



## Winter 2020

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A Jean Monnet European Union Centre of Excellence  
A US Dept. of Education National Resource Center  
with funding from  
International and Foreign Language Education



## Welcome Back!



Welcome back, and happy new year! The European Studies Center is ready to start the decade with an exciting lineup of events, including roundtables, film screenings, lectures, and more. The Fall semester was rich in stimulating discussions, and we look forward to generating new ones in the Spring.

Our monthly series of virtual roundtables, “Conversations on Europe,” returns with another set of exciting topics. As part of our yearly theme, “Memory and Politics,” both our February and March roundtables will focus on the notion of “contested memory,” in relation, respectively, to monuments in Europe, and to borders in Northern Ireland. Our last Conversation on Europe of the year will be conducted in French, and will be centered around Notre-Dame as a *lieu de mémoire*.

As part of the Year of Memory and Politics, we will also welcome Sophia Rosenfeld on February 27 for a lecture on the subject of her latest book, the question of the relationship between democracy and “truth.” The month of March will be especially busy, with an EUSA roundtable discussing the issues currently impacting the EU, and an international conference co-hosted by a delegation from Newcastle University, on the theme “Bridging the Past and the Future.” Finally, we are excited to announce the screening, in early April, of the award-winning documentary *The Silence of Others*, on the continuing struggles for justice of the victims of Franco’s dictatorship.

This is just a snapshot of the many different events we will organize or co-sponsor this semester, so make sure to follow us on social media to stay up to date! We look forward to your participation and insights, and wish you the best of luck on your projects this semester.

## CONVERSATIONS ON EUROPE

*All conversations are held on Tuesdays from noon to 1:30 p.m. in 4217 Posvar Hall. Conversations are free and open to the public. You may join us in-person or remotely. Conversations are live-tweeted by @EuCeESC.*

**Tuesday, January 21, 2019**  
Update on Brexit

**Tuesday, February 18, 2019**  
Monuments and Contested Memory in Europe

**Tuesday, March 17, 2019**  
Borders and Contested Memory in Northern Ireland

**Tuesday, April 14, 2019**  
*Lieux de Mémoire* - Notre Dame One Year After the Fire

## Student Research Spotlight:

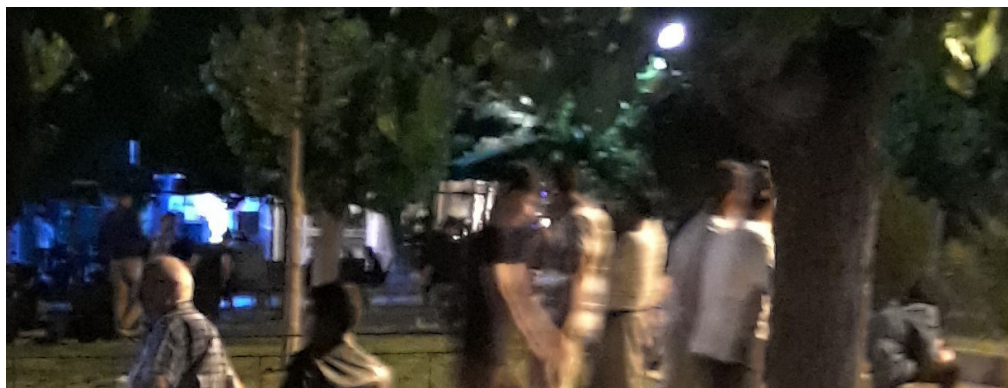
### Mobility and Sex Work Among Afghans and Iranians in Athens

*By Anna Mousouli*

In early May 2019, I arrived in Athens, my home city, to continue preliminary fieldwork research for a second time among people who are from Iran and Afghanistan and who are seeking refuge in Greece. The ESC Klinzing pre-dissertation generous grant gave me the opportunity to delve into and research thoroughly my field sites for a three-month period.

In 2015—the year of the European “refugee crisis”—over a million refugees entered the European Union through Greek territory. While many have since relocated elsewhere in the EU, and new arrivals have dwindled, significant numbers remain in Greece facing harsh legal, socio-economic, and living conditions. They receive very little support, often residing in camps, with limited access to necessary resources; and asylum applicants are not eligible to work. Currently a significant number of displaced people in Athens, both female and male, turn to sex work as a way to acquire income. According to humanitarian and advocacy workers, the majority of male refugees who participate in Athens’ sex market are from Afghanistan and Iran, usually serving same-sex individuals, and often receive particularly low payments.

Parks, camps, bars, central squares and streets comprise non-legal zones, where the everyday activities of local residents occur in parallel with sex work transactions. These transactions are normalized and tolerated, often remaining invisible to passersby



*Author's picture of a bustling Athenian Square at night*

even as they are surveilled by the police. Yet the police are known to intervene at unpredictable or seemingly arbitrary moments. This reveals an ambiguous system of enforcement, which leaves ground for irregular and even corrupt practices, creating space for the criminalization of non-native participants in the sex industry. My Ph.D. project will examine how engagement in sex work, experience of displacement, and criminalization form the complex framework in which Afghan and Iranian male sex workers in Greece shape and negotiate their masculinities and sexual identities. In specific, I will examine how Afghan & Iranian displaced people identify themselves and make meaning in relation to gender and sexuality. For instance, refugees who engage in sex work with same sex individuals do not usually identify by the Western notion of “homosexual” but may be encouraged to present themselves as queer in order to qualify for asylum. Work on queer refugees shows how the asylum process enforces a hegemonic LGBTQ (sexual) identity, with which the sexual minority refugee must comply to get asylum even if they identify in relation to gender differently. Moreover, I will investigate how sex work intersects with state and humanitarian interventions in



the formation of identities in ways that do not fit normative categories of masculinity.

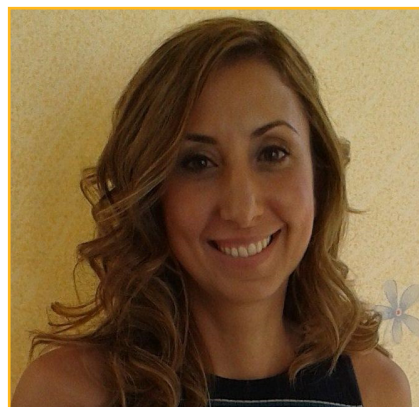
Research on “refugee issues” often focus on formal sites of refugee habitation, such as refugee camps and such iconic figures as women and children, thus sometimes neglecting the diversity of what it means to be a “refugee”, and specifically how male



refugees’ positions in host societies shape their experiences and survival strategies. My Ph.D. research will focus on urban spaces outside of camps. In order to approach non-legal zones of the sex industry this summer, I frequented main squares, parks, bars in which male displaced people from Afghanistan and Iran often go, and I observed their interactions with the locals inside and outside the context of the sex industry. I conducted semi-structured and unstructured interviews with key research participants focusing on issues of masculinity both in the country of origin and in the host country and discussed participation of displaced people in sex work. Following the paths of my research participants, I visited spaces administered by religious organizations, in which displaced people go specific times a week in order to have free meals, meet and spend time with other compatriots, wash their clothes or take a shower. During my preliminary fieldwork, I noted the multiplicity of networks among refugees, sex workers, Greek citizens, humanitarian agents as well as state officials and in my future research I intend to investigate how these networks are shaped within the political, economic and legal environments in which the sex industry operates and the refugee issue is governed.

Finally, I established connections with grass roots organizations, which are going to facilitate my future ethnographic fieldwork. I am particularly grateful for the support from the ESC Klinzing pre-dissertation grant, as I was able to continue researching different aspects of my topic. Data gathered from this summer research will lead me to delineate a compelling research proposal in the near future.

*Anna Mousouli is a third-year graduate student in the University of Pittsburgh (PhD in Anthropology/MPH in Behavioral & Community Health Sciences)*



## ESC NEWSLETTER

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*This newsletter has been funded with assistance from the European Union and the International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE) office of the U.S. Department of Education. The contents are the sole responsibility of the ESC and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the EU or the U.S. Government.*



# Student Research Spotlight: Erroneous European Jitters

By Anthony Ocepek

This summer I received funding from the European Studies Center's *Alberta Sbragia Fund for Graduate European Studies*, as well as a Klinzing Grant for Dissertation Research. These grants allowed me to conduct interviews with party members and elected officials of populist and nationalist parties in Western Europe for my dissertation project "Erroneous European Jitters: A Pathway for Moderating the Extremes."

Recent electoral successes in both national assemblies and the European Union by populist and nationalist parties often present the picture of political systems veering from longstanding liberal policies and positions succumbing to more extreme and illiberal policy positions, which are usually advocated by parties previously delegated to the margins of the political debate. My research project examines when and why we may see these parties moderate, and accordingly, if we really should be concerned about their increasing role in European politics, and about their potential in implementing illiberal policies. I propose a series of pathways towards moderation where these parties, such as through their participation in coalitions and/or concerns over their voters' own preferences, employ various strategies with the goal of increasing their political influence. These strategies can ultimately lead to an unintended turn towards moderation and away from more extreme policy positions.

Crucial to this project then is understanding firsthand how parties and their elected officials shape their strategies and alter their policy preferences over time. Interviews from members of these parties allowed me to further understand this necessary context. I travelled to Europe from late May-July 2019, where I visited Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Belgium. In these countries, I had the opportunity to interview party members and elected officials from the Danish People's Party, Sweden Democrats, Finns Party, and Blue Reform political parties.

This was a time of turmoil in Europe. The 2019 EP Parliamentary elections were occurring simultaneously with the Danish National elections. It was also around that time that the Austrian governing coalition collapsed, made up of the Austrian People's Party and the Freedom Party of Austria. This resulted in many precious opportunities to interview party officials as they were strategizing and campaigning. My questions ranged from how parties negotiate policy positions with their country's governing coalition and within the European Parliament, to how the perceptions and preferences of their voters influence their parties' strategies.

For example, Karine Due, member of the Danish Folketing from

the Danish People's Party, stated how "[the governing coalition] does negotiate with us because they have to ensure the majority of course...so they need us and we like that position because when they come to us and say we really want this law to go through the parliament, can you support this? When we want changes, we get those changes, almost every time." The Danish People's Party is not a member of the coalition, but offers parliamentary support, and leverages this position to maintain its policy preferences and extract policy concessions by the governing coalition.

Conversely, when one of these parties instead joins a governing coalition, it becomes more difficult for them to maintain these differences as they are expected to toe the line with other members of the coalition. In this case, the party negotiates and compromises on some preferred positions, in order to potentially receive support from the coalition on other policies that the party wants enacted. Tiina Ahva, the First Vice-Chairman of Finland's Blue Reform, noted the reservations the party had concerning the language of policies promised by coalition partners. She said "they've just pushed it aside in the hopes that we wouldn't notice. And it was almost a parliamentary crisis...these kinds of things try to undermine our power in the government and we got really upset about that...and we had to fight tooth and nail for even the things that had already been agreed upon." The party, compromising on positions in order to obtain promises from the coalition on others, felt pressure afterwards from coalition partners to accept further changes to policies.

The above examples demonstrate how parties display different strategies that result in varying degrees of moderation, away from more illiberal policy positions. Given the recent rise in other regions of the world of populist and hardline parties and politicians, these interviews prepare us for what we may expect from other parties supportive of illiberal policies, especially as they become more politically established and face the pressures of accountability from their potential coalition partners.

*Anthony Ocepek is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh. His dissertation examines populist and euroskeptic parties in Europe and their potential to push for illiberal policies both in their countries and the broader European Union.*





By Barbara Petrosky

Thanks to the Research in Germany Grant, I was able to do research in the Lake Constance region during the summer of 2019. This funding helped me in my research for a book-length manuscript on the representations of Charlemagne (771-814 AD) in medieval literature, art and religion.

I visited the UNESCO listed Abbey library of Saint Gall, one of the richest medieval libraries in the world. It is home to one of the most comprehensive collections of early medieval books in the German-speaking part of Europe. These manuscripts were a crucial part of my book, and formed the basis of my research. The Carolingian style Abbey of St Gall was founded during the reign of Pepin the Short, Charlemagne's father. My goal was to research some of the most important manuscripts of the Carolingian era, especially the unique 9th-century document, known as the Plan of Saint Gallen.

This manuscript is the only surviving major architectural drawing from the roughly 700-year period between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the 13th century. The plan was an ideal of what a well-designed and well-supplied monastery should have been, as envisioned by one of the synods held at Aachen during the early years of emperor Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's son. I was able to study the Codex Sangallensis 1092 or Manuscript Ms 1092 situated in the library. There, I followed the footsteps of San Gall's most famous monk, Notken who was one of Charlemagne's biographers. In his biography, he explained that the emperor made all the important decisions regarding the building of his cathedral, and that he used the gold and treasures he brought back from his victory against the Avars between 791 and 796.

I also went to the Constance region and conducted research on the island of Reichenau. There, I compared the architecture of the churches on Reichenau island with the Dom (or cathedral) in Aachen, Germany. The religious architecture of Aachen is linked to the architecture of these different monuments on the Lake Constance. In order to write a book manuscript about Charlemagne and the pilgrimages, I needed to study the churches that were used as model for the emperor's cathedral in Aachen, because this book manuscript will link French poems from the 12th and 13th century, as well as art history.



This part of my trip was dedicated to the study and analysis of the Reichenau Island abbaye, one of the most important cultural and scientific centers of the Carolingian era. Reichenau is famous for its three magnificent Romanesque churches. A millennium ago, Reichenau was at the cultural heart of Europe with Kloster Reichenau monastery an important center of learning. The three Romanesque churches in Oberzell, Mittelzell, and Niederzell survived from this period and are inscribed in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list. The main goal of my research there, was to understand why the churches of St Mary, St Peter and St Paul, can provide a panorama of early medieval monastic



architecture in central Europe. The Carolingian basilica of Mittelzell, consecrated in 816, is exceptional both in its size and its excellent state of conservation. Equally important are the surviving parts of the Carolingian monastery with a heating system modelled after ancient Roman examples.

My grant proposal was unique and original in that it involved three different fields: medieval French literature, history, and art, as well as two countries: Germany and Switzerland. I had never been to Lake Constance, and this grant allowed me to make new discoveries in my field, and to work on a book-length manuscript. This grant money helped me develop as a professor, and enabled me to share what I have learned with my students.

*Barbara Petrosky is a native of Paris. She is a nineteenth century specialist, and she received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 2006. She is interested in the relationships between art and literature. She is Associate Professor of French and Spanish at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, where she teaches French and Spanish language courses.*



## Faculty Research Spotlight: Architecture and Professional Identities in Ancien Régime France

By Drew Armstrong

Two grants from the European Studies Center – together with grants from the Jewish Studies program, the Center for Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies, and the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences – allowed me to spend three months last summer in Europe, first exploring fin-de-siècle architecture in the depths of Transylvania and surrounding regions, and second exploring the mechanics of the French royal building administration in the depths of the National Archives in Paris.

Central Europe was for me virtually *terra incognita* when I arrived at the University of Pittsburgh. In 2009, I was asked by Professor Bob Hayden, director of the then Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies, to develop a Pitt Study Abroad course that I have now taught five times on site in Prague, Vienna, Ljubljana and Zagreb. Much effort has gone into developing that course, which I will teach again in May 2020. *Architecture & the City in Central Europe* is built around the capital cities of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, a zone that, despite its extent and historic significance, is not well integrated into current surveys of European architecture. With the dissolution of the Iron Curtain and the integration of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and Romania into the European Union, a new vision of the architectural production of those nations is emerging in recent scholarship that I'm excited to explore with students.

In May 2020, my goal is to include Budapest as part of *Architecture & the City in Central Europe* for the first time and to incorporate Jewish sites throughout the course in a more



*Exterior of the Szeged Synagogue*

substantial way. As I wrote my grant proposals last spring, I was preparing new lectures on synagogues for my introductory survey of architectural history. A realization emerged that the appearance of synagogues as monumental public buildings in

the urban landscape was often testament to the formulation of new ideas about citizenship, their construction either heralding or following the implementation of emancipation laws that redefined the status of Jews and other religious minorities. Throughout Europe, synagogues were sites for thinking through the relationship between nationalism, religious identity, and



*View of the Budapest Dohany Street Synagogue*

modernity. Many nineteenth-century urban synagogues were purpose-designed to house large congregations and thus incorporated new structural materials like cast and wrought iron, and new amenities such as gas, electricity and central heating. To accommodate reformed services inspired by German congregations, organs were often a prominent feature. Elaborate decorative schemes were created to project a distinctive visual identity, often inspired by near Eastern and Spanish models such as the Alhambra. In Vienna, all but one of the twenty nineteenth-century synagogues were destroyed during the Nazi occupation. In Budapest, the central Jewish neighborhood is largely intact and the Dohany Street Synagogue (1854-59) – a monument to Hungarian Neolog or reformed Judaism – is among the largest in the world by capacity, easily rivalling the largest opera houses of the same period.

To better contextualize the nineteenth-century architecture of Budapest and to gain a fuller sense of the prominence of Jewish communities in their respective urban environments, funding from the ESC, REES and Jewish Studies allowed me to travel throughout the larger cultural orbit of the Kingdom of Hungary. My trip began in Bucharest where I met with a former Romanian Fulbright student. As a specialist in early twentieth-century worker housing and garden city planning, his experience added another layer to our analysis of urban modernity in Romania and Hungary. Together we drove from Bucharest across the Carpathians and Transylvania visiting Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Timișoara and Arad before arriving in Budapest. Subsequently, I visited Kecskemét, Szeged, Subotica, Novi Sad and Belgrade. My iPhone indicates I clocked between 12 and 15



kilometers on foot every day for three weeks.

Arriving in Paris on June 1 marked a radical change of pace, allowing me to rest my feet and to continue research for my book on the French Royal Academy of Architecture (1671-1793), the earliest state institution in Europe dedicated solely to the advancement of architectural knowledge and to the training of elite practitioners. The Academy functioned as a think-tank for the royal administration and opened pathways for the social advancement of architects, contributing in enduring ways to the definition of architecture as a liberal profession in the west.

Scholarship on French ancien régime architecture is extensive: surveys of design trends, architect monographs, and studies of individual buildings have proliferated for over a century. To date, however, only the most prominent of the 120+ members of the Academy of Architecture have been studied in detail. My research aims to reposition the Academy and its members as part of a larger state apparatus that by the end of eighteenth century relied increasingly on expert knowledge and specialized training. Building up a comprehensive picture of the careers, social networks, patterns of property ownership, and investment strategies of members of the Academy has been the focus of my research since 2016.



*Exterior View of the Subotica Synagogue*

The archives of the Paris notaries, conserved at the National Archives of France, are an inexhaustible trove of legal documentation that is the main source for my project. Capitalizing on searchable on-line databases to more rapidly track down documents, it is possible to imagine a comprehensive study of the membership of the Academy and to reconstruct larger family and kin relationships.

Based on the mass of new material I have gathered (marriage contracts, death inventories, etc.), it becomes possible to describe how over the course of the eighteenth century in Paris, career advancement in professions that required specialized training relied increasingly on inter-generational social

networks and the accumulation and transfer of wealth – as opposed to royal and aristocratic patronage. In addition, official accounts and correspondence paint a complex picture of early modern architectural practice, in which labor disputes and the management of supply chains for building materials emerge as major preoccupations. Sustained research into archival material the I assumed had been thoroughly mined has revealed the opposite. Examining the career trajectories and social networks of a large corpus of individuals is revealing how their relationships, struggles and aspirations contributed to shaping both the profession of architecture and the built environment in pre-Revolutionary Paris.



*Christopher Drew Armstrong's work investigates approaches to observation and the experience of art and architecture in the 18th and 19th centuries. He is especially interested in the construction of the 'self' and how this concept shapes the relationship of the individual to temporal and spatial phenomena.*

If you have lived in Pittsburgh for a few years (or even less), you will certainly have noticed that the Steel City is home to a wide variety of immigrant communities from all over the world. It is unsurprising then that Pittsburgh restaurants offer a remarkable range of foreign cuisines, and a small group of undergraduate students, under the leadership of Linda Saikali, have decided to tell the stories behind these immigrant-owned restaurants (and to sample their offerings, for professional reasons).



“Eat@Pitt” is a student club that was started in 2017. Since then, it has attracted a sizeable membership, and boasts a robust internet presence through a slick website, as well as Facebook and Instagram pages, where you will find pictures (you guessed it) of food and restaurants. But the main goal behind Eat@Pitt is to collect and circulate stories of immigration. Linda and the other members of the board only feature restaurants whose owners have made



themselves available for interviews. From a Columbian woman who started selling empenadas to make ends meet, to a Thai ex-nurse who missed the food from her home country: Eat@Pitt is a

repository of stories of displacement, of obstacles overcome, and of transnational exchanges.

At the time of writing, few restaurants



originate from European countries, although Linda has assured me that they planned on featuring a Polish restaurant soon. Another constraint is monetary: they try to stick to modestly prized restaurants, which means many of the French restaurants of Pittsburgh, for example, will have to do without their stories told - for a time at least.

The European Studies Center has a number of grants and awards available to graduate students, and some of our past recipients are featured in this special issue.

- The *Alberta Sbragia Fund for Graduate European Studies* is open to University of Pittsburgh graduate students – currently ABD – for dissertation assistance, research or publication support, or travel to and research in relevant European countries. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$2,000, and applications are due on February 7.

- The *ESC Klinzing Grant Competition in European Union Studies* is also open until February 7. These grants are meant to facilitate graduate study on topics related to contemporary Europe. Historical topics may be eligible for funding, but must relate the past to Europe’s present in a clear way. Grants are available to students at the dissertation and pre-dissertation stage.

- Finally, the ESC also offers small grants (up to \$300 domestic; \$500 international) to Graduate Students to help defray the costs of presenting papers at professional conferences. Applications are reviewed at the beginning of every month, and notifications are sent out by mid-month. There are no deadlines, but the funds available are limited.

The ESC is proud to support graduate student research every year, so make sure to take advantage of these offers! Who knows, you might even be featured in one of our Newsletters.