic development of many parts of the world,” he said. “I express my recognition to Muhtar Kent for making this initiative possible.” [👑](#)

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*"We must always look for ways to make positive change in the world, no matter how daunting the challenge."*

**MUHTAR KENT**

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A gift from Muhtar Kent will support a leadership-education program, visiting scholars, fellowships, and research.

# CLASS NOTES

## STAY IN TOUCH!

Have something to share with us and your fellow SIPA grads? We are always interested in hearing what SIPA alumni are up to. Please submit updates at [bit.ly/SIPAClassNotes](https://bit.ly/SIPAClassNotes).



## 1962

**Anthony Horan** published the third edition of his book on prostate cancer, *The Rise and Fall of the Prostate Cancer Scam*. The book, Horan writes, is “aimed at the international market to try to prevent the medical free market, return on investment, ‘riot’ that occurred [in the US].”

## 1965

**Anthony Elson** is pleased to announce that his fourth book, *The United States in the World Economy: Making Sense of Globalization*, was published in 2019 by Palgrave Macmillan. He is now working on a book about the global-currency power of the US dollar.

## 1966

**Roger H. Lourie** retired this year after three decades as general partner of Seagrace Partners of Greenwich, CT, a private-equity investment partnership investing in American family-owned manufacturing firms and in French private military suppliers. He was the cochairman, along with his wife, Claude,

of the Palm Beach Opera’s hospitality committee. Their home in Provence houses visiting American artists on a regular basis.

## 1967



**Stan Sloan’s** latest book, *Defense of the West: Transatlantic Security from Truman to Trump*, was published this summer by Manchester University Press. In January, he taught for the 16th consecutive year in the winter term at Middlebury College. He and his wife, Monika, live in Richmond, VT, except from May to November, when they escape to their cabin on the Green Mountain state’s Lake Groton.

## 1969



**Aria Edry** writes: “For 41 years, I have been working tirelessly in the non-profit arena advocating for gender equality, animal wel-

fare, wildlife conservation, youth development, and social justice through community engagement and my own firm, Edry and Associates, a boutique consultancy with a team of creative women that assists nonprofits with strategic growth, digital storytelling, and governance. I’d love to hear from other alumni about what causes they are most passionate about, if they are serving on boards, and if their organizations need any advice.” Email Edry at [aria@edryandassociates.com](mailto:aria@edryandassociates.com).

## 1972



**J Boyd Black** is the honorary secretary of the UK Labour Party in Northern Ireland.

**Rose Ganguzza’s** latest film, *Fatima*, was recently released worldwide, and she begins production in New York this fall on a feature film, *All About Elaine*, about Elaine de Kooning and starring Mark Rylance.

## 1977



**Allan Grafman** was elected chair of the audit committee of IDWM, a public comic book and television entertainment company. On the personal side, last summer he revisited St. Petersburg, Russia, where he was an exchange student via CIEE.

**Mike Holubar** writes: “Having retired after 30-plus years in tech, I’m entering my fifth year teaching a required introductory survey course on business at the SCU Leavey School of Business. I thoroughly enjoy the student interactions, although this fall may be difficult having to do it via Zoom. It will certainly be different.”

**Peta Pellach** is the director of education at the Elijah Interfaith Institute, which is launching its “Coronaspection” series of interviews with world religious leaders representing seven different religions. He writes: “The wisdom of religious leaders and scholars can bring inspiration and hope during this time of global crisis. It is remarkable to see the common messages that these spokespeople share, despite the diversity of their religious identities.” The release will be via *Tablet* magazine and on Elijah’s website, [elijah-interfaith.org](http://elijah-interfaith.org).

## 1978

**Susan Aaronson** conceived of, fundraised for, and now directs the Digital Trade and Data Governance Hub at George Washington University. The hub educates policymakers on data-driven change and the governance of data. Aaronson is also a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation and does research on digital trade, data and national security, and AI as a global public good. She is eager to hear from classmates; email her at [saaronso@gwu.edu](mailto:saaronso@gwu.edu).

**Jill Gay** writes: “I continue to work on the intersection of gender, health, and education globally. I was in Senegal working on inclusion and education and returned in February. I have been sheltered in place since then but continue to provide technical assistance from the US.”



**Matthew Stevenson's** new book, *The Revolution as a Dinner Party: Across China with Edgar Snow, Mao Tse-tung, Joseph Stilwell, Chiang Kai-shek, and Sun Yat-sen*, an account of China before and during the

revolution, was published this spring by Odyssey Books. He wrote the book after extensive travel across China, including to the now infamous Wuhan.

## 1980

**Bruno Frydman** writes: “I speak seven languages and have had a very international career, mostly in film and entertainment, after graduation. Later, there was a period in hospitality management and private equity funds. I have lived in France, the United States, Italy, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, and Turkey. Now retired from corporate life, I am back in the country where I was born, Morocco. I live in a predominantly Berber region. I own a citrus and pig farm 30 miles east of the city of Agadir for half the year and spend the other half in Paris, where family, friends, and culture draw my full attention.”

**Richard Jones** writes: “Hard to believe, 40-year anniversary since graduating and also since I married my wife, a Columbia Law School graduate. We have two grown children and a two-year-old grandson. I am also pleased to say that I am cofounder of a private wealth management team, Jones Zafari, which was just recently ranked as the #1 private wealth management team in the nation by *Barron's*. I greatly value my experience at Columbia SIPA, not only from meeting my wife, but for the excellent education I received at the School. In addition to my business, I am involved with several philanthropies, including the boards of the LA Opera, USC Thornton School of Music, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, and St. Barnabas Senior Services. It is so important to give back to the community, especially in today’s challenging world.”

## 1981

**Austin Amalu** writes: “Following retirement, I formed the nonprofit organization the Triangle, which, among other things, seeks to deal with poverty eradication issues at the grassroots rural level in my village, Obeleagu Umana, near Enugu in Enugu State, Nigeria, through empowerment of native women, microcredit, revolving funds arrangement, and food security initiatives, including rural animal husbandry. All activ-

ities are funded by myself. Unfortunately, I ran into a spell of ill health lately and have been here receiving treatment at Johns Hopkins.”

## 1982

**Paul Bernstein** is a distinguished fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at National Defense University in Washington, DC. He is engaged in research, policy support, and professional military education activities related to strategic security policy, including nuclear weapons, regional security, arms control, missile defense, and deterrence strategy. He has been a national security professional for 38 years in the public and private sectors. Before joining National Defense University, he was vice president at Science Applications International Corporation, a leading professional-services firm in the defense sector.

**Patricia Haslach** retired from the US State Department and is living in Doha, Qatar, with her husband, the UK ambassador to Qatar.

**Bethany Mickahail**, a faculty member in the School of Doctoral Studies at the University of Phoenix, released a new management book with coeditor C. T. Aquino, *Effective and Creative Leadership in Diverse Workforces: Improving Organizational Performance and Culture in the Workplace*. The book was published in 2019 by Palgrave Macmillan.

**Anne Dowd Moretti** writes: “I’ve been selling residential real estate for nearly 25 years in Scarsdale, NY. My studies in economics, Chinese language, and African studies were all important to my career. I dismissed NGOs and the UN, finding instead that I could be more impactful in supporting education in Africa if I spent my own money and personally directed the assistance. Real estate sales finance my work in Africa. I sell homes and use part of that money to support my educational and refugee work in Rwanda. My website [mamaproject.org](http://mamaproject.org) shows what my small team does.”

**Carol Wise**, a professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Southern California (USC), has written widely on trade integration, exchange-rate crises, institutional reform, and the political economy of market restructuring in the Latin America region. Wise is author of the book *Dragonomics: How Latin America Is Maximizing (or Missing Out on) China's International Development Strategy*, which was published in 2020 by Yale University Press. The book analyzes the rapid economic ties that have developed between China and Latin America since the 1990s.

## 1984

**Carol Lynch** writes: "Our daughter, Emily Degener Lynch, was born on August 4, 2019."

## 1985

**John Jove** writes: "I am working at PepsiCo in global sales and appreciate all the webinars SIPA is providing during COVID-19! All my SIPA learnings are helping me navigate this global crisis. Always glad to connect with alumni!" Email Jove at [jc1jove@gmail.com](mailto:jc1jove@gmail.com).



**Marc St John** writes: "Living the dream in the UK. Met my wife, **Julie Newton '86**, at SIPA in 1983. Julie is now a research fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford. We have two children, Malcolm in New York City with Citi and Maddie, who just graduated (remotely) from Princeton University. Columbia was an amazing experience and great place to learn for Julie and me."

## 1986



**Christine Ingebritsen**, a professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, writes: "This has been a year. Learning Zoom and creating new learning experiences to engage students at home, working on a project on 'Sweden Today,' and comparing the responses of Scandinavian societies to COVID-19. Empathy for our students is mandatory. Greetings to my friends Laurie Doyle '86SW and Eileen Mullarkey '86SW, who served on the residence counselor team on the quad. Many discussions and runs down Riverside Drive on the way to V&T's. Two books out thanks to mentoring by Glenda Rosenthal: *The Nordic States and European Unity*, published in 1998 by Cornell University Press, and *Scandinavia in World Politics*, published in 2006 by Rowman & Littlefield. I am still writing—now more on eco-capitalism. Greetings to everyone in the Class of 1986, and thanks for reaching out to the alumni."

**D. Bonni Van Blarcom** started her own firm, Customs and Border Management Services, after working for the United Nations, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and US Agency for International Development. Her current work is an evaluation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's multi-million-dollar customs reform project in Guatemala. Last year, she provided training on indicators to the government of Egypt on the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement and advised the Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority. Soon, she'll be looking for her next assignment.

## 1987

**Timothy Lim** has a new book, *The Road to Multiculturalism in South Korea: Ideas, Discourse, and the Challenge of Institutional Change in a Homogenous Nation-State*, forthcoming with Routledge. He previously

published *The Politics in East Asia: Explaining Change*, in 2015, and *Continuity and Doing Comparative Politics*, Third Edition, in 2016, both with Riener. Lim is also a recipient, with a team of six other researchers from the US and Australia, of a \$1.3 million Laboratory for Korean Studies grant, awarded by the Academy of Korean Studies and the Ministry of Education for South Korea (2018–2022).

## 1992



**Yoshikazu Mikami** writes: "During April and May, I had to stay home because of the deadly coronavirus. All the university meetings and lectures were done by Zoom. That saved me from commuting three hours every day, and thanks to this, I was able to jog every morning and finish my new book. If you see the cover of the book *Wine and Nudist Beach—Confessions of a Bisexual*, you'll notice a nice beach and a sunset which, with some imagination, can take you to Spain's Mallorca, where the story takes place. Hopefully, readers can enjoy a virtual summer holiday!" Learn more about the book at [yoshikazumikami.wixsite.com/mysite](http://yoshikazumikami.wixsite.com/mysite).

**David Victor** writes: "I recently left journalism to work full time building an NGO I started four years ago—the International Free Expression Project. The mission is to generate public support for free expression around the world by erecting the world's first iconic work of public art symbolizing free expression, creating in a vast former newspaper pressroom a 'marketplace of ideas,' inventing immersive educational activities that drive home the importance of protecting free-expression rights, and commissioning works of art and other creative endeavors. Please join us at [ifep.io](http://ifep.io). We'd love to have you."



## 1993

**Horace Jen** is serving as acting principal deputy under secretary for intelligence and analysis at the Department of Homeland Security, the third-largest federal government agency, with nearly a quarter million employees. He would love to hear from SIPA alumni in the Washington, DC, area at horace.jen@hq.dhs.gov.

**Michele Wucker**, author of *The Gray Rhino: How to Recognize and Act on the Obvious Dangers We Ignore*, published an op-ed, "No, the coronavirus pandemic wasn't an 'unforeseen problem,'" in the *Washington Post* on March 17 challenging the tired black swan trope.

## 1994

**Mayada El-Zoghbi** has joined the global nonprofit Accion as managing director of its Center for Financial Inclusion.

In January, **Laurence Freed** was promoted to principal of the Brattle Group, a global consulting firm that provides consulting services and expert testimony in economics, finance, and regulation.

## 1996

**Elizabeth "Libby" Higgs** (no, not the lion as some SIPA classmates from RSA inferred) works in emerging infectious disease research response for the NIH on pandemics and outbreaks including H1N109, Ebola, Nipah, and SARS-CoV-2. Higgs works collaboratively with multilaterals, bilaterals, and the interagency in an effort to advance vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics for outbreak pathogens. She has four fabulous children and resides in McLean, VA, just outside Washington, DC. She values her SIPA education and says hello to former classmates.



April Palmerlee



**Charles Owino-Ngesa** writes: "Retired in 2016 as communications secretary and CEO of the National Communications Secretariat, an agency

of the government established to provide policy advisory services on the ICT sector to the government of Kenya. Graduated from Columbia SIPA with an MIA in Economic Policy Management in 1996."

## 1997

**Jeremy Craig** continues to try to run a Singapore-based test-prep business serving the region, though recent developments have prompted him to diversify into other enrichment programs, such as grammar skills, filmmaking, coding, and jazz flute. He is seriously thinking about packing it all in and moving with his Malaysian wife to her home of Kuching and teaching why hegemonic stability theory didn't work.

**Scott Licamele** gave a lecture, "Beyond Containment: A New Policy for Managing Russian Aggression," at the Harriman Institute at Columbia University as part of the Program on U.S.-Russia Relations (PURR).

**Molly Spencer** is starting her third year as a writing instructor at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public

Policy. In addition to her teaching, she is a poet, a literary critic, and a senior editor at the online literary magazine the *Rumpus*, where she edits book reviews and essays on poetry and poetics. Her debut poetry collection, *If the House*, was published in October of 2019 by University of Wisconsin Press. A second collection, *Hinge*, will be published this October by Southern Illinois University Press.

## 1999

**April Palmerlee**, CEO of the American Chamber of Commerce in Sydney, writes: "Australia has had a tough 2020: droughts, fires, floods, and now COVID-19. However, the country has come through the pandemic relatively well, barely cracking triple digits in the death toll. As the *New York Times* said, 'The epidemic curve was not so much flattened as steamrollered.' After almost three decades of uninterrupted economic growth, we will almost certainly see a recession in the months and years ahead. But I look at the constraints imposed by the lockdown as impetus to innovate and increase efficiency. And although it appears we won't be able to bring in-person trade delegations to the US for some time, the new opportunities created by everyone's adoption of a work-from-anywhere mentality are significant and exciting."

**Shelly Sitton-Tygielski** was featured in the June issue of *Mindful* magazine, an international publication focusing on the field of contemplative studies and research. Her cover story focused on the grassroots mindfulness community of over 15,000 students she has built in South Florida over the last three years and her trauma work with the Parkland community after the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February of 2018. She is now leading healing retreats for victims and survivors of mass shootings all over the country, as well as working with community and social justice organizations focusing on bringing tools of “self-care for activists.”

## 2000

**Laura McHale** writes: “I finished my doctorate (PsyD) last year in leadership psychology, with a concentration in the neuroscience of leadership. I have launched my own consulting business doing leadership consulting and advisory, along with executive coaching and psychometric assessments. I continue to research the neuroscience of intercultural competency. I’ve also started lecturing as a visiting scholar at HKUST. While Hong Kong has been badly impacted by the protests, we have been relatively lucky with COVID-19, in large part because of a population with very high mask-wearing compliance, due to their previous experiences with SARS and influenza. While the future of the pro-democracy movements remains uncertain, Hong Kong continues to be a fascinating place to live!”

After time in investment banking and impact investing, **Steve Rocco** continues to innovate as managing director at the Ground\_Up Project. In collaboration with the SDG Lab at the United Nations in Geneva, Ground\_Up is piloting the Pipeline Builder, which uses development expertise and financial industry acumen to address the missing middle of SDG investments

and to structure and broker transactions for SMEs that are directly linked to country-level SDG plans.

**José Luis Rojas Villarreal** writes: “After SIPA, I joined UBS in Mexico City as the country tasted democratic change. Then I moved to Cambridge, MA, where Maija and I married, and I started working at Root Capital. After lending to Latin American and African fair trade cooperatives and becoming a father to Alejandro and Erik, I changed my focus to Massachusetts. At Mass Growth Capital and Boston Private, I worked with small businesses in disadvantaged communities. Now at LEAF I have returned to my cooperatives roots. My kids attend Cambridge Public Schools, where I am serving my first term on the school committee [board].”

## 2001

**Danielle Garbe Reser** received Exponent Philanthropy’s 2019 “Outsized Impact Award.” The award recognizes individuals at Exponent Philanthropy member organizations whose style of philanthropy is achieving outsized—or, greater than expected—impact. Reser’s nomination was for her work promoting rural philanthropy as CEO of Sherwood Trust in Walla Walla, WA. She left the private foundation in January and announced that she is running for the Washington State Senate. Her website is garbereser.com.

**Michael Sharpe’s** scholarly article “Extending Postcolonial Sovereignty Games: The Multilevel Negotiation of Autonomy and Integration in the 2010 Dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles and Dutch Kingdom Relations” was published in the April issue of *Ethnopolitics*. He also published a review of Pedro Iacobelli’s *Postwar Emigration to South America from Japan and the Ryuku Islands* in the summer 2019 issue of the *Journal of Japanese Studies*. Sharpe is an adjunct research scholar at the Weatherhead East Asia Institute at Columbia University.



Shelly Sitton-Tygielski

**Ivan V. Small’s** book on social and material dimensions of migration and remittances, *Currencies of Imagination: Channeling Money and Chasing Mobility in Vietnam*, was published in 2019 by Cornell University Press. An economic anthropologist based in Connecticut, he is on sabbatical research leave in Southeast Asia.

## 2002



**Jennifer Enslin** and her partner Jacky Ramsey are thrilled to announce the launch of their company Ashlyn Lee,

which is dedicated to helping tweens and teens and their parents navigate puberty with content, community, and premium organic tampons and pads that are sized for adults and teens. Learn more at ashlynlee.com.

**Ogniana “Oggie” Ivanova-Sriram** joined the US State Department Foreign Service in 2010 along with her husband, Raj Sriram. After serving tours in Bangladesh, Brazil, Washington, DC, and Russia, she is the chief of American Citizen Services at the US Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine. In these unprecedented times of global health crisis, her top priority is to help US citizens go back home, and in the past three months,

she and her team have helped over 2,000 people return to the US on charter flights. She and her husband have an 11-year old son, Emil, who loves football, tennis, math, and drawing.

## 2003



**Chingyu Yao** writes: "SIPA alumni and the Columbia Alumni Association responded to New Taipei City's invitation (where I work as the DG of

the Secretariat), and together we donated the personal protective equipment—including 1,250 isolation gowns and 400 cloth masks—to the New York City Mayor's Office, where **Penny Abeywardena '05** serves as commissioner of international affairs. Also, CAA Taiwan and Yale Club Taipei jointly hosted a webinar where health experts shared Taiwan's practices of combating COVID-19 with international counterparts. No one can predict the ending time of the pandemic. However, we do realize that solidarity will be the best antidote."

## 2004

After serving as a senior cabinet and communications adviser to California governors Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jerry Brown and as chief of staff to the then attorney general Kamala Harris, **Elizabeth Ashford** has worked for the past four years in various roles developing California's legal cannabis marketplace. As senior communications director for Eaze Technologies, she led the company's COVID-19 response plan to ensure thousands of daily to-the-door deliveries are completed legally, safely, and within CDC requirements. She lives in California with her husband, Conyers Davis, who serves as global director for the USC Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Local Policy.

**Claire (Bratt) Meier Underhill** writes: "After 15 years as in finance, I am now back at a nonprofit. I'm lucky to have a flexible schedule at the Emerging Markets Investors Alliance, though when there is no fixed start time, there is no fixed end time! The new work brings me back in touch with old colleagues—many SIPA alumni—across EM public markets and has relit my fire for ESG and advocacy, though I am keeping one foot in sovereign debt analysis at the *Ally Pally Analyst* ([allypallyanalyst.com](http://allypallyanalyst.com)) and also keeping the mind fresh developing my skills as a financial journalist."

**Colum Murphy** was recently appointed reporter covering Chinese politics for *Bloomberg* in Beijing. Before that, he was an editor on the publication's tech desk, also in Beijing. Since graduation, Murphy has worked extensively in journalism in Greater China, including as automotive reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* in Shanghai. He's also the founder of *Chinarrative*, a newsletter and website that showcase long-form nonfiction writing from and about China in English. Murphy is looking forward to connecting with SIPA alumni working in international affairs, especially those focused on US-China relations. He can be reached at [cmurphy270@bloomberg.net](mailto:cmurphy270@bloomberg.net) or on Twitter @Colum\_M.

**Takamasa Nakajima** writes: "Since last summer, I have been working in Hokkaido (northern Japan), where great nature and wonderful foods attract millions of tourists every year from around the world. COVID-19 affects this region, which counts heavily on the tourism industry. As Shakespeare says, however, 'The night is long that never finds the day.' Messages from every corner of the world have again made me realize the spirit of solidarity which I have learnt at SIPA. Wishing that humans overcome times of crisis as quickly as possible—'Kampai' to the world!"

## 2005



**Shawn Brown** is the commissioner of public safety for the Town of North Hempstead on Long Island. In October 2019, he was elected as a board member for the New York State Parking and Transportation Association. In addition to being the public safety commissioner, Brown started Samba 360, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, all-volunteer charity that distributes sports equipment to disadvantaged children throughout the Americas. Since 2013, Samba 360 has given away more than 7,000 new and gently used soccer balls, cleats, uniforms, and similar sports equipment.



**Jon Pyatt** serves as chief of staff to Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-IL). Bustos serves as the chairwoman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, tasked with protecting the House Democratic majority during the 2020 election cycle. Pyatt serves as Bustos's top adviser and was the architect of two successful leadership races. Bustos, from Pyatt's home state of Illinois, is the only member in senior House Democratic elected leadership who represents the Midwest or a congressional district won by President Trump. Pyatt and his husband, Ron Mennow, a nurse practitioner, reside in Washington, DC, with their American bulldog, Thurlo.

## 2006

**Michaela Cabrera** is a video journalist in the Paris bureau of Reuters. She covers French and European politics, culture, fashion, and soccer. Recently, news has been focused on the coronavirus and the pandemic's economic impact. During her summer at SIPA, Michaela did an internship with the *Daily Star Egypt* in Cairo, where she started learning Arabic. She went back to the Middle East for a stint in the Jerusalem bureau of Reuters during the Gaza War. She continues learning Arabic in France, where she lives with her husband and daughter.

**Sarah Huber** writes: "I moved to Nigeria last year after a couple of years in Ethiopia working with the government. Here in Lagos, I'm working with a big food company to improve agricultural production with Nigerian farmers. I've really enjoyed traveling and getting to know the country. Things are very difficult in Nigeria now with the pandemic and crash in oil prices. Hoping this will lead to a renewed focus on agricultural investment. And hoping it will be safe to travel and explore again soon!"

## 2008

**Erica Berenstein** is the head of video at *Business Insider*, working with her team to develop shows and series in the areas of business and politics, as well as overseeing Facebook's most popular daily news show, *Business Insider Today*. She is also teaching at SIPA, leveraging her journalism and video experience to offer a newly developed course, *Crowdsourced Storytelling for Policymakers, Journalists, and NGOs*.

**Pat Contreras**, director of business development at McGownGordon Construction in Kansas City, MO, was honored in the 22nd class of "40 Under Forty" by *Ingram's Magazine*, the leading business publication in Missouri and Kansas.



**Peter Zalmayev** writes: "In 2016, I moved back to Ukraine, where for the last two and a half years I've been hosting an international affairs talk show on the Pryamy TV channel. I continue to work as director of the NGO Eurasia Democracy Initiative, providing regular commentary on developments in Ukraine to western media and explaining US politics to the Ukrainian audience. I write for a variety of Ukrainian publications and appear occasionally on BBC World News, Al Jazeera, and CNN International."

## 2009

**Marie Mintalucci** is excited to announce the launch of a new program: WomenSave. WomenSave is on a mission to expand financial services to underserved women in developing economies with commitment savings plans and access to mobile money. As the director, she is piloting the project in Uganda and is looking forward to scaling it up next. Please feel free to reach out to her with any comments or questions at [mmintalucci@gpfd.org](mailto:mmintalucci@gpfd.org).

## 2010



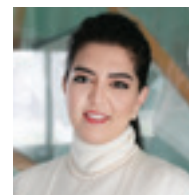
**Waqar Ahmad**, head of corporate affairs at Nestlé in Pakistan and Afghanistan, is responsible for developing direct linkages, leading sustainability, and ensuring institutional networking for public policy and business advocacy with government, media, private-sector, and international institutions. He previously worked as a private sector specialist with the World Bank.

**Carolina Duran**, secretary of economic development in Bogotá, Colombia, writes: "Today we face a dual challenge: to flatten the epidemic curve by assuring all sanitary and safety measures, including confinement, and to flatten the economic recession curve. Mitigating the effects of COVID-19 has inevitably impacted Bogotá's productive ecosystem; nonetheless, we have been working to ensure that the most affected have the necessary support. However, we are most aware of the importance of 'keeping it positive' and inviting citizens to see an opportunity to reinvent and recharge their skills; to be inspired; and to promote entrepreneurs and local businesses. Ingenuity, innovation, and talent are key to successfully achieve economic reactivation in post-COVID-19 countries."

**Brian Goldblatt** is head of sales at Natoora, a company that delivers produce and specialty goods to chefs at New York City restaurants. Its mission—to build a better food system, with responsible farmers as the foundation and ingredients grown for flavor, not yield—continues post-COVID-19 by serving thousands of New Yorkers through at-home delivery service. Consumers can now purchase the same fruits and vegetables used by the city's top chefs, giving much-needed support to a network of growers providing long-term sustainability for the food system. To join Natoora's food revolution, visit [natoora.com](http://natoora.com).

**Thurlough Smyth** earned a PhD in technology, policy, and innovation at Stony Brook University, the State University of New York, and is working as a visiting scientist with Oak Ridge Institute for Science & Education (ORISE).

## 2011



To support NYCHA General Grant Houses' residents in Harlem during the devastating impact of COVID-19 and as a heartfelt thank

you for their contributions to the community, SIPA adjunct professor **Ameera Amir** launched a philanthropic series. In collaboration with Congressman Adriano Espaillat, the threefold series is geared toward elevating seniors, single mothers, and youth. It is part of an effort to ensure support and unity as communities rebuild in response to the crisis. Sarah Alshawish and Kaitlyn Menegio-Stahl, current SIPA students in Urban and Social Policy, have joined the team as Social Policy and Community Relations Fellows. To connect, email AH2859@columbia.edu.

**Jaclyn Carlsen** and Rebecca Saxton-Fox '13 work at USAID in the Center for Digital Development, where they work on improving the use of digital technologies and data in international development programs. They have been doing work on COVID-19 response, building off of the work they did during the Ebola response several years ago. Carlsen sits on several of USAID's working groups dedicated to COVID-19 response.



US Army **Lt. Col. Joe Katz** graduated from the United States Army War College in Carlisle, PA, with a master's degree in strategic studies in

June. His next assignment is working as an operations officer for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon in Washington, DC. While at the Army War College, he completed a strategic research project on the impacts of climate change on the US Army Arctic strategy.

**Thomas Rains** recently became executive director of the Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. Institute, a new organization named after the federal judge whose rulings sparked the civil rights movement. The Johnson Institute is dedicated to promoting understanding of the US Constitution and inspiring others through the stories of Judge Johnson's cases and courage.



Brian Greer

## 2012

**Brian Greer** writes: "At the end of 2019, I left my position as a professional staff member on the Armed Services Committee of the US Congress and started working for a boutique government affairs firm called the Klein/Johnson Group. As a principal at this firm, I advise business on how to work with the US government. In personal news, recently my wife, Natalie, and I were blessed to welcome my son, Titus Maddox Greer, into our lives. He is an absolute joy and will now share a special section of my heart, right there with Natalie and SIPA."

## 2013

**Rebecca Saxton-Fox** and Jaclyn Carlsen '11 work at USAID in the Center for Digital Development, where they work on improving the use of digital technologies and data in international development programs. They have been doing work on COVID-19 response, building off of the work they did during the Ebola response several years ago.

**Adam Scher** is a White House Fellow in the Office of Management and Budget.

## 2014

**Itay Gefen** manages the initiative Yazam, an Israeli-Palestinian software house, founded in 2011 and based in Tel Aviv and Ramallah. Yazam is a social business placing high-level Palestinian programmers at

high-tech companies based in Israel, with two lines of profit—financial and social. They have placed employees at Google, Cisco, HP, and many other Israeli high-tech companies. The employees are hired long term, providing a unique career opportunity that allows for continuity and contributes to the diversity in the workplace. This initiative also fosters meaningful cross-cultural collaboration between the Palestinian and Israeli personnel.

## 2015

**Zhaniya Adilova** and Anuar Yelemessov were married in 2019 and are raising their two kids, Jeanne Aurette and Amir Alim, in New York. After graduating from SIPA, Adilova founded Dulat Consulting, providing services to investors and entrepreneurs interested in doing business in Kazakhstan. In 2017, she founded the Tengri Foundation, an NGO supporting innovators to solve social and environmental issues worldwide.

Through his organization Public Sentiment, **Mike Lenihan** is working with the City of New York to design a yearlong COVID-19 relief and recovery effort in low-income communities. The community-led work benchmarks biweekly surveys tracking residents' needs against citywide data and brings policymakers, residents, and community-based organizations together to design and iterate effective policy solutions. Lenihan is looking for more collaborators, so email him at mlenihan@publicsentiment.org if interested.

**Angel Vasquez** writes: "My SIPA education has propelled me into places in my career that I could not imagine doing without it. From serving as an education policy analyst in the New York State Senate to running two political campaigns to serving as chief of staff to the first Dominican state senator in New York State to now serving in the legislative and political action department at the United Federation of Teachers. I live my SIPA MPA every day."

**Elyssa White** writes: “Since graduating from SIPA, I’ve had the pleasure of working in San Francisco and NYC on a variety of policy issues ranging from affordable housing and homelessness to small business and environmental resilience. I’m particularly grateful for the friendships I made in SIPA’s Urban and Social Policy focus and for the opportunity to meet even more brilliant classmates as a TA. The people I met at SIPA have inspired me in all of my work, lifted me up personally, and helped me see the intersections between public and private approaches and intersectional disciplines.”

**Lily Li-Wen Zhang** is teaching at the Seton Hall University School of Diplomacy and International Relations and has also taught at Zhejiang University and Fudan University (China). She writes: “Thank you to Columbia University and all the professors that provided me a great opportunity to obtain an excellent education and provided me an opportunity to give back to Columbia University and the society as a whole.”

## 2016

**Anita Koul** writes: “I recently launched Kufukaa, a digital platform that invites artisans from distant communities to showcase and sell their sustainable artwork. When the COVID-19 pandemic gripped our country, the Kufukaa team decided to drop everything and help the unemployed, make face masks and other products, and donate to our health-care workers. It was when I realised that the embedded purpose of my business was beyond bringing people together, it was to contribute. Kufukaa was meant to contribute to artistic societies, to support small businesses, and to contribute towards causes that make this world a better place. I’m proud that today it’s exactly what Kufukaa is doing.”



**Zhazira Kul-Mukhammed** writes: “My MPA degree was an incredible launchpad for my career as a diplomat. The lectures of revered faculty and amazing guest speakers filled with incredible insight and foresight into how policies and politics influence international relations are what fueled my interest in politics. The knowledge that I gained from fantastic faculty and equally amazing peers seasoned and shaped me for my career. Today, as a human rights officer for the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations Office in Geneva, I continue to apply the instrumental knowledge gained at SIPA in my daily work. And I thank you for that, SIPA!”

## 2017

**Ignazio Bellini** writes: “After three years working in infrastructure as project manager with public- and private-sector clients, first in New York and then in Dublin, I have moved back to Italy to work for a leading energy firm on their sustainability strategy, which includes the pursuit of carbon neutrality, as well as initiatives to promote local development through the establishment of public-private partnerships.”

**Claudio Maes** writes: “My journey through Columbia began in spring 2016. It all happened at a time when, after many years leading supervision teams in the Brazilian capital market, I was looking for a new meaning to my professional life. My routine was composed of bylaws, numbers, information, and tough conversations. Sustainability? It didn’t seem like a businesslike matter! But SIPA has enlightened me! Nowadays I have the privilege of working in the links between market solutions and the sustainable development of the nations. And the supervisor whose mission was to pull ears has become a creator, dealing with innovations, sandboxes, fintechs, and green finance. Thank you so much, Columbia! Cheers!”



Always driven by a mission to create large-scale impact, **Vipul Nanda** previously worked as a management and strategy consultant and with various different UN entities. The same drive has led him to join Invest India, the national investment promotion and facilitation agency of India. He is working with the central and state governments to facilitate investments by focusing on regulatory bottlenecks in key sectors and driving sectoral policymaking.

## 2018

**Gabriel Guggisberg** was one of 40 young professionals selected to join the World Energy Council as a Future Energy Leader. This global initiative aims to shape the energy future, challenge conventional thinking, and solve the world’s most pressing issues in the energy and sustainability of tomorrow.

**Sinta Lestari** writes: “After graduation, I worked for CIFOR for more than 10 years. I left the organization in December of last year to join the Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) as a partnership and capacity-development specialist. RFN is a rights-based organization located in Oslo. It works with local partners in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea to support the environmental and human rights defenders to protect the rainforest.”



**Allia Mohamed** and **Srujan Routhu** are cofounders of a new startup, openigloo, a platform that allows tenants to read and share rental experiences while gaining

insights about their buildings and landlords. Based in Brooklyn, Mohamed and Routhu are on a mission to empower tenants and address the lack of transparency in rental markets. Since graduating from SIPA, Mohamed has worked in venture capital, while Routhu was part of the team at EdLab at Teachers College. They are excited to take this next step and join the community of SIPA entrepreneurs!

## 2019

**Clara Ceccanti** writes: “I graduated in 2019 with a dual degree from SIPA and CSSW. Currently I am working for Mount Sinai Hospital, supporting an extensively diverse, high-risk population of patients suffering from multiple chronic conditions. My work on a daily basis involves providing food, medications, and housing resources, as well as emotional support and mental health counseling. One of the hardest parts of my work in the last two months has been working with families who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. I personally have lost eight patients to this virus, while many more have been infected and hospitalized. The work is tiring and emotionally overwhelming, but I love what I do and am humbled to have graduated in a field that enables me to work alongside some of the city’s most vulnerable, most affected, and most resilient during this crisis.”

**Maayan Keren** is working with Tikkun Olam Makers (TOM), an Israeli-turned-global humanitarian venture that designs open-source solutions to neglected problems (those without a market or government solution) for people with disabilities and the elderly. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the TOM team (including CEO **Edun Sela '17**) has focused on mobilizing our global network of communities to manufacture and distribute over 60,000 units of PPE, including face shields and masks for essential workers in hospitals, medical clinics, nursing homes, rehab centers, and special education programs around the world.



Tikkun Olam Makers (TOM) has mobilized its global network of communities to manufacture and distribute over 60,000 units of PPE.



**Even Kvelland** co-founded Glint Solar, which uses a combination of satellite data and machine learning to find and analyze sites for floating solar energy. The company recently received an investment from Antler, a global early-stage VC firm, and is now working with customers around the world to accelerate floating solar projects. He writes: “SIPA’s energy concentration, with its mix of policy and finance, prepared me well to enter into the energy sector.”

**Sarah Stone** writes: “Please reach out if you are interested in collaborating on issues related to racial justice in education in NYC or social justice in Israel and Palestine. I work with the NYC DOE as a restorative education analyst and with IntegrateNYC as a coach and remain involved in anti-occupation and peacebuilding efforts in Jerusalem.” Email Stone at sbs2181@columbia.edu.

**Mark Weiller** recently joined Stone Harbor Investment Partners, a global institutional fixed-income investment manager with expertise in emerging markets debt and global credit strategies, as head of dis-

tribution and product management. He is based in New York and has 28 years of investment management experience. Before joining Stone Harbor, he was investment director—emerging markets for M&G Investments and also served in executive roles at emerging market specialist firms New Sparta Asset Management and Ashmore Investment Management. He has also worked at Citigroup and Morgan Stanley. [👉](#)

## IN MEMORIAM

**John Conway Boyd IF '08, MIA '09**  
1980–2020

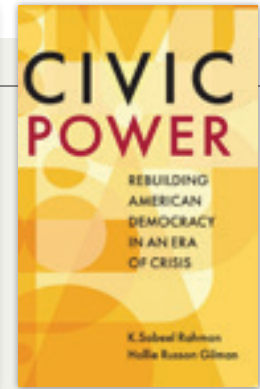
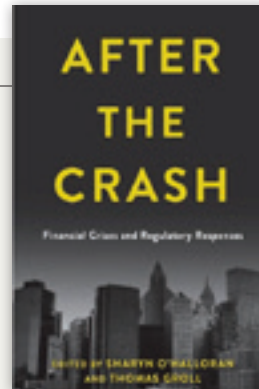
**Isaac Rauch MPA '17**  
1991–2020

**Frederick David Seaton IF '62, MIA '66**  
1940–2020

**Peter “Pedro” Spiller MIA '68**  
1943–2020

**Amitha Sundararaj MPA-EPM '16**  
1986–2020

# BOOKCASE



## FACULTY & SCHOLARS

**ELAZAR BARKAN (WITH CONSTANTIN GOSCHLER AND JAMES E. WALLER)**

*Historical Dialogue and the Prevention of Mass Atrocities* (Routledge, 2020)

**STEVEN COHEN AND WILLIAM EIMICKE**

*Management Fundamentals* (Columbia University Press, 2020)

**ANDREAS DOMBRET**

*Stable Banks in Challenging Times* (Edward Elgar, 2020)

**HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN (WITH K. SABEEL RAHMAN)**

*Civic Power: Rebuilding American Democracy in an Era of Crisis* (Cambridge University Press, 2019)

**TAKATOSHI ITO (WITH TAKEO HOSHII)**

*The Japanese Economy*, Second Edition (MIT Press, 2020)

**PAUL F. LAGUNES AND JAN SVEJNAR**

*Corruption and the Lava Jato Scandal in Latin America* (Routledge, 2020)

**MARIA VICTORIA MURILLO (EDITOR, WITH DANIEL M. BRINKS AND STEVEN LEVITSKY)**

*The Politics of Institutional Weakness in Latin America* (Cambridge University Press, 2020)

**JOHN C. MUTTER**

*Climate Change Science: A Primer for Sustainable Development* (Columbia University Press, 2020)

**ANNE NELSON**

*Shadow Network: Media, Money, and the Secret Hub of the Radical Right* (Bloomsbury, 2019)

**JOSÉ ANTONIO OCAMPO (EDITOR, WITH MACHIKO NISSANKE)**

*The Palgrave Handbook of Development Economics: Critical Reflections on Globalisation and Development* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

**SHARYN O'HALLORAN AND THOMAS GROLL (EDITORS)**

*After the Crash: Financial Crises and Regulatory Responses* (Columbia University Press, 2019)

**ARVIND PANAGARIYA**

*India Unlimited: Reclaiming the Lost Glory* (HarperCollins Publishers India, 2020)

**FRANCISCO L. RIVERA-BATIZ (EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)**

*Encyclopedia of International Economics and Global Trade* (World Scientific, 2020)

**RICHARD ROBB**

*Willful: How We Choose What We Do* (Yale University Press, 2019)

**JEFFREY D. SACHS**

*The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions* (Columbia University Press, 2020)

**ROBERT SHAPIRO (EDITOR, WITH DEMETRIOS JAMES CARALEY)**

*Presidential Selection and Democracy* (The Academy of Political Science, 2019)

**JOSEPH STIGLITZ**

*Rewriting the Rules of the European Economy: An Agenda for Growth and Shared Prosperity* (W. W. Norton, 2020)

**MIGUEL URQUIOLA**

*Markets, Minds, and Money: Why America Leads the World in University Research* (Harvard University Press, 2020)





**ALEXIS WICHOWSKI**

*The Information Trade: How Big Tech Conquers Countries, Challenges Our Rights, and Transforms Our World* (HarperCollins, 2020)

**ALAN YANG (WITH RODOLFO DE LA GARZA)**

*Americanizing Latino Politics, Latinoizing American Politics* (Routledge, 2019)

## ALUMNI

**ZAINA ARAFAT MIA '09**

*You Exist Too Much* (Catapult, 2020)

**SUSAN BERFIELD MIA '92**

*The Hour of Fate: Theodore Roosevelt, J. P. Morgan, and the Battle to Transform American Capitalism* (Bloomsbury, 2020)

**NATHANIEL PARISH FLANNERY MIA '13**

*Searching for Modern Mexico: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the New Global Economy* (Florincanto Press Hispanic Latino Books, 2019)

**MARCO GREENBERG MIA '89**

*Primitive: Tapping the Primal Drive That Powers the World's Most Successful People* (Hachette, 2020)

**JEFF HENIGSON MIA '01**

*Warhead: The True Story of One Teen Who Almost Saved the World* (Delacorte Press, 2019)

**DEBORAH LEE JAMES MIA '81**

*Aim High: Chart Your Course and Find Success* (Post Hill Press, 2019)

**KARINE JEAN-PIERRE MPA '03**

*Moving Forward: A Story of Hope, Hard Work, and the Promise of America* (Hanover Square Press, 2019)

**GLENN KESSLER MIA '83 (WITH SALVADOR RIZZO AND MEG KELLY)**

*Donald Trump and His Assault on Truth: The President's Falsehoods, Misleading Claims and Flat-Out Lies* (Simon & Schuster, 2020)

**KAWAI STRONG WASHBURN MIA '08**

*Sharks in the Time of Saviors* (Macmillan, 2020)

# BRENT FEIGENBAUM

## MIA '84

The SIPA Alumni Association recently elected Brent Feigenbaum MIA '84 as its new chair. He succeeds Kirsten Imohiosen MPA '03, who served as chair from 2017 to 2020. Feigenbaum was instrumental in launching SIPA's Regional Ambassadors initiative in 2018 and will lead the association's efforts to grow the engagement of SIPA alumni around the world.

Feigenbaum, a corporate brand and marketing communications executive with extensive experience in global strategic marketing, spoke with *SIPA Magazine* about his vision for the SIPA Alumni Association from his home on Long Island. The conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity.

### On Expanding the SIPA Alumni Network

A few months after graduating from SIPA, I landed my first job through a SIPA alum. I think that's an important message to deliver—we have a great network. With 23,000 alumni around the world, we belong to this elite group who have had a shared experience.

I'm partnering with SIPA's career, admissions, and development offices to say, "Look, we have these resources on the ground. We can be your eyes and ears. We can be true ambassadors. We are the face of the School in many countries. Let us find great people in those markets and work to help the School through expanded admissions efforts or through career networking."

### On the Power of Networking

Networking is absolutely essential and a benefit to all who participate. In addition to helping with career development, networking builds community. I know this is true at SIPA. Networking provides a great opportunity to meet fascinating, like-minded people. SIPA alumni want to share their stories, successes, and challenges and help students and fellow alumni. By networking, alumni are building stronger relationships with one another, strengthening SIPA's alumni community and, in turn, the School.



### On the Importance of Giving Back

Education is transformative, and I believe in supporting education-based organizations and institutions. If you can help provide students with a great education, you're launching them into the world to hopefully do something significant. It takes many committed parties to help fund, encourage, and grow an institution to provide that opportunity.

We need to get more alumni actively helping SIPA through career networking, mentoring, and financial support. With increased alumni engagement and financial support, the School can become even more dynamic. With expanded resources, SIPA can attract even more outstanding faculty and students. Scholarships are vital for providing students with opportunity. I've met students who turned down other institutions to come to SIPA because they received generous financial aid. As alumni, we all have an opportunity and responsibility to support the School. Every contribution makes a difference. Giving back to SIPA, however one can, matters.

### On SIPA's Role in the World

SIPA educates students to think collaboratively and in a broader context. There's no one right answer or one path. The beauty of SIPA today is that its curriculum is very broad and encompasses a variety of perspectives, fostering critical thinking, and its students bring differing viewpoints and interpretations, creating a campus of greater understanding.

I've been happy to get involved and help grow the SIPA Alumni Association—we're still just getting started. There is a lot of potential to really engage on all levels. My challenge is to encourage more alumni to discover the amazing SIPA of 2020. The School has evolved over the years and is incredibly impressive. My hope is that alumni around the world will be equally impressed. I speak from personal experience when I say that being involved and staying connected is life enriching. 🏰

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A view of Kent and Hamilton Halls from College Walk by Lenny Pridatko MIA '11. Pridatko's latest book is *Columbia University in Pictures*, Second Edition (Luminance, 2019). Follow him on Instagram @lenny\_pridatko.



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The breadth of opportunities available to students is truly extraordinary. My SIPA experiences have helped me to refine my personal values, articulate my concerns and hopes, and plan for my personal and professional future. I've developed a strong network of inspiring classmates and mentors who will be lifelong friends. The generous scholarship support that I received from SIPA helped to make all of this possible.

Zulpha Styer MPA '20

Now more than ever, SIPA students need your support. Contribute to student financial aid through the SIPA Annual Fund at [sipa.givenow.columbia.edu](https://sipa.givenow.columbia.edu).



Photo by Virpratap Vikram Singh MIA '20