



Weatherhead Center
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

2017 Undergraduate Associate Thesis Conference

February 2–3, 2017

Center for Government and International Studies, South Building
1730 Cambridge Street, Belfer Case Study Room (S020 on the concourse level)

Up-to-date details on the conference, including the presenters' abstracts, can be found on the conference website at http://conferences.wcfia.harvard.edu/undergraduate_thesis.

(Please note that most of the presenters' theses are due in March and are works in progress.)

Thursday, February 2

12:15 p.m. Welcoming Remarks

Michèle Lamont, Director, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs; Robert I. Goldman Professor of European Studies; professor of sociology and of African and African American studies, Departments of Sociology and African and African American Studies, Harvard University.

12:30–2:30 p.m. Diasporas, Migration, and Politics

Chair: Chris Gratien, Academy Scholar, Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies; Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Virginia.

Kais Khimji (Social Studies), Canada Program Undergraduate Fellow. Canada and the Ismaili Imam: transnational Muslim diplomacy and (post)multicultural nationalism.

Abstract: This thesis examines developments in the relationship between Canada and the Ismaili Imam, a transnational institution which oversees the spiritual guidance of fifteen million Shia Ismaili Muslims scattered in over twenty-five countries around the world. The seat of the Imam is currently occupied by His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, a lineal descendent of Prophet Muhammad who was appointed to his role by the previous Ismaili Imam, Aga Khan III. Over the course of the last decade, the Imam's relationship with Canada has flourished, manifesting itself in the form of funding for international development initiatives, the creation of new buildings and institutions, the appointment of diplomatic representation, and the signing of treaty-like protocols. This thesis inquires what the character of this relationship is: How does it function operationally? In what ways does it affect imaginaries of Canadian multicultural nationalism and self-understanding of the institution of the Ismaili Imam? And how does it complicate our theories of nationalism, transnationalism, and Canadian (post)multiculturalism? These questions are explored through interviews with Canadian government officials and Ismaili institutional leaders as well as analyses of provincial and federal agreements signed by the Imam and Canadian agencies. The thesis

ultimately argues that this relationship offers us one example of a nation state (successfully) transnationalizing multiculturalism in its engagements with a Muslim 'agency.'

Sarah Michieka (African and African American Studies), Rogers Family Research Fellow. The forty-eighth county: Kenyan state-diaspora relations after 1990 and the emergence of the Kenyan diaspora vote.

Abstract: My thesis analyzes state-diaspora relations during the three Kenyan presidential administrations since the fall of the Soviet Union through evaluating the variables that contributed to the emergence of the Kenyan diaspora vote. The economic argument of Kenya's diaspora vote exemplifies the trend in diaspora engagement policy of remittances and the impact of diaspora lobbying leading a state to propose external voting to encourage long lasting investment. However, I argue for the importance of the timing of a combination of variables in the establishment of the Kenyan diaspora vote—mainly the overlap of certain aspects of post-Cold war democratization and the large growth in Kenyan emigration. The governmental shifts contributed to the rise of the constitutional reform movement and created a window for discussion of a diaspora vote and dual citizenship as prospective aspects of a new constitution. Meanwhile, the recent nature of large-scale Kenyan emigration meant that many Kenyan emigrants still maintained strong ties with family members and communities within Kenya, facilitated further by the contemporaneous growth of the Kenyan telecommunications industry and rise in financial transfer technology enabling the diaspora to maintain strong networks with Kenyans at home. These networks allowed for a diaspora highly connected to the Kenyan domestic population during the window of opportunity for the establishment of diaspora voting and dual citizenship that was the constitutional reform process.

Toby Spencer Roper (Social Studies), Sobin Family Research Fellow. The British EU referendum: An analysis of demographic voting trends in Brexit.

Abstract: While my interests and my project originally centered on migration in Europe and European responses to the refugee crisis, I decided to narrow my scope and focus specifically on the United Kingdom—as a unique entity in its response to refugee and migration issues in Europe. Then on June 24, 2016, when it was confirmed that the United Kingdom had voted to leave the European Union in a referendum, my focus shifted once again. My thesis explores the causes of Brexit, particularly the issues surrounding migration and refugees. I am analyzing referendum voting data alongside demographic and values data across different subsets of the UK's population. With the financial markets, the betting markets, most polls, and most respected pundits predicting a win for the "remain" campaign, there exists an opportunity to investigate a hugely significant and largely unexpected outcome that will have far-reaching implications for decades to come. I hope to situate my work within the broader context of EU integration, and contribute to the larger project of understanding why individuals do or do not support the European Project. Ultimately, I hope to better understand the most important political development of the twenty-first century in my home country.

2:30–2:45 p.m. Coffee break

2:45–5:00 p.m. Identity and Representation

Chair: **Erez Manela**, Professor of History, Department of History, Harvard University.

Hana S. Connelly (History & Literature), Williams/Lodge International Government and Public Affairs Fellow. Nineteenth-century literary representations of Georgia versus the North Caucasus,

specifically focusing on the kidnapping of two Georgian princesses by North Dausasian tribal leader, Imam Shamil, in 1854.

Abstract: My thesis addresses Russian imperial attitudes toward the North Caucasus and Georgia in the mid-nineteenth century. I focus primarily on one Russian author's account of the kidnapping of two Georgian princesses by North Caucasians acting under the orders of Imam Shamil, the leader of the Caucasian resistance against Russian incursions into the region. My analysis is based in the particular style and perspective of this book, as well as the historical facts of the kidnapping case, and what this incident and its representations can add to our understanding of the Russian imperial project. I begin by considering the influences acting on this text and its author, Evgraf Verderevsky, which include romantic literature in general and Lermontov's work in particular. My second chapter focuses on questions of gender and imperialism; I consider the role of these Georgian princesses, who are caught between the Western femininity of a French governess who accompanies them and the orientalized femininity of Shamil's wives, in the context of this imperial moment and the Russian literature on the topic that came before and after. Finally, my third chapter addresses the representation of Caucasian men, primarily Imam Shamil and his son, to consider how the cultural exchange represented by this kidnapping was perceived and reframed in context of Russian imperialism. I am currently working on making my thesis as a whole as cohesive as possible. I have complete drafts of my first and third chapter, and am in the process of drafting the second chapter.

Jessica Margaret Dorfmann (Social Studies), Williams/Lodge International Government and Public Affairs Fellow. Decolonizing multiculturalism: teaching Māori history in a "nation of immigrants."

Abstract: Modern settler states from Canada to New Zealand all rest on a fundamental tension. Their bedrock is colonial oppression and the dispossession of indigenous peoples overlaid with the cultural and ethnic diversity brought by successive waves of immigration. The label "nation of immigrants," often applied to these states, masks the complicated and sometimes fraught interplay between indigeneity, immigration, and multiculturalism in the modern day.

How can immigration become a force that supports rather than undermines indigenous sovereignty? By way of answer, my thesis examines the Treaty of Waitangi education movement in New Zealand, a grassroots effort to teach new migrants about New Zealand's 1840 founding treaty between Māori and the British Crown. New immigrants to countries like New Zealand and Australia arrive without background on the historical context of indigenous rights claims. How they learn about indigenous history and the content of this education affects how they view indigenous issues. Yet migrant perspectives on and opportunities to learn indigenous history have received scant research attention. In this thesis, I combine an in-depth case study of Treaty of Waitangi education in New Zealand with data from interviews I held with new migrants in both Australia and New Zealand. I argue that Treaty education capitalizes on the unique perspectives migrants bring to indigenous history. In particular, the movement's reinterpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi as an immigration document applying to all non-Māori New Zealanders both connects migrants to New Zealand history and encourages migrants to view Māori culture as the legitimate host culture of the country.

I am currently in the process of writing my empirical chapters, and I would appreciate feedback/assistance on how to best present my mixed methods case study material. I am also working on the main takeaway of my thesis—what relevance do my results have for settler states other than New Zealand that lack the same prominent treaty relationship? Does Canada or Australia have a similar historical moment that could become the focus of indigenous history education for new migrants?

Melda Ayse Gurakar (Social Studies), Frank M. Boas Fellow. Ottoman law in practice versus theory: women and judges coming together to devise unique solutions.

Abstract: A troubling trend in Ottoman legal historiography is to study *fiqh*, or jurisprudence, instead of court records. Doing so, however, prevents historians from getting a complete understanding of Islamic justice as jurisprudence lacks the interpretative process inserted during rulings. This study will reverse this trend by focusing on Ottoman law in practice. Particularly, it will examine court records of women in Ottoman Istanbul in the eighteenth century. It will show the strategies Ottoman women adopted to work past institutionalized legal disabilities and instead use the court to their benefit. The main purpose of this study will be to illuminate the consumers of the law themselves and describe the female experience in the courtroom. It will bring to light the dynamic process that existed between women and judges, which allowed women to influence the outcome of their cases. Additionally, it will show how judges individually interpreted the law in order to devise unique solutions to meet female tribulations and needs. Ultimately this study will reveal how together both judges and women modified Ottoman law in its practice.

5:00–6:00 p.m. Reception outside of S020

Friday, February 3

8:15–9:00 a.m. Continental breakfast outside of S020

9:00–10:30 a.m. International Relations in the Atlantic Basin

Chair: **Kirsten Weld**, John L. Loeb Associate Professor of the Social Sciences
Department of History, Harvard University.

Allyson Rose Perez (Social Studies), Williams/Lodge International Government and Public Affairs Fellow. Demystifying and identifying opportunities for US-Cuba agricultural relations.

Abstract: This thesis tackles the reality facing the US-Cuba agricultural trade relationship through the eyes of both the United States and Cuba, analyzing the very different actions each country has taken while facing the same dilemma. Cuba imports a majority of the food consumed there, with some estimates as high as 70 percent, and since the passage of the Trade Sanction Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, the United States has been a leading partner in Cuba's agricultural imports. However, since the fiscal year 2009, the United States has fallen from Cuba's leading partner to the third through fifth depending on the year. In Chapter One, I introduce this fact along with the methodology I will use to answer my research question: Despite the normalization of diplomatic relations, why is this the case? In Chapter Two, I analyze US foreign policy towards Cuba in regards to agricultural trade, with a focus on the post-TSRA period, analyzing the trajectory of agricultural exports to Cuba and the increased interest in agricultural trade on the US side since the normalization of relations. In Chapter Three, I focus on the various political and economic changes in Cuba since the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s that have affected the Cuban food system, with an emphasis on changes occurring since the presidency of Raul Castro, which may have been contributing to this decline in US agricultural imports to Cuba. I am just coming off of a research trip to gather information for Chapter Three in Cuba, so my findings and argument are still developing. I am also still working on my argument for Chapter Two; any and all feedback on these issues is welcome.

Nick Thomas John Wood (History & Literature), Imperial insecurities, nationalism, and the Falklands War of 1982.

Abstract: This thesis seeks to place the Falklands War in the wider historical frame of the relationship between the British Empire/United Kingdom and Argentina. The breakout of the Falklands War can be attributed to overactive imperial insecurities in both the United Kingdom and Argentina. By the early 1980s, the British Empire had largely disintegrated, and the British population was living not only with the soreness of the loss of overseas territories, but also with a sense of domestic economic and social decay. Also, front and center in the minds of British policy makers was the Suez Crisis and the embarrassment it caused for the United Kingdom. Similarly, Argentina had been in decline since the outbreak of the First World War, and in the 1940s the issue of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) rose to prominence in Argentine political discourse as a hybrid nationalist/anti-imperialist cause. While these developments engendered the conditions for the outbreak of the war, the decision to invade—and the decision to respond—was very much bound to the political projects of Margaret Thatcher's conservative administration in the United Kingdom and the military junta in Argentina, led by Leopoldo Galtieri. Both administrations promised national rejuvenation in their respective countries, and the Falkland Islands proved to be, for both parties, the best way of preserving that promise. I am currently still working on the nuance of the relationship between the United Kingdom and Argentina, specifically researching and trying to articulate the economic influence that British actors had in the country during the early twentieth century. Also, I am struggling with managing the flow between the large-scale, macroscopic picture I am drawing on an international level and the content of the interviews I did in the Falkland Islands.

10:30–10:45 a.m. Coffee break

10:45–12:45 p.m. Urban Inequality in the Global South

Chair: **Sunil Amrith**, Mehra Family Professor of South Asian Studies, Department of South Asian Studies; Professor of History, Department of History, Harvard University.

Henry Sewall Udayan Shah (History & Literature), Williams/Lodge International Government and Public Affairs Fellow. The construction of urban citizenship through beggary and vagrancy in Bombay, 1898–1959.

Abstract: How was the begging, vagrant body a subject and object of anxiety, aspiration, and exclusion in the city of Bombay from 1898 to 1959? Relentless migration during this time period created a city powered by not just the dream of urban life—employment and excitement—but its co-constitutive nightmare—criminality and destitution. This thesis argues that the deviant beggar and normative urban order constructed each other as the colonial hub emerged into an independent metropolis. The thesis grounds this analysis in 1) a genealogical treatment of vagrancy law 2) a history of the punitive regime erected to eliminate beggary and 3) a study of Raj Kapoor's landmark film *Awaara*. This sequence maps onto cycles of the beggar's historical form of life—from interpellation to rehabilitation to exhibition, and from freedom to seizure to indeterminacy. The history of striving and exclusion in Bombay breathes, flutters ambiguously, in the figure of the beggar. I hope that this work will illuminate the ways in which the vagrant was a feared, denigrated, and celebrated figure haunting the streets and screens of Bombay.

Samantha Deborah Luce (Social Studies), Rogers Family Research Fellow. Taxi violence and the politics of mobility in post-apartheid South Africa.

Abstract: Minibus taxis in South Africa are a form of paratransit—or semi-public, semi-private transportation that combine elements of economic formality and informality. Taxis are responsible for transporting more than 65 percent of South Africa’s citizenry, and are particularly significant to the country’s urban poor due to their low cost, social embeddedness, and a long history of resistance under the apartheid regime. However, taxis are also widely notorious for violence and gangsterism, even though the industry today is regulated by the government and taxi associations through mechanisms ranging from permitting to aggressive patrolling. This thesis attempts to explain the continuity of the industry’s violent and aggressive nature into the post-apartheid era. I specifically examine the metropolitan industry of Cape Town, the legislative capital of South Africa, particularly in light of the souring taxi-government relation there after the recent (and, as of 2016, ongoing) implementation of a competing bus rapid transport system called MyCiTi bus. I focus on how the taxi is disputed as both vehicles on the street and as figurative vehicles of social mobility. Drawing upon literature on the anthropology of infrastructure, I argue that the rationalizing mission of the government, epitomized by the rollout of MyCiTi bus, has fomented a crisis of sovereignty between the government and taxi industry that has engendered anger and mistrust. The tension between the Weberian rational-legal authority of municipal governance and the popular sovereignty of the taxi industry has had the consequence of crystallizing an ethos of masculine aggression in the industry. My argument emerges out of fieldwork from the summer of 2016, conducted in major taxi ranks in Cape Town. I engaged in participant-observation research at several sites, primarily taxi routes and ranks in the city, incorporating sites both close to the city center and those located in distant townships. I also draw upon conversations and interviews that range from affiliates of the taxi industry, such as drivers and owners, to regulatory officials and academics.

Bharath Venkatesh (South Asian Studies), Williams/Lodge International Government and Public Affairs Fellow. The economic history of transportation and coffee shops in South Asia.

Abstract: My research focuses on the nature of changing class aspirations and identities in South Asia—specifically: India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. I investigated my topic through the lens of coffee shop businesses that have come up in this part of the world in the last two decades, following the beginning of economic liberalization and the opening up of local markets. Through observing interactions that took place in these public spaces, interviews of coffee shop patrons, and other forms of collected data (e.g., marketing material produced by coffee businesses), I sought to analyze the role of coffee shops in regards to the manifestation of socioeconomic markers of class. In piecing together a historical understanding of the kinds of people who visit such coffee shops, I was able to ascertain the class associations that these businesses often enable, engender, and transform in contemporary South Asia. My findings span various thematic categories: social spaces (e.g., coffee shops as places for teenagers and young adults to hang out and go on dates), workplace culture (e.g., the availability of Wi-Fi internet enabling coffee shops to become potent spaces for professionals working on laptop computers), ‘globalization’/‘glocalization’ (e.g., the appropriation and transformation of national/transnational consumer cultures as manifested in the personalized availability of food and non-coffee drinks served in South Asian coffee shop businesses), media (e.g., the immense influence of the American television show *Friends* in regards to the development of coffee shop culture), pricing (e.g., the alignment of coffee chains’ geographically based price differentiation with the specific economic attributes of the different neighborhoods where these businesses’ outlets are located), and so on.

12:45–2:00 p.m. Lunch provided outside of S020

2:00–4:00 p.m. LGBT and Women’s Rights in Latin America

Chair: Jason Beckfield, Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology, Harvard University.

David J. Coletti (History & Literature), Kenneth I. Juster Fellow. One community, two worlds apart: the effects of economic liberalization and dictatorship on homosexuals in São Paulo, 1964–1984.

Abstract: In my thesis, I explore the ways in which the military dictatorship in Brazil ended up persecuting the LGBT population in São Paulo in its pursuit for economic liberalization and international prestige. In order to thoroughly dive into this topic, I have broken down my thesis into the following three chapters: the first is a broad overview of the military dictatorship, its goals, and its surface-level effects on the LGBT community in São Paulo; the second outlines police brutality against *travestis* and male sex workers, how the military regime segregated LGBT people, and the LGBT community's response by means of mobilization; and the final chapter demonstrates the international influence on the LGBT community in São Paulo, specifically by means of tourism. My methods have mostly included analyzing newspapers and police documents at Harvard, and police documents from the Archives of the State of São Paulo in Brazil. I have also conducted interviews with a few leaders of the LGBT movement in São Paulo, all of whom lived in the city when the military dictatorship was in power.

Domenica Alejandra Merino (Social Studies), Simmons Family Research Fellow. Gender inequality and women's reproductive rights in Ecuador.

Abstract: In spite of a liberalization trend of abortion laws throughout the world since the mid-twentieth century, Ecuador—alongside most other countries in the Latin American region—has maintained stringent restrictions on abortion. Global studies find, however, that criminalizing abortion does not reduce its numbers but rather increases the rate of clandestine procedures. According to government data, abortion continues to be a leading cause of morbidity for women in Ecuador in 2011, with over 23,000 cases each year. In the case of women who suffer from complications following a clandestine abortion, physicians are legally obligated to treat such patients, yet their understanding and opinion of the law can affect not just the treatment they provide, but their decision on whether to report such women to the authorities. In dichotomy to the legal mandate to denounce a crime stands the physician's legal duty to protect patient confidentiality. For the main part of my research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with OB/GYNs that explored their understanding, opinion, and enactment of current laws pertaining to the medical and judicial duty they have in cases dealing with abortions. Through qualitative analysis, I am working to discern how these medical professional conceptualize their legal duty when facing these situations and how the notions of medical responsibility, motherhood, and personhood influence their understanding.

Jonathan Andrew Sands (Social Studies, Global Health and Health Policy), Williams/Lodge International Government and Public Affairs Fellow. Strategic dilemmas in Mexico's LGBT rights movement.

Abstract: My thesis examines strategic dilemmas in the movement for LGBT rights in Mexico City. Despite making substantial gains in recent years, including the 2009 legalization of same-sex marriage, the movement now faces increasingly robust backlash from conservative anti-gay groups throughout the country suggesting that they pose a threat to Mexican families and children.

Through twenty-eight qualitative interviews and textual analysis, I explore how goals and strategy differ amongst movement factions and which of these factions are best able to effect cultural

change. I argue that despite broad recognition that internal tensions represent the largest challenge for the movement's future, they remain divided on whether or not to pursue change through the political establishment and whether or not gaining nationwide marriage equality should be their primary goal. I then argue that while mainstream activists collaborating with politicians and advocating for marriage have more power in the cultural environment, this occurs at the expense of addressing other pressing issues including violence and access to employment.

Additionally, I explore the consequences of framing LGBT rights as human rights, a common framing throughout Latin America. I argue that while activists recognize invoking sexual and gender minorities' "right to be human" as both an apt strategy and a reflection of their true beliefs, they remain concerned that the frame may fail to uproot homophobic attitudes, cannot set unified goals for the movement, and compels LGBT people to assimilate by underscoring similarity instead of celebrating diversity.

4:00 p.m. Closing Remarks

Theodore J. Gilman, Executive Director, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.