IN MAY, 43 PEOPLE WERE SWORN IN as U.S. citizens at a naturalization ceremony in the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum. It was the first citizenship ceremony held at Harvard Kennedy School. Harvard President Larry Bacow ’76 MPP ’78 JD ’78 PhD ’78 spoke at the ceremony. “The American dream is something to which all of us can aspire but which none of us should take for granted,” Bacow said. “And now as citizens you have a special responsibility, I think, to also ensure that this dream of a better life—this dream of citizenship—is made available to those who will now come after each and every one of you.”

—PHOTO BY JON CHASE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As this issue of Harvard Kennedy School Magazine reaches alumni and friends of the School, a new cohort of students has arrived on campus—with great excitement and perhaps a little anxiety about the year ahead. These students come with a wonderful variety of specific aims. Some wish to improve their countries and communities through roles in government, others through civil society or the private sector; some are focused on strengthening democracy, others on expanding economic opportunity, improving security, enhancing human rights, or other issues. What unites all our students is excellence, passion, and a steadfast commitment to advancing the public interest.

In a world marked by change, many of these students are looking for innovative ways to solve long-standing public problems. Others are grappling with challenges that are themselves new. Over the past few decades, the rapid pace of development in science and technology has transformed our societies. At the same time, evolving political trends, economic forces, and social movements have fundamentally altered the lives of people around the world—sometimes for good, sometimes for ill.

In this issue of the magazine, you will read about how the Kennedy School is tackling the public challenges that the digital revolution has created. Our new faculty, courses, research papers, and interactions with policymakers and practitioners are addressing a wide range of risks and opportunities. Kennedy School alumni—such as Stephanie Nguyen, who helped redesign the U.S. government’s Medicare payment system, and Kirsten Rulf, who works to shape digital policy in the German chancellery—are leading the way in addressing these challenges. And biotechnology may be the next daunting frontier. You can read here about Professor Sheila Jasanoff’s research exploring how advances in bioscience, such as gene-editing technologies, have fundamentally affected the way we think about human life.

The shifts brought by social movements over the past few decades have been transformative as well. This issue of the magazine describes Professor Erica Chenoweth’s research exploring how advances in social movements have fundamentally altered the lives of people around the world—sometimes for good, sometimes for ill.

As the first head of digital issues in the German chancellery, Kirsten Rulf is bringing the agile approach of a tech startup into the regimented heart of the German bureaucracy.

FEATURES

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Cover Illustration Ismael Vargas
The planet is warming. Keeping that warming to a manageable level and dealing with its consequences are among humanity’s greatest challenges in the years and decades ahead. The Kennedy School’s expertise in the interlinked issues of ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT is helping to meet that challenge. Here we highlight some of the people, programs, teaching, and ideas involved.

**Robert Stavins**
A. J. Meyer Professor of Energy and Economic Development

The HARVARD ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS PROGRAM develops innovative answers to today’s complex environmental issues by bringing together faculty and graduate students from across Harvard University who are engaged in research, teaching, and outreach in environmental, energy, and natural resource economics and related public policy.

The HARVARD PROJECT ON CLIMATE AGREEMENTS identifies and communicates scientifically sound, economically sensible, and politically pragmatic public policy options for addressing global climate change.

The GOVERNANCE OF SOLAR GEENGINEERING PROJECT advances our understanding of a key set of governance issues and aims to move the research community toward a shared set of assumptions and consensus on options for solar geoengineering.

ECONOMICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY APL-115: The course provides a survey, from the perspective of economics, of public policy issues associated with environmental protection and natural resources management.

**Meghan O’Sullivan**
Jeanne Kirkpatrick Professor of the Practice of International Affairs

The GEOPOLITICS OF ENERGY PROJECT, launched in 2011, aims to improve our understanding of how demand and supply of both conventional and alternative energy shape international politics—and vice versa.

GEOPOLITICS OF ENERGY IGA-412: Examining the intersection between international security, politics, and energy, the course explores how countries shape their grand strategies to meet their energy needs, and how such actions have implications for other countries and global politics.

**David Keith**
Professor of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and Gordon McKay Professor of Applied Physics at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

The Harvard-wide SOLAR GEENGINEERING RESEARCH PROGRAM brings together an interdisciplinary group of faculty from across the University to accelerate understanding of the effectiveness and risks of solar geoengineering.

**Edward Cunningham**
Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy

The ASIA ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY AGREEMENTS project helped devise the world’s first emissions trading system for particulate matter in China.

**Rema Hanna**
Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy

EVIDENCE FOR POLICY DESIGN has examined the interplay between economic development, environmental pollution, and health risks to the most vulnerable populations. A recent project helped devise the world’s first emissions trading system for particulate air pollution in Surat, India.

**Cristine Russell**
Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy

CONTROVERSIES IN CLIMATE, ENERGY, AND THE MEDIA IGA-451M: As dire scientific warnings about climate change increase and mainstream news outlets shrink, the internet provides a growing global megaphone for confusing and often contradictory information and misinformation. This course is designed to help students navigate the rapidly changing media landscape.

**Henry Lee**
Senior Lecturer in Public Policy

Today, environmental policy is an integral part of energy policy, economic development, and security. The ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAM strives to meet a global demand for multiple needs and values across both disciplinary and geographic boundaries.

**Robert Paarlberg**
Adjunct Professor of Public Policy

GLOBAL FOOD POLITICS AND POLICY IGA-422: The policy landscape around food and farming in rich and poor countries is highly contested, with scientists, farmers, agribusiness, environmentalists, consumer organizations, and social justice advocates often holding sharply different views. The course includes a focus on the environmental impact of various farming and livestock systems.

**Halla Lógadóttir**
MC/MPA 2017

The ENERGY-CIMATE CHALLENGE IGA-411 (with Henry Lee): The greatest challenge at the intersection of science, technology, and public policy in the 21st century has arisen because society is getting 80 percent of the energy it needs using fuels and technologies that are disrupting the globe’s climate. This course examines the character and magnitude of this challenge and the policy choices germane to meeting it.

**John Holdren**
Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy

Nowhere is climate change more pronounced than in the Arctic, and the Belfer Center’s ARCTIC INITIATIVE works to improve our understanding of changes in this region and their effects on the environment, the people, and the rest of the planet.

POLICY AND SOCIAL INNOVATIONS FOR THE CHANGING ARCTIC IGA-671M (with Halla Lógadóttir): Through the lens of the rapidly changing Arctic region, this course gives students experience in developing policy and social innovations to address complex policy challenges at the intersection of the environment and human well-being.

**Edward Cunningham**
Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy

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**William Clark**
Harvey Brooks Professor of International Science, Public Policy and Human Development

The SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE PROGRAM, led by Bill Clark, addresses the central challenge of sustainable development: how to foster shared prosperity and reduce poverty while protecting the environment.

**William Hogan**
Raymond F. Clark Research Professor of Global Energy

The HARVARD ELECTRICITY POLICY GROUP’s agenda includes the economics of electricity production and use, the evolution of the industry and its regulatory institutions, transition paths and strategies, and related public policy goals.

**Daniel Schrag**
Sturgis Hooper Professor of Geology and Professor of Environmental Science and Engineering, FAS

For nearly 40 years, the SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM has been bringing science and technology into the design of public policy. Its research has included energy access and security and reducing vulnerability to climate change.

**Joseph Aldy**
Professor of the Practice of Public Policy

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Research Briefs

NATO at 70

SEVENTY DECADES after its founding, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization remains the strongest alliance of democratic countries in the world, preserving the balance of our geopolitical landscape and ensuring the safety of citizens of the United States and Europe. Yet NATO faces more complex and divisive challenges than at any other point in its history. NICHOLAS BURNS, the Roy and Barbara Goodman Family Professor of the Practice of Diplomacy and International Relations, and Belfer Center Senior Fellow Douglas Lute, both of whom served as U.S. ambassadors to NATO, examine so major challenges the organization faces—from within its own borders and beyond, now and on the horizon—and how to address them. With contributions from former Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell as well as other experts, NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis offers a path forward for an organization the authors see as essential to the security and stability of our world.

Effect of Asking About Citizenship on U.S. Census

The Census Bureau’s attempt to include a citizenship question in the 2020 census sparked controversy and concern. Aside from the fear that a citizenship question could deter some residents from participating at all, experts worried that its inclusion could cause respondents to alter or omit information. In their new paper, Estimating the Effect of Asking About Citizenship on the U.S. Census: Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial, Marvin Kalb, Professor of Global Communications MATTHEW BAUM, Professor of Public Policy MAYA SEN, and their colleagues assess data from more than 9,000 respondents to a survey designed to mirror the 2020 census. They find that inclusion of a citizenship question significantly increased the percentage of questions skipped, particularly among Hispanic respondents, and made respondents less likely to report members of their household who are of Hispanic ethnicity. The results suggest that asking about citizenship would reduce the number of Hispanics reported in the United States by 6 million—more than 12 percent of the 2010 Hispanic population.

Post-political Careers

Public officials have a wide range of job options to choose from when they leave office—including positions that allow them to capitalize on their political experience and connections. Understanding the private-sector career choices of former officials is crucial to ensuring that post-political career aspirations do not influence officials’ policy decisions while in office. Assistant Professor of Public Policy BENJAMIN SCHNEER’s recent Journal of Politics article, “Postpolitical Careers: How Politicians Capitalize on Public Office” (with Maxwell Palmer of Boston University), documents the need to look beyond registered lobbying to understand the full picture of post-political careers. Their analysis shows that most former officials are more likely to join boards of public companies than to work as registered lobbyists. The article finds that changes intended to restrict lobbying have simply pushed former officials toward alternative positions that are similar to lobbying but without the same restrictions.

The Unwavering SES Achievement Gap

INCOME INEQUALITY has a staggering effect on student achievement, with the students from the lowest socioeconomic households falling some three to four years in performance behind students from the highest ones. In his recent working paper, The Unwavering SES Achievement Gap: Trends in U.S. Student Performance, Henry Lee Shattuck, Professor of Government PAUL PETERSON looks at data from 1954 through 2010 to measure the achievement gap between the highest and lowest socioeconomic groups of students across the United States. Importantly, Peterson finds that this gap has remained consistent over the past 50 years—suggesting a large-scale failure of the educational policies designed to narrow it. As schools devote increasing resources to closing these gaps, Peterson’s latest work is essential to understanding the socioeconomic status achievement gap, what drives it, and why it persists.

Implicit Stereotypes and Gender Bias

Regardless of the progress schools have made toward closing and even reversing the gender performance gap over the past century, girls still lag far behind boys in mathematics. And since math performance can predict a student’s likelihood of studying and working in the STEM fields, understanding why boys outperform girls in math is essential to moving toward gender balance in STEM university programs and in the labor market. Based on research of around 1,400 teachers in Italian schools, Assistant Professor of Public Policy MICHELA CARLANA’S Implicit Stereotypes: Evidence from Teachers’ Gender Bias uncovers a connection between teachers’ gender biases and middle school girls’ math performance, finding that teachers who believe math is more difficult for girls can unconsciously contribute to this negative performance. Addressing unconscious bias can help teachers boost girls’ confidence in math—and improve their prospects for the future.

Two Centuries of Sovereign Bonds

Sovereign bonds are considered a risky asset class, vulnerable to high rates of default and limited security and enforcement as the global financial landscape shifts. Are investors justified in their attraction to these bonds? In Sovereign Bonds since Waterloo, CARMEN REINHART, Minos A. Zambanakis Professor of the International Financial System, constructs a database of more than 220,000 monthly prices of foreign-currency government bonds from 95 countries traded in London and New York between 1815 and 2016. This 200-year perspective on the history of sovereign bonds finds that regarding foreign government default, war, and global catastrophe, sovereign bonds have consistently offered a high enough return to compensate for their risk. Reinhart assesses how markets consider and measure sovereign risk and explains investors’ beliefs about crash probabilities in emerging markets worldwide.

Compiled by Jessica McCann

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Compiled by Jessica McCann
IN MEMORIAM CAMPUS welcomed new faculty directors. — Center News

Center News
This spring and summer, three Harvard Kennedy School centers welcomed new faculty directors.

DAVID DEMING now leads the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy. Deming is a professor of public policy whose research focuses on education and employment training. He is a co-founder of the Collegiate Leaders in Increasing Mobility (CLIMB) initiative to study how higher education can help low-income people reach the middle class.

NANCY GIBBS is now at the helm of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. Gibbs is the Visiting Edward R. Murrow Professor of Practice in Press, Politics, and Public Policy. She is a former editor in chief of Time and a former editorial director of the Time Inc. News Group. Gibbs was named Time’s 17th managing editor in 2015 and was the first woman to hold that position.

ASIM IJAZ KHWAJA is the new faculty director of the Center for International Development (CID). Khwaja is the Sumitomo Foundation Advanced Studies on International Development Professor of International Finance and Development. Previously he was a co-faculty director of the Evidence for Policy Design program at CID. Khwaja’s areas of interest include economic development, finance, education, political economy, and institutions.

A Handbook in Honor of John R. Meyer

DEREK C. BOK RESEARCH PROFESSOR
TONY GÓMEZ-IBÁÑEZ

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Point of care

Behind the 3-inch plastic device is a tale of innovation and perseverance, and the hope that it can save thousands of lives. Health workers will use it to conduct a urine test, much like a pregnancy test, to quickly and cheaply determine whether patients at high risk of getting HIV are consistently taking their prescribed preventative drugs.

It’s the brainchild of Giffin Daughtridge and the team at UrSure, Inc. Daughtridge co-founded the company while at Harvard Kennedy School and is now seeking regulatory approval to market the device in North America, Africa, and Europe.

What made you want to become a doctor and help vulnerable populations?

I had a tumor when I was 15. A lot of different doctors kept seeing me. My family was torn up. Doctors kept seeing me. I had a tumor when I was going to the hospital to get it. It dawned on me that we have some amazing preventative technology, but the people who need it most are the ones least likely to access it, because they’re the most detached from the health care system and most stigmatized.

So I started a program down there to vaccinate sex workers. Instead of having them go to the clinics, we brought the vaccines to them on the street.

How did those insights evolve over time?

We saw that several guys still became HIV positive because of poor adherence. There were two main problems: We didn’t know who was and wasn’t taking the drug, so we wanted to find a way to measure actual adherence and not just self-reported adherence; and people didn’t feel any different when they took the drug, so we wanted a way to show them that the drug was in their system. We developed the lab-based urine test as a way to address those two issues.

How do you balance your for-profit business model and your social mission?

As a medical student who studied biology and Spanish as an undergraduate, I had never taken a stats class, never taken an econ class, never taken a finance class. HKS gave me the skills and global perspective that my clinical training lacked—to take a holistic approach to providing care.

INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION across Harvard usually takes the form of co-authored papers or jointly chaired conferences. TAREK MASoud’s latest collaboration found him not in a classroom but working with the writers and directors of We Live in Cairo, a musical set during the years protesting in Cairo’s Tahrir Square and the tumultuous years that followed in Egypt. The show had its premiere in May 2019 at Harvard’s American Repertory Theater.

For Masoud, professor of public policy and the Sultan of Oman Professor of International Relations at Harvard Kennedy School, the opportunity to apply his scholarly knowledge of the Arab Spring and democratization in the Middle East to the production was irresistible. “As academics, we speak in disciplinary language to disciplinary audiences,” he says. “The arts are completely different in that they are meant to appeal broadly. A work of art about the Egyptian revolution can get people to care about it in a way that pure scholarship never could.”

Having conducted extensive fieldwork in Egypt, Masoud was well positioned to work with writers Daniel and Patrick Lavrador and the director Tali Magar to ensure that they accurately portrayed the revolution and its idealistic young activists. “It’s a passionate, patient, and a serious lover of musical theater,” Dan Lavrador says, “so in our spirited conversations, which could go on for hours, we paid close attention to how our six characters would interact with complex political situations and historical events.”

For Masoud, We Live in Cairo demonstrates the depth and durability of the democratic yearnings that young people in Egypt had in and after the Arab world. Even as Egypt has retreated toward authoritarianism, says Masoud, “the desires and passions that created that dramatic revolution still exist, and they remain unfilled.” According to him, “Many around the world have come to view the so-called Arab Spring as a failure and have written off the prospects for Arab democracy. We Live in Cairo reminds us that the Arab Spring was a process, that it is still ongoing, and that the people who sparked it are not going away.”
For Lindiwe Mazibuko MC/MPA 2015, democracy in Africa is a live experiment. Elected to South Africa’s parliament before she was 30, and a mentor to numerous aspiring leaders, she knows the continent’s promise and yearning. But she is all too aware of a history that is working against it. After a single five-year term, despite public clamor for him to serve another, Mugabe rules Zimbabwe for 37 years, well into his 90s—only to be replaced in a coup by his 75-year-old deputy president. 

Mazibuko says these liberation-era leaders often committed twin sins: They enabled corruption even as they stuck with outdated economic policies that failed to accept that globalization is a reality. “The people of Africa do not like big men in office,” she says. “They prefer term limits, and they have enormous demands for democracy.”

She is especially worried that the failures of the “big men” have fueled a narrative that judges the democratic experiment in Africa a failure and argues instead for autocratic leaders who push development over democracy. She describes Rwandan President Paul Kagame as “a stone in the shoe of the democratic movement in Africa.”

In fact, Mazibuko argues, “the data and the surveys and the studies are clear: democracy produces better outcomes.”

Mazibuko upset some members of her own party during her leadership as she shook up committee assignments to bring up younger, more diverse voices. After the party increased its share of the seats in parliament in the 2014 elections, she stepped down for what she called a sabbatical to come to the Kennedy School. As a Mid-Career MPA student who had already served in parliament, Mazibuko knew she didn’t need courses on how to run for office. Instead she studied statistics, game theory, economics, and electricity markets; she learned about negotiation in a course with Nicholas Burns, the Roy and Barbara Goodman Family Professor of the Practice of Diplomacy and International Relations, and Professor James Seney’s of Harvard Business School. “I came here with a dry sponge of a head, just wanting to absorb,” she says.

After a fellowship with Harvard Kennedy School’s Institute of Politics (IOP) following graduation, Mazibuko started writing a book but felt it wouldn’t be game-changing if not accompanied by action. She recalls that while she was an IOP fellow, she encountered African diaspora students at Harvard and neighboring universities who were wrestling with their own future: Should they return home and enter public service and try to strengthen legitimate democratic institutions? Yes, was her unequivocal counsel.

The problem, she realized, was that although the continent offered many general leadership programs, almost none were designed to empower emerging leaders to run for office and then to govern skillfully. So Mazibuko connected with the Daniel Sachs Foundation in Stockholm and the Apolitical Group in London, a technology platform that brings together public servants and policy ideas. They thrashed out a plan for a nonprofit program to support aspirant candidates and higher-level political appointees. Daniel Sachs, a philanthropist and democracy activist, provided seed money.

The academy’s first class for the year-long program includes 15 women and 10 men, mostly from South Africa but some from nearby countries. Some belong to political parties, while others are independent or not aligned. Mazibuko wants to build a critical mass of effective, principled politicians—including candidates and senior appointed officials, whom she regards as political players. She is not training civil servants, who already have ample training opportunities. “My focus is on the people who gain power for five years at a time, who have manifestos to implement,” she says. Leaders, young or old, who “are able to understand that power is a temporary thing.”

Meanwhile, Mazibuko’s relationship with the Kennedy School continues to deepen. She returned in the spring of 2019 at the invitation of Burns, who directs the Future of Diplomacy Project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. As the Fisher Fellow, she led seminars and study groups for students on Africa’s political, economic, and diplomatic challenges. (Previous fellows have included the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman.)

Mazibuko embodies the mission of the Kennedy School—to train the next generation of political leaders in Africa,” says Burns.

Mazibuko has weighed a return to elected office, but for the time being she is devoting herself to this project. “I’m waiting for the right time, but I’m not biding that time,” she says. “I believe in fixing systems that are broken from the inside. Experience has taught me that you need critical mass.”

The data and the surveys and the studies are clear: democracy produces better outcomes.

Lindiwe Mazibuko MC/MPA 2015 is working to train a new generation of African leaders who will energize democratic politics.

By James F. Smith

For Lindiwe Mazibuko MC/MPA 2015, democracy in Africa is a live experiment. Elected to South Africa’s parliament before she was 30, and a mentor to numerous aspiring leaders, she knows the continent’s promise and yearning. But she is all too aware of a history that is working against it. After a single five-year term, despite public clamor for him to serve another, Mugabe rules Zimbabwe for 37 years, well into his 90s—only to be replaced in a coup by his 75-year-old deputy president.

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The problem, she realized, was that although the continent offered many general leadership programs, almost none were designed to empower emerging leaders to run for office and then to govern skillfully. So Mazibuko connected with the Daniel Sachs Foundation in Stockholm and the Apolitical Group in London, a technology platform that brings together public servants and policy ideas. They thrashed out a plan for a nonprofit program to support aspirant candidates and higher-level political appointees. Daniel Sachs, a philanthropist and democracy activist, provided seed money.

The academy’s first class for the year-long program includes 15 women and 10 men, mostly from South Africa but some from nearby countries. Some belong to political parties, while others are independent or not aligned. Mazibuko wants to build a critical mass of effective, principled politicians—including candidates and senior appointed officials, whom she regards as political players. She is not training civil servants, who already have ample training opportunities. “My focus is on the people who gain power for five years at a time, who have manifestos to implement,” she says. Leaders, young or old, who “are able to understand that power is a temporary thing.”

Meanwhile, Mazibuko’s relationship with the Kennedy School continues to deepen. She returned in the spring of 2019 at the invitation of Burns, who directs the Future of Diplomacy Project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. As the Fisher Fellow, she led seminars and study groups for students on Africa’s political, economic, and diplomatic challenges. (Previous fellows have included the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman.)

Mazibuko embodies the mission of the Kennedy School—to train the next generation of political leaders in Africa,” says Burns.

Mazibuko has weighed a return to elected office, but for the time being she is devoting herself to this project. “I’m waiting for the right time, but I’m not biding that time,” she says. “I believe in fixing systems that are broken from the inside. Experience has taught me that you need critical mass.”

The data and the surveys and the studies are clear: democracy produces better outcomes.

Lindiwe Mazibuko MC/MPA 2015 is working to train a new generation of African leaders who will energize democratic politics.

By James F. Smith
THE IMPETUS came in part from Kennedy School students themselves. Students arriving in Cambridge for their graduate degree programs appealed to the School's administrators: They wanted more courses and research projects on the digital technology revolution that is reshaping the world; they wanted more expert help as they grappled with digital policy and politics. At the same time, faculty and practitioners in the HKS community were recognizing the growing impact of digital tech on government and society.
The Kennedy School’s response to these challenges is evident, across the campus and beyond. New faculty, courses, seminars, fellowships, and academic papers are examining digital terrain, alongside ambitious initiatives in the research centers. From Cambridge to Washington to Silicon Valley to tech and government hubs around the world, the School’s faculty members, expert staff, and digital-native students are contributing to a combination of analysis and practical ideas at the intersection of innovation, policy, and political power.

Much of the School’s work in the field examines how to use data and digital technology to govern better: How should cities use technology to improve services? What can be done to ensure that governments don’t abuse the power of digital technology? How can the integrity of voting and the political process be ensured? How can big data help reduce economic inequality and create opportunities as the nature of work changes?

Researchers are also studying whether and how we should govern digital technology: How should we monitor social media, if at all? How can we encourage competition and privacy? How can we protect the rights of the individual while supporting the interests of the state? And, looking even further ahead, how should government and industry prepare for the next wave of innovation in artificial intelligence and the bioscience revolution it is enabling?

The pages that follow offer glimpses into Harvard Kennedy School’s work tackling these complex questions.

### A School-Wide Push on Digital

To kickstart the charge, the School hired Lecturer in Public Policy David Eaves, who teaches courses on digital government and leads the digital HKS project, which draws on all three of the School’s core strengths: teaching, research, and engagement with decision makers.

Eaves, who previously advised the Canadian government on its open data strategy, sees the Kennedy School as a natural leader in shaping public policy on digital technology, even though its core focus is not on computer science or hardware design. “The big challenges in this space, the big problems, are of course strongly informed by the nature of the technology,” Eaves says. “But the deeper problems have to do with the relationship between technology and humans and society. It’s about governance and systems thinking, all of which are things we teach and focus on here.”

While digital HKS is a School-wide effort, many individual faculty members and research centers have generated digital-focused projects in their fields of expertise, often designed to spark collaboration on policy problems. In addition to supporting the teaching and research of affiliated faculty, the center hosts seminars and workshops like the one Carter addressed in Washington that bring together policymakers, industry executives, technical experts, and academics to debate tough policy choices—the kind of critical-mass convening that gives the School its distinctive influence in shaping public policies and strategies.

Another example of this type of gathering is the Council on the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence, convened last November by Sturgis Hooper Professor of Geology and Professor of Environmental Sciences and Engineering Daniel Schrag and Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy John Holdren, who together direct the Belfer Center’s Science, Technology, and Public Policy program. The council gathered 30 leaders from government, business, academia, and civil society to discuss the risks and opportunities flowing from developments in digital technology, including data science, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. Between faculty appointments at the Kennedy School, Holdren served as President Obama’s top science advisor. In that role, Holdren championed the creation of the U.S. Digital Service and SIF, two innovative organizations that bring engineers and technologists into government to ramp up industry-quality digital services.

To bolster its digital expertise, the School has recruited several faculty members to teach more than 15 courses related to digital policy and technology and plans to hire more. Several professors take part in a faculty working group that draws from universities across the Boston area; it has met more than a dozen times to debate current digital questions. Beginning in the 2018–19 academic year, the School also recruited more students with significant digital skills and experience.

The Kennedy School has traditionally devoted substantial attention to quantitative skills and methods. But the relevant skills and methods have changed. People and, increasingly, things are constantly sharing information, flooding the world with data. In such a world, the skilled public leader is the one who can sift through data and find meaning in it, and who can think in a digitally oriented way. The School is evolving to help its students do that.

To provide students with a foundation for more advanced coursework in data science and data analytics, the School’s digital HKS initiative led a pilot program to teach the programming language Python to interested MPA and MPP students in the summer of 2018. Assistant Professor of Public Policy Soroush Saghafi’s “Machine Learning and Big Data Analytics” course helps students understand how and when to apply machine learning algorithms to policymaking and decision making.

The Kennedy School’s researchers are also increasingly using big data in addressing public problems. For example, at the Growth Lab in the Center for International Development, Rafik Hariri Professor of the Practice of International Political Economy Ricardo Hausmann uses global trade data to understand the dynamics of economic growth and helps developing countries assess their best path to growth. David Deming, professor of public policy and director of the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy, is studying data from millions of students and their parents to determine the role of higher education in improving social mobility by moving people up the income ladder. Deming’s other research interests include how automation and technological change affect the labor market and economic inequality—a topic of growing importance in an increasingly digitized world.

“The Kennedy School has a historic opportunity to lead at a time when the world of technology and governance is evolving at an astonishing speed.”

**DOUG ELMENDORF**
THE FUTURE OF CITIZENSHIP might look something like this: You flip
more efficiently.

and behavior of the user would guide product and service
development—a concept borrowed from the tech sector. To help
understand and teach that approach, the Kennedy School brought
in another digital innovator: KATHRYN PHAM, an adjunct lecturer in
public policy, was a founding product and engineering member of
the U.S. Digital Service (UDS) at the White House. Her experience
in the private sector, which included stints with Google and IBM,
have informed her thinking and teaching on product management.

"I think there’s such an opportunity to weave the power of
technology deeply into the fabric of how Kennedy School students
think," Pham says.

One of Pham’s recruits at the UDS was Stephanie Nguyen
who reimagines public governance—helping municipal leaders translate
technology into public value. The vast amount of distributed
data made possible by data collection and sharing requires
rethinking the traditional, siloed, top-down model of public
management. Smart cities put citizen users of public services
center stage in what Goldsmith calls distributed governance.

"Today, the way that government operates is designed
around the agency, and the definition of effectiveness is the
effectiveness of that agency," Goldsmith says. "It's not the
effectiveness of how we reduce the time, or the transaction
costs, and the difficulty of communicating and participating
with government." Goldsmith's Data-Smart City Solutions
project, part of the Kennedy School's Ash Center for Democratic
Governance and Innovation, serves as a central resource for
cities interested in the use of data in local government. His
efforts to broaden adoption include the Civic Analytics Network,
a national network that allows urban chief data officers to share information on data use and predictive analytics.

Countries approach the new reality of digital government in
different ways. Estonia and India, for example, used their relative
lack of information technology infrastructure to design ambitious
digital systems from scratch. The United States and Germany,
where a recent HKS graduate is leading the government's efforts
(see the sidebar on page 2a), have launched dedicated units
to provide digital know-how and to slowly build buy-in among
government employees.

The "State of Digital Transformation" conference, organized
by digital HKS, brings together these digital teams from
dozens of governments. The gathering (the second one was
held in June 2019) allows for discussion, debate, and sharing
of experiences and best practices. Participants in the 2018
conference came to an agreement on a guiding principle:
building a core government platform.

In this "government as a platform" model, a single sign-in
would allow a user to access all digital services, make payments,
and update personal information. Here, too, the interests
and behavior of the user would guide product and service
development—a concept borrowed from the tech sector. To help
understand and teach that approach, the Kennedy School brought
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"I think there’s such an opportunity to weave the power of

Elections and Democracy

AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS of digital governance is
protecting democratic institutions. The Kennedy School is already
playing a vital role in understanding how to secure the physical
infrastructure of elections and analyzing the new relationship
between citizen and state that digital technology creates.

The Belfer Center's Defending Digital Democracy (DDD)
project works with election officials across the country to
prevent the hacking of vote counts or other electoral digital
machinations. Founded by ERIC ROSENBACK, Belfer Center
co-director and lecturer in public policy, the bipartisan project
(which includes fellows Robby Mook and Matt Rhoades—
former Hillary Clinton and Mitt Romney campaign managers)

practical tool for campaign staffers to help them reduce their
vulnerability to cyberattacks.

Students play key roles in the project, and in spring 2018, they
worked with more than 150 officials from 42 states to offer tips,
tools, and training and carry out role-playing exercises designed
to fortify state election systems against cyberattacks and
information operations.

Rosenbach credits students with pushing for more
opportunities to get a grounding in technology skills to better
position them for careers in digital policy. He says that one-third
of the 90 students in his "Cyber and Info Ops" course are heading
for digital policy-oriented jobs within the government or private
sector. One example: Silicon Valley serial entrepreneur Nand
Mulchandani was enrolled in HKS to shift course into
government service; he’s now headed to the Pentagon as chief artificial
intelligence policy director.

While election security is one issue the School is tackling at
the intersection of technology and democracy, other scholars
are working on very different issues at that intersection.

ARCHON FUNG, the Winthrop
Lavin McCormack Professor of
Citizenship and Self-Government,
is examining ways in which digital
technology affects citizens’
engagement with government.
His Transparency Policy Project
has focused on how public
disclosure can reduce health risks,
discourage corruption, or increase
participatory governance. That
transparency can be supercharged by
digital data and the web, Fung
has pointed out. Participedia.net,
a wiki-project Fung co-founded,
creates a community of shared
knowledge and experience about
participatory political processes
around the world.

On the flip side, Fung has also addressed the very real
challenges to democracy posed, counterintuitively, by
an overabundance of (often vitriolic) citizen sentiment. In research
(including a paper he co-authored with, among others, JANE
MANSBRIDGE, the Adams Professor of Political Leadership and
Democratic Values), Fung has addressed the strain now imposed
on deliberative democracy and how technology and social media
could be recalibrated to create a protected space for civil debate
and public engagement.

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation,
where Fung heads up democracy programs, also hosts a half-dozen
Technology and Democracy Fellows each year—technologists from
the public, nonprofit, and private sectors who explore technology's
potential for improving democratic governance.
A STU DENT LIGHTS THE DIGITAL PATH

BY THE TIME she came to Harvard Kennedy School, STEPHANIE NGUYEN MMP 2019 had already designed data visualization tools for Fortune 500 firms, launched a software company, and designed better user experiences for the U.S. Digital Service (USDS), including a more streamlined, usable interface for the Medicare payment system for doctors. In her spare time, she designed interventions to help patients in recovery from opioid use disorder navigate the complicated world of public services and emergency rooms.

With her breadth of experience, Nguyen did plenty of advising as well as learning during her two years at Harvard. She was a sought after speaker and collaborator and a mentor for other students pursuing careers in digital policy. She contributed ideas and expertise to projects at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, and the Center for Public Leadership, where she was a Gleitsman Fellow.

KARHY PHAM, a co-founder of USDS and an adjunct lecturer at HKS, worked with Nguyen at the White House-based digital service as well as on campus. “She is such a great example—a student with serious design chops, probably one of the best designers I’ve worked with, who then went into government, and then to public policy school and has really helped change how people think about design and privacy policy and ethics and regulation in really interesting ways,” Pham says. Having students

at the Kennedy School with that kind of skill set means “they become resources for both faculty and students,” Pham says.

In April, Nguyen was the student facilitator of a high-pressure two-day workshop in Washington, organized by the Belfer Center. The goal was to convene 40 or so congressional staffers, engineers and designers, civil society activists, and academics to trade ideas and policy options on the complex issues of data privacy. Nguyen challenged them to test new approaches that cross professional and organizational boundaries. Over four hours, they guided them through a set of five-minute “lightning talks” from experts, then small-group discussions, and finally shared brainstorming that generated walls full of Post-it notes capturing thoughts on ethical challenges and strategy priorities.

“She can get in front of an audience, she can guide the whole room and be a leader already at this stage in her career,” says Hong Qu, the program director of technology for the Shorenstein Center and a former YouTube executive who took part in the event. “She’s giving so much and having so much impact.”

Nguyen’s parents were refugees from Vietnam who worked in a night manager at a grocery store; the family sold furniture at flea markets on weekends. Nguyen excelled at the University of Virginia and began her career creating data analytics and visualizations for some of the biggest U.S. companies while building a grassroots collective for women and minorities in technology called DCfemTech. Then she co-founded a startup that made apps for wearable devices such as smart watches. Given her growing reputation in digital product design, she could have followed a lucrative path in Silicon Valley. But she became troubled by the ethical challenges flowing from technology and entered by the chance to help reshape public policy.

“I worked with a lot of marginalized populations and big systems and helped end users navigate very complex systems,” she says. She encountered issues of systemic racism and unequal access to resources among groups that are often forgotten.

The Kennedy School, she says, gave her an opportunity to connect people from varied backgrounds who could “really bring together the user experience in design and more technical backgrounds with policy and legal, with civil rights and advocacy work, to bring a better lens that’s not so rooted in just one silo.”

A mentor for her was Pfizer/Rowher Professor of Science and Technology Studies Sheila Jasanooff, who has studied technology issues for decades and helped Nguyen think about the intersection of technology, law, philosophy and history, and the nuances of culture.

In May, Nguyen graduated and headed down the street to the MIT Media Lab, where, as a research scientist, she will keep crossing boundaries. “I will continue doing work in the areas where user experience design meets policy, legal, and regulatory issues meets civil rights and advocacy work.”

Regulation Challenges

THE ISSUE OF WHETHER and how to regulate digital technology and the biggest tech companies is drawing increasing attention, and Kennedy School experts and alumni are helping shape the debate. As the reach of digital technology and the power of Big Tech increases, several faculty members, including JONATHAN ZITTRAIN, the George Bemis Professor of International Law at Harvard Law School and also on the faculty of the Kennedy School, are working with research fellows at the Shorenstein Center to tackle a broad set of questions on internet and platform regulation, including whether the biggest platforms should be broken up. In recent white papers and conferences, Shorenstein Fellows TOM WHEELER, a former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission; PHILIP VERVEER, an influential Washington communications lawyer; and antitrust expert GENE KIMMELMAN have recommended approaches to internet regulation reforms that invoke historical analyses of previous monopoly industries such as the Bell System phone conglomerate.

JASON FURMAN, a professor of the practice of economic policy and formerly chair of President Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers, has also turned his attention to the digital economy and the concentrated power of the largest tech companies. As the head of a U.K. government panel examining competition in the digital economy, he called for government policies that, he argued, would unlock competition and provide greater benefits to consumers and continued innovation. This approach, detailed in a report presented to the British government in March, proposed giving people more control of their data, allowing businesses to work with government to establish a digital platform code of conduct, and creating a digital regulator to oversee the fast-moving market. (Furman is currently advising the government on how to establish that digital regulator.)

DIPAYAN GHOSH, a research fellow at the Shorenstein Center who previously worked at Facebook and in the White House on digital policy issues, is quoted widely in the media on how to hold the big platforms accountable. He has written two “Digital Deceit” white papers that analyze the major tech platforms’ business model, Ghosh says that model encourages the spread of misinformation and propaganda because they sell better than truth and sober debate do. To protect authentic democracy, Ghosh calls for “a new digital social contract” that promotes privacy, transparency, and competition.

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**Tackling Disinformation**

THE SHORENSTEIN CENTER REFLECTS the School’s digital-era transformation. The center has broadened its focus well beyond legacy newspapers and broadcasters to take on research projects on digital-heavy subjects, such as how news media should handle disinformation and how to document research projects on digital-heavy subjects, such as how news beyond legacy newspapers and broadcasters to take on investigations is a project gauging the effects on people in several countries who use digital communication tools such as WhatsApp. Another research project will study the influence that both fact-checked and non-fact-checked information have on people’s political views “because you have to know the dogs that didn’t bark as well as the ones that do,” says Baum.

In addition, Baum and Shorenstein Center post-doctoral fellow IRENE PASQUETTO are overseeing the creation of a new journal called The Misinformation Review, which will vastly speed up the typical time lag in publishing peer-reviewed research from more than a year to just a month or two. The journal’s design is in part a response to the pace of digital innovation so that peer-reviewed findings will reach the field while still relevant for policy debates. The Misinformation Review is convening a conference for researchers in October. Gibbs is also working with lead researcher IOAN DONOVAN on the Technology and Social Change Research Project, which has set out to compile case studies on media manipulation and to train 100 researchers at a dozen universities over the next three years to focus on the field of “critical internet studies.” Donovan is creating methodological standards for the case studies on media manipulation to distinguish malicious campaigns from legitimate social media advocacy. “We don’t yet have methods that help us find and measure what we’re looking at,” Donovan says. “We’re really trying to get a very robust, transdisciplinary field together.”

“**You have to know the dogs that didn’t bark as well as the ones that do.**”

MATTHEW BAUM

**Security**

FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, the U.S. director of national intelligence has identified cyberattacks as the country’s top security threat. The evolution of computing and encryption, together with the transfer of information and services onto digital networks, has resulted in great advances but also significant vulnerabilities.

For more than a decade, the Belfer Center has worked to expand the School’s understanding of security to include cyber and other digital security questions. [JOSEPH NYE](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/nym), Harvard University Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, and [GRAHAM ALLISON](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/allison), the Douglas Dillon Professor of Government and then-center director, both former Kennedy School deans, launched a project on cybersecurity to keep the School at the forefront of security policy as it shifted into the big-data era.

Today, that focus continues through the Cyber Project, which studies how to manage the risk of conflict in cyberspace, from drones to surveillance to sabotage. The issues range from protecting vital infrastructure to controlling escalation in the event of a cyber conflict. Looking forward, the center is considering a biosecurity and bioweapons initiative as it anticipates future threats. In an example of the Kennedy School’s growing talent pool in the sector, LAUREN EVERETT Mc/wra 2019 became director of the Cyber Project after graduating from the School in May.

“What we’re talking about is at the scale of what do you do to mitigate against the risk of the Russians who have destructive malware in the electric grid right now.”

ERIC ROSENBACH

“And what’s the broader policy for determining what we should think about both the Chinese theft of intellectual property plus their pervasive surveillance system? These are big policy issues, and there’s a huge demand from the policy-making community to think them through.”

In addition to matters of national and international security, individual and network security are vital.

BRUCE SCHNEIER, digital security expert and an adjunct lecturer in public policy, is another member of the Kennedy School’s growing team of public interest technologists. Because cybersecurity is “fundamentally technological,” Schneier argues, “any serious public policy discussion requires a firm understanding of the underlying technology.”

Schneier’s work at HKS, such as his class “Cybersecurity: Technology, Policy, and Law,” helps make future policymakers literate in internet security policy and “able to spot political agendas disguised as technical arguments,” he says.

JAMES WALDO, the Gordon McKay Professor of the Practice of Computer Science at Harvard’s John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), helps guide HKS students through the complex issue of privacy in this world of computers, cell phones, cameras, and the Internet of Things. For Waldo (who is also the chief technology officer at SEAS), that includes examining the traditional understanding of privacy in the modern digital world along with the role of governments in regulating the gathering of, access to, and use of information. The answers policymakers arrive at have enormous implications. European law, Waldo points out, focuses on protecting the privacy of the individual from corporations, while in the United States, privacy laws are mostly concerned with protecting the individual from the government.
REIMAGINING ANYTHING DIGITAL

AT THE BEGINNING, says KIRSTEN RULF, 2017, she felt like someone throwing water balloons at a fancy wedding reception. As the first head of digital issues in the German chancellery, she didn’t find it easy to bring the agile, imaginative approach of a tech startup into the precise, regimented heart of the German bureaucracy.

But that, essentially, is the job. Rulf leads the strategy and policy unit for digital and innovation issues in the German federal government. “We’re basically reimaging anything digital,” she says of the 60-person department she heads. “How does government become digital? But also, how do you regulate technologies, especially disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence? And moreover, how can the German government ensure that technology companies and startups thrive here in Germany and in Europe?”

It is a position—in the digital sector and at the highest reaches of government—that Rulf, who had been a self-described “hardcore” television journalist, says she could not have imagined prior to her Harvard Kennedy School experience.

“When I came to HKS, I’d never done anything else in my life,” other than journalism, says Rulf, who came to the Kennedy School with the aid of a McCloy Fellowship, an exchange program for German and American journalists and policy experts. “And I thought afterwards I would go back and bring more of a social technology voice to the role.”

But classes with Gordon McKay Professor of the Practice of Computer Science JAMES WALDO and Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy BRUCE SCHNEIER, and the fledgling digital community curated by Lecturer in Public Policy DAVID EAVES (see main story), pointed Rulf in another direction, and by the middle of her second semester she could see another path ahead. An internship in Silicon Valley between her first and second years brought further confirmation.

Her Policy Analysis Exercise on autonomous vehicle policy led her to Lecturer in Public Policy MARK FAGAN’s Autonomous Vehicle Policy Initiative, and she stayed on after graduation, also working on artificial intelligence as a fellow at Harvard Law School.

The private sector came calling, but the opportunity with the German chancellor’s office was something Rulf could not pass up: “It was just such a big opportunity to actually build a startup inside the government.” She is convinced that the mix of technical and policy skills that she acquired at the Kennedy School allowed her to prevail over a thousand other applicants for the position.

Jumping into her job, which started in January 2019, felt a bit like being thrown into a washing machine, she says, as she built a team while being pulled in a hundred different directions. Besides her many individual projects, one of her main challenges is bringing a different mindset to government.

She is doing workshops with ministers, teaching agile development, and developing policy projects using a lean startup methodology. She has also implemented initiatives, such as a year-long fellowship that brings together technologists and government officials for joint projects and teaches them the basics of AI, data science, and computational thinking. In addition, her office was able to shepherd through Germany’s first digital strategy—a white paper that set the country’s overall goals for all things digital across ministries and sectors.

The strategy was developed in collaborative workshops and guided by “user personas,” fictional characters that represent the types of people who use the government’s services and technology. Putting the user—the citizen—at the center of her work is very close to Rulf’s heart.

Rulf accompanied Chancellor Angela Merkel to Harvard in May when Merkel spoke at Commencement. She finds herself constantly returning to her Harvard mentors and the frameworks that she learned here.

“Bringing a different, more digital and agile mindset to government is as fundamental as it is for the startups that I really took away as essential from my classes at HKS, for instance my courses with NICK SINAI and DANA CHISNELL, adjacent lecturers in public policy. Time and again, I learnt at HKS that good public service starts with the user at the center. This user-centered approach helps guide my decisions,” Rulf says.

“My main focus every day is on policy implementation. The German government has several great strategy papers for the digital sector, for example on AI, on the usage of big data, on transforming the education system or the medical sector to be resilient in financial slumps. Soon we will be the first country to have a blockchain strategy. Germans are precise and thoughtful when it comes to writing good strategy papers. Where we are less good is when it comes to implementing our goals. So bringing agile development and user-centered design to government kills two birds with one stone. It changes the mindset of government officials and it helps us implement our own good ideas faster and better for the benefit of our citizens. This will help my country to foster all things digital in the future.”

“Time and again, I learnt at HKS that good public service starts with the user at the center.”

DAVID EAVES OFTEN WARNS about a darker digital future—one in which all data is in the hands of an unscrupulous regime that uses private and public records to monitor individuals and groups, to stifle dissent, and to preserve or strengthen the state’s monopoly on power. That specter is one reason why technical and academic experts throughout the Kennedy School stress the need to inject ethics and human rights concerns into the digital policy debate.

SHEILA JASANOFF, the Pforzheimer Professor of Science and Technology Studies, has studied the ethical aspects of science and technology for decades (see the article on page 30). Her thinking about science, technology, and society has long informed debates among those weighing the human rights impact of digital policy approaches. She has proposed the creation of what she calls an observatory on gene editing: a diverse, international, and interdisciplinary network of individuals and organizations that would monitor and anticipate major biomedical advances and discuss the ethical issues and social implications they entail.

Looking forward, the Belfer Center’s Technology and Public Purpose Project is also investigating the nascent and potentially dangerous world of biotech, which often relies on big data and artificial intelligence. That combination poses ethical as well as technological challenges that the project is tackling with researchers, technologists, public policy makers, and investors.

Similarly, the ethical issues of artificial intelligence were the subject of an executive education program led by Jim Waldorf, which the School recently piloted at the Shorenstein Center, Ghosh is publishing The Ethical Machine, an online anthology of more than a dozen essays from a range of experts. The essays, he says, “bring together big ideas and drive discussion on how algorithms process information, and how it can lead to harmful discriminatory impact.”

The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy is a hub for ethical and human rights concerns at the Kennedy School. Its Human Rights and Technology Fellowship program has 15 inaugural fellows conducting research and hosting conversations on the ethical ramifications of new technology. They have looked at questions ranging from hands-on social problems to more abstract issues about the future of warfare and the use of automated weapons systems. Two of the fellows are working on a project to give employers information to help them hire former prisoners.

Carr Center Faculty Director MATHIAS RISSE, the Lucas N. Littauer Professor of Philosophy and Public Administration, and Executive Director Sushma Raman also run a series of talks called “Towards Life 3.0,” that look at biotech and other future challenges. “For me as a philosopher, technology is a domain where a lot of on-going philosophical questions are getting circed back,” Risse says. “That makes it attractive for the Carr Center.”

Risse took this year’s 70th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights as inspiration to think about recent trends and future challenges. The occasion prompted him to wonder what human rights problems should occupy the Carr Center during the next 70 years. He and others have no doubt that the shifting landscape of digital technology—which includes the wider use of AI in biotechnology—will help shape the future of human rights for the next seven decades, just as it will transform government institutions and services and every conceivable area of policy.
BY JULIA HANNA

THE DEPARTMENT OF FAILURE

TO UNDERSTAND THE STORY OF ROHIT MALHOTRA MPP 2013, consider two crucial moments. The first takes place in college at a national dance competition, where Malhotra is the base of a seven-person tower for a bhangra number—the high-energy Indian folk dance known for its acrobatic moves. As he lifts the people stacked on top of him, his knees lock, his ankles roll, and he breaks both legs.

In the second, Malhotra’s parents are visiting from Atlanta for his graduation from the Kennedy School. “For the first time, I saw them use the railing to climb some stairs,” he says. “I remember going back to my apartment that day and I cried. I realized my parents weren’t getting any younger, and that I wanted to be near them.”

Disconnected as these events may seem, both played a key role in the creation of Atlanta’s Center for Civic Innovation (CCI)—a nonprofit and social innovation and civic engagement hub Malhotra founded in 2014 to counter what he calls “the tale of two cities.”

“There’s the Atlanta with a thriving business center and companies known all over the world,” he says. “But it also has one of the highest income inequality gaps of any large city in the United States.”

Since its opening, CCI has created a community of thousands of Atlanta residents, in addition to raising and investing nearly $2 million in almost 100 community leaders with solutions to improve the city’s outlook. It has launched a citywide voter engagement initiative to connect citizens with candidates for elected office in the Atlanta region. And it is leading an effort to reassess a decades-old system of neighborhood planning in the city. The organization has come to embody Malhotra’s spirit of iteration, outreach, and risk taking.

“I joke that we’re the city of Atlanta’s Department of Failure,” Malhotra says. “I’ve always wanted it to be a place where there was no red tape—where you can innovate for the public sector.”

Rohit Malhotra always believed there needed to be a space for innovation in the public sector. So he went back home and built one.
Charged up

Now about that bhangra accident, which happened in Malhotra’s second year at Emory University. Confined to a wheelchair for weeks, he happened to pick up The End of Poverty by Jeffrey Sachs and Building Social Business by Muhammad Yunus. “It came back from that injury charged up about poverty issues around the world,” he says. As an undergrad, Malhotra started a nonprofit that engaged other young people around the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals, among them the elimination of malaria. He raised money by selling T-shirts with the message “Mosquitoes Suck” and traveled to Malawi, where his understanding of poverty was informed by the complexity and resilience he saw in the country’s villages and cities. “It’s not that I didn’t know about poverty. I grew up in it, and my parents lived it in India,” Malhotra says. “But that trip gave me context for it. It made me understand. Poverty isn’t what you read about in textbooks. People are not data points—they are wrapped up in culture and experiences that dictate the way they see the world and the way the world sees them.” Malhotra believes that coming into a community from the outside and directing it how it should be wasn’t as powerful as enabling citizens to create that change themselves.

Out of college, Malhotra worked in marketing and digital outreach for Malaria No More and Bono’s One Campaign before landing a job developing a digital communications strategy for the Democratic National Committee, including content for @BarackObama, the president’s Twitter account. “I learned that I loved the communication side, but I was always a little sad when the door closed and others worked on policy,” he says. That realization led Malhotra to the Kennedy School, where he served as Kennedy School Student Government president. “The Kennedy School gave me a lexicon I would have never otherwise had,” he says. “I learned the work happening on the ground in my hometown of Atlanta was known to the rest of the world as social innovation. If you don’t put a name to something, it’s hard to value it, and that’s exactly what was happening in our city.”

As an Ash Center Government Innovations Fellow, Malhotra worked in the White House Office of Management and Budget in the summer of 2012, focusing on social impact bonds as a financing mechanism for struggling cities. His instinct was to reach out directly to city leaders with the information and ideas being generated, but he soon realized that it wasn’t that easy. “We were talking about nerdy stuff I loved, but it was hard to move that conversation beyond our bubble in Washington,” he says. “I knew the federal government was complex, but I think I didn’t realize how much red tape was involved before dollars and opportunity could flow from the federal government to a city.”

When Malhotra moved back to Atlanta after graduating from the Kennedy School, he began organizing discussion groups for residents to better understand some of his hometown’s most pressing issues—among them, food insecurity, transportation, income disparity, safety, and education. An opportunity to be a Presidential Innovation Fellow came his way; he turned it down to continue working with local leaders on what would become CCI.

On September 12, 2014, a diverse collection of more than 300 “stubborn, thoughtful, and driven” residents of Atlanta came together in the pouring rain for CCI’s launch in its renovated space just steps away from city hall and the Georgia state capitol. That public show of support and interest was a powerful sign for Malhotra that people in Atlanta were ready to address widening inequality and low public participation in local government.

Fierce Guidance

At the heart of CCI’s mission is its collaboration with civic innovators—a term Malhotra defines as people on the ground who are challenging the status quo and building entrepreneurial solutions to address inequality. Malhotra and his teams have raised about $2 million from philanthropic and impact investors to directly invest in those grassroots leaders’ solutions. That has meant supporting Tiffany Latrice Williams (left), top), who launched TILA Studios, which is focused on increasing representation of black female art in galleries and museums around the country, and John Kennebrew’s Showcase Group, which provides mental health services to teens in juvenile detention to substantially decrease recidivism rates. Chantelle Brittle’s (left, bottom) organization, Grandma’s House, was another investment. Brittle started it when she noticed something in her Oakland City (Atlanta) neighborhood: People she’d known for years were disappearing, driven to sell their homes to developers because of unpaid taxes or costly repairs.

“I saw my neighborhood changing,” Brittle says of the city’s rising real estate market. “God isn’t making no more dirt, and in certain parts of Atlanta it’s very valuable. It’s important for our community to understand what we have—to treasure it, and pass it on to the next generation.”

So Trimble created Grandma’s House to provide workshops and individual sessions to guide eligible residents through the process of applying for government funds for home repair. Trimble learned about CCI when she served as a volunteer for its #VoteATL Initiative, where it focused on educating residents about the local elections and hosted Q&A sessions with all 12 mayoral candidates. Selected as a CCI Civic Innovation Fellow, Trimble received an initial investment of $5,000 to test her idea over a six-month period during which she had access to CCI’s resources, including office space, networking events and talks, and one-on-one strategic planning sessions. Because of that, Trimble was one of eight women to receive a follow-on investment of $25,000 through CCI’s partnership with Sara Blakely, the founder and CEO of Spanx. In 2016, Malhotra and Blakely teamed up to start an initiative to invest in women-led businesses creating social impact in Atlanta.

Trimble laughs and uses the word “fierce” when describing Malhotra’s guidance. “He takes your plan and tears it down, rips it up, and gives it back to you,” she says. “He says, ‘My job isn’t to make you good, my job is to make you excellent.’” CCI creates a strong community among the leaders it works with, but also challenges them to create models for their work that eventually “put them out of business” because they actually solve the problem.

Beyond its work with individual leaders, CCI focuses on strengthening engagement between people and local government. In addition to #VoteATL, CCI launched its NPU Initiative, an effort to educate residents on Atlanta’s official system of community engagement: Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs). Introduced in 1974 by Mayor Maynard Jackson, the first African American mayor of a major Southern city, NPUs were created to give Atlanta’s residents a voice on the issues that concern them most and become a model of civic engagement for other American cities. In the following decades, owing to declining support from city government, many residents saw that the system no longer worked as originally intended. Malhotra commands the leaders of Atlanta’s NPUs who, in spite of these challenges, still find ways to represent their neighborhoods’ unique voices. CCI is working with these leaders to evaluate and revitalize what has become an outdated process of reaching out to residents—who, not surprisingly, did not feel heard. That process, Malhotra says, requires him to turn back to his organizer roots to attend neighborhood meetings and listen to people share their frustrations and aspirations.

“These meetings are never what I would describe as fun, but they are fundamental to how cities function,” he says. “The hypothesis is that a greater number of active voices will result in increased innovation in the public sector and increase public participation so they are not only seven or eight people in a room making decisions on behalf of tens of thousands—that’s scary.”

CCI’s team, working out of a 10,000-square-foot space located in a renovated department store building in the city’s downtown, has now grown to 20. But in a sense, it’s working to include the entire community.

“We need places where communities can test ideas that can have massive implications for the system,” Malhotra says. That outlook will continue to drive Malhotra and CCI’s work in the years ahead—because, as his own story shows, big change can evolve from seemingly random events.

“I’ve always wanted it to be a place where there was no red tape—where you can innovate for the public sector.”

ROHIT MALHOTRA
THE DEMOCRACY OF SCIENCE

LAST YEAR, at the Second International Summit on Human Genome Editing, the Chinese researcher He Jiankui presented experimental results on twin girls born successfully—just weeks earlier—from embryos he had genetically modified. One of the girls’ parents was HIV-positive, and He claimed that he had edited the embryos to prevent the virus from infecting them. The backlash was swift and universal as he was condemned for acting irresponsibly and unethically. The consensus was that a line had been crossed.

But what is that line, and who has drawn it? And as the pace of biological and biotechnological discovery accelerates and begins to reshape the very definition of life, who sits at the table to determine the consensus?

These are the questions that Sheila Jasanoff, the Pforzheimer Professor of Science and Technology Studies at Harvard Kennedy School, has spent her career asking. As a scholar of science and its role in society, Jasanoff wants to bring a wider range of voices into conversations that in the late 20th century have been dominated by biologists.

One of Jasanoff’s inspirations comes not from science but from art. Across the river from Harvard Kennedy School, in Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts, hangs one of Paul Gauguin’s most famous paintings. It is a vibrant Tahitian scene. A baby and an old woman bookend the work, with clusters of young people in the middle. In a corner of the canvas, the artist wrote three questions: “Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?”

Gauguin painted his work more than a century ago, but Jasanoff argues in her new book, Can Science Make Sense of Life?, that his questions are just as relevant now—if not more so.

SCIENTIFIC ACCELERATION

TO UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES of these questions today, it helps to understand the accelerated history of discovery and invention in the field of biology—especially in terms of genetics and reproductive technology.

In the mid-19th century, biology was the realm of amateurs, explorers, and naturalists—students of what was then called natural history. In England, Charles Darwin and contemporaries such as Alfred Russel Wallace were developing theories of evolution through observation of the natural world. At the same time, Gregor Mendel, an Augustinian monk from Silesia, was cross-breeding pea plants in his monastery’s garden. Although Mendel gained his reputation posthumously, his experiments led to an understanding of the rules of heredity.

By the mid-20th century, the explorers and naturalists working outdoors had been supplanted by white-coated professionals in the lab. From the groundwork of Darwin, Mendel, and others, there came a flowering of biological discovery—most famously the understanding of the double-helix structure of DNA and the hereditary code contained in all living things. By the 1970s, scientists had discovered how to join DNA from different sources, resulting in so-called recombinant DNA, which had many applications, including the modification of food sources to make them higher yielding or more resistant to pests or drought. Since then, gene editing has opened up yet more possibilities for redesigning nature. Meanwhile, reproductive technology advanced in step, leading to the first “test tube baby,” Louise Brown, born through in vitro fertilization (IVF) in 1978.

THE EVOLUTION OF A FIELD

THE RAPID DEVELOPMENTS in the biological sciences over the past 40 years run parallel to Jasanoff’s own career. As breakthroughs in the lab allowed for new manipulations of life, Jasanoff observed the scientists themselves and helped build the field of science, technology, and society (STS)—first at Cornell University, and for the past two decades at HKS, where she directs the Science, Technology, and Society Program.

Jasanoff came to the study of science and society though a series of happy accidents. Born in India, she studied mathematics at Harvard as an undergraduate. Her fascination with languages led her to complete a PhD in historical linguistics at the University. But with few options for an academic career in that specialty, Jasanoff proceeded to Harvard Law School and then—uninterested in corporate law—joined a small environmental law firm in Boston.

When her husband, Jay (now the Diebold Professor of Indo-European Linguistics and Philology at Harvard), joined the faculty at Cornell in the late 1970s, Jasanoff had to come up with a plan B. “At that time environmental law was an extremely new practice,” she reflects. The small city of Ithaca, New York—which revolves around Cornell—offered scant opportunities. Some political scientists, however, were getting involved in a new discipline at the intersection of science, technology, and society. So Jasanoff joined Cornell’s STS program and began to rev it up. She has been shaping the field ever since.

For Jasanoff, STS fills an important gap. Although all major research universities teach the sciences, few study the making of science as a cultural practice. “Science and technology are social activities,” she says. “How do you study these activities for themselves?” This question has driven Jasanoff to develop...
2008 | IF HE JERUSALEM CLAIMS THAT THINGS WERE SUCCESSFULLY BORN FROM HUMAN EMBRYOS, HE GENERALLY EDITED WITH CAREFUL TECHNOLOGY.

1966 | IF THE MARRIAGE COMMITTEE IN SOUTH AFRICA IS A REPORT, IN THE CASE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A WOMAN AND A HUMAN EMBRYO, IT IS NOT EXPERIMENTAL.

1894 | THE U.S. SUPREME COURT CALLED UNAVAILABE TO PATENT A SPECULATIVELY MODIFIED BACTERIUM. BEFORE THE TIME WHEN ORGANISMS COULD NOT BE PATENTED.

1887 | H. L. HUXLEY, THE FIRST TEST TUBE BABY, IS BORN THROUGH IN VITRO FERTILIZATION.

1970 | THE VENTURE CAPITAL FIRM BAYBIO BIDS FOR BROTHER BODIES BUCKET AND WISE TO DEVELOP COMMERICAL APPLICATIONS FOR RECOMBINANT DNA.

1975 | THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL ISSUES THE SAFETY OF RECOMBINANT DNA AT THE ASILOMAR CONFERENCE.

1962 | MICHAEL POLANYI PUBLISHES "THE REPUBLIC OF SCIENCE."

1963 | SEVERAL PAPERS APPEAR IN AMONG SUGGESTING RECOMBINANT DNA AS THE STRUCTURE OF DNA, INCLUDING ONE BY JAMES WATSON AND FRANCIS CRICK, AND TWO BY ROUSKIND FRANKLIN AND MARIOLIS SZEGOL, AND WALTERS WINKEL.

1987 | PAUL GAUGUIN PUBLISHES "THE CULTURE OF SCIENTIFIC SELF-GOVERNMENT COMBINED WITH THE MINDING INFLUENCE OF A BOOMING AND LUCRATIVE MARKET—WITH SCIENTISTS OFTEN DRIVEN BY THE FINANCIAL REWARDS AND PRESSURES OF DISCOVERY—MEANT THAT MANY PERSPECTIVES WERE LEFT UNHEARD, JASNOFF ARGUES. AND BIOLOGISTS ARE LESS LIKELY THAN ETHICISTS AND LAWMAKERS, FOR INSTANCE, TO TACKLE THE BROAD PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS THAT GENETIC ENGINEERING AND REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES RAISE. "WHERE DOES LIFE COME FROM? WHERE DOES LIFE END?" JASNOFF ASKS. "LINKED TO THESE MORAL CHALLENGES ARE ISSUES OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. WHOSE OPINION COUNTS AND WHOSE DOES NOT IN ADDRESSING THESE FUNDAMENTAL CONCERNS?"

1993 | THE CULTURE OF SCIENTIFIC SELF-GOVERNMENT COMBINED WITH THE MINDING INFLUENCE OF A BOOMING AND LUCRATIVE MARKET—WITH SCIENTISTS OFTEN DRIVEN BY THE FINANCIAL REWARDS AND PRESSURES OF DISCOVERY—MEANT THAT MANY PERSPECTIVES WERE LEFT UNHEARD, JASNOFF ARGUES. AND BIOLOGISTS ARE LESS LIKELY THAN ETHICISTS AND LAWMAKERS, FOR INSTANCE, TO TACKLE THE BROAD PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS THAT GENETIC ENGINEERING AND REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES RAISE. "WHERE DOES LIFE COME FROM? WHERE DOES LIFE END?" JASNOFF ASKS. "LINKED TO THESE MORAL CHALLENGES ARE ISSUES OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. WHOSE OPINION COUNTS AND WHOSE DOES NOT IN ADDRESSING THESE FUNDAMENTAL CONCERNS?"

2018 | THE AGE OF RECOMBINATION: FROM HUMAN EMBRYOS TO HUMAN EMBRYOS, AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN.

2020 | THE AGE OF RECOMBINATION: FROM HUMAN EMBRYOS TO HUMAN EMBRYOS, AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN.

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rigorous methods for examining science and technology through a societal lens—and she has focused this lens especially on the environmental and biological sciences.

THE REPUBLIC OF SCIENCE

“THE 20TH CENTURY’S GREATEST BREAKTHROUGHS IN THE SCIENCES HAVE MADE IT INCREASINGLY MORE ACCEPTABLE FOR BIOLOGISTS TO CLAIM OWNERSHIP OF THE MEANING OF LIFE,” JASNOFF WRITES IN HER NEW BOOK, "THE ORIGINS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THAT GROWING PRIMARY DESERVE OUR ATTENTION.”

Approaching her subject with forensic rigour, Jasnoff examines how twists in the narrative of scientific progress over the past century have led to a kind of “mythmaking”: a story of “eureka!” moments of scientific discovery that obscure and simplify the hard collective work that led to them. Along with this mythmaking comes an assertion that scientists work best independently and that they can and should regulate themselves. The chemist Michael Polanyi argued for this scientific autonomy in his 1962 essay “The Republic of Science,” and it is playing out in practice today.

One site of such self-regulation was the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, California. As recombinant DNA research accelerated, in tandem with the development of the biotechnology industry, scientists gathered at Asilomar in 1975 to lay down rules for experimentation. Instead of examining broader social questions, however, the meeting focused on narrow concerns about contamination and lab safety. “Questions about biosafety and ethics were explicitly excluded from the agenda,” Jasnoff points out. “Ecological questions, such as long-term effects on biodiversity or non-target species, received barely a nod.”

Furthermore, the scientists did not talk about what would happen if work after fertilization, after they had used on an industrial scale. While they discussed the possibility of changing the very nature of food itself, she says, they did not consider possible impacts on farmers, consumers, crop diversity, and food security around the world.

Despite these shortcomings, Jasnoff argues, the Asilomar conference was broadly perceived as a successful exercise in scientific self-regulation, and policymakers were less pressed to demand that we can have more thoughtful conversations if—in addition to biologists—legal, ethical, religious, and other voices are invited to discuss these messy, complex questions. In other words, if scientific conversations happen within a broader societal context.

Historical examples of such conversations do exist. Jasnoff points to a British government-appointed committee in the 1980s that provided guidance on research using embryos created through IVF. Notably, the chair was not a biologist but a moral philosopher from Oxford University named Mary Warnock. It was Warnock’s task to consider the status of an embryo produced and kept alive outside a human body: What was this ambiguous new entity? Was it only a ball of cells? At what point, if any, a human baby? Contemplating these questions could help to establish research guidelines. The committee ultimately came to the consensus—truly a compromise—that embryos could be used for research for only five weeks, after which they began developing rudimentary nervous systems.

The Warnock committee is a model for broad, if not democratic, conversations about human life, and Jasnoff has an ambitious plan to make the conversations even broader. Along with J. Benjamin Hurlbut, of Arizona State University—a former postdoctoral fellow at the Kennedy School’s Science, Technology, and Society Program—and others in the STS field, Jasnoff has launched a project to foster a “summit,” which she views as an elite gathering dominated by scientists and limited to experts.

SCIENCE IN SOCIETY

THE CULTURE OF SCIENTIFIC SELF-GOVERNMENT COMBINED WITH THE MIDDYING INFLUENCE OF A BOOMING AND LUCRATIVE MARKET—WITH SCIENTISTS OFTEN DRIVEN BY THE FINANCIAL REWARDS AND PRESSURES OF DISCOVERY—MEANT THAT MANY PERSPECTIVES WERE LEFT UNHEARD, JASNOFF ARGUES. AND BIOLOGISTS ARE LESS LIKELY THAN ETHICISTS AND LAWMAKERS, FOR INSTANCE, TO TACKLE THE BROAD PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS THAT GENETIC ENGINEERING AND REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES RAISE. “WHERE DOES LIFE COME FROM? WHERE DOES LIFE END?” JASNOFF ASKS. “LINKED TO THESE MORAL CHALLENGES ARE ISSUES OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. WHOSE OPINION COUNTS AND WHOSE DOES NOT IN ADDRESSING THESE FUNDAMENTAL CONCERNS?”

Such an observatory—which she and Hurlbut argue for in Nature, one of the world’s premier scientific journals—would be an international, interdisciplinary, and collaborative forum for conversations about science and society. It would open up the discourse about gene editing and invite perspectives that have been excluded. After all, Jasnoff says, “everyone around the world sees a piece of this thing called human existence. Everyone has a stake in it.”

The observatory is one metaphor Jasnoff uses to think about sharing knowledge. Another is the book and the library. In her own book, she writes: “Representing the human genome as the book of life, written in the plain four-letter code of DNA, implicitly claims for biologists a priestly role: as the sole

“Where does life as we know it begin? Where does life end? ... Whose opinion counts and whose does not in addressing these fundamental concerns?”

authorized readers of that book, those most qualified to interpret its mysteries and draw out its lessons for the human future. But the genetic book of life sits in practice alongside numerous other volumes whose authors have also been occupied, for much longer stretches of time and across more diverse cultural spaces, in asking questions about the meaning and purposes of life in general and human life in particular.”

Jasnoff’s hope is that we will access these diverse volumes in the abundant library humanity offers. And that we will take into account many perspectives about life’s meaning and purpose—the perspectives of scientists and of non-scientists—to best serve people in a complex world with competing values and interests.

“People are constantly trying to ask me, ‘Are you pessimistic or optimistic about science?’” Jasnoff reflects. “But I say that that’s not the right question. The right question is: ‘How should we steer this enormously significant capability for the public good?’”

Professor Erica Chenoweth’s research shows the value of nonviolent resistance in societal conflicts, making her a resource for activists opposing oppressive regimes worldwide.

BY RALPH RANALLI

they reach out to erica chenoweth almost daily—from Africa, South America, the Middle East, Europe, even the United States. They hail from places where authoritarian officials are tightening their grip, where repression is on the rise, and where citizens are mobilizing against governments they want to unseat. Their inquiries usually boil down to one key question: How can we win without resorting to violence? Chenoweth’s painstaking research, unprecedented in its scope and historical breadth, has shed new light on the understanding of civil resistance, political change, and the surprising effectiveness of nonviolent action.

It has made Chenoweth, a professor of public policy at Harvard Kennedy School and a Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, one of an elite group of global experts on civil resistance. She is sought out both for her remarkable chronicling of nonviolent movements and for her understanding of what can potentially make or break them. With authoritarianism and populist nationalism on the rise worldwide, the importance of a carefully constructed empirical foundation has grown each year, she says. “Certainly I didn’t think when I started down the path of this research that that would be the case.”

Chenoweth was a predoctoral fellow at the Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs from 2006 to 2008 when she and fellow researcher Maria Stephan—who had just earned her PhD at Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy—started studying the topic. Inspired by other leading civil resistance scholars such as Gene Sharp, Peter Ackerman, and Kurt Schock, they collected data about every violent and nonviolent mass action from 1900 to 2006, 323 of them in all—and analyzed them in the context of 160 variables. Chenoweth was certain that violent movements would be shown to be more successful in overthrowing the regimes they were opposing. The data proved her wrong.
Chenoweth says success also means thinking beyond social media, particularly for young activists who are accustomed to instant and easy mass communication. Social media can organize large numbers of people in a short time, but authoritarians have also learned how to use it to their own advantage, to the point where, she says, the world is now in an “age of smart repression.”

“My sense is that regimes have basically caught up to whatever advantage there was to the internet for activists,” she says. “The internet provides lots of opportunity for more narrow, discriminating repression that’s more effective than the blunt, brute force that would take place in the streets.”

In one case in Sudan during 2019’s Arab Spring, the regime of then-President Omar al-Bashir feared that it might face an uprising, so its security services created a fake event on Facebook designed to look like a protest organized by young activists. As many as 12,000 people responded, and the would-be protesters who showed up were rounded up by security forces.

Institutions and authorities’ subsequent access to the protesters’ Facebook contacts led to even more arrests. Organization is another key element of successful nonviolent movements that is underappreciated and not fully understood, Chenoweth says. Solid organizational structures are important not only for withstanding repression when things get tough but also for helping pave the way for sustained success when repressive regimes actually do give up power.

“That is so much of what Gandhi talked about: having a constructive program, creating alternative institutions, and actually building the society you are trying to achieve,” she says. “In Poland, the Solidarity movement built its own newspaper, its own schools, and even its own self-governing coalition in areas of resistance.”

One challenge to organization, especially in the Western world, Chenoweth says, is that progressive movements full of fledglings tend to be fragmented and often internally contentious. Participants in right-wing movements, meanwhile, are easier to organize because they tend to be more ideologically oriented to following authority.

In emergencies, people in left-leaning or progressive movements can agree on the problem, so progressive movements tend to rally around a key moment or an emergency,” she says. “But this means they are often reacting to crises rather than taking the initiative or proposing a consensus-based solution to the problem.”

Complicating this is that the world is often less agreement in democracies about what exactly constitutes a crisis, and the energy around mobilization for change gets pushed into election cycles.

“People tend to think the way we create change is through elections, and the result is an overconfidence in elections,” she says. “During election cycles, people divert their energies away from community organization and mobilization in a way that makes it hard to sustain a mode of extra-institutional struggle.”

Countries where resistance campaigns were nonviolent were 10 times as likely to transition to democracy compared to countries where resistance turned violent—regardless of whether the campaign succeeded or failed in the short term. Even when nonviolent campaigns were not immediately successful, Chenoweth and Stephan found, they still tended to empower moderates or reformers within the ruling elites who would gradually initiate changes. Chenoweth points to the Keffa movement in Egypt in the early 2000s and its likely influence on the organization of the 2011 uprisings against the regime of President Hosni Mubarak. Similarly, the Defiance Campaign in South Africa that was suppressed by mass arrests in the 1990s eventually reemerged in the late 1980s as the movement that ultimately ended apartheid.

Chenoweth and Stephan collected their research in their seminal 2011 book, Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict, which became a touchstone for subsequent conversations and analysis of nonviolent movements. Further research showed the surprisingly small critical mass needed for success: movements that were able to mobilize at least 3.5 percent of the population were uniformly successful.

The key ingredients of a successful nonviolent resistance movement, the researchers found, are:

- A large and diverse population of participants that can be sustained over time.
- The ability to create loyalty shifts among key regime-supporting groups such as business elites, state media, and—most important—security elites such as the police and the military.
- A creative and imaginative variation in methods of resistance beyond mass protest.
- The organizational discipline to face direct repression without having the movement fall apart or opt for violence.

Chenoweth says that the third and fourth attributes may be both the most important and the least understood, particularly the need for creative responses that are able to fragment and weaken security elites such as the police and the military. “I feel a responsibility to communicate this information effectively but also to communicate the limits of our knowledge—and there is a real tension between being an observer and being a participant,” she says. “I get a lot of emails or correspondence, multiple times a week. I don’t provide direct advice, but I suggest resources for people.”

Many autocratic regimes accuse nonviolent dissidents of engaging in foreign-backed conspiracies against them. So, for both their own sake and the sake of the people who reach out to her for help, Chenoweth says, she must avoid any perception that her research, the University, and/or the United States are pulling the strings in a nonviolent conflict from afar. This can be difficult for someone who has become so closely aligned with an idea—successful nonviolent resistance—that is so important to so many people.

“She wants her research to matter. She truly is a public intellectual, I deeply admire that about her,” says her co-author Stephan, who is now the director of the Program on Nonviolent Action at the United States Institute of Peace, an independent, nonpartisan agency funded directly by Congress. “We have both prioritized making our research available to a broad audience and making it our life’s work.”

“The line that we don’t cross is offering strategic and tactical advice to activists. We can offer the research as generalizable findings on the efficacy of civil resistance and offer key takeaways from the research that are relevant and examples across cases,” Stephan says. “Offering cross-case comparisons and analysis I think is really helpful to activists in different environments. But the line crossing is suggesting or prescribing a course of action. That’s a huge risk.”

What Chenoweth does instead is point people to her research and other sources that spell out best practices for successful nonviolent resistance. Although some people may think that passion, principle, and a robust social media strategy are enough to launch a resistance movement, she says, actual success requires much more than that.

“It’s hard,” Chenoweth says. “And it requires imagination and creativity. It requires organization. And it requires courage and discipline.”

Looking to the future, Chenoweth is currently collecting data on nonviolent actions in the United States with Jeremy Pressman, an associate professor at the University of Connecticut. Their project, called the Crowd Counting Consortium, has catalogued more than 8,700 protests dating back to the Women’s March in January 2017. So far, their data shows that from six to nine million Americans protested between 1.8 and 3.8 percent of the U.S. population—and that 89 percent of those people were rallying against the Trump administration and its agenda.

Chenoweth is also continuing her outreach to activists everywhere through a new book, Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know, due out in early 2020. The book will contain updates on her previous research on effective nonviolent resistance, including new charts to help readers visualize the data, and new knowledge that other researchers have produced.

“I hope it’s something that reflects the incredible insight that researchers have had over the years about nonviolent resistance,” she says. “I’m just trying to make it as accessible as possible.”

**SMART REPRESSION**

Chenoweth says her goal is that her research has become a resource for nonviolent resisters, but she says she’s circumspect when they reach out to her directly for help.

“I feel a responsibility to communicate this information effectively but also to communicate the limits of our knowledge—and there is a real tension between being an observer and being a participant,” she says. “I get a lot of emails or correspondence, multiple times a week. I don’t provide direct advice, but I suggest resources for people.”

Many autocratic regimes accuse nonviolent dissidents of engaging in foreign-backed conspiracies against them. So, for both their own sake and the sake of the people who reach out to her for help, Chenoweth says, she must avoid any perception that her research, the University, and/or the United States are pulling the strings in a nonviolent conflict from afar. This can be difficult for someone who has become so closely aligned with an idea—successful nonviolent resistance—that is so important to so many people.

“She wants her research to matter. She truly is a public intellectual, I deeply admire that about her,” says her co-author Stephan, who is now the director of the Program on Nonviolent Action at the United States Institute of Peace, an independent, nonpartisan agency funded directly by Congress. “We have both prioritized making our research available to a broad audience and making it our life’s work.”

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"It struck me as being incredible... how male and technical this world was. Nothing about human rights. Nothing about gender. Nothing about what I understood to be the problem.”

Former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, at a Forum in April, describing the first climate conference she attended.

“There’s plenty of time to go make money, but there’s not always a great time to change the world for the better.”

Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo, giving the Godkin Lecture in March.

“We have to be careful with race, continuously, certainly for candidates of color. That it is still a third rail, and it is still very difficult to talk about.”

Former Florida gubernatorial candidate Andrew Gillum at a Forum in April.

“America, the piggy bank, will continue to be plundered by a trade deficit that transfers more than half a trillion dollars of American wealth a year into foreign hands.”

Peter Navarro, President Donald Trump’s trade adviser, speaking at a Forum in April.

“Washington more closely reflects the American people than they would like to wish.”

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He concludes with sections on strategy and leadership that underpin effective security, especially in an era of fast-changing, asymmetrical threats from cyberwar to terrorism.

**Love Your Enemies**

**How Decent People Can Save America from the Culture of Contempt**

Arthur Brooks, Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership

> “WHILE POLITICS IS LIKE THE WEATHER,” writes Arthur Brooks, “climate is like ideas.” And Brooks—a self-described “policy nerd with a PhD,” a recent addition to the Kennedy School faculty, and former president of the American Enterprise Institute—had always been happy to stay away from the squalls and concentrate on blue-skying thinking.

> “However, even a climate scientist has to think about the weather when a hurricane comes ashore, and that’s what’s happening today,” Brooks argues. “Political differences are ripping our country apart, rendering my big, fancy policy ideas largely superfluous.”

> “Across the political spectrum, people in positions of political power and influence are setting us against one another. They tell us our neighbors who disagree politically are ruining our country. That ideological differences aren’t a matter of differing opinions but reflect moral turpitude. That our side must utterly vanquish the other, even if it leaves our neighbors without a voice,” Brooks writes.

> So, what to do when one is grappling with ideas and taking to a family member or a close friend because of the 2016 election, and millions deliberately avoid hearing different viewpoints? Brooks sees a hunger for unity obscured by the fractiousness and what he calls the “culture of contempt.”

> He proposes five simple rules to allow people to fight back:

> "Stand up to the Man—stop giving your money and attention to policies and politicians who rip our country apart and render your ideas largely superfluous."

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1975 45th Reunion
Albert (Nick) Nichols MPP, PhD 1978.

writes, “Stayed at HKS to get PhD in public policy, distracted by teaching, children, house remodeling, etc. On the faculty at HKS (1977–83, 1985–88, and adjunct 2011–15), where I taught micro, analytic methods, and energy & environment. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1985–88), where in the economic analysis division I directed a program of lead in gasoline. As an economic consultant (NERA and CELG, 1989–2013), I focused on regulation & litigation in antitrust, environment, and energy. Eve and I have two children (Matt and Beth) and three granddaughters (ages 11–15). We are both retired and pursue hobbies (mine is woodworking), volunteer (I’m on town appropriation committee), and travel.”

1976 Michael Wallace MPP is retired—and loving it!

1977 Larry DiCara MC/MPP writes, “I have retired from Nisan Peabody and am sharing space with old friends at 16 Post Office Square, consulting and lobbying on behalf of clients with complicated issues, often at Boston City Hall, which is but a few minutes away. I remain an active citizen of the Boston community. My three daughters have completed their junior year, one at Harvard and William Smith and two at Harvard.”

1978 Adam Thompson MPP writes, “I’m gradually picking up threads with classmates. In the past year, I have seen Rob Meyer MPP, PhD 1995, John Walsh MPP, Chris (and Carole) Fisher MPP, and Tom (and Mary) Gallagher MPP in the UK. I expect to see John and Gail Lundgren MPP with the Fishers at the end of May (2009). I’m still running the European Leadership Network, doing guerrilla diplomacy to stop conflict in Europe.”

1980 40th Reunion

Joseph Aide mc/lgp writes, “I continue to be blessed with good health, a great extended family, and a circle of friends from kindergarten through to those I’ve made late in life. Many, many good friends from our class: I hope we have a big turnout for our class!”

Edward Burns MC/MPP, while at HKS, was an assistant district attorney in Suffolk County (Boston). In 10 years, he conducted more than 200 jury trials of violent felons. On two occasions, record-breaking (length) prison sentences were obtained—both against rapists, in totally unrelated cases. He later became the undersheriff of Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Cambridge). Edward writes, “Since the solos, the sheriff of Middlesex traditionally leads the Harvard University Commencement Day Parade. In 2006, circumstances resulted in me leading the commencement procession. Astoundingly, Earth continued in its orbit with barely a whimper.”

John Macdonly MC/MPP writes, “After retiring, I began writing. My first published (coauthored) work was a “mediocre true” collection of stories—Not Exactly Rocket Scientists and Other Stories (outnowitasouls.com), available, as they say, wherever books are sold, including Amazon. I have row written more than 30 short fiction stories, appearing in Short Story America, Dit & Flos, and other print and digital platforms. Several of my latest stories will appear in anthologies that will be released this fall, and I am working on both a novel and my short story collection. My novella is glaring at me from my desk, asking for attention. Stay tuned.”

Ken Young MC/MPP writes, “Finding life as challenging as always. Medics are crowding. President of the Harvard Free Library, established in 1880, transitioning (hopeful) to a new sustainability model. Involved in state-level policy debates—development vs. conservation. More foreign travel. Navigating my men and helping others manage the retirement finances landscape. Enjoying having a child living and working abroad. Deciding where to live to keep warm in the winter, cool in the summer, while transitioning to one floor. Making new friends and exploring new interests and opportunities. Rising the fragmentation of my country and the decline of our democracy.”

1981

Lynn Fields Harris MC/MPP, until June 2018, served for 15 years as executive director of Center in the Park, a nationally accredited senior center community and social services agency in Philadelphia. Through her leadership, the center was transformed into a wellness center and was recognized as a model for the implementation of innovative programming and of community-based/ academic participatory research initiatives with diverse populations. She has served in numerous volunteer leadership roles, including as a National Council on Aging (NCOA) board member. Lynn received the NCOA’s 2019 Distinguished Service Award. The NCOA’s

1982

Eric Elbro MPP writes, “After months conducting national security focus groups in Bali with elites from Russia, China, Germany, and Muslim states, I entered the 2016 New Hampshire presidential primary to share outcomes with the next president. This year I am entering to stimulate debate about these next-term disruptors: trade war with China becomes cold war, becomes hot war, distracting from Iran error blowback; invert lifelong adaptive education for AI, bioengineering, and global competitive work shifts; test climate change meta-strategies: globally move hot peoples from Equator to melting North; fast-track genomic medicine for free, effective, low-cost health-partnership care.”

Alexi Parelhin MC/MPP writes, “After 36-plus years, I retired in August 2018 from the U.S. Agency for International Development. My last two years with USAID I was seconded to the National War College, in Washington, D.C., where I taught national security strategy at the graduate level to senior military, diplomatic, and civil service employees. I am now living on an island, where I am researching and writing three books and working on two articles. One of the articles, titled ‘Your Affective Brother,’ examines George Washington’s often unguarded correspondence with his four full siblings, in my spare time, am gardening, traveling, hiking, and owl and bird banding.”

Kereti Werengwa MC/MPP writes, “Returning home after graduation, I was appointed secretary to the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research. From 1982 to 1997 continued to work as
Gary Jones MC/MPP writes, “I’ve retired after 53 years as a senior researcher for the Massachusetts House of Representatives. In 2004 I earned an MNL in English literature and creative writing from Harvard Extension for my novel on Deborah Sampson, a Massachusetts heroine who disguised herself as a man and fought in our revolution. One of her descendants, who is transgender, published his novel about her the same year. Now I’m rewriting my novel and starting a new one structured on the Chinese classical Dream of the Red Chamber or The Story of the Stone. My hero and heroine, a stone and flower in heaven, are sent to the Masstachtouse to live out their human lives.”

1983

Jody Litvak MPP writes, “More than 50 members of our MPP/MPA 1983 class gathered for our 35th reunion, where we loved reconnecting with each other and some of our favorite professors. Some who couldn’t attend sent along best wishes. The large turnout was due in large part to the early organizing by classmate Judy Burnett MPP and the team she built. She found “lost” classmates and created an environment that was welcoming to all of our classmates, ensuring that as many of us as possible could attend. We were thrilled that some professors—Tony Gilman-Silva, Steve Kelman, and Dutch Leonard joined our group for Saturday’s activities. We enjoyed many informal gatherings at old haunts like Charlie’s, Grendel’s, and Shaye’s. Many commented how we left feeling the “afterglow.” We invite all classmates to keep the glow by joining our Facebook group (HKS MPP/MBA 1984 Reunion).”

1984

Maria Noa De Casas MC/MPP writes, “Venezuela’s complex humanitarian situation, created by a corrupt and irresponsible regime, has changed my life. Since 2016, I have been involved almost full-time in children’s nutrition programs in Ciudad Guayana with the support of Musulhague, an NGO created by Venezuelans living in Europe. It has been challenging both professionally and emotionally. But also it is a source of happiness every time one child achieves normal weight and smiles in gratitude. I hope my country will be free soon.”

1985

Steve Falss MPP, having recently concluded a long career as the city manager of Lafayette, California, received one of the first Bay Area Metro Awards recognizing people, projects, organizations, and local governments that have advanced solutions to ease the Bay Area’s housing crisis, improved the transportation system, and/or made the nine-county region more resilient. Launchled jointly by MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the awards program honors positive impacts on the Bay Area’s mobility, affordability, resilience, and community, and recognizes efforts that make the region a better place to live, work, and play.

Paul Tuccio MPP and his wife, Barbara, live in Jackson, Mississippi. Paul is retired from the U.S. Department of the Army Corps of Engineers. Paul and Barbara are active members of the Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle Parish.

1986

Nadine Hack MCA/MPA gave the keynote speech at Stockholm Philanthropy Symposium in Sweden this past May and the keynote speech on International Women’s Day in Geneva, Switzerland, at Barclays’ Private Bank (Deutsche net) (Blog-relay-for-your-justice). She also was honored as a 2019 Entrepreneur Woman of the Year (enterprisingwomen.com).

1987

Jonathan Duke-Edwards MCA/MPP retired from Britain’s Ministry of Defence at the end of 2018, where he worked on the history of ideas and trying to learn them. He and his wife, Patricia, divide their time between London and a Russian. Jonathan and his wife, Patricia, divide their time between London and a Russian. Jonathan and his wife, Patricia, divide their time between London and a Russian.

1988

Cina Lawson MPP 2001 first met the president of Togo when he visited New York for the United Nations General Assembly in 2009. She was working in Manhattan, developing data infrastructure services for Orange Business Services public- and private-sector clients, and the two discussed the challenges and opportunities facing the telecom sector in West Africa.

When President Faure Gnassingbé was reelected in 2015, he remembered his conversation and asked Lawson to join his government as the minister of posts, digital economy and technological innovation. Since assuming that position, she has significantly expanded access to both the internet and financial services in Togo. For instance, the percentage of people in Togo who have mobile internet access has grown from 3 percent in 2012 to 49 percent in 2018, while the number of people who have internet service has grown tenfold since 2013. On financial inclusion, Lawson led two projects—ECO-CCP (an interesting mobile savings account that allows anyone with a mobile phone to open a bank account in seconds) and AgriPME (an electronic wallet for farmers that has revolutionized the disbursement of government subsidies to the most vulnerable Togolese farmers, making it possible for them to receive funds directly in their e-wallets to purchase fertilizers). “With AgriPME, we are ensuring that the fund is effectively managed and that the subsidies reach their farmers,” says Lawson.

In a sense, Lawson had been preparing for this job her whole life. She grew up in Paris as the daughter of Togolese immigrants who had fled their homeland. “Because my dad was an opponent of the regime and we were exiles, we had lots of discussions about politics. But for me, it was about policy not politics—how do you do something to contribute to the public good?” she says.

She was studying at Institut d’études politiques de Paris/Sciences Po when one of her professors suggested that she continue her education at Harvard Kennedy School. Thanks to a scholarship from the Harvard Club of France, she was able to attend. “I loved the MPP program,” says Lawson.

She says that she valued her HKS education while she was in Cambridge, but that it was only later, as she was working in telecom, that she connected the dots. “My time at the Kennedy School was fundamental. It prepared me for the position I have today, but I had no idea of this at the time,” she says.

As minister, Lawson implements what she learned about leadership, teamwork, and motivating others. “I cannot be doing everything on my own,” she says. “I need to convince people to believe in what I do and to be willing to put in the effort and fight even when I could be for a shorter vision. Now I have a deeper understanding of leadership. It’s not about forcing people; it’s about inviting them to understand your vision and connecting with them on a level where their fight too. It’s not successful for you as an individual. I understand better, 20 years later, the importance of what I was taught at the Kennedy School.”

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She also recognizes the significance of her Kennedy School alumni network. “I was on a trip for Togo in Japan, and I wanted to meet some Japanese leaders, so an HKS alumna organized everything for me. I know I can rely on this—people are very helpful with their contacts and advice. The alumni network is formidable.”

Lawson is also aware that she is a role model. “For Africans, it is very important to have other Africans as Harvard alumni—it inspires me, and I tell people, and tells them that they too can achieve this,” she says. As one of just a few students from Togo in the history of Harvard Kennedy School, Lawson is a shining example for other leaders everywhere.
A Dream Realized

Kader Kaneye MC/MPA 2017

"HARVARD MADE ME FEEL THAT EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE, even beyond my craziest dreams," says Kader “Kad” Kaneye MC/MPA 2017. “I had the idea, and a plan for a new university in Niger, but Harvard is a place that moves you from the realm of dreams to the realm of reality.” Kaneye grew up modestly—he spent his early years in a mud house without clean water—but education was important to his family. His father taught high school before becoming a consultant for the World Bank and founding his own firm. By the time Kaneye graduated from high school as one of Niger’s top students, he was able to study in Paris.

After graduating and landing a job at one of Niger’s largest accounting firms, Kaneye began to volunteer at a private business school. “I was teaching finance to master’s students,” he says, “but they couldn’t understand it because they didn’t know the basics. So I went to see the founder of the school, to tell him we needed more teaching hours, and he didn’t listen. And that’s when I decided to create a university in Niger.” That was in 2007, 10 years before Kaneye founded the Community Bank Advisory Committee (CBAK), an NGO in Montreal. As chief election officer at International Finance Corporation (IFC), he has continued to share his experience with organizations facing emerging cybersecurity threats. He is responsible for client service delivery, sales and revenue growth, building client relationships, financial reporting, and personal development as a part of the North America/Southeast region based in Washington.

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At Harvard’s graduation festivities, speakers from the Harvard Kennedy School Class of 2019 inspired their peers. Lucila Tuberañez was selected as the graduate student orator for the Harvard-wide Commencement ceremony, and four graduating students—one from each of the School’s master’s programs—spoke at the Class Day awards ceremony. Read excerpts from their speeches.

“Perhaps you have been blessed in your life with small gifts that made big changes. Maybe it was a teacher who instilled in you a love of a certain subject. Or a kind stranger who helped you with directions when you were lost. At Harvard, I see it every day, in the smiles of the cafeteria staff who keep me so well caffeinated, and in ad hoc babysitting circles. Small things...such small things...but from these small things grow inspired people, lasting friendships, and strong communities.”

Lucila Tuberañez

“The year 2019 marks my 20th anniversary graduating from HKS. It has been a wonderful journey working and living in many countries in the MENA region. Working in Egypt, Saudia Arabia, and UAE is a delight, and now I still do it that with Washington. My work at Education.com is focused on activism for children facing abuse and/or neglect, based in Seattle. The group has an existing affiliate in Fairfield County, and a new statewide association to advocate for a better life for their families.”

Ann Abdallah

“Since graduating from HKS with concentrations in health policy and leadership, I have worked in health-related settings including government, nonprofit, and business. My choice to pursue doctoral studies at Carleton, which has the oldest and most distinguished public policy program in Canada, flows from my desire to increase my knowledge of international public policy issues and comparative health systems. My choice is also personal in that I am a Canadian citizen (dual U.S. citizen), and the majority of my relatives live in Canada.”

Jeffrey Butler

“Use the Alumni Directory to contact your classmates. HKS alumns went to Broadway in a special screening of The Prom. The evening featured an exclusive panel discussion following the performance focused on activism and social justice.”

Paul Carlson
Lonely Leaders No More

Michael Koehler MPA 2014

“The higher up you go, the more lonely you are,” says Michael Koehler MPA 2014 of the people he meets in his role as an executive coach. Many HKS alumni, in their positions as leaders, encounter the same issue. The dilemma of executive loneliness is not new, but it is one he hopes to solve through the Adaptive Leadership Alumni network, License to Solv. Many HKS alumni, in their positions as leaders, encounter the same issue.

Koehler became a teaching assistant for Heifetz and former student Ron Heifetz in the first semester, “he says. “We have this misconception of leadership as a heroic act done by one person,” he says. “The beauty of the adaptive leadership framework is that it’s a team sport. How can leadership generate more ideas, create partnerships, cross boundaries, and build bridges? I think that’s why this network is successful. It allows people to develop around the issues they care about, and find folks who care about similar challenges and who are willing to listen to them.”

In the coming years, Koehler hopes to double the size of the Adaptive Leadership Alumni group from its current membership of 500. One of the highlights of this year’s program is the third annual gathering, to be held in Baltimore, Maryland, October 25-27, 2019. The beauty of the adaptive leadership framework is that it’s a team sport.

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More than 800 alumni and friends came back to campus May 17–19 for this year’s Harvard Kennedy School Reunion. Check out the Reunion 2019 video, photos on Facebook, and explore the buzz on Instagram and Twitter by searching #HKSAlumni.


1. Members of the 1994 mid-career cohort
2. Faculty panelists Iris Bohnet, academic dean and Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government; Robert Livingston, lecturer in public policy; and Hannah Riley Bowles, 1994, Roy E. Larsen Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Management, presenting on “Promoting Equity and Inclusion at Work”
3. Members of the 2004 class
4. Members of the 2009 class (left to right) Nancy Comero, Anita Amin, Danielle Beauchamp, and Robert Bench
5. Alumni from the class of 2009 gather in the new HKS courtyard during Reunion
6. Marlene Malaho Forte and Naye Bathby, both HKS 2009, catch up before a Forum
7. Members of the 1984 class
9. After his address in the Forum, Dean Doug Elmendorf, Don K. Price Professor of Public Policy, took questions from alumni
10. Alessandra Lawrence, Maggie Williams, and Gauri Goyal, all MPP 2014, with guests
Innovating with Data

Lauren Sager Weinstein MPP 2002

A REVOLUTION IN TRANSIT TOOK PLACE IN LONDON in 1863, when the first underground passenger railway in the world opened to the public. More than 150 years later, Lauren Sager Weinstein MPP 2002 is leading another kind of transformation for users of the world’s sixth busiest transit system.

Sager Weinstein is the chief data officer for Transport for London (TfL) where she uses the quantitative skills she learned at Harvard Kennedy School to improve travel in that city. She joined the agency after graduating in 2002. “At the time, there was no such thing as a data job,” she says. “It was a great opportunity to come here and put some of the things I’d been thinking about into a new organization. TfL was brand-new—there were multiple predecessor agencies—and it was set up as an agency that could help deliver mobility services in London.”

She started work at TfL as a senior business planner, and then over the next few years, when the technology developed, began to think about how to leverage the data that TfL was collecting at the time. “I’ve always been interested in technology and analysis,” she says—she comes from a family with lots of engineers and “techies”—“and as the data industry evolved, I began to think about how to leverage the data and use it in new ways.”

The next change will be, how can we understand the patterns in the network now so we can understand what will happen in the future? Sager Weinstein says. “The biggest change since I joined TfL is that you need to respond faster. You want to know what is happening right now and use this information in real time to inform customers and our internal teams. Thinking ahead, I predict the next change will be, how can we understand the patterns in the network now so we can understand what will happen in the future?”

Sager Weinstein is grateful for the training she received at HKS, particularly the classes that taught her key quantitative skills. “One of the classes I got a huge amount out of was Richard Zeckhauser’s course on analytic frameworks. It was a lot of fun and hugely challenging—it was a good way to learn how to think.”

Sager Weinstein also enjoyed her courses on management and leadership. “These courses were very relevant,” she says. “In my career, I’ve relied heavily on both the analytical and people skills that I honed at HKS. To be effective, you have to blend the two.” She does that with her team of data scientists and software engineers as they capture, measure, analyze, and report on travel patterns and other data.

Tamas Kewalik MPP/MBA 2019, ’16, everyone. I have recently gained admission to the PhD in Leadership Communication Program of Kansas State University, and was also granted a graduate research assistantship. In addition to my doctoral studies, I will be working with the Kansas Leadership Center. If you are around, please let me know.”

Tal Summerton MPP founded his own consulting practice, the Strategic Insights Group, and is also the executive director of Independent Cities Alliance, a nonprofit focused on policies that enhance cities across southern California. In May of 2019 Tal was commissioned as a liaison officer with the U.S. Air Force.

Bina Venkataraman MPP writes, “I’m excited to share that my first book, The Optimist’s Telescope: Thinking Ahead in a Reckless Age (Riverhead, 2019), is being published this fall. It features some Kennedy School favorites like Marshall Ganz and rock-star alumni like Bindu Nanak. I look forward to hearing what you think, and finding ways to put these ideas about the future of our society and the planet into action.”

2009

Brent Wright MP 2009 was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general by Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt on May 3, 2019. Brent currently serves as Vice Wing Commander, 358th Fighter Wing, Tulsia, Oklahoma. He serves as the assistant adjutant general for the Oklahoma Air National Guard and is the principal advisor to the adjutant general for all public affairs and public relations matters. Brent is also responsible for the command’s readiness and operational effectiveness of all Oklahoma Air National Guard units.

10th reunion

Catherine Clor Ashbrooke MPP 2010 writes, “Tom Ashbrooke and I are thrilled to announce the September 17, 2018, birth of our son Jonathan Thomas Clor Ashbrooke. Looking forward to our 10-year reunion at HKS in 2020!”

Claudia Ramirez Bulos MPP/MA 10, “Since graduation, I have been working at the Central Bank of Mexico in the research department. Last year I moved to the Financial Stability Area, analyzing the interaction between the financial sector and the real economy, as well as new financial developments in Mexico. Within the Central Bank, I have participated in several activities and women’s groups. The aim is to empower women in the organization and to improve conditions so that men and women can work and advance their careers with more equality and the same opportunities. On a personal matter, I am expecting my second child. I am excited for the 10-year reunion.”

Nice Furash MPP 2009, “Interesting mix of challenges and achievements this year. Been doing more work with taxi activists, which was pretty inspiring. Two big clents evaporated, making a sizable dent in my income. Got denied entry to Lebanon, again. Bought a house at a bargain price and while rates were still low. Had a successful heart surgery. Managed to raise more than $210,000 for the Museum of the Palestinian People, of which I’m chair of the board.”

Sven Merten MPP writes, “We are building COMATCH, an expertise access point that matches pre-vetted, high-quality independent consultants and industry experts with clients. Our worldwide talent pool is more than 8,000 individuals strong as of early 2020. After growing the business into the leading talent marketplace in Europe, we are now building out our North America presence. I am certain we can help fellow alumni find the right kind of talent to help with their most pressing consulting needs. Let’s chat!”

Ian Mills MPP 2009, “Courtsey Routledge MPP and myself now have two little treasures—Analia and Foul (Boo)—and have spent most of the past decade in the Netherlands, working for the World Bank and DfD and Courtyard having founded Sinaiq, which scales early-stage businesses and teaches ethical business based on Christian principles (yes in six countries and growing). We’re about to move—by the time this comes out, we’ll either be in the Caribbean or in the United States (Austin or D.C.), we are on our next phase! Would love to see you!”

David Payne MPP 2009 was promoted to the rank of colonel while serving as deputy division chief of the Army War Plans Division of the Army. After completing his Pentagon tour in January, he assumed new duties as the director of strategic plans and policy for the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve. David was recently selected to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Seminar XXI course for U.S. national security leaders.

2011

Anirban jahangiri MPP/MA 2011, “Life has been a roller-coaster for most of the past five years. After graduating with degrees in political science, security studies and policy, I am currently attempting to raise $25 million (EDN) to initiate this patient-centric collaborative research endeavor.”

I know that some of you arrived on these shores knowing that you have no nation home to return to. Some of you have seen and witnessed the inside of political prisons…. As we stand here, let us be reminded that this Harvard education is not for us. A Harvard education comes with great responsibility and also great duty—a responsibility to return and rewrite the histories that were taught to us.”

TINA TEMBEI MUP 2019

Class Day speaker
I Thank the Kennedy School Mightily
Jessica Feldman MC/MPA 1989

WHEN JOHN F. KENNEDY WAS RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT, Jessica Feldman MC/MPA 1989 canvassed door-to-door for him, pushing her children in strollers along the streets of Evanston, Illinois. “People always let me in—they were attracted to the little children, so I’d purposefully take them along,” she says, only half jokingly. Fast forward to 1987. After a recent divorce, Feldman did not think that the everyday event of checking her mail would significantly alter her future. “The week that my divorce was finalized,” she says, “I came home—at that time I was volunteering for [then-U.S. Representative] Paul Simon and for the Women’s Association of the Chicago Symphony—and in my mailbox was a brochure from the Kennedy School. Now, I had no relationship whatsoever in my life with Harvard or the Kennedy School.” She was mystified and intrigued. “I read it, and it sounded interesting. I decided I’d take a flier and apply,” she says.

Feldman loved her time at HKS. “What made the School and my experience special were the people I met. They were people I would never have had an opportunity to get to know otherwise”—such as members of the U.S. military and a student from Beijing whose world was plunged into disarray after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, the year Feldman graduated from HKS.

After graduation, she went on to direct Chicago’s Department of Environment. Later, she volunteered for President Barack Obama’s campaign, where she was known as the “list lady” for her devotion to ensuring that the candidate’s mailing lists were accurate and up-to-date. “I worked at national headquarters for the campaign, and was called on to make sure that their lists were correct.” Feldman cherishes her time at the Kennedy School so much that she has made a gift to the HKS Fund annually for the past 30 years. “I think if you have benefited greatly from the School, you owe them something,” she says. “At the Kennedy School, I was challenged. It was truly transformative.”

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and the deep sense of satisfaction and meaning it provides. Since October 2018, I’ve been deputy chief of operations for the Burlington Police Department in Burlington, Vermont. We’re a small city with big problems: rising numbers of opioid and other substance-abuse disorders, gun violence, and domestic violence. But we’ve got a vibrant new American community, and we’re implementing prevention-leading programs like the Medication-Assisted Treatment and Mental Health Initiative for substance-abuse disorder. Always happy to see HKS grads if you make it up to the Queen City.

Cynthia Villanueva, Advancement Program Manager at HKS, has changed careers after the federal government change in Mexico. She started her work at Tecnologico de Monterrey—Mexico’s top private university. “I am now very happy to be responsible for the institution’s civic engagement and social initiatives. Please reach out if we can collaborate!”

2016
Shawnice Cozzy M/PA, MS ’16, has been named to the 2015 class of Changemakers by the Jefferson Awards Foundation, now known as the YouBelong Group. The group consists of 15 individuals from around the country who have demonstrated a commitment to service and the potential to truly move the Upward Force forward. Since 1972 the Jefferson Awards Foundation has hosted a national public service recognition event and has recognized more than 200,000 individuals from around the country and its communities. The Jefferson Awards is the country’s highest honor for service and volunteerism, and honorees have included Barbara Bush, Oprah Winfrey, and Bill and Malinda Gates.

2017
Paul Mauro M/PA, MPA, “Hello, all. I currently serve as the commanding officer of the 82nd Airborne Division in New York City. For those of you with a legal bent: if I can avoid your efforts, please do that. I believe in the importance of our challenges, but substantive events,” says Fabio Ubias. “We are trying to re-create the feeling of the Kennedy School and the Forum, and give alumni an opportunity to ask questions of public leaders.” Events this past year have included a salon series on topics such as peacekeeping operations, running for office, and impact investing, and gatherings for current and potential HKS students as they explore careers and the doors that the HKS alumni network can open for them. Says Fabio Ubias, “These events could not happen without the dedication of many volunteers in the region, especially alumni who have hosted gatherings in their homes.”

Fabi Ubias is grateful to her fellow board members for their dedication, and hopes that additional alumni will get involved. “We have a great team, and we’d love for more people to step up to the plate and make the network even better.” She asks alumni in the tristate area to email the network at hksnewyork@gmail.com to share ideas for events they might like to lead, suggest spaces they could offer for events, or discuss other ways they would like to become active members of the network. To receive emails from HKS, sign up at ny.alum.hks.harvard.edu/signup.

2014
Carmon Dominguez Mc/MPA, MPA, “Since September 2018 I have been in Geneva, working as an advisor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. The challenges we face today are bigger than ever, and the stakes are high. Seventy years after the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted, we see backtracking and the rise of threatening ‘isms.’” Michael Koffler, MPA, and his husband, Allison Chang M’09, settled into a new home in Washington. Michael continues to grow his adaptive leadership firm, KONG, in both North America and Europe, with a special emphasis on new markets in London, Brussels, and Geneva. KONG regularly runs free refresher workshops for HKS alumni—learn more at kong.org/events.

2015 5th Reunion
Edward Dong Mc/MPA, MPA, writes, “Greetings in solidarity to my dear classmates of 2015. As founding chair of the U.S.-China Committee and national advisor on the Los Angeles Charter Advisory Board, both with International Leadership Foundation, I’ve been promoting civic engagement, leadership empowerment, and economic prosperity of the Asian Pacific American community to enhance the representation of diversity in our country and develop young leaders in the United States, Asia, and Pacific Rim countries in public service, politics, and business. I’ve served on the HKS Dean’s Council since 2005, the Leadership Council of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights since 2015, and the Leadership Circle as an inaugural member since 2013.”

Rodrigo Perez-Alonso, Mc/MPA, writes, “Since graduating, my wife, two kids, and I moved back to Mexico, where I set up a consulting firm called Hahetreo. One of my clients, an airline, recommended me to the position of executive director of the National Air Transportation Chamber, which I worked until March 15, 2019. I am back at Hahetreo, writing an op-ed weekly column for Excelsior and weekly commentary for Imagen Television and Radio in Mexico. My wife and I enjoy traveling in Mexico with the kids and being in touch with friends and family.”

A Deep Bench
The HKS New York Alumni Network
Dean Doug Ehrenfeld (right) with Juan Manuel Santos

Memberships as of July 23, 2019

Santos told graduates:

“Contrary to what I thought before coming here, public service is not a role; it’s not a position; it’s not even a calling. Public service is a moral commitment to ourselves, to each other, and to the work we do. Public service is being willing to listen more, to judge less, to care about others, to be humble, to be willing to listen more. Before coming here, public service was viewed as a role; it’s not a role; it’s mine”.

Juan Pablo Caleido

HKS Alumni Board

Executive Board

Deborah Bailey (left) with Maria Torres-Springer

DEAN’S COUNCIL

Laurence D. Bollier, Chair
Karen A. Frank, Vice Chair
Peter L. Mahlin, Chair Emeritus

MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Geraldine Acuña-Sunshine (left) with Peter L. Malkin

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WAYS AND MEANS

BREAKING THE MOLD

Reem Jafari MC/MPA 2019, the inaugural Rawabi Fellow, wants to build a better future for her community. That is exactly what Bashar Masri wanted.

BY MARI MEGIAS

These are the questions—and this is the type of person—that Bashar Masri had in mind when he established the graduate Rawabi Fellowship for Leaders from Palestine at Harvard Kennedy School in 2018. Masri, a Palestinian American businessman, hopes that Jafari and the students who follow will be the ones bringing change to this troubled part of the world.

“I believe that forward-looking young people will find solutions to problems that appear intractable to us today,” Masri says. “And education and exposure are the building blocks of change. It’s how we break the mold, how we innovate.”

Before coming to Harvard Kennedy School, Masri worked at organizations such as USAID and World Learning, building the foundations for a future Palestinian state, and offering hope and sustainable solutions for marginalized communities such as child laborers and people with HIV. His efforts have helped individuals in Ecuador, Ethiopia, Uganda, and her native Palestine.

The Rawabi Fellowship allowed Jafari to attend the Kennedy School, and now she wants to use the education she’s received to advance statehood for Palestine and improve the quality of life for all Palestinians.

“Mr. Masri has opened opportunities for future leaders to come to Harvard, a place that is central to policymaking and leadership,” says Jafari, “and he is contributing to building a core group of leaders from Palestine who can go back and serve.”

Masri’s vision is audacious. He is not only giving promising leaders from Palestine the opportunity to attend Harvard Kennedy School; he is also developing an entirely new city in Palestine—Rawabi, which means “mountain” in Arabic, is situated a half-hour north of Jerusalem, in the heart of the West Bank. Built with funding by Masri and Qatar, it is by far the largest private-sector development in Palestine. It is currently home to about 4,000 people, a number that Masri, a native of Nablus, hopes will increase to about 40,000. With luxury shopping and space to lure high-tech companies, Masri aims to offer additional economic opportunities to residents of the West Bank.

Jafari, who visited Rawabi, says that the new, sustainable city and the economic opportunities it will bring are powerful representations of what would be possible with Palestinian statehood. “There’s a huge correlation between democracies and economic opportunity,” she says.

“In the West Bank, we have a very high unemployment rate—it is about 55 percent for youth. Young people struggle with finding jobs and becoming active members of their community. Achieving Palestinian independence and providing economic opportunities is crucial in Palestine.”

At the Kennedy School, Jafari focused on leadership and negotiation. “I’ve worked on core skills for developing and exercising leadership, and analyzing groups and systems so we can mobilize people toward a common goal,” she says. “How do you negotiate in a multistakeholder context? How do you frame the issues in ways that are understandable to the other side?”

She cites her classes on negotiation with

BRIAN MANDELL, the Mohamed Kamal Senior Lecturer in Negotiation and Public Policy, and KESSELY HONG, lecturer in public policy, as particularly helpful.

Despite the apparent intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Jafari is an optimistic realist. “In terms of achieving Palestinian statehood, mobilizing communities, and building a democratic culture, economic development is one aspect—but you also really need to work on education, and not just formal education, but informal education as well,” she says. “When I talk about education, and about changing cultural norms, it’s working on problem-solving, teamwork, and consensus building. These are important to creating an underlying foundation for a community.”

As she prepares to return home, Jafari says it is crucial to put a face on the many challenges confronted by the Palestinian people. “I think having Palestinians here at the Kennedy School is important because of the conversations we can have with other classmates from around the world, providing a better understanding of Palestinian history and culture. There are very few places like the Kennedy School, where you have people from around the world with unique backgrounds—we all learn so much from each other both in and out of the classrooms.”

Masri concurs. “By bringing young leaders from Palestine like Reem Jafari to Harvard’s atmosphere of excellence, and positioning them within its unparalleled network of global influencers, I hope to empower the thought leaders of Palestine’s next generation.”
ON CLASS DAY, Juan Manuel Santos MC/MPP 1981, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former president of Colombia, urged the 582 members of Harvard Kennedy School’s graduation class to “lead with hope, not fear.” The graduates, this year representing 92 countries, will no doubt heed the wise words as they embark on careers dedicated to the public good around the world. They also allowed themselves a few moments of boundless joy as they celebrated their achievements.
REUNION 2020
SAVE THE DATE MAY 15–17, 2020