

Academic Year 2024

Aina Turillazzi (Italy/Spain)

In March 2024, Ms. Aina Turillazzi traveled to Tokyo, Japan, to conduct a war game centered on the East China Sea for her Master's Thesis. Focusing specifically on a crisis involving the Senkaku Islands, Turillazzi leveraged the expertise and collaboration of students from the University of Tokyo. During her visit, Turillazzi explored the National Museum of Territory and Sovereignty, an institution entirely dedicated to the Senkaku Islands. Engaging with government officials and conducting interviews further enriched the depth of her thesis.

This immersive experience not only yielded insightful findings from the war game but also deepened Turillazzi's comprehension of Japanese history and politics.

Jonathan van de Gronden (Holland)

From March 8 until March 13, I made a short trip to Amman in the context of my thesis research on EU funding in Jordan and Lebanon. I conducted several interviews with officials from the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the EU Delegation, and a former high diplomat. These interviews proved to be of high importance for my research, as they increased the quality of my data collection tremendously. Because I had the opportunity to go to Amman and speak with people in person, the conversations became much more vivid. Additionally, on several occasions, people were willing to share stories with me on the basis of confidentiality and anonymity. This was possible because of the face-to-face contact, which I would have never been able to realize if it weren't for the support from the Fred Hood Research Fund. Moreover, I experienced the benefits of the informality of the in-person interview setting because of the fact that I got to meet other people during the interviews, who I hadn't been in contact with initially, that also shared relevant information with me. This was something that I couldn't have foreseen beforehand. Furthermore, this trip made my research come to life in a new way. I had the opportunity to better understand what kind of projects the EU is funding on the ground in Jordan and what the negotiation structures with the relevant ministries in Jordan look like.

All in all, I look back with gratitude on this trip and I am very thankful for the generous financial support I have received from the Fred Hood Research Fund. I believe the work of the fund is great and truly enriching for students at SAIS in doing their fieldwork.

Olivia Salberg (USA)

In June 2023, Ms. Olivia Salberg, under the guidance of Professor Tommaso Sonno, visited Accra, Ghana to continue their research exploring a causal relationship between increased financial literacy and the mitigation of financial constraints among Ghanaian students undergoing the employment transition. As the study aims to employ a randomized control trial (RCT) methodology with users of a local fintech platform, Olivia's time on the ground played a pivotal role in assessing the technical feasibility of this approach. Additionally, while in Accra she was able to ensure a smooth implementation of the baseline surveys and obtain necessary insights for the study.

Jack Kennedy (Ireland)

In January 2024, Mr. Jack Kennedy made a research trip to Yorba Linda, California, to conduct research for his MAIA thesis. Jack's research focuses on the use of nuclear weapons in coercive diplomacy, analysing the Nixon administration's use of US nuclear forces for signalling during the Vietnam War in comparison with Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats during the ongoing war in Ukraine. With support from the Fred Hood Research Fund, he was able to consult original historical documents stored in the archives of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library, providing valuable insight into the decision-making processes and risk calculus of leaders who engage in nuclear sabre-rattling.

Sara Moussavi (USA/Iran)

During 2023, Sara Moussavi, a Doctoral of International Affairs (DIA) candidate, utilised this generous Fred Hood grant to conduct key informant interviews with influential policy makers and experts in Washington D.C. and New York, focusing on the intricate dynamics of international sanctions and their impact on food security target nations. These interviews have been pivotal in deepening the understanding of the multifaceted nature of sanctions. The insights gathered from these discussions are not only enriching this doctoral thesis but are also contributing to the broader discourse on the efficacy and consequences of sanctions as a foreign policy tool. Additionally, the grant facilitated participation in an advanced sanctions course, significantly enhancing expertise in this complex field. The knowledge and skills acquired through this course have been invaluable in analysing the nuances of sanctions policy and its real-world implications. Furthermore, the grant was utilised to collect quantitative and qualitative data in one of the research case study countries, Somalia. These interactions have offered an unprecedented level of access to the thought processes and considerations behind sanctions decisions, greatly enriching the quality and depth of the research. Overall, the Fred Hood grant has been fundamental in advancing the academic and professional development in the field of international sanctions and their effect on food security amongst vulnerable populations.

Joseph Fraley (USA)

Mr. Joseph Fraley made a research trip to Florence to use the Historical Archives of the European Union at the European University Institute. For the second half of SAIS Europe's spring break, Joseph spent 3 days and 2 nights in Florence. He wrote his thesis on the EU othering of Turkey during the period of 1999-2007 and 2015-2016. The European University Institute's archives provided him with historical documents in relation to this topic. Joseph used money from the Fred Hood Research Foundation to support this journey, as it helped pay for housing, food, and transportation.

Academic Year 2023

Irene Quadrelli (Italy)

In January 2022, Ms. Irene Quadrelli from Italy made a research trip to Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to conduct research for her thesis. Irene is a M.A.I.A. student working on the role of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Bosnia. Through the Fred Hood Fund, Irene was able to travel to Bihac, conduct interviews and visit the sites of IOM-run refugee reception centers in the region. Traveling to Bosnia allowed Irene to speak not only with IOM personnel and humanitarian workers present on the field, but also to several refugees living in IOM-run centers. Through her research, Irene seeks to understand the linkages between IOM's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union's migration management interests in the country. Visiting Bihać allowed her to see the reality of life in EU-funded, IOM-run reception facilities and speak to people working and living inside them. This made it possible for her to gain key insights on the interdependence between IOM and the EU and on how this affects the lives of migrants and refugees along the Balkan route.

Juliette Denis-Senez (France/Denmark)

Ms. Juliette Denis-Senez made a research trip to Greenland and Denmark to conduct research for her thesis on the possible governance of rare mineral mining in Greenland. She is particularly interested in understanding the local perception in Greenland and in Denmark of the mineral mining industry, as both countries still dispute whose authority should prime in the decision-making. For this she needed to travel to both countries and conduct physical interviews with key stakeholders such as with government members (DK & GR), Nuuk university and Copenhagen university researchers.

Jacob Boswall (UK)

Mr. Jacob Boswall made a research trip to Lebanon to conduct research for his thesis. During the trip he carried out a number of interviews with high profile political figures from Lebanon's former March 8 alliance (Hezbollah, Free Patriotic Movement, and Amal Movement). Without travelling to Lebanon, enabled by this funding, he would have been impossible to access these viewpoints which form the basis of his qualitative data collection for his master's thesis titled "Hezbollah and the IMF: Between Rhetoric and Policy."

Michael Schroeder (Germany)

Mr. Michel Schroeder made a research trip to Indonesia to conduct research for his thesis. He is focusing his research on the supply-demand balance of critical minerals for electric battery vehicles. Indonesia is a centrepiece of the global battery value chain and he was invited by the Indonesian Deputy Minister for Investment and Mining to visit his ministry and to speak with him and other officials about his research during the latter half of March.

Alec Fiorini (USA)

Mr. Alec Fiorini plans to research the question, what are the implications of a commercial hydrocarbon mining company serving as the unofficial foreign policy arm of the Italian state? The mythologized account of Eni's activity in the Mediterranean will be subverted through a detailed analysis of the company's actual historic engagement in post-independence Algeria. More specifically, the project will reexamine an internal company dispute between advocates of ship-based LNG technologies and those supporting the construction of a direct cross-country, sub-sea pipeline. Alec will use the Hood funds to conduct extensive archival research. The main archival sources are: Eni's corporate archive (Castel Gandolfo); Historical archives of the EEC/EU (European University Institute, Fiesole); Eni's technical research center archive (San Donato Milanese); Sicilian Historical Archives; and Corriere della Sera Archives (Bologna and/or Milan).

Academic Year 2020

In January 2020, **Ms. Gai Yassin** made a research trip to Banjul (The Gambia) to collect crucial data that can only be gathered by traveling on-site. Gai is a MAIA student whose thesis focuses on the livelihoods and household income of the smallholder farmers who supply mangoes to the agro-firm Tropingo Foods. Tropingo Foods is a Gambian-owned agro export-oriented company that processes dried mangoes in The Gambia. The objective of this research project was to study a specific agribusiness model in The Gambia to understand its impact on its smallholder farmers suppliers. The case study was intended to advance understanding of agrobusiness models that strengthen smallholder farms in rural African contexts such as The Gambia, in terms of income and sustainable livelihoods. The support from the Fred Hood Fund allowed Gai the opportunity to interview more than 35 smallholder mango farmers in addition to the CEO of Tropingo Foods; Gunjur Mango Cooperative; Food and Agriculture Organization office in The Gambia; the Startup Incubator Gambia; The World Bank office in The Gambia; and the Ministry of Agriculture in The Gambia.

Academic Year 2019

In April 2019, Mr. Erik Trautman from the US made a data purchase from the Italian National

Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) to collect data for his thesis. Erik is a MAIA student whose thesis seeks to quantify the impact language barriers have on labor market mobility in the euro zone. The data Erik purchased pertains to foreign language familiarity and proficiency by Italian region. This data was crucial for Erik's thesis as the focus independent variable in his econometric model attempting to place language barriers among other obstacles and incentives of labor market mobility. The support from the Fred Hood Fund allowed Erik the opportunity to obtain this data, which would have been difficult to gain otherwise and not to have access to it would have presented a formidable problem for Erik's thesis. After graduation, Erik hopes to work on macroeconomic policy especially as it pertains to labor and education.

In March 2019, Mr. Grant Marcinko from the US made a research trip to Bogota, Colombia to collect data for his thesis. Grant is a M.A.I.A. student whose thesis seeks to analyse the effects of US foreign policy on Colombia to better understand Colombia's prospects to construct a lasting peace. Grant met with a number of representatives from academia, government, civil society, and private business such as La Universidad de Los Andes, Senator Maria Fernanda Cabal, the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, El Alvispero Movement, and others. The opportunity to speak with these stakeholders provided additional and unfiltered insight that would have been difficult to gain otherwise. This uniquely fulfilling experience will allow Grant to better frame the arguments and historical contexts used within my MAIA thesis.

In January 2019, Ms. Taylor Giorno from the US made a research trip to Pristina, Kosovo to collect data for her M.A.I.A. thesis. Taylor is a M.A.I.A. student whose thesis seeks to analyze the democratic framework of Kosovo, identify challenges to democratic development, and make recommendations to address these challenges. Taylor met with a number of representatives from governmental, civil society and multilateral organizations such as the Constitutional Court of Kosovo, Kosovo Stability Initiative, and United Nations Development Program. The opportunity to speak with the wonderful men and women in these organizations was important not only for the thesis methodology, but also for a realistic and grounded understanding of the country, its culture, and its future. Upon graduation, Taylor hopes to aid the development of a stable, democratic future in Kosovo utilizing the interdisciplinary perspectives from her interviews.

Academic Year 2018

In March 2018 Mr. Juan Manuel Reyes from the US made a research trip to Central America to collect data for his M.A.I.A. thesis. This funding opportunity allowed Juan to collect crucial data that can only be gathered by traveling on-site. Interviewing both repatriated unaccompanied minors and the pertinent government offices and NGO's in these Countries helped him substantiate the main goal of his thesis: to compare and better understand how the Countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras receive and try to reintegrate these deported unaccompanied minors who are in dire need of protection. Juan scheduled interviews with Casa Vides Shelter in El Paso; Save the Children in El Salvador; the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety in El Salvador; the Guatemala Department of Immigration; the Honduran Department of Immigration; the UNICEF offices in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras; and the UNHCR/IOM offices in Guatemala City, San Salvador and Tegucigalpa.

In March 2018 Mr. Valentin Grimoux from France attended the 21st Power and Electricity World Africa 2018 conference in Johannesburg. Valentin is an M.A.I.A. student whose thesis deals with China's Energy policy and its investment on the Sub-Saharan African energy sector. The conference gathered 800 African energy utilities and is Africa's largest and longest running power and electricity forum. It was designed to help shape the regional energy market through sharing knowledge and education. It was a formidable source of information for Valentin because there were numerous speeches from African leaders of the energy sector, as well as a diversity of organizations which are involved in the SSA energy sector. What is more, Valentin also experienced South Africa and could appreciate the multiculturalism of such environment.

In March 2018 Ms. Mathilde Perrot from France made a research trip to Sri Lanka to collect data for her thesis. Mathilde is an M.A.I.A. student whose thesis deals with Chinese Investments in Sri Lanka. Having already lived in Colombo for a while, Mathilde had the chance to reconnect with people who could help her get in touch with valuable contact for her thesis. She met with various professionals, all of them from different backgrounds. Among representatives from international organizations, Mathilde met with a representative of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. She also met with national government representatives and staff members: a representative of the Sri Lankan Board of Investment, as well as an economic national advisor. Finally, she met with a research officer at the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka, an influential think tank. In my opinion, this experience was more successful than expected. Performing those interviews gave her a better grasp of the reality on the ground. She did not find all the evidence that she needed to support her initial statement; on the contrary, Mathilde ended up reconsidering her findings and balancing her initial stance on the subject.

In February 2018, Mr. Roberto Nisi from Italy made numerous domestic research trips to gather data for his thesis. Roberto is a M.A.I.A. student whose thesis deals with Japanese Soft Power and Foreign Policy. To corroborate his theories, he chose to focus his work on an Italian case study aimed to question the rankings of Japanese soft power set by various foreign-policy-oriented think tanks. By connecting with various academics from Italian public institutions, he ultimately surveyed a heterogeneous sample of 465 Japanese studies university students. Siding these quantitative findings, a series of qualitative interviews with distinguished professors and Japanese public servants further explored the reach of Japanese soft power in Italy. The responses from either dataset, quantitative and qualitative, were consistent with each other and with the initial statements argued by Roberto, contesting the strategy beyond Japanese soft power gains.

Academic Year 2017

In January 2017 Mr. Zack Zimbalist from the US made a research trip to South Africa and Mozambique to collect data for his doctoral dissertation. Zack is a Ph.D. student whose dissertation aims to explain local-level variation in public goods provision in South Africa and Mozambique. This research trip was vital to securing interviews and data that will be of enormous added value to the dissertation. The trip included interviews with high-level government officials who are involved in decentralization and service delivery programs. In Mozambique, he also conducted several interviews with public utility managers, ministry personnel, and NGO representatives who are engaged in service delivery efforts. For example, Zack interviewed and obtained additional data from managers working at the utilities responsible for electricity, water supply, and sanitation. Obtaining the appropriate permissions to secure these interviews and the data would have been impossible outside of the country. For example, each ministry and utility required the presentation of different credentials as well as multiple visits to follow up on his requests. The trip was also extremely useful in that he was able to collect additional quantitative (community survey and census) data from the national statistical agencies in Pretoria and Maputo, which will be critical to conducting the quantitative analysis. In Maputo, obtaining these data required weeks of continual visits, which included working with different staff members to locate the data and help identify and resolve any problems. This would not have been possible outside of Mozambique. Similarly, in South Africa, Zack was able to follow up in person with different technicians to obtain additional data, including GIS maps.

In March 2017 Ms. Sofia Cornali from Italy participated in a ten-day research trip to Myanmar to gather on-field data for her thesis. Sofia is an M.A.I.A. student whose thesis deals with the obstacles to Myanmar's transition to democracy, with particular reference to legal obstacles (most importantly, the 2008 Constitution) and strategic obstacles (such as the Civil War and the Rohingya Crisis). Traveling to Yangon was an occasion for Sofia to conduct extensive interviews and step into the delicate politics of Myanmar: she had the opportunity to meet with Giuseppe de Vincentiis, UNHCR Special Representative to Myanmar, with Mr. Zay Yar Linn, Deputy Director of International Relations Division of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, with Isabell Poppelbaum of the EU

Delegation to Myanmar, and with Khine Khan Tun, foreign affairs manager of the Buddhist movement Ma Ba Tha, among many others. She also had the opportunity to travel to the country's capital, Naypyidaw, where she met with Mr. Min Thein, Director of the Judicial Department of the Constitutional Tribunal of Myanmar. The Fred Hood Research Fund allowed her to immerse herself in the Myanmar culture and conduct, as the ethnographical method may be considered the main methodological instrument of this research.

In April 2017 Mr. Brad Potter from the US attended the British Political Science Association (PSA) Annual Meeting in Glasgow, UK. Brad is a Ph.D. student whose dissertation is titled "Mars at Twilight: Ending America's Wars, 1965 ? 2015". The meeting was an opportunity to present early research findings from his dissertation as well as hear from other researchers doing work on a variety of issues related to his own work. The experience suggested that how Brad discusses his empirical work needs to be much broader and more systematic. Rather than attempt to detail an entire American war in fifteen minutes, he should focus on just the decision points his dissertation principally addresses and only briefly discuss historical details. Those audience members wanting more history can certainly engage during the question and answer periods following any future presentation. Meanwhile, Zack's theoretical work thus far is relatively easy to present and really only needs refining on the margins. This experience presenting at PSA will certainly strengthen the related talk that he will give at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting in August of this year. Dr. Gupta of the USAF War College was impressed by Zack's work and suggested that they stay in touch should he wants to pursue a career in professional military education following graduation. This is one option that Zack is considering.

Academic Year 2016

In March 2016 Ms. Elisa Bettelli from Italy participated in a five-day research trip to Beirut to complete her thesis. Elisa is a M.A.I.A. student whose thesis deals with analyzing the main constraints that have till today prevented in Lebanon the adoption of an agreed educational system, with a particular focus on how History is taught in public and private secondary schools. During the field research Elisa had the opportunity to personally interview the Director of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and two Lebanese historians of different religious beliefs. Furthermore, she submitted a survey, and met students, in a Christian, a Muslim and a laic High School with the aim of further investigating the current status of the different curricula present in the country.

In May 2016 Mr. Brian Carlson from the United States participated in a week research trip to Moscow to gather written materials in Russian on developments in China-Russia relations. Brian is a PhD student whose thesis deals with China-Russia relations. Brian worked on a thesis concerning China-Russia relations under the supervision of Professor Charles Doran. As part of his research work, the Hood Fund has enabled Brian to conduct a week research trip to Moscow to gather written materials in Russian on developments in China-Russia relations. During the previous two academic years, Brian conducted research in both Russia and China. His main purposes in seeking a return trip to Moscow are to gather written materials in Russian on developments in China-Russia relations since my departure from Moscow in June 2014 and to conduct additional research interviews. Brian met once again with some experts with whom he already had a working relationship, such as Sergei Luzyanin of the Institute of the Far East. In addition, he met with some experts with whom he was unable to meet previously because of scheduling conflicts, such as Alexei Arbatov of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), and also with some experts who have emerged on the scene since my departure, especially Alexander Gabuev of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Academic Year 2015

In October 2014 Ms. Giulia Parzani from Italy participated in a four-day research trip to Tunisia, working with the United Nations Development Programme and with local experts in Tunisian politics. Giulia is a recent MAIA graduate whose thesis was entitled "The Role of International Actors in the Writing of the Tunisian Constitution: From the 2011 Tunisian Uprising to the New Challenges Faced by Tunisia". Her project was supervised by Professor of Middle East Studies Raffaella Del Sarto and Adjunct Professor of International Law Justin Frosini. [Click here to read an abstract of Giulia's thesis and a report from her trip.](#)

In May 2015 Mr. Andrew Whitworth from the United Kingdom traveled to London to meet with members of the London academic and policy/think tank communities. Andrew is a PhD candidate in European and Eurasian Studies, working toward a thesis in which he analyzes the links between bank regulatory change and the financial cycle under the supervision of SAIS Director of European and Eurasian Studies, Professor Erik Jones. Andrew's trip was helpful not only for his thesis prospectus (which he successfully presented), but also as a basis for creating a strong network of local industry professionals, policy makers, and scholars that he will be able to interview for his continuing research over the next year. [Click here to read an abstract of Andrew's thesis.](#)

Mr. Ryan Connelly from the United States was able to access to the News Archive (NY Times, Financial Times and Wall Street Journal) and obtain books to help him with his doctoral research work. Ryan is a PhD candidate in European and Eurasian Studies, working under the supervision of Professor Erik Jones on a comparison of how the European Central Bank, the Bank of England, and the U.S. Federal Reserve have responded to the economic and financial crisis. Ryan's goal is to analyze how differences in the structure of the three institutions influenced their capacity to adopt, implement, and defend the use of unconventional monetary policies. This work is important because one of the great lessons of the crisis is that central banks need to be flexible and adaptive. They also need to be (perceived as) legitimate. Hence the challenge is to understand what institutional design features work best in promoting those characteristics.

In May 2015 the PhD summer school at the University of Trento was co-sponsored by the Jean Monnet Centre and the Department of Sociology at the University of Trento, The European Consortium for Political Research, and JHU SAIS Europe through the Fred Hood Fund. The theme of the program was "Understanding Crisis and transformation in the UE 2015". SAIS Director of European and Eurasian Studies Professor Erik Jones and SAIS Europe Professor of International History, Mark Gilbert participated in the organizing committee, together with SAIS Adjunct Professor of European and Eurasian Studies and summer school host, Vincent Della Sala. The program attracted 16 PhD students from throughout Europe and represented a unique opportunity for SAIS to expand its research profile within a larger European cohort of PhD students. [Click here to read the detailed program of the summer school.](#)

Academic Year 2014

In April 2013 Mr. Bulat Akhmetkarimov from Russia participated in the International Studies Association's (ISA) 54th Annual Conference in San Francisco. This conference helped to advance Bulat's PhD dissertation in Russian and Eurasian Studies entitled "State Policies toward Islam in Russia, 1991-2012". [Click here to read an abstract of Bulat's thesis.](#)

In April 2013 Mr. John A. Gans Jr. from the United States travelled to Brussels to conduct a series of interviews with the US Ambassador to NATO and the NATO Deputy Secretary General. In October 2014 John successfully defended his dissertation in Strategic Studies entitled "The Pleasure of the President: Strategic Change, Decision in Conflict, and the National Security Council Staff". John earned his doctorate 'with distinction', an impressive achievement that would not have been possible without the support of the Fred Hood Research Fund.

Academic Year 2013

In September 2012 Mr. Neil Shenai from the USA presented some of his early research findings in Cambridge, UK at the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET). Neil was working on his doctoral dissertation entitled "Feckless and Fickle: Central and Shadow Banking During the Global Financial Crisis". The presentation was not only important for Neil but also for SAIS as it opened the door for a new institutional relationship with INET, an initiative funded by George Soros to reconsider how markets function in the world economy. [Click here to learn more about Neil.](#)

Academic Year 2012

In March 2011 Ms. Zsofia Barta from Hungary, one of the Bologna Center Ph.D students, was able to participate as a panel discussant in the 12th Biennial International Conference of the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) held in Boston, MA. [Click here to learn more.](#)

In April 2011 another Bologna Center PhD student, Ms. Saskia van Genugten from The Netherlands was able to attend the European Research Seminar Author's Workshop, organized by the SAIS European Studies Program in Washington D.C. During the seminar the PhD students presented their work-in-progress, discussed it with SAIS faculty members, and several M.A. students that are potentially interested in pursuing doctoral degrees. Saskia was working on her own dissertation in European Studies on the history and present of Italian and British relations to Libya which she successfully defended the same year.

