WQ
THE WILSON QUARTERLY
SURVEYING THE WORLD OF IDEAS

MEXICAN MOMENTUM

HEROES AND DRONES

THE NEIGHBORHOOD RENAISSANCE

AUTUMN 2013

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COVER STORY

MEXICAN MOMENTUM

Drug wars and illegal immigrants often come to mind when people think of Mexico. But big changes are occurring under President Enrique Peña Nieto, the standard-bearer of the once autocratic political party that ruled Mexico for most of the 20th century. Will the momentum last?

FEATURES

ABOVE LEFT: Juana Emilia Perez (far left) watches her son compete in a rodeo in Oaxaca.
Photograph: Dana Romanoff / Getty

ON THE COVER: A fan cheers for Mexico during the 2006 World Cup.
Photograph: Magics / Action Press / ZUMA Press / Newscom

EDITOR'S COMMENT

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

STEVEN LAGERFELD is the editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*. Before joining the magazine's staff in the 1980s, he worked at *The Public Interest* and the Institute for Educational Affairs. His articles and reviews have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The New Republic*, *The Wall Street Journal,* and other publications.

When Tom Vanderbilt's essay on neighborhoods arrived on my desk, I immediately thought of the popular television series *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. The show's appeal was limited pretty exclusively to the 3-to-5-year-old set, leaving millions of parents to endure painful hours of the treacly host and his spun-sugar world. But despite this divide, Fred Rogers (the host's real name) put his finger on something that seems universal: an abiding desire for a safe and welcoming place beyond the family.

My own children never took to Mister Rogers' imaginary neighborhood, and that might have had something to do with the fact that they were lucky enough to live in a real one. Yet as they grew up I realized that real neighborhoods are fundamentally a lot like Mister Rogers'—they aren't so much places as acts of imagination.

Franklin Forest, the suburban neighborhood where I live, was just a name like countless others dreamed up by real-estate developers until several decades ago, when the people living there turned it into an idea and, ultimately, a community, going so far as to formalize ties that had grown at the school-bus stops and over evening drop-bys at a social club (the Frolickers) that still blessedly survives. It's a surprisingly wonderful thing to make friends with people from a few blocks away whom you'd normally never even meet. Vanderbilt tells a similar tale about Brooklyn's Cobble Hill, which became a neighborhood after area residents perceived a threat from development and invented a name and identity for the place where they lived. It became a community.

In Franklin Forest, just as in Mister Rogers' neighborhood and in Cobble Hill, it is people who make neighborhood happen—often just a handful of them, the ones who are happy to invite the newcomers down the street over for

drinks or to hear out the wild tales told by the eight-year-old who lives two doors down. In my neighborhood, the unofficial mayors lived right next door and were godparents to both our children. I often joke that the real-estate ad for the house we bought should have read "4 BR, 2BA, next door to the Chriscos." But it's not really a joke. Neighborhood can be a precious part of the human experience, yet despite our contemporary talk about all things local—the "things" often being merely consumer goods—we still seldom appreciate it. It certainly wasn't on my mind when my wife and I bought our house in "the Forest."

That neglect partly explains why neighborhood and community have long been preoccupations of the *WQ*. Beginning with Robert Fishman's "Megalopolis Unbound" (Winter 1990) and "The Second Coming of the American Small Town"(Winter 1992), by New Urbanist thinkers Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, we have published many articles on these themes, including five by the premier observer of urban America, Witold Rybczynski, and, most recently, Sarah Courteau's "New to the Neighborhood" (Spring 2011). All are ungated at www.wilsonquarterly.com. I hope you'll drop by.

— Steven Lagerfeld

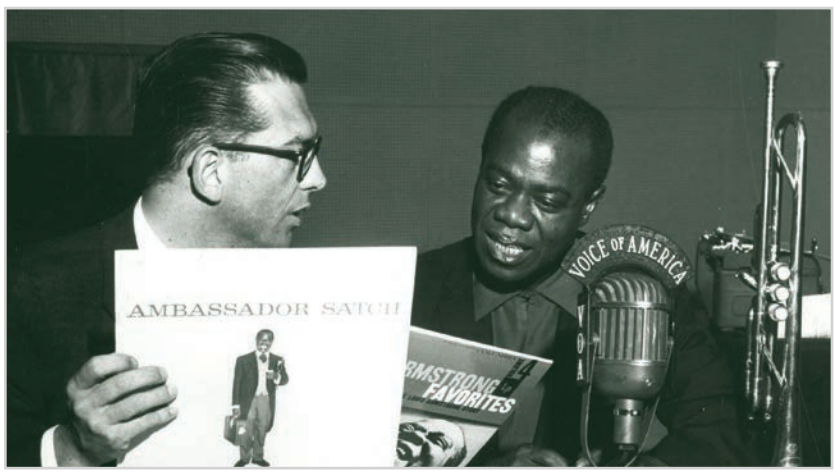
FINDINGS BRIEF NOTES OF INTEREST ON ALL TOPICS

1.

Unmuzzled

America gets its Voice

Is this a great country, or what? You . . .



2.

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Time caste

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Wonder Dog

A big bite?

Like Tom Selleck, Joan Collins, and . . .

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The Taste of Defeat

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For football fans, the agony of defeat has a palliative: junk food. . .

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iScroll

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Along with aqueducts, credit the ancient Romans with inventing social media. That's the claim advanced by . . .

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Bumpy Boulevard

Silence of the morgue

Sunset Boulevard routinely makes lists of best American films. In 1989, the . . .

UNMUZZLED

America gets its Voice

Is this a great country, or what? You no longer have to leave the United States to enjoy full access to the Voice of America. Since July 2, the VOA has been free to make its programs available to American taxpayers, who, after all, foot the bill. Repealed last year by Congress, the decades-old ban on domestic dissemination of VOA content could be traced back to fears about partisan political propaganda, the shielding of corporate interests, and personal pique. Along the way, Americans missed out on such programming as *Straight Talk Africa* and Willis Conover's *Jazz Hour*, as well as news broadcasts in 44 foreign languages.

A few months after Pearl Harbor,

UNT

Willis Conover was "the most famous American virtually no American had ever heard of," *The New York Times* noted when he died in 1996. During the Cold War, Conover's Voice of America jazz broadcast reached 30 million regular listeners behind the Iron Curtain and millions more elsewhere in the world—but he was virtually never heard in the United States. By popularizing what he called "the music of freedom," said the *Times*, he was "more effective than a fleet of B-29s."

the government launched the VOA and other media outlets directed at European audiences. Congressional Republicans complained that some material wasn't promoting the values of democratic governance; rather, they asserted, it was promoting the values of the Democratic Party. The Office of War Information's magazine *Victory*, for instance, featured the headline "Roosevelt of America—President, Champion of Liberty, United States Leader in the War to Win Lasting and Worldwide Peace." The Republicans sought to ensure that such overseas propaganda didn't reach American voters.

When they refashioned the VOA as a Cold War agency in 1948, members of Congress once again wanted to quarantine the homeland. Now, though, fears of partisan propaganda had abated. The new bugaboo was, as Representative William Lemke (R.-N.D.) put it, "unnecessary government competition with private enterprise." Lemke and others wanted to protect commercial media from federal encroachment.

They got their way. Although the 1948 law didn't require it, government broadcasters bypassed domestic audiences rather than risk riling Congress.

In 1972, Senator James L. Buckley, a Conservative Party member representing New York, arranged to feature *Czechoslovakia 1968* in a monthly TV show he hosted that was broadcast to his constituents. The U.S. Information Agency (USIA), which at the time oversaw international broadcasting, had produced the 12-minute film. Although it had won an Oscar for best documentary short subject, Americans hadn't been able to see it.

Senator J. William Fulbright (D.-Ark.) protested Buckley's plans. Letting Americans see *Czechoslovakia 1968*, Fulbright insisted, would violate federal law. He asked the Justice Department to investigate. In response, the USIA's assistant director termed Fulbright's views "naive and stupid."

The impolitic official resigned and the agency apologized, but Fulbright wasn't satisfied. He pushed through an amendment barring the USIA from making its content available to American audiences without congressional approval, granted on a case-by-case basis. That's no small irony, Indiana University journalism professor Emily Metzgar observed in *Communication Law and Policy* in 2012, since Fulbright is best remembered as the father of the Fulbright Program, which sends Americans abroad to study, teach, and conduct research in the interest of increasing Americans' understanding of other countries.

The Internet largely mooted the Fulbright amendment. Starting in the 1990s, the VOA posted content online, where anyone, including Americans, could find it. Even so, when people in the United States asked the VOA for help, it couldn't comply. In 2008, the University of Virginia sought to screen *A Fateful Harvest*, a VOA documentary about Afghanistan's poppy harvest. The film was available on YouTube, but in order to get a high-resolution print, the university had to seek an act of Congress.

The American Civil Liberties Union urged Congress to change the law, which it called "both highly paternalistic and a nightmare for government transparency." Many media organizations agreed—courts had ruled that government broadcast material, like national secrets, lay beyond the reach of the Freedom of Information Act. Repeal of the Fulbright amendment was also favored by the Board of Broadcast Governors, the independent federal agency that oversees the VOA as well as the government's other international broadcast outlets (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Radio and TV Martí, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks).

In 2012, Congress lifted the ban, effective July 2 of this year. Under the new rules, the government networks can't promote their programming in the United States, but they can respond to requests from journalists, scholars, and others for broadcast-quality copies of content.

The VOA received some 30 such requests in the first two months, according to Letitia King, director of public affairs for the Board of Broadcast Governors. "People in the building are glad there's greater openness and transparency for the work they do," King said in an interview. "They welcome that."

July 2 may have represented a turning point for the VOA, but other media organizations didn't pay much attention. There were a few exceptions. Likening the government broadcasters to the Ministry of Truth in George Orwell's *1984*, one online news organization called the law "a desperate move . . . to manipulate and misinform the U.S. populace" and "nullify the mission and the purpose of the Fourth Estate."

The alarmist source? The Kremlin's official broadcast outlet, the Voice of Russia.

HIGH SOCIETY WAITS

Time caste

"Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are," the French gourmand Jean

GRANGER ARCHIVE

Dining after dark became the norm in the 19th century for striving urban families like this immigrant clan in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote in 1825. A few decades later, American tastemakers tweaked Brillat-Savarin's aphorism, asking not what you ate, but when you ate it.

Industrialization pushed the day's big meal from its traditional midday slot toward evening, Abigail Carroll writes in *Three Squares: The Invention of the American Meal* (Basic Books). But the trend wasn't driven by factory workers. For their midday meal, many of them could return to their nearby boarding houses. Instead, according to Carroll, industrialization messed with mealtime for white-collar workers, who had moved out of the central city to escape "the noise, pollution, and wheeling and dealing of the urban environment." They were the ones who couldn't dart home to eat.

At first, office workers headed to restaurants and bars for the day's big meal. But health experts disapproved. A man's "important meal" must be eaten "slowly, and with proper regard for

the welfare of his digestive apparatus," *Good Housekeeping* declared in 1886. For the sake of "happiness and long life," the magazine advised, "it is always better to dine late."

The dinner hour soon became a status marker. Whereas farmers continued to eat their main meal close to noon, urbanites held off until evening. "If you desire to be among the *crème de la crème*," counseled *Good Housekeeping*, "dine no earlier than five." Being hungry was bad, but, *évidemment*, being gauche was even worse.

WONDER DOG

A big bite?

Like Tom Selleck, Joan Collins, and Mr. T, McGruff the Crime Dog rose to stardom in the 1980s. In *How McGruff and the Crying Indian Changed America: A History of Iconic Ad Council Campaigns* (Smithsonian Books), Wendy Melillo, a former writer for Adweek, traces the canine's pedigree.

The Ad Council, which produced public service announcements for broadcast and print media, commissioned

GETTY IMAGES

McGruff faces off with Emmanuel Lewis, star of the *Webster* television sitcom, in 1986.

the agency Dancer Fitzgerald Sample to develop an anticrime campaign in 1979. The goal was to recruit Americans to report suspicious characters and goings-on in their neighborhoods, a precursor of the post-9/11 "See something, say something." The ad team's concept came quickly—a law enforcement dog with the tagline "Take a bite out of crime"—but the character proved elusive. They rejected several ideas, including a mutt in a Keystone Cop hat (think Snoopy) and a jowly bulldog (think J. Edgar Hoover).

The winning pitch came from copywriter Sherry Nemmers: an unkempt hound in a trench coat. "He has bad posture and is a little hunched over," Nemmers explained at the time. "He has a raspy, growly voice. . . . He is holding a cigar, and he brushes off the ashes from his coat as he is talking and saying something very smart."

McGruff, as the rumpled crime-fighter soon was named, bore more than a passing resemblance to Peter Falk's eponymous character in television's popular *Columbo* series. Agency executives considered asking Falk to provide McGruff's voice, but they decided that his slow diction wouldn't work in punchy ads. The cigar got rejected, too: The Ad Council had declared its public service announcements a no-smoking zone.

Sans Columbo voice and Columbo cigar, McGruff debuted in 1980. In terms of audience awareness, according to Melillo, "Take a bite out of crime" soon became one of the Ad Council's most effective campaigns.

The American crime rate started to fall in the early 1990s, a change that social scientists have ascribed to demographic shifts, harsher prison sentences, innovations in policing, and even readier access to abortion. Copywriter Nemmers has a different theory: McGruff. The ad campaign, she told Melillo, "cleaned up neighborhoods practically overnight." Columbo might be skeptical.

THE TASTE OF DEFEAT

Fans at the fridge

For football fans, the agony of defeat has a palliative: junk food.

Yann Cornil and Pierre Chandon, French marketing researchers, examined food diaries kept by 726 Americans in 2004 and 2005. The fortunes of the local NFL team, they found, markedly affected people's eating practices the day after a game. Residents ate more healthfully than usual when their team won, and less healthfully when it lost.

NEWSCOM

It looks bad for the Chicago Bears. Fans eat more unhealthy foods when their team loses.

In the most sports-crazed cities, consumption of saturated fats fell 16 percent following a victory and rose 28 percent following a defeat.

It wasn't just winning or losing that mattered. Appetites varied with the point spread. In winning cities, residents were especially likely to opt for broccoli when the victory was resounding. By contrast, people in the losing cities heavily self-medicated with Cheetos after a squeaker.

Previous studies have found that a fan's sense of self-worth can rise or fall with the team's fortunes. Self-control, in turn, can follow self-worth. Dejection, Cornil and Chandon explain in a forthcoming article in the journal *Psychological Science*, leads to "disinhibited eating."

Plus-sized fans of the Oakland Raiders—the team ranked at the bottom of NBC Sports' preseason NFL rankings in July—may want to reconsider their allegiances.

iSCROLL

Social media ca. Caesar

Along with aqueducts, credit the ancient Romans with inventing social media. That's the claim advanced by Tom Standage, the digital editor of *The Economist*, in *Writing on the Wall* (Bloomsbury).

To an unprecedented extent, according to Standage, written news and gossip buzzed throughout ancient Rome. Whereas plebeians enlisted traveling friends to deliver messages, elites dispatched them via slaves, who often waited at the recipient's home for a reply—"the Roman equivalent of broadband," Standage writes. And two millennia before BTW and ROFL, Romans saved time and papyrus with abbreviations. SVBEEV stood for *Si vales, bene est, ego valeo*: "If you are well, that is good, I am well."

Ancient Romans had so much to say that they even wrote on walls. Graffiti were everywhere, indoors as well as out-, according to Standage. Some messages prefigured TripAdvisor: "Once you've tried Gabinius's hotel you'll stay there."

GETTY IMAGES

Zero Mostel in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962).

The fragmentary written record leaves many questions about the era unanswered, and probably unanswerable. But we do have a graffito discovered on a wall in Pompeii, one that achieves the quotidian nature of a Facebook status update: "On April 19, I made bread."

BUMPY BOULEVARD

Silence of the morgue

***Sunset Boulevard* routinely makes lists of** best American films. In 1989, the Library of Congress included it among the first 25 movies chosen for the National Film Registry. But the 1950 film nearly came to a dead end.

Preview audiences hated the first cut. "I never saw such a pile of shit in all my life," one woman snapped at director Billy Wilder. People hooted at the opening: In a morgue, a room full of cadavers—including narrator Joe Gillis—gab about their causes of death. Reluctantly, Wilder shot a new prologue, with dead Gillis floating face-down in a swimming pool. Problem solved. Whereas a chorus of garrulous corpses struck audiences as utterly risible, a single narrator corpse seemed altogether plausible.

In her biography of the film's star, *Gloria Swanson* (University Press of Mississippi), Tricia Welsch points out other roads not taken. For the role of Norma Desmond, the washed-up star enmeshed in delusions of a comeback, the filmmakers were determined to cast an actual silent-movie star. Mary Pickford said no, and Mae West took umbrage at the implication that her own glory days might be behind her.

GETTY IMAGES

Ultimately, Gloria Swanson, who had been nominated for the first Academy Award for best actress in 1929 (she lost to Janet Gaynor), signed on.

Montgomery Clift agreed to play Gillis, the male lead, but he pulled out at the last minute. After Gene Kelly proved unavailable and Fred MacMurray uninterested, Wilder picked the then-obscure William Holden.

The silent-film director Erich von Stroheim took the part of Max, Norma Desmond's butler and, we ultimately learn, her ex-husband. Von Stroheim proposed additional scenes for his character. Wilder accepted several suggestions, but he deemed one too risqué. Von Stroheim, according to Welsch, wanted to show "Max washing out Norma's lingerie, lovingly stroking her silken panties."

Sunset Boulevard reignited Swanson's career. She was nominated for an Oscar (this time she lost to Judy Holliday), and directors came calling. Most of them, though, aimed to cast her as another over-the-hill actress, and she'd had enough of that. She accepted a few movie roles and many TV ones, but she refused to play another Hollywood has-been.

But a quarter-century after *Sunset Boulevard*, Swanson acquiesced. In a 1974 film, she played an elderly movie star—one named Gloria Swanson. It would be her final film. Her costars in the salmagundi cast included Charlton Heston, Karen Black, Myrna Loy, Helen Reddy, and Linda Blair.

Although *Airport 1975* isn't in the National Film Registry, it does appear in a 1978 compendium: *The Fifty Worst Films of All Time*.

—Stephen Bates

ALAMY

A water balloon toss brings neighbors together at a block party in Detroit, Michigan.

WELCOME TO THE JUMBLE

What place do neighborhoods have in modern cities?

BY **TOM VANDERBILT**

By TOM VANDERBILT

IN A SAN FRANCISCO HOTEL ROOM NOT long ago, I absently flipped through one of those forgettable in-room lifestyle magazines aimed at the casual visitor. Set amid ads for marbled steak and glistening sushi, a tourist map occupied the last pages. As do most urban maps, it had segmented the city into its various and iconic neighborhoods—Pacific Heights, the Mission, Haight-Ashbury.

Gazing at this depiction of a city I know only from a smattering of disjointed visits and impressions, I was struck by the regularity in the distribution and size of its neighborhoods. I had the sense that what I was looking at was the expression of some kind of logic—but whether it was the result of government fiat or some curious social alchemy was beyond me. It left me wondering: Is there some human penchant for breaking up space to better fit our cognitive maps?

Neighborhoods often exist as much in the collective imagination as on urban ground, their borders shifting depending on who draws them. Contrast a map of San Francisco neighborhoods produced by the municipal planning department with another effort—this one created by the city's realtors' association—and the activity becomes a children's game of "spot the differences." The realtors' map brims with Candlestick Points, Barbary Coasts, and Yerba Buenas; the names sound like the result of fanciful branding exercises rather than designators of actual places to live.

It is frequently, almost reflexively said of Chicago, Saul Bellow's "somber city" where I was born, that it is "a city of neighborhoods." Indeed, the city does exude vital local identities within its larger boundaries. But if Google is to be believed, so too is Boston a "city of neighborhoods." As are Saint Louis, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. Not to mention Los Angeles, Miami, and Dallas. Detroit, that city on the brink? Long a city of neighborhoods. With my exercise beginning to turn dully repetitive, I started looking for exceptions. Perhaps Phoenix, with its legendary sprawl? No—there, nestled high in the search results, was the following claim: "Phoenix

It may be many things to many people, but apparently Las Vegas is not a city of neighborhoods.

is a city of neighborhoods, each with a unique personality of its own."

After plugging in every burg from Tampa to Topeka, I finally hit on a major municipality that did not answer the summons of my keywords: Las Vegas. It may be many things to many people, but apparently Las Vegas is not a city of neighborhoods.

Archaeologists are now even suggesting that Mayan settlements—which were once not even deemed "real" cities—had neighborhoods.

I had come to the realization that "city of neighborhoods" is a virtual tautology, a truism so often repeated that it no longer seems to explain much. Perhaps it was time to go back and unpack the word "neighborhood," frequently invoked yet seldom analyzed. What is a neighborhood? How do neighborhoods relate to the larger city? How much influence do neighborhoods exert in their residents' lives? And in an era of global cities and digital communities, do we even need neighborhoods?

IN A 2010 ARTICLE IN THE *JOURNAL OF Anthropological Archaeology*, Michael E. Smith of Arizona State University wrote that "the spatial division of cities into districts or neighborhoods is one of the few universals of urban life from the earliest cities to the present." In late medieval Marseille, he noted, quarters—in essence, neighborhoods—were important sites of social identity, oriented largely toward one's profession; Smith cited research that found that "close to 70 percent of all craftsmen whose residences are known lived in the quarter associated with their craft." In Aztec cities in Mexico, he pointed to clusters of houses that could be "confidently identified as neighborhoods" that were organized around a *calpolli*, a social unit composed of many often-related groups. Archaeologists are now even suggesting that Mayan settlements—which, Smith observed, were once not even deemed "real" cities—had neighborhoods.

Our view about how ancient people lived is partially viewed through the lens of mid-20th-century academic sociology—from which Smith's own definition of neighborhood ("a distinct territorial group, distinct by virtue of the specific physical characteristics of the area and the specific social characteristics of the inhabitants") was drawn. Indeed, much of

our thinking about neighborhoods dates to the 1900s.

While the word "neighborhood" first appeared in written English in the 15th century, the current usage did not emerge until much later. The historian Carl Abbot, for instance, argues that in late-18th-century New York City—contrary to notions that citizens lived largely in a socioeconomic mishmash—"residential neighborhoods were in fact differentiated according to wealth and occupational status." He calls them (with hindsight) neighborhoods, but, curiously, the word itself does not begin to appear in *The New York Times* until the late 19th century. In 1894, in one of its earliest uses, the *Times* declared, "Nobody can fail to sympathize with the efforts of the worthy people who are trying to purge certain neighborhoods in the city that have become disreputable."

The neighborhood began to acquire new conceptual currency around that time—as the prominent urbanist and *New Yorker* architecture critic Lewis Mumford suggested in a 1954 article in *Town Planning Review*—precisely because it was under threat. The "spontaneous neighborhood grouping" was falling victim to industrial capitalism's rapidly intensifying income and place segmentation, Mumford argued, while the advent of wheeled transport changed planners' emphasis from "facilities for settlement to facilities for movement," destroying neighborhood texture even as it brought different parts of town closer together (and created new, suburban neighborhoods). Planners wondered how to find the means, in the ever-growing metropolitan regions, to make life feel more local. In a 1929 monograph, the planner Clarence Perry coined a term for the concept used in planning communities such as Sunnyside, Queens, and Radburn, New Jersey: "the neighborhood unit."

"What Perry did was to take the fact of the neighborhood and show how, through deliberate design, it could be transformed into . . . the modern equivalent of the medieval quarter or parish," Mumford wrote. What no longer existed organically—the sense of community gained by people living and working in proximity to each other, their movements restrained by how far they could walk or what they did for a living—could be reverse engineered. Perry envisioned his neighborhood unit as encompassing 160 acres (with a housing density of 10 units per acre) and having about 7,000 residents. It would be laid out around a school positioned "so that a child's walk to school [would be] only

GETTY IMAGES

Urban activist and author Jane Jacobs (1916–2006) played a large role in the mid-20th century's renewed appreciation of neighborhoods. In 1962, she led the successful fight against New York City's proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway, which would have left hundreds of buildings demolished and thousands of people and businesses displaced.

about one-quarter of a mile and no more than one half mile and could be achieved without crossing a major arterial street." (Perry would not live to see the time when most American children would stop walking to school.) Arterial roads and shopping complexes would be pushed to the edges, with local streets designed to discourage cut-through traffic.

Perry's monograph became a virtual bible for planners and developers for decades to come. As the American Society of Planning Officials noted in 1960, Perry's neighborhood unit was more or less replicated from coast to coast: "Thus one might feel just as at home, or just as lost, on the curvilinear streets of a 'desert mesa' in Arizona, at the neighborhood super-shop in 'Prairie Estate' in Illinois, or in the centrally located elementary school in a 'Rolling Meadows' in Pennsylvania."

Perry's scheme was not without its critics. The Harvard planning professor

Jane Jacobs charged that "as a sentimental concept, 'neighborhood' is harmful to city planning."

Reginald Isaacs argued that its form and execution promoted segregation and exclusion, and that its focus on schools neglected the needs of other residents. Jane Jacobs, in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), charged that "as a sentimental concept, 'neighborhood' is harmful to city planning," leading to "attempts at warping city life into imitations of town or suburban life." While no one might appear more neighborhood-centric than Jacobs, the champion of Greenwich Village, she noted a "seeming paradox" of modern urban life—that to keep people attached to a neighborhood, cities needed "fluidity and mobility." For the street-level neighborhood to survive, it had to mesh with the texture of the city. She saw a confining sterility in Perry's units, and lauded Isaacs and others who had "daringly begun to question whether the conception of neighborhood in big cities has any meaning at all." What she was really after was not, as she put it, a self-contained "artificial town" or pure simulacrum of "village life" in the metropolis, nor a meaningless planning unit without some "means for civilized self-government." Her ideal existed somewhere in between.

As elusive as that Goldilocks medium was, in the 1960s the idea of the urban neighborhood was on the ascent again as an organizing principle and way of life; the reason, as half a century earlier, was that it was under threat. In a context of urban renewal, the revolt against new freeways, and changing demographic profiles, neighborhoods became the locus of social cohesion, whether underpinned by an impulse toward social inclusion or exclusion. It was during this period, for example, that the phrase "There goes the neighborhood," with its echoes of "white flight," began to enter the lexicon.

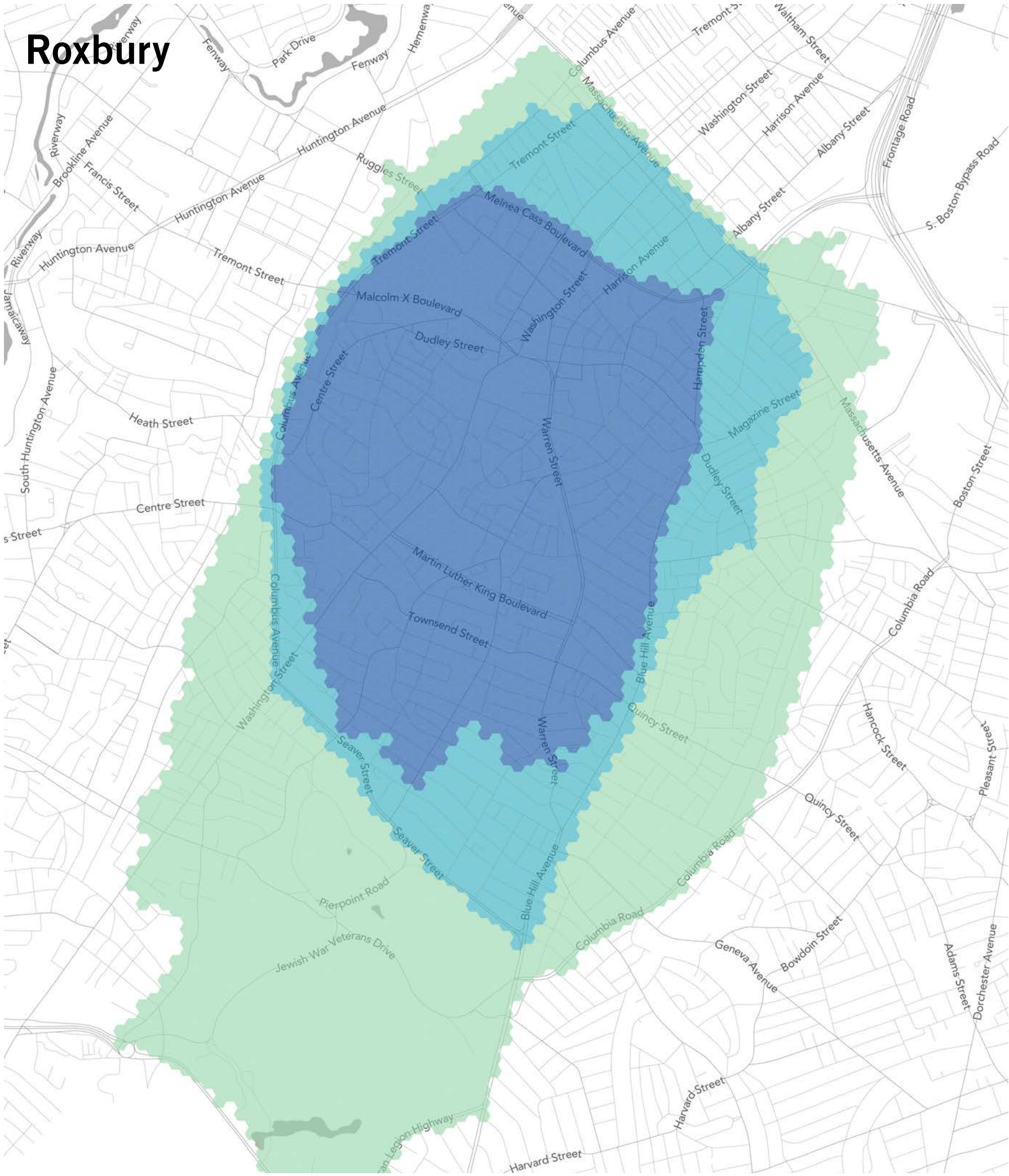
The Brooklyn neighborhood next to mine was formed by just such a midcentury crisis. Cobble Hill, a landmarked, tony district of elegant townhouses peopled by bankers, "bobos" (bourgeois bohemians), and cultural mandarins such as the novelist Martin Amis, seems an eminently historic district. But as *The New York Times* noted in 1960, "It is not a well-known area—it had no name until two years ago." The event that precipitated the

emergence of a recognized neighborhood was the announcement of plans to construct a supermarket. Around the same time, efforts at "slum clearance" began. Residents, many of them newly drawn to the area and looking for more affordable alternatives to affluent Brooklyn Heights, formed a homeowners' association. They named the newly conceived neighborhood after a fort that had stood in the area during the Revolutionary War ("Cobble Hill" sounded better than the name early Dutch settlers had come up with—"Punkiesburg"), and out of the cartographic muddle of South Brooklyn was born a "new" neighborhood, one that eventually shook off vaguely threatening economic torpor and became the place it is today, replete with single-origin coffee and well-regarded public schools.

EVERYONE HAS HEARD THE COMPLAINT about a neighborhood being "invented" by realtors hoping to stake out new price points or protect old ones, but every neighborhood requires some initial fusion of cartography and mythology to spring into being, and imposed or artificial boundaries do appear to shape community life. A project in Boston shows how people's conceptions of neighborhood boundaries often relate to—and differ from—more formalized strictures, in this case, the all-important municipal parking permit zones.

Imposed or artificial boundaries do appear to shape community life.

Another project, Livehoods, developed by Justin Cranshaw and colleagues at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science, uses social media data (tweets and Foursquare "check ins") that reveal where people actually spend their time in a city. Often, the patterns of activity and neighborhood boundaries match up—particularly when a neighborhood is bounded by strong geographic features. In many cases, however, neighborhoods may be split into different groups of users; or, particularly in neighborhoods in flux, people's movements may spill across the edges of various neighborhoods, forming new social territories. As Cranshaw told me, in cities such as Tampa, city planners are using Livehood techniques to help optimize the allocation of services to new developments, and to envision how those developments connect to established neighborhoods.



BOSTONOGRAPHY

A crowd-sourced project at the website *Bostonography* uses colored hexagons to map Boston residents' perceptions of their neighborhood boundaries. Purple covers areas where more than 75 percent of respondents agree, aqua more than 50 percent, and green more than 25 percent. "Roxbury is the most interesting neighborhood to watch in all this," *Bostonography*'s Andy Woodruff writes. "It has uncertainties on at least three sides, and it and its neighbors seem to have reasonably strong identities to both their residents and outsiders."

It has become a bit of an urban sport to create (and then joke about) increasingly baroque neighborhood names—the SoPaNoMaHos—but research suggests that local awareness of neighborhood names and map boundaries is connected to various indices of social capital. One study found, for example, that "groups with more shared local ties are more able to supply a neighborhood name." Other studies have found positive correlations between neighborhood naming and relatively high homeownership levels, residential stability, and fewer police calls.

A 1984 study of neighborhood affinity in Baltimore published in *Population and Environment* found that the "race variable" had the "strongest direct effect" on neighborhood identification. The researchers surmised that the city's African-American residents, often living in perceived "high-threat" areas, "collapsed" the sense of their neighborhoods into their own blocks, thereby trimming a dangerous world to a manageable size. Surely this happens on many levels: In my own neighborhood, there are summer "block parties," not "neighborhood parties," as if to reinforce the idea of the city block setting the outer limit to some kind of social cohesion.

Is there an ideal neighborhood size? In 1981, the noted urban planning professor Kevin Lynch championed the "*very* local unit," containing anywhere from 100 households to as few as 30 or 15. The spirit of Lynch's idea exists today in architect Ross Chapin's concept of "pocket neighborhoods," groups of houses clustered around a courtyard or shared open space, built, as Chapin has said, "around the fact that our human nature is social." Curiously, the physicist and networks expert Albert-László Barabási and colleagues, looking at mobile phone activity, found that human "spatial clustering" (the geographic proximity of members in a community) begins to expand greatly once community size reaches 30. As the community grows, its geographic span grows—but at a much greater rate. "This suggests that the tendency of human groups to remain geographically cohesive gradually gives in as the group size exceeds 30." The number 30, Barabási and colleagues add, also seems to be the optimal number for achieving cooperation in laboratory experiments on group behavior.

Whatever size neighborhood we live in, we are likely to further rearrange it in our own conception. The writer Jonathan Raban, reflecting a few decades after the publication of his influential 1974 book *Soft City*, which proposed the idea of the "city of illusion, myth, aspiration,

nightmare," talked about the liberating quality of the metropolis, where you were not "stuck" with your neighbors, as in suburbia, but could construct your own personal city. He wondered, as critics such as Mumford had done before, whether gentrification and increasing class segmentation were destroying that sense of possibility. Perhaps the Internet, where his daughter dwelt in an "elective community of exactly the kind I once sought in the big city," was where the soft city now resided. Perhaps social networks and the like were the new neighborhoods, not of proximity, but interest.

But Raban's whole supposition, of the freedom, essentially from one's context, that could be found in the city, ignores one thing: For many urban residents, neighborhoods are more than fictive constructs. They are real, and they are the very stuff of life and death.

IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO, WHERE YOU reside has an enormous impact on your destiny. In large swaths of the city, there is nothing "soft" about it; the fact of one's geography is as hard as one's life. Low birth weights and high homicide rates cluster in geographic hot spots, Harvard's Robert J. Sampson writes in his ambitious study *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* (2012). That should come as no surprise—the surprise, Sampson learned, was that those troubles cannot be explained by poverty alone. After adjusting for income, he found that some neighborhoods in his study were still healthier and safer than others.

Many people would rather not have their friends as neighbors.

Sampson recreated a classic "pro-social behavior" experiment in Chicago, dropping stamped, addressed envelopes across the city. Would where the letter was dropped affect how often it was returned? In theory, it should not: There are no income or institutional barriers to picking up a letter. But Sampson found clear neighborhood-level differences in letter-return rates; moreover, he found that those areas with the highest rates—where people were in essence more "neighborly"—tended to be the ones with the lowest rates of violent crime.

Neighborhoods, Sampson found, can become something more than the sum of their parts. He argues that social ties need be neither deep nor extensive to make

healthy neighborhoods; indeed, he suggests, many people would rather not have their friends as neighbors. They just want people they can trust to help look after the common good. "When ties are 'thick,' it may even be that outcomes are worse rather than better," he notes. For me, that rings true: In my many years in Brooklyn, while I have been friendly with neighbors I know, and some of my closest friends have become my neighbors, I have not become good friends with anyone simply because that person was my neighbor.

Despite the ideas, promulgated by the digital age and the "flatness" of globalization, that "the city is more or less a random swirl" and that "anyone (or anything) could be *here* just as easily as *there*," Sampson's work reminds us that place is more important than ever. Though their obsolescence has been prophesied at various points, neighborhoods remain a vital—perhaps the *most* vital—way of thinking about the modern city.

In the digital age, it sometimes seems as if we merely inhabit the far-flung contours of our various social networks. But this leaves a hole in the center, one that, curiously, an online startup called Nextdoor is trying to fill. Noting that only about two percent of one's Facebook "friends" are actual neighbors, Nextdoor hosts private social networks for neighborhoods. Its avowed mission: "To bring back a sense of community to the neighborhood, one of the most important communities in each of our lives." It has been said of the limits of placeless digital globalization, that you can't hammer a nail over the Internet—but maybe you can borrow a cup of sugar. ■

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GETTY IMAGES

Two Predator drones rest in hangars at a base in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Even after the United States withdraws its last combat troops from Afghanistan next year, it will continue to operate drones in the country.

HEROES AND DRONES

Drones fly in the face of lessons taught to us by centuries of warfare.

BY **F. S. NAIDEN**

By F. S. NAIDEN

A RECENT REPORT BY THE PAKISTANI government revealed an embarrassing detail about the U.S. drone campaign against Al Qaeda. Before Navy commandos caught up with Osama bin Laden in 2011, the terrorist leader had escaped detection during his years of hiding out in Abbottabad in part by wearing a cowboy hat. Thanks to the hat's broad brim, American surveillance satellites couldn't identify him by his face. To find him, the United States had to use human intelligence, and then it had to send soldiers to kill him in a face-to-face shootout.

Another attack on Al Qaeda the same year ended differently. The target, Anwar Al-Awlaki, an American citizen turned Al Qaeda preacher, was unwilling to give up Arab dress for Western attire, or perhaps did not realize how a cowboy hat might protect him. A small, unpiloted aircraft directed by remote control found and killed him outside a town in Yemen. The two killings hardly could have been more different. Conventional forces like those that tracked down bin Laden can take prisoners; they can also suffer casualties and often kill civilians by mistake (four died in the Abbottabad attack). The drone that killed Awlaki, on the other hand, was virtually invulnerable. It was less likely to kill civilians than armed attackers would have been, but it was unable to take prisoners or interrogate or otherwise seek information directly from the enemy.

These are two ways of making war, one old, one new. In 2009, Leon Panetta, then the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said he preferred the new. Discussing the use of drones in fighting Al Qaeda, he stated, "It's the only game in town." Critics of drone warfare generally stick to the legal issues it raises: A court should authorize these killings, and the military, not a civilian agency such as the CIA (which controls drones used outside war zones), should carry out the operation, they contend. Using a civilian agency violates U.S. law and the Geneva Conventions.

Leon Panetta called drones "the only game in town."

From the perspective of a military historian, the true issues are operational, not legal. If drones are used to the exclusion

of short-range weapons, American forces will be unable to take or interrogate prisoners, accept surrenders, and occupy positions. These practical advantages are not to be despised. Some terrorists surrender, even if bin Laden did not. Some provide intelligence. Yet a drone cannot communicate with the enemy.

In World War II, no weapon could have eliminated the entire top echelon of the government of any of the belligerents. Drones, though, offer this new possibility. Using them, the United States might try to eliminate the entire leadership of Al Qaeda. Although this new war aim may be attractive, once an enemy's leaders are dead, drones will not be able to capture, interrogate, or parley with survivors. And without any leaders to represent them, the remaining forces of the enemy may not be willing or able to surrender. The elimination of whole strata of leaders may not bring the conflict to a close.

Overreliance on drones is not only impractical; it is harmful to the combat ethos of the U.S. military. This ethos has always allowed for the use of long-range weapons, but it also gives an honored place to the use of short-range arms. A weapon such as the Hiroshima atomic bomb, dropped by airmen who never beheld their victims, is acceptable, but the alternative, invading Japan with a large landing force, is acceptable, too.

Centuries of warfare combining short- and long-range weapons teach us that belligerents can fight and communicate with the enemy at the same time. Innovations such as the drone have their place, but it is a smaller place than technologically infatuated officials suppose.

THE FOLLOWING BRIEF (AND SELECTIVE) survey of the history of weapons begins with a truism: Weapons that kill from a safe remove are preferable to those that involve personal risk. Yet this truism has never been the whole story. Indeed, the activity of choosing between long- and short-range weapons is almost as old as warfare itself. In Book 11 of the *Iliad*, Paris, who uses the ancient Greek version of a long-range weapon, a bow, wounds Diomedes, who uses face-to-face weapons, a spear and a sword.

After hitting Diomedes, Paris says, "You're hit! . . . If only it had caught you down in the flank and killed you." Diomedes answers, belittling his opponent's weaponry, "You are boasting in vain about grazing the bottom of my foot. . . . It's like being hit by a woman or a silly boy." An arrow, he says, "is the flimsy weapon of a weak and worthless man."

ART RESOURCE

Thousands of years ago, Homer recognized the moral and practical dilemmas posed by long-range weaponry such as the Greek archer's bow, shown in a 15th-century depiction of the Trojan War.

Fighting fair means spear to spear, face to face. Homer agrees with Diomedes, praising "those fighting in the front rank." Yet Paris survives unscathed, while Diomedes limps to his chariot and leaves the field. This scene strikes a balance between the two kinds of weapons, giving Paris the tactical advantage and Diomedes the moral advantage.

Neither side tries to exterminate the enemy without a word. Homeric leaders and soldiers alike prefer to parley and stage duels rather than fight to the finish. If wounded men do not fling insults and board their chariots, they are captured and beg for mercy. The victor negotiates with the captive, and often spares him in order to collect ransom. Sparing those who beg for mercy is the acme of heroism. Killing without warning is out of the question.

During the Classical period, which began after the Persian Wars of 490–79 BC, more long-range weaponry was available, but the idea of heroism in close-range combat persisted. When a visitor asked why the Spartans fought with short swords, a Spartan magistrate replied, "We come up close to our enemies." Yet even the Homerically inclined

Asked why the Spartans fought with short swords, a Spartan magistrate replied, "We come up close to our enemies."

Greeks had to admit that long-range weapons sometimes worked better. In his account of the Peloponnesian Wars, Thucydides reported that archers could defeat the fearsome Spartans, while taking care to note that the advantage conferred by their long-range weapons was unfair:

> When one of the Athenian allies maliciously asked one of the prisoners whether the Spartans who had died were good, brave men, the prisoner said that spindles [arrows] would be worthwhile if they could pick out brave men. He implied that men killed by arrows and stones died by chance.

A little later, in the fourth century BC, Greek warfare became higher tech. Crossbows increased the reach of long-range weapons from 100 yards to 250. Next came catapults loaded with five-pound stones. About the same time, engineers learned to use torsion, which increased throw-weight as well as range.

Homer and Thucydides never conceived so powerful a weapon as a catapult. Yet despite the advance in military technology, the hoplite or legionary with his spear and sword remained the bulwark of ancient armies; artillery did not change the fundamentals of warfare. Killing and talking continued to complement each other.

One of the first uses of artillery, by Alexander the Great's father, Philip of Macedon, at the Greek city of Olynthus in 349 BC, illustrates how old attitudes persisted amid new weapons. Macedonian artillerymen firing lead pellets and balls into the city first scratched messages on them (perhaps the first time artillerymen wrote on shells), extending the practice of Homeric jeering. Some of the balls have survived. Among the inscriptions are "Here's one, swallow it" and "It rained." One reads, simply, "Ouch." Some warned of rape: "Conceive."

Olynthus soon fell, but thanks to traitors who opened the gates to the Macedonians, not artillery fire. The victors looted the city, ransomed some of the inhabitants, no doubt raped others, and sold many into slavery. Long-range killing was only a moment in this process. To a Macedonian, as to a Homeric hero, it was unthinkable that the victor would not come face to face with enemies.

Ancient siege warfare did mark a departure from Homer in one respect: It affected civilians more deeply. In sieges, civilians could no longer see or hear missiles before impact. Even in peacetime, city dwellers experienced a new remoteness from the world beyond the city gates, one measured by towers built to interdict artillery fire, ramparts to cushion its impact, and outer works to ward off the enemy. Something of a siege mentality became permanent. This was the Greeks' high-tech military horror, their foretaste of drones. Yet even in these circumstances, the enemy was less than a mile away, and words still flew between foes, along with arrows and stones.

THERE IS NOTHING PECULIARLY GREEK about combining face-to-face and long-range weapons. There is also nothing peculiarly Greek about fighting and talking at the same time. Colonial America provides an example: Indians armed with tomahawks and bows, and later with muskets.

When Europeans started fighting Indians in eastern North America in the 16th century, the natives would begin engagements by firing arrows at a Homeric range of 50 yards or so. Then they would rush the opponent, usually with a tomahawk or club, in order to capture or scalp him, or just touch him. If they did not touch him, they earned no honor—as Jesuit missionaries put it, they would not count *coups*. Long-range killing was permissible, and sometimes unavoidable, but not preferable. The Indians had no practical notion of exterminating the whites.

Indian methods of warfare should not be thought anything less than cruel and brutal. Sneak attacks with flaming arrows often caused high numbers of casualties. The French explorer Jacques Cartier recorded an example that occurred in 1539 in what would become the province of Quebec. In his book *A Memoir of Jacques Cartier*, he told of a force of Toudaman Indians who attacked a village of 200 sleeping Iroquois, burning them to death and killing those who tried to escape the flames. But in other instances, pitched battles resulted in fewer casualties. The two sides would face off and then dart behind trees to avoid arrows. Often the fighters on each side sang and danced in the face of the enemy, as some ancient Greek warriors did. In 1643, Roger Williams, the Protestant dissenter who founded Providence Plantations, witnessed a nearly bloodless battle in Rhode Island. Arrow attacks caused some wounds, but few

deaths. The two sides ridiculed each other, then quit the field.

European invaders brought with them longer-range weapons, too—matchlock guns effective at 50 to 100 yards, but heavy and cumbersome. The burning cord gave away the soldier's position, and often fizzled out in wet weather. Then came the flintlock musket, introduced to North America around 1700. It was lighter than the matchlock and operable in a rainstorm. Appreciating the difference, the Indians abandoned their bows in favor of the new weapons. Indian warfare now took the form described in the 19th century by the novelist James Fenimore Cooper: Indians firing from the depths of the forest ambushed columns of white soldiers.

BRIDGEMAN

American Indians adopted the European settlers' long-range weaponry with considerable success. The Seminole leader Osceola, shown here with a musket in an 1842 lithograph, was captured during the Second Seminole War (1835–42) only when he was lured to sham peace talks and arrested.

American Indians did not immediately grasp the strategic setback represented by an increased reliance on long-range killing.

Even more deadly than the flintlock was the rifled musket developed around 1750 by German gunsmiths in Pennsylvania, but known as the Kentucky rifle because of its popularity in the first white settlements west of the Appalachians. With this weapon, a marksman could

fell man or beast from up to several hundred yards away. Long-range killing now became easier, and Indians had no scruples about adopting it. Once the warriors hit their targets, they could still close in and count *coups*. They did not immediately grasp the strategic setback represented by an increased reliance on long-range killing. Their archery skills became obsolete, their superiority in hand-to-hand fighting became less important, and their dependence on European goods increased. By the end of the 19th century, Indians faced repeating rifles and machine guns: ever more projectiles, fired more accurately from farther and farther away.

Now, amid weapons that would have been as surprising to Roger Williams as catapults would have been to Homer, the U.S. Army could exterminate its Indian opponents at little risk to itself. It was a somewhat new kind of warfare, but not entirely: The Army had to find the Indians, and some, like Geronimo, were very elusive. To do better against future enemies, the Army would need even better long-range weapons. First came improved field artillery, then bomber planes and rockets, but none were flawless. Artillery was more effective when targeting was done with the assistance of airborne spotters, but the spotters were very vulnerable.

In Vietnam, the foe was cleverly retrograde. He attacked with short-range weapons such as knives and bamboo stakes.

Bombers were vulnerable to enemy aircraft and ground-based antiaircraft fire, and bombs often missed their targets. Any infantryman adjusting his aim was a more flexible killer than a bomb or rocket. Through both world wars, the infantry remained the largest segment of any army's frontline troops, the same as in antiquity and colonial America.

In World War II, when their enemies were finally defeated, the Allies did not deal with them at a distance and without communication. When the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, enemy leaders were not targeted. The bombs were not dropped in order to preempt negotiations but to hasten them. Allied military leaders received the German and Japanese surrenders face to face in formal ceremonies, then implemented an occupation of both countries that lasted for years.

In Vietnam, the foe was cleverly retrograde. He attacked with short-range

weapons such as knives and bamboo stakes. His notion of a long-range weapon was a tank gun with an effective range of a mile. The Americans could fire from much longer range, in safety, but they would have to fire incessantly, since they would almost always miss once the target slipped into the jungle or ducked into a cave. U.S. forces introduced precision-guided munitions that anticipated today's drones, but in small numbers that made little impact on a numerous enemy. Another new weapon, the guided missile, was too expensive for most targets in a guerrilla war. Carpet-bombing by B-52s hearkened back to the massive raids against Japanese and German cities at the end of World War II. But the United States had no notion of killing Ho Chi Minh and the other members of the elite that ran North Vietnam any more than the Communists had of killing off the Nixon administration. Innovations and all, the Vietnam War effectively ended at a negotiating table, different in form but not in substance from the powwows of America's colonial era and the parleys reported by Thucydides.

Then came drones. Although experiments with unmanned planes dated back to the beginning of aviation, the 1950s witnessed the first military use of these machines, which served as radio-guided decoys in the Korean War. Similar planes directed naval gunfire in the 1990s. In the Gulf War (1991), one of these planes took pictures of Iraqi soldiers waving their shirts in the air, attempting to surrender to the drone. In the late 1990s, in time for the invasion of Afghanistan and the Iraq War, drones began to carry missiles. Soon all the services had drones. Army personnel and Marines directed the craft from trailers near the frontlines. The CIA joined in, and the Air Force built a command center for drones at Nellis Air Force Base, in Nevada. Aerial surveillance improved, making it possible to pick out individual targets, such as bin Laden.

The United States and its allies lacked the troops, ships, and planes to assault Al Qaeda in all of its sanctuaries throughout the greater Middle East, and the George W. Bush administration turned to drones as a substitute. After the election of Barack Obama in 2008, it became clear that the United States lacked the will to keep large forces in the field indefinitely. In the first few years of Obama's presidency, drone attacks on enemy leaders increased, with the avowed purpose of breaking up the Al Qaeda system of command and control.

The Obama administration found several justifications for the reliance on drones. There was the old rationale of not nego-

tiating with terrorists, and the new one of treating Al Qaeda as a criminal enterprise. There was humanitarian horror at civilian casualties caused by conventional warfare. Yet drone warfare is not immaculate. Civilians are killed and wounded, and in Pakistan and Afghanistan that has led to protests against "the only game in town."

SOME SOLDIERS AND CIA PERSONNEL dislike the game. "There's something about pilotless drones that doesn't strike me as an honorable way of warfare," a former Army Ranger told journalist Jane Mayer for a 2009 article in *The New Yorker*. The Ranger did not quote Homer, but he was thinking like Diomedes, or like the Spartan who scorned arrows. He was thinking of the personal risk taken in combat, but also of the responsibility felt for taking life. An ancient soldier might accept this responsibility without qualm. A contemporary soldier is more likely to ponder this duty, and ask whether a goal worth killing for is also a goal worth dying for. The operator of a drone need not ask this question.

Drone operators are not without conscience. Many have found the job intensely stressful, and some, Mayer reported, are said to wear flight suits at work. That reminds the operator that he is, after all, making a bombing run. Even if he cannot see the enemy face to face, he is entering hostile airspace. If he were a pilot, he could be shot down or captured after parachuting to the ground. He could end up in a place like the Hanoi Hilton, and get to know his enemy all too well. He could taunt or be taunted, be brainwashed or forgiven, or be exchanged, if not ransomed. He could, in a word, be a warrior.

This sort of thinking is not too romantic for the public. The public reacted to the death of bin Laden much more than to Awlaki's not just because bin Laden was more important, but because his almost cinematic demise seemed mythical. The attackers ran great risks in order to kill him point-blank. He had a chance to arm himself, to no avail.

When Panetta described drones as a game, he could not have been thinking about heroes or heroism. He supposed that the United States could prevail over Al Qaeda. Attacking Al Qaeda's leadership may not lead to this result. In 2002, former CIA general counsel Jeffrey Smith told *The New Yorker*'s Seymour M. Hersh, "If they're dead, they're not talking to you, and you create more martyrs."

Unlike the war with the Taliban, which may end after U.S. troops leave Afghanistan, the war with Al Qaeda is sure to continue. The United States will keep

deploying drones, and Al Qaeda will keep using its own arsenal. While not averse to using the poor man's long-range weapon, the improvised explosive device, or IED (often detonated by cell phone), Al Qaeda also uses the poor man's face-to-face weapon, the suicide bomb. Suicide bombers are counted as martyrs, the heroes of their religious lexicon. The asymmetrical conflict may go on for some time. Then will come a change of fortune that Thucydides might have predicted. Just as the Indians acquired muskets, Al Qaeda will acquire drones. That is another one of warfare's truisms: A weapon used by one side will sooner or later be acquired by the other. The game will have two players, not one. The outcome of the game will be exponentially harder to predict.

Drones are tempting. Compared to spears or even guns, they save attackers' lives. Compared to artillery or bombs, they save civilians' lives. Used to the exclusion of conventional forces, however, they will do harm as well as good. They will liquidate a target like bin Laden the same way they liquidate a target like Awlaki. Used as an instrument of assassination, they will turn war against an enemy into war against his leaders, a psychological and cultural shift that may backfire. Drones give our own combat soldiers no responsibility, and they give our technicians too much.

Drones should serve the familiar purpose of inflicting casualties in tandem with inducing surrender. They should not serve the novel purpose of replacing troops, casualties, negotiations, and heroism—the whole business of war—with gadgetry.

Americans like gadgets, of course, especially the military kind, and they admire the strong, silent type. D. H. Lawrence spotted this predilection in the character of Natty Bumppo, novelist Cooper's frontier hero. Bumppo is a dead shot with his Kentucky rifle. Lawrence thought Bumppo exemplified "the essential American soul . . . hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer." Drones are the postmodern equivalent: silent, deadly gadgets that do the frontiersman's solitary work. But gadgets do not win or lose wars. Soldiers and nations do. ■

Just as the Indians acquired muskets, Al Qaeda will acquire drones.

F. S. NAIDEN is an associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He is now at work on *The Invention of the Officer Corps*, a study of the army of Alexander the Great.

MEXICAN MOMENTUM

After years of political gridlock in Mexico, a new president has unleashed a startling array of reforms. Is the country heading in the right direction?

STEVEN DUDLEY
on the new calculus of the fight against the drug cartels

ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS
with a photo-essay on the lives of Mexicans

DUNCAN WOOD
on reviving the energy industry

JESUS VELASCO
on Mexico's brain drain

GETTY IMAGES

Arrests of police officers and other officials are a disconcertingly common sight in Mexico. This former federal police officer was arrested in Mexico City earlier this year and charged with leading a gang that committed robberies and kidnappings.

DRUG DEALS

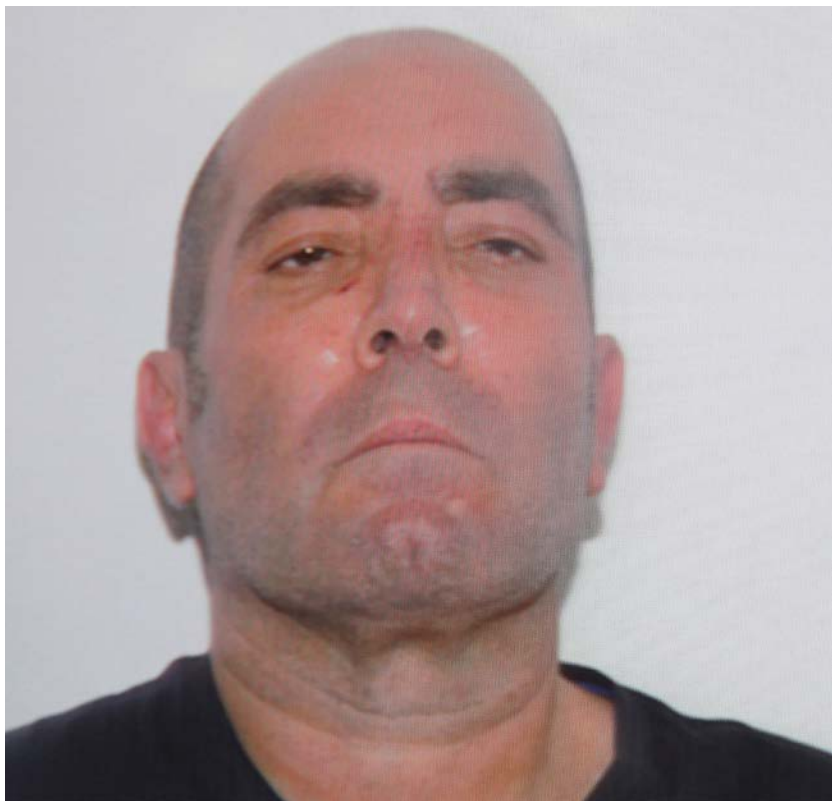
A new president is betting that making peace with the drug cartels is the key to a safer Mexico.

BY **STEVEN DUDLEY**

By STEVEN DUDLEY

A FEW HOURS BEFORE DAWN ON JULY 15, a Blackhawk helicopter swooped down on a Ford pickup moving quickly along a dirt road about 16 miles south of the Texas border. The chopper's sudden appearance startled the driver, who slammed on the brakes. The truck's three occupants shoved the doors open, and two of the men threw themselves to the ground. The third started running away through the desert brush, but was quickly surrounded by Mexican security forces.

That man was Miguel Ángel Treviño. Known by the alias Z-40, he was one of the most wanted men on the planet, accused of multiple crimes in both Mexico and the United States—most notoriously, ordering two massacres in which more than 200 Mexicans were killed, some for refusing to participate in his drug smuggling operations. As the head of the feared Zetas criminal organization, Treviño represents a Mexican underworld that is more violent and fragmented than ever before—and also more diversified, pursuing criminal enterprises beyond drugs.



NEWSCOM

Miguel Ángel Treviño, alias Z-40, was arrested in July. He headed the Zetas criminal organization, which was started by former members of an elite Mexican military unit.

Treviño's capture was the biggest blow President Enrique Peña Nieto had struck against organized crime since taking office in December 2012. It was followed by another dramatic capture in August, when authorities arrested Gulf Cartel leader Mario Ramírez Treviño (no relation to the Zetas leader), alias X-20. Like Treviño, Ramírez was taken by surprise and captured without a shot being fired.

The arrests represented a slight strategic shift in the fight against large criminal groups in Mexico. It was clear from the outset that Peña Nieto wanted to change the narrative created by his predecessor, Felipe Calderón, whose frontal assault against criminal organizations had yielded some good results but

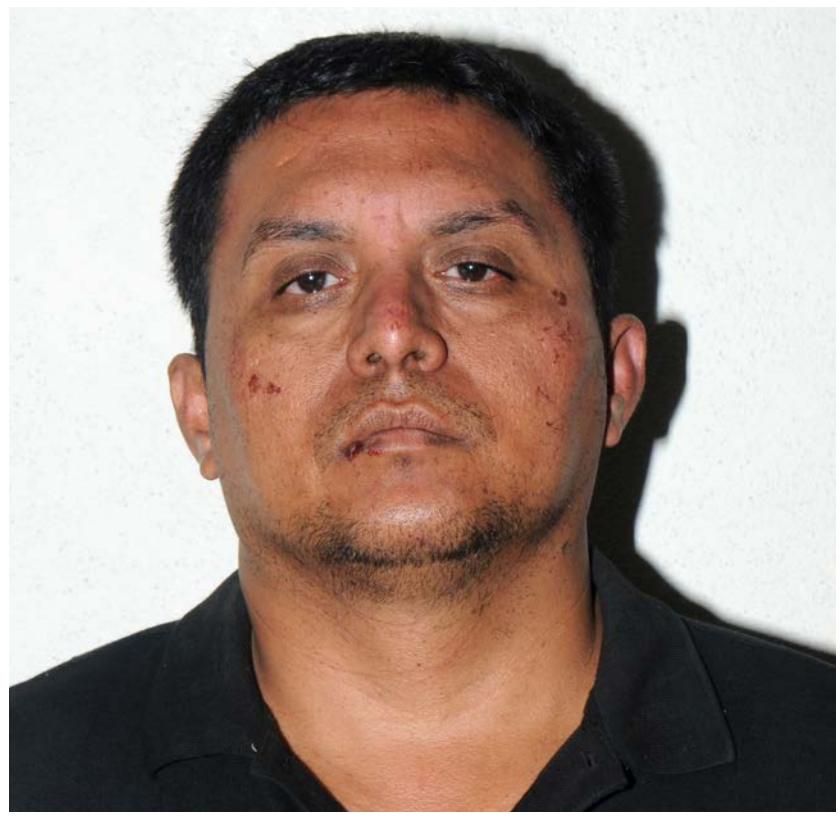
In many ways, Mexicans have seen a return to the old days when Peña Nieto's PRI ruled with an iron fist and a polite smile.

also a nasty surge in violence. And in targeting the Zetas and the Gulf Cartel, the new president was prioritizing the most violent gangs over the biggest drug traffickers. Peña Nieto has also successfully created a single command center in the Interior Ministry. He has shifted some resources toward the areas hit hardest by drug-related violence, and his administration tightly controls information about homicides and arrests.

In many ways, Mexicans have seen a return to the old days when Peña Nieto's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) ruled the country with an iron fist and a polite smile. The party's discipline represents a welcome change from the chaos of his predecessor's government, but its past entanglements with criminals also worry some observers. And over the longer term, there are reasons to ask if Mexico's crime problem can be solved by another new crime-fighting strategy, or whether that will require a deeper foray into the institutions that govern Mexican society.

PEÑA NIETO SEEMS AS IF HE WERE made to be president. The handsome, well-spoken former governor of the state of Mexico, which geographically surrounds the Federal District of Mexico City, is not only a PRI stalwart but is married to the popular *telenovela* actress Angélica Rivera.

Once the country's permanent political powerbroker, the PRI ruled Mexico for more than 70 years by holding a near-total lock on the country's various echelons of power through a disciplined and fiercely vindictive political



AP IMAGES

Mario Ramírez Treviño, alias X-20, head of the Gulf Cartel, was known more for his brutality than his business acumen when he was arrested in August.

structure. Its reign ended in 2000 with the election of National Action Party (PAN) candidate Vicente Fox, who was succeeded in 2006 by the right-leaning PAN's Calderón.

It was Calderón who inaugurated the aggressive campaign against the drug cartels that has filled the news media in recent years. Faced with the need to establish his credentials as a strong leader after securing victory in a disputed election, Calderón chose to make security—a term Mexicans use to encapsulate their concerns about the many ills growing out of the power of the drug organizations—the defining issue of his administration. Just over a week after his inauguration, he dispatched the army to his embattled home state of Michoacán, west of Mexico City, where the quasi-religious Michoacán Family, which had fashioned its own bible-styled manual to guide its members and followers, was a deeply entrenched player in the drug trade.

That was only the beginning. Calderón beefed up intelligence and threw the navy into the fight—in part because the army's reputation had been tainted by allegations of corruption and human rights abuses. He worked hard to establish the Fox-created Secretariat for Public Security as the center of control over the anticartel effort and pushed to put the country's corruption-prone municipal police forces under the control of the states and ultimately the federal government. He began purging the police at every level and dispatched the Federal Police and the military to areas hit hard by the violence.

In some ways, Calderón tried to replicate the strategies of Colombia and other countries that have successfully countered narco-violence. By the middle of his term, Colombian military officers were training Mexican police in jungle warfare and counterinsurgency tactics. Just as Colombia had done, Calderón forged a stronger relationship with the United States. Under the Mérida Initiative of 2008, the United States has provided $1.9 billion in assistance to the antidrug effort. Calderón's "kingpin strategy" of targeting high-level organized crime figures and extraditing them to the United States for trial also echoed the approach in Colombia, as did the push to begin changing from an inquisitorial judicial system, with its judge-driven courts, to a more open and transparent U.S.-style adversarial system.

But the Colombian comparison cut two ways. The antidrug campaign ratcheted up the level of violence, leading some to recall Colombia's crisis in the late 1980s,

when drug lord Pablo Escobar terrorized the country with bombings. "Cartels are showing more and more indices of insurgencies," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared in 2010. "It's looking more and more like Colombia looked 20 years ago, where the narcotraffickers controlled certain parts of the country."

Rhetoric from the presidential palace soon stiffened. "We do not share these findings, as there is a big difference between what Colombia faced and what Mexico is facing today," Calderón's top security adviser, Alejandro Poire, announced at a news conference. Calderón began speaking more frequently about Americans' drug consumption as well as gun trafficking from the United States as causes of the violence in Mexico.

Poire had a point. The Mexican cartels are capable of controlling territory, but they do not have a political agenda. They aim to co-opt local officials and others who can be useful to them, not to capture national political power. Even more important from the perspective of Mexican officials, Colombia was and is a far more violent place than Mexico. In 1996, Colombia's murder rate was more than three times higher than Mexico's is today. And violence against civilians in Mexico does not approximate what happened in Colombia.

REDUX

In the Pacific resort city of Acapulco, family members mourn the 2011 death of 16-year-old Luis Felipe López, an innocent bystander in a clash between rival criminal groups.

Colombia was and is a far more violent place than Mexico.

Calderón could also boast of some tangible results. By the end of his term, his government had killed or captured 25 of the 37 criminals on its "most wanted" list. It had extradited hundreds of criminals to the United States and effectively dismantled one of the country's premier criminal organizations, the Tijuana Cartel. As of November 2012, it had tested more than 330,000 security personnel for drugs and administered polygraph tests inquiring into their connections to criminal groups, removing 10 percent of them from service. It had pushed the new judicial system into several states, and passed new anti-corruption and anti–money laundering laws. And despite the violence, the Mexican tourist industry enjoyed a record year in 2011.

Yet Calderón was forced to grapple with awkward truths. His team had fully expected that the new security plan would increase the violence for a time, but murder rates kept rising, not just in the traditional trafficking corridors but throughout the country. Extortion and kidnapping also became more common. The death or capture of kingpins fractured criminal groups, creating a spike in bloodshed as the survivors fought to fill the vacuum. The criminal justice system strained to handle the burden. Eighty percent of murders resulted in no prosecution. Add to this the startling reality that 60,000 people were killed during the Calderón administration, and another 25,000 disappeared.

The carnage devastated communities, and it went on to hurt the national economy. Investors lost confidence in the country, and foreign direct investment fell 34.9 percent in 2012, to its lowest point in 20 years relative to gross domestic product.

DURING HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, Peña Nieto carefully staked out his positions on the security issue, arguing that the government needed to address the problem of violent crime generally instead of focusing on drug trafficking organizations. Strikingly, however, he mostly avoided the security question, as did the other candidates. The lack of substantive debate reflected a reality: that quick solutions are not possible, and that, in the short term at least, there would be some overlap with Calderón's strategy.

To be sure, Peña Nieto's security plan for his own state, announced in 2010 while he was a state governor, was a virtual replica of Calderón's.

Instead, Peña Nieto focused on corruption both during and after the campaign. It was not surprising that his administration's first high-profile arrest before Z-40 was corralled in the desert was of Elba Esther Gordillo, the longtime head of Mexico's 1.4-million-member teachers' union, who for many years had been shaking down government officials and union members alike. Gordillo, who had made the mistake of challenging Peña Nieto's authority during a debate over a new education law, has been charged with embezzling $200 million in a case that has served to affirm that the PRI's swift political discipline is back in force.

The PRI's return to power has brought a distinct change in the political environment. The party's 71 years at the helm before 2000 allowed it to develop a highly centralized form of decision making and information dissemination. True to tradition, Peña Nieto all but ignores uncomfortable issues such as security and tries to keep a lid on publicity about crime and violence. Gone are the perp walks and the press conferences announcing every capture or kill. Information that was routinely released during the Calderón years is now locked away, including some basic information on the cartels. The government instead talks up its political and economic reforms as "Mexico's Moment," in what is little more than a public-relations effort to brush the continuing violence under the rug.

When the president talks about security, he uses new terminology and keeps his objectives broad. His "Mexico in Peace" plan emphasizes violence prevention and the protection of human rights while promising better coordination of police and other security-related agencies. "The important part is to get results and fulfill our objective of providing peace and tranquility to Mexicans, sensibly reducing the violence," he told the Mexican Congress.

The government talks up its reforms as "Mexico's Moment," in what is little more than a public-relations effort to brush the continuing violence under the rug.

He has channeled more money into prevention programs in high-violence areas and dissolved the PAN-created Secretariat for Public Security, once again centralizing power in the Ministry of the Interior. He has also called for the creation of a new national gendarmerie to replace the military as the country's go-to shock unit to fight organized crime.

But there are also signs that little has really changed. Within his first few months in office, in what seemed like déjà vu to many Mexicans, troops were sent to Michoacán to deal with rising insecurity and the emergence of new "self-defense" groups. Still, Peña Nieto has at least slowed Calderón's frontal assault. Most notably, he has all but stopped prosecuting Mexicans for drug-related crimes. During the Calderón years, the government launched a record 6,500 new cases per month for "crimes against health," which mostly involve drug trafficking. Since Peña Nieto took office, the monthly average has dropped to less than 1,000. And in the strategic corridors where violence was the worst during the Calderón years, military and police units have taken down roadblocks and stopped regular search-and-seizure operations. As one army colonel explained to me, the military was told to take its foot off the accelerator and instead pursue more focused operations. Such actions suggest that the government may be seeking an informal accommodation with the traffickers, a sort of narco-pact.

That kind of tacit agreement with the cartels in order to reduce violence would not be new. Before 2000, many members of the old PRI publicly thrived off the largesse of drug traffickers, including some who are now members of Peña Nieto's inner circle. One of them is Jorge Hank Rhon, the flamboyant former mayor of Tijuana, who is one of the country's richest men and widely thought to be an associate of the Tijuana Cartel. In 1988, a member of his security team was convicted of murdering a journalist who was looking into Rhon's activities, and in 2011 Rhon himself was arrested on weapons charges. He was released by a judge on grounds of insufficient evidence even though dozens of unregistered guns were reportedly found in his home, including two that had been used in homicides. Rhon's extensive business interests include casinos, a bank, and the Tijuana soccer team. He strongly supported Peña Nieto's bid for power.

Other parties are not immune to narco-influence. For many years before Calderón took office, the incentives to fight the cartels were relatively low. Violence was not as widespread as it is now,

and campaign contributions and other gifts from drug bosses were plentiful for politicians and security forces alike. Fox, Calderón, and other PAN politicians have been constantly dogged by accusations of ties to the Sinaloa Cartel, and Calderón's government filed charges against a number of mayors from the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution for colluding with drug traffickers. Although many of these cases were thrown out for lack of evidence, the reality is that local politicians, whatever the party, have little choice but to negotiate the terms of their existence with entrenched criminal groups.

Calderón faced seven major criminal organizations, but Peña Nieto confronts dozens.

Peña Nieto himself is already facing accusations that he is influenced by narcos. In August, a federal court, citing a technical issue in the original trial, abruptly released Guadalajara Cartel cofounder Rafael Caro Quintero after he had served 28 years of his 40-year sentence for the 1985 killing of Enrique Camarena, an agent of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. After loud protests from the Obama administration, the Mexican government issued a warrant for Caro Quintero's arrest—but he had vanished.

Subsequent statements by the Mexican government on the Caro Quintero affair reveal an administration divided. Even while the attorney general's office admitted irregularities in the release, it also fired back that the United States has given inadequate sentences to drug kingpins who were extradited from Mexico. Both the PAN and the PRI are harsh critics of the United States, regularly blaming it for fostering Mexico's problems by hosting a huge domestic drug economy, failing to battle money laundering with enough vigor, and giving criminals easy access to weapons through its lax gun laws. These criticisms have merit, but they also reveal a readiness to pass the buck.

Even if Peña Nieto chooses to negotiate with the cartels, there is now a question of whom, if anyone, he can negotiate with. In 2006, Calderón faced seven major criminal organizations, but Peña Nieto confronts dozens, with constantly changing leadership. They are smaller in some cases, but they are also better armed and have been emboldened by their formal and not so formal

connections to the larger organizations, which have given them weaponry and access to safe houses and corrupt officials. Their side businesses have proliferated and now include the domestic sale of illegal drugs, extortion, and kidnapping. Preserving the international drug trade is not necessarily their first priority, which makes any parlay with the government vastly more complicated. Indeed, even if powerful cartels call for less violence in their areas of influence, it's not clear their word will be heeded. In Baja California, for example, there are reports that some sub-commanders have ignored orders from leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel to "stop heating the plaza" with murders.

Peña Nieto's focus on reducing the overall level of violence in Mexico is the biggest and most laudable change he has made in the country's security strategy. On the ground, though, it is hard to see exactly what it will entail. So far, the movement of more military and police resources to violence-ridden areas has been the most visible change, and it appears to be paying dividends. Violence is down, although just how much is subject to interpretation.

The outlines of a new approach can also be found in the capture of Treviño and Ramírez, which the government treated with little fanfare even as the news media feasted on the story. The arrests represented a rare triumph of coordination among the nation's security agencies and effective targeting of the groups causing the most violence. The PRI's disciplined approach stands in sharp contrast to that of the previous, PAN-led, administration. Officials say they aim to dismantle the entire structure of the duo's criminal organizations rather than merely decapitate them, and there have been numerous arrests of cartel members, which could prevent some of the conflict between surviving cartel fragments that has caused so much violence in recent years.

The criminal challenge, however, keeps changing form. Treviño's Zetas remain the principal target. The terrifyingly quick spread of the Zetas, one of the new splinter cartels, has been one of the main drivers of violence in Mexico, and the organization's success has spawned numerous smaller copycats, creating a much more chaotic underworld. These new groups do not appear to fear the government, and much of that government still appears to be for hire, offering criminal organizations of all sizes crooked personnel, weapons, ammunition, protection from prosecution, and political cover. That is why the shifting

strategies of politicians in Mexico City pose only temporary challenges to the underworld. The government's long-term strategy must focus on reforming the institutions that the criminal organizations now often feed on, including the police, the judiciary, and the prisons.

The Peña Nieto administration is moving as slowly on this front as its predecessor did. It has shelved its plan for a national gendarmerie and returned to police reform, seeking to put more easily corruptible municipal forces under the authority of state-run police. But this effort is stalling. Of the 50,000 police who were purged under Calderón, for example, more than 40,000 are still drawing a paycheck because of labor laws and political intransigence. Judicial reform is also moving at a crawl. A new uniform penal code that requires the states to implement a common system of criminal law is in place, but the government will have to expend all its political capital to get the states to adopt the new adversarial legal system that is the penal code's companion reform by the proposed 2016 deadline.

In order to shift the balance of power permanently against the cartels, Peña Nieto will have to invest more heavily in this kind of unglamorous institutional reform. The challenge may be larger than he and the PRI are ready to accept. But while Mexico has enjoyed some successes, stability will only come when it has solid institutions to rest upon. ■

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PORTRAITS OF MEXICO: A PHOTO-ESSAY

A photographer explores Mexico's hopeful future and heavy past.

BY **ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS**

OCTOBER 2007

A vocalist for Banda Unicornio, Julio Cesar Vasquez Rivera, 19, holds his stage costume. Rivera, who lives in Guanajuato, a state in central Mexico that has lost many residents to emigration, was planning his first trip to the United States.

By ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS

APRIL 2012

Siblings Rosa Maria, 6, Yasmin, 17, Juan Antonio, 1, and Juan Manuel, 14, gather in their temporary home. The Romero-Dias family—a household of nine, headed by a single mother—would soon move into a new residence designed by Tierra Savia. Based in Ciudad Juárez, a city of 1.5 million across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas, Tierra Savia employs Juarezeños living in extreme poverty to build their own eco-friendly houses from dirt.

FEBRUARY 2008

Micaela Rivera, of Villa de Vázquez, outside Mexico City, and her mother borrowed $3,550 from Compartamos for their homemade-cheese business. Compartamos ("we share" in Spanish) is a commercial microlender that has become one of Mexico's most profitable banks. Today, its average customer pays a yearly interest rate of about 80 percent.

JUNE 2007

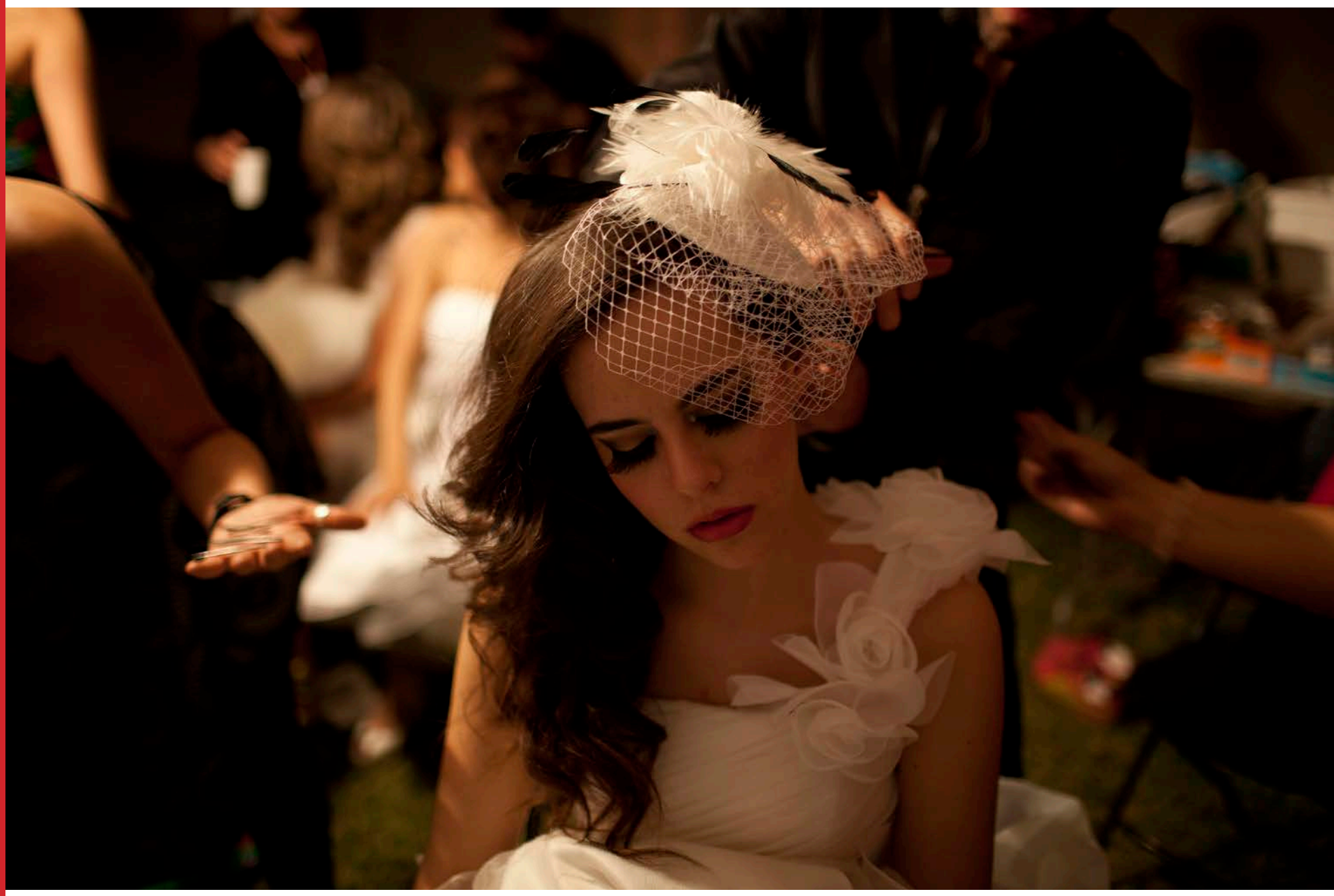
Carlos Slim, a Mexican businessman and perhaps the world's richest person, with a net worth of $73 billion, poses in his Mexico City gallery amid his private art collection.

SEPTEMBER 2012

Yaihr Castillo García, 8, plays outside his family's home in Ciudad Juárez. His sister, Brenda Berenice, went missing while in a downtown neighborhood. She is one of hundreds of women and girls who have disappeared in the area since 1993. Some bodies have been found, many bearing marks of torture.

JANUARY 2007

Fernando Ramírez Rangel, chef and owner of Maria del Alma, a restaurant in the fashionable Condesa neighborhood in Mexico City, specializes in cuisine from rainforest-covered Tabasco, a southeastern state on the Gulf of Mexico.



APRIL 2012

A model waits backstage at a fashion show organized by Amor por Juárez (Love for Juárez), a group that hopes to revitalize the city through the arts.

APRIL 2013

In Culiacán, Sinaloa, a city on the Gulf of California notorious for drug-related violence, women dance in a cemetery during a birthday party for a man who died the year before, at age 35.

ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS is a freelance photojournalist from Brazil. Based in Mexico City for the past nine years, she contributes regularly to *The New York Times*, and her work has also appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Sunday Times*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Glamour Magazine*, *The Guardian*, and *Paris Match*. She is an instructor for Foundry Photojournalism Workshops, which holds photojournalism courses in developing nations.

GETTY IMAGES

With two cabinet ministers by his side, President Enrique Peña Nieto announces his much-anticipated energy reform package in August.

RAISING LÁZARO

In a year that brought an eruption of ambitious reform measures, the biggest of them all is the proposed overhaul of Mexico's iconic national oil company.

BY **DUNCAN WOOD**

By DUNCAN WOOD

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, ECSTATIC Mexicans thronged the Zócalo, their capital city's immense central square, to celebrate President Lázaro Cárdenas's decision to nationalize the assets of the foreign companies that controlled Mexico's oil. By the tens of thousands they donated jewelry, cash, and even chickens to help provide the compensation Cárdenas had promised the companies. The day the decision was announced, March 18, became a national holiday marking what many Mexicans still consider a signature moment in their country's struggle for dignity and freedom from American imperialism. Oil was the *tesoro nacional* (national treasure), and Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex), the national oil company Cárdenas created, became a monument to Mexican pride.

Today, however, Mexico's streets ring with speeches and chants by demonstrators opposing an array of ambitious reforms proposed by President Enrique Peña Nieto during his first months in office, none more significant than his call in August to shake up Pemex and reopen the country's economy to foreign oil companies and private domestic firms.

The government's proposal came hard on the heels of several other sweeping pieces of legislation. A labor law reform, passed with Peña Nieto's support just before he took office, promises to bring Mexican labor markets some much-needed flexibility. A controversial school reform bill would subject teachers to formal evaluations and generally make them more accountable. In telecommunications, the government challenged virtual monopolies in the telephone and television markets with new antitrust measures, and a financial reform will encourage banks to increase lending to consumers and businesses. In September, Peña Nieto capped a busy year by introducing a package of revenue-raising tax reforms, including the promise of an old-age insurance program. But because of its great potential to generate jobs and economic growth, the energy package is seen as the "mother of all reforms."

Since Peña Nieto took office last December, under the banner of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), he has achieved more than his two National Action Party (PAN) predecessors, Vicente Fox and Felipe Calderón, were able to pull off in 12 years. Each of Peña

Nieto's reforms has required taking on powerful vested interests—the labor unions, teachers, telecommunications billionaire Carlos Slim, and the banks, respectively—and coordinating closely with the main opposition parties, the conservative PAN and the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Both opposition parties have been weakened by internal divisions, and the dominant faction in each believes that working with the government may persuade frustrated voters that it can get things done. The result has been a period of extraordinary cooperation. It is not for nothing that the international press is calling this "Mexico's Moment."

ONE OF THE GREAT IRONIES OF THE current situation is that Peña Nieto's PRI is the same party that ruled without interruption for 71 years until 2000, creating and defending many of the institutions he now seeks to overhaul. It was the PRI, emerging from the Mexican Revolution of 1910–20, that created Pemex and shaped modern Mexico, controlling the national political scene by co-opting the opposition and fixing elections. But by the turn of the century Mexicans had had enough of a system once described as "a perfect dictatorship" by Peruvian novelist and political leader Mario Vargas Llosa, who said it exceeded even Soviet communism in its malign subtlety. They had tired of its recurring financial crises (known as the *sexenio* crises because they often coincided with the end of a president's six-year term) caused by financial mismanagement, corruption, and surges of pre-election spending. By choosing the PAN's Fox as their president in 2000, the voters opted for a fundamental shift toward a more democratic system and the promise of faster economic growth and greater accountability from government.

It is not for nothing that the international press is calling this "Mexico's Moment."

Then came a dozen years of frustration. That is not to say that nothing changed. The country's political system evolved, and Mexico consolidated its democratic institutions, establishing competitive elections as the norm. Although the process of building a democratic culture is far from complete, the shift to free and fair elections is particularly impressive given the country's recent history.

GETTY IMAGES

Petroleum and patriotism have long proved a heady mix in Mexican politics. "Serving the nation," says this 1956 Pemex sign.

Thanks in part to the North American Free Trade Agreement, Mexico has become one of the world's leading exporters, shipping more manufactured goods abroad every year than the rest of Latin America combined. Increasingly those goods go not just to the United States, but to many other customers around the world—everything from textiles to high-value-added goods such as automobiles, aircraft parts, and metalworking machines. Mexico's middle class has grown, too, and the rate of homeownership is on the rise. Gross domestic product per capita rose from about $5,600 in 2000 to some $9,700 in 2012.

Despite the growth of the economy and the consolidation of democracy, however, nearly half the population remained in poverty. Fox and Calderón were widely criticized for failing to create a more equitable society. Along with this harsh assessment came accusations of corruption and general ineffectiveness. In the six years before Peña Nieto took office, for example, Calderón saw his reform proposals rejected at every turn by an opposition PRI party that was simply unwilling to negotiate. All of these failures were magnified by the upsurge of drug-related violence and insecurity that began after 2006 with

the Calderón administration's war against major drug traffickers.

PEMEX WAS ANOTHER ROCK FOX AND Calderón failed to move. The national oil company remained an almost sacred symbol of Mexican sovereignty and national pride. Yet the company's performance left much to be desired. Mexicans have long celebrated the nationalization of 1938, yet it marked the beginning of a long period of virtually stagnant output. By the 1960s, Mexico had been reduced to importing foreign oil.

Pemex was another rock Fox and Calderón failed to move.

Only the chance discovery of a huge oil field in the Gulf of Mexico reversed the decline. The find came after a fisherman named Rudesindo Cantarell repeatedly accused Pemex of oil spills, complaining for several years that oil floating on the surface of the ocean had been ruining his nets. When Pemex geologists finally went

NEWSCOM

Once a bountiful source of oil, the Cantarell field in the Gulf of Mexico has suffered rapidly declining output since 2006.

to investigate in 1976, they stumbled upon the field. Estimated to be the third-largest oil deposit in the world at the time, the Cantarell field catapulted Mexico into the big leagues of the global oil industry. By 2004 the country was producing more than 3.4 million barrels per day (bpd) and was exporting more than half of it, primarily to the United States.

Pemex was not just pumping oil; it was also pumping money into the government's coffers. Dependence on tax revenues from Pemex, which provide about a third of its income, contributed for many years to the government's reluctance to free up the company financially or operationally. And the abundance of the Cantarell field made it easy not to think much about the future. While better-governed national oil companies such as Ecopetrol in Columbia and Petrobras in Brazil have advanced, Pemex has skimped on investments in technology and operations. This has left it unable to keep producing at the high levels seen a decade ago. Inadequate spending on exploration and production—a serious problem since the mid-1980s—has hurt Pemex's ability to tap new resources. As a result, oil production has declined dramatically over the past nine years.

Mexico's national oil production currently stands at 2.55 million bpd, down slightly from 2.6 million in 2010. While, thanks to high oil prices, production has been sufficient to maintain a steady flow of money to Pemex and the government, the decline has caused consternation in policy ranks. The reduction of output by more than 800,000 bpd since 2004 translates into a loss of some $80 million each day in revenue (assuming a price of $100 per barrel). Given the fact that national hydrocarbon consumption is rising, Mexico will have to boost both its reserves and its production significantly in coming years if it is not again to become a net importer of oil.

Beyond the overwhelming focus on oil, a second vitally important energy issue has gone largely unnoticed: Mexico's failure to develop its natural gas resources, including massive shale gas reserves that rank as the world's sixth largest, according to the U.S. Energy Information Agency.

Gas-rich Mexico is struggling desperately to increase gas imports from the United States.

Because of its preoccupation with efforts to stem the rapid decline of oil production in the Gulf of Mexico, Pemex has made only minimal investment in shale gas. That has led to the unhappy spectacle of gas-rich Mexico struggling desperately to increase gas imports from the United States.

The shale gas revolution to the north has created thousands of new jobs in the United States and greatly enhanced its global competitiveness. But a perverse effect has occurred in Mexico. The surge of cheap gas coming onto the market drove prices down, increasing demand. Because its conventionally sourced gas costs more to produce, however, Pemex cut gas production. On a number of occasions during the past two years, gas shortages have forced companies in Mexico to shut down manufacturing processes. Pemex has increased natural gas imports from the United States, but the cross-border natural gas pipeline network is already operating at full capacity, and it will take several years before it can be expanded. Mexicans must now watch in dismay as their energy-rich country loses out to the United States in the competition for new industry. General Electric, for example, recently shifted some of its refrigerator production from China and Mexico to Kentucky in part to take advantage of low fuel costs.

PEÑA NIETO'S PEMEX PROPOSALS WILL not provide a quick fix for the natural gas imbroglio, but they nevertheless promise profound changes in Mexico's energy sector. The president laid out five main areas of reform, including a corporate reorganization and a reduction of the government's take of Pemex's revenues. By far the most important change involves an amendment to the constitution. Invoking the spirit of Lázaro Cárdenas, Peña Nieto tiptoed through a political minefield by proposing to restore a clause that was written into the Constitution in 1940 but later removed. It prohibited land concessions to foreign oil companies but did give the government much greater flexibility in determining how to exploit Mexico's oil and gas reserves. Specifically, it allows both production- and profit-sharing contracts with foreign firms and private Mexican companies. But, in deference to the delicacy of the subject, Peña Nieto cautiously specified that he would only seek legislative approval for profit-sharing deals. That means that foreign firms will not physically possess any of the precious *tesoro nacional*. But it also means that companies will have significantly less incentive to invest in the Mexican energy sector. (A profit-sharing scheme makes it much more difficult for companies

to book any gain in their own oil reserves, and thus harder for them to raise capital for ventures in Mexico.)

There are various ways to navigate these and other challenges. Although the government has speculated that the reforms will bring much-needed private capital, it is unlikely that we will see a flood of major investments in the short term. The finer details of the legislation and contracts still need to be defined, and many companies will want to wait and see how the first few contracts work out before diving into the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico. However, in the long run this promises to be a transformational shift in the Mexican oil and gas sector.

The PRD, led by its éminence grise on energy issues, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the son of Lázaro, immediately denounced what he saw as the hijacking of his father's name and called on opponents to protest against the "privatization" of Pemex. They have been joined by followers of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a firebrand leftist and two-time PRD presidential candidate. But in Mexico City, where antigovernment protesters regularly take to the streets, their protests have been overshadowed by those of the national teachers' union, which is opposing the government's education reform. However, Peña Nieto's constitutional proposal on energy also has the support of the PAN, so there is little doubt that it will pass.

Although the Pemex reform is far from being the "whole enchilada" sought by many on the right in Mexico and by the global oil and gas industry, it will move Mexico another step forward in the consolidation of the liberal economic development path that began with the debt crisis of the 1980s and the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1992. Mexico still faces large problems. Poverty and inequality are rife, violent crime is pervasive, and the rule of law remains a distant goal. Democratic progress has brought elections that are largely free and fair, but individual rights and those of minorities are far from secure. And Pemex itself must still deal with many challenges, including crushing debt and a tenacious labor union. Yet this is a great moment. Change in Mexico can be glacial, but Peña Nieto has managed to set in motion reforms that could markedly improve the lives of all Mexicans. We can hope that Mexico today is enjoying more than a moment of change. ■

DUNCAN WOOD is the director of the Mexico Institute at the Wilson Center.

NEWSCOM

Students marked the centennial of the National Autonomous University of Mexico in the streets of Mexico City's Zócalo district in 2010. The university's more than 300,000 students are a precious resource in a country where the average citizen has only a little more than eight years of schooling.

THE OTHER IMMIGRANTS

The United States is luring many of Mexico's best and brightest northward.

BY **JESUS VELASCO**

By JESUS VELASCO

LAST YEAR, THE PEW RESEARCH CENter's Hispanic Trends Project reported that net migration from Mexico to the United States "has stopped and may have reversed." Mexicans can only hope that this trend included the highly skilled workers and researchers who have been moving to the United States in droves in recent years. Alas, that is unlikely.

Amid all the controversy in the United States over illegal immigration by low-skilled workers, few Americans recognize how significantly the influx of Mexican talent has benefited the United States—and how much it has hurt Mexico. The number of college-educated Mexicans living in the United States rose from some 300,000 in 2000 to 530,000 in 2010. This is a grievous loss in a country where the average citizen has only a little more than eight years of schooling. According to education researcher Alma Maldonado, Mexico has only 30,000 citizens with a PhD, and 11,000 of them live in the United States.

For the most part, the United States has not paid for the education and training of these talented newcomers. They were educated in Mexico, and many who obtained graduate degrees did so with the support of the Mexican government—in some cases, in the form of scholarships to study at U.S. universities. In many ways, the United States is getting a free ride.

Mexico has only 30,000 citizens with a PhD, and 11,000 of them live in the United States.

Many of Mexico's best minds are now contributing to American (and global) science on the strength of intellectual assets they developed in Mexico. Their achievements have contributed only marginally to the growth and prestige of Mexican academia and industry, and their absence from their native country deprives young Mexican students of important teachers and mentors. Take, for example, Ignacio Chapela, a microbial ecologist at the University of California, Berkeley. He was able to write his still controversial 2001 *Nature* article in which he claimed to reveal the flow of transgenes

from genetically modified corn into Mexican wild maize because he was intimately familiar with the southwestern state of Oaxaca, where he said the contamination had occurred. (Chapela had used borrowed money to open a rudimentary laboratory in the region in the 1980s.) Rodolfo Dirzo, a professor of environmental science at Stanford, is currently working in Kenya and Tanzania, studying the impact of human behavior on elephants, giraffes, and other big fauna, and the feedback effects on human health. But Dirzo's project wasn't born at Stanford or in Kenya; it grew out of his years as a researcher in the Lacandona and Tuxtlas rainforests of southern Mexico.

"All my experience [was] acquired in Mexico," observes Jorge Soberón, a biologist who served as executive secretary of the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity in Mexico before accepting a faculty position in the United States, "but my current productivity looks good for the University of Kansas, where I work." Not even when Mario Molina was awarded a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995 for his work revealing the threat posed by chlorofluorocarbons to Earth's ozone layer did Mexico win wide recognition.

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Mario Molina is the kind of immigrant Mexico hates to lose. He came to the United States as a graduate student and went on to receive a Nobel Prize in Chemistry. In August, President Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Molina currently teaches at the University of California, San Diego.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY SO many of Mexico's knowledge elite leave home. The most obvious is that they are welcomed abroad with open arms. American universities and industries support a free market in brainpower, in which the most qualified—and sometimes those willing to work for lower pay—get the job. Those conditions cannot always be found in Mexico. The U.S. government works hard to attract foreign talent, and it is under constant pressure to do more by, for example, increasing the supply of visas for highly skilled foreign workers. Earlier this year, the Senate approved an immigration reform bill that would eliminate caps on the number of green cards available to foreign citizens working in the United States who hold a U.S. graduate degree in science and other critical areas.

For highly educated Mexicans, the lure of the United States is strong. Mexico's support for education and research is meager. Last year, Mexico invested only 0.39 percent of its gross domestic product in research and development, while South Korea devoted 3.45 percent and the United States 2.85 percent. But Mexico's investment also trails that of other less developed countries such as Brazil (1.25 percent) and Argentina (0.61 percent). President Enrique Peña Nieto has promised to increase Mexican R & D to one percent of GDP, which will be a significant improvement if he can achieve it, but still less than is needed.

Low pay hobbles Mexican research institutions. Entry-level professors are paid less than a third as much as their counterparts to the north. Bureaucracy and politics pervade the universities. "When you work in experimental science," said Soberón, "you are always subject, on the one hand, to the stupid bureaucracy of Hacienda [the Ministry of Finance] and Customs, and on the other, to the university's bureaucracy. You have to wait a long time to obtain any DNA reactives or primers. Besides, you always, always, always, always have to fight, because in Mexico the institutions are weak."

Most of the well-educated Mexicans I interviewed for this article said that traffic, pollution, and other quality-of-life issues were additional inducements to leave. "I have never liked the chaos of Mexico City," said Héctor Valdés, an economist at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, "and you can also add the issue of insecurity." Mexico's crime rate

has soared, with kidnappings rising from almost 600 in 2006 to more than 1,300 in 2011; the number of homicides doubled in that period, to more than 27,000. The threat of crime and general insecurity also seems to be scaring away American students. Once the main destination for young Americans studying in Latin America, Mexico dropped to third place in the 2010–11 academic year, according to the Institute of International Education. The number of American students in Mexico dropped 42 percent from the year before, tumbling to just over 4,000.

MEXICO HAS TAKEN ONLY A FEW steps to stop the brain drain. Through its National Council for Science and Technology (CONACyT), the government has pursued two main policies, one of retention, the other of repatriation. A competitive program created in 1984 to bolster technological and scientific research within Mexico provides Mexican researchers with substantial grants. If the program did not exist, said Jorge Durand, a distinguished specialist on immigration at the University of Guadalajara, "the brain drain would be a stampede."

The parallel CONACyT effort to bring émigré Mexican researchers back to the country has been beset by problems, however. In order to qualify, candidates must first find a job at a Mexican institution. But many open positions are not properly advertised, and personal contacts are indispensable—a significant obstacle for people who work abroad. And for people trained in very specific areas, appropriate jobs often do not exist. Ana Mylena Águilar, a specialist in health and population economics who holds a Harvard PhD, recently told me, "There are no jobs in my field in Mexico. . . . Besides, in Mexico there are no people who stay up-to-date in my area."

Some argue that highly skilled Mexicans do not necessarily need to come home in order to benefit their country. Instead, they can join in what those who study the migration of talent worldwide have called "brain circulation." The idea is that people who have gone abroad can engage in collaborative research across borders or, particularly if their work is more commercially oriented, participate in transnational investment and joint ventures. And they can use the personal networks they develop abroad for the benefit of others in their home country. Stanford's Rodolfo Dirzo, for example, teaches a course in Mexico, sharing his knowledge and contacts with his Mexican students.

Many jobs in Mexico's private sector pay very well, so coming home is relatively easy for highly skilled corporate workers.

Something like brain circulation already prevails in the world of commerce. Highly qualified Mexicans in business have more options than researchers and academics. As Alejandro Cardoso, CEO for Latin America of the global advertising firm Publicis, told me, the atmosphere of insecurity contributes to some departures, but often those who work for transnational companies in Mexico simply find that promotions take them to the U.S. headquarters or outposts of their employers. Others seek jobs across the border as a way to build their resumés for multinational careers. Indeed, many émigré Mexican businesspeople spend no more than a few years abroad. They work in fields where turnover is high relative to what it is in academia, and jobs in Mexico's private sector pay very well, so coming home is relatively easy. And it is not uncommon for Mexican employees of multinationals to be transferred back to their home country after a few years abroad. Mexico reaps many benefits from these transnational workers.

Given the disparity in opportunities between Mexico and the United States in higher education and research, the cross-border exchange of people in these two fields is likely to remain mostly unidirectional. But knowledge and ideas can travel much more easily than people. Brain circulation in the realm of research requires "synergy between professionals abroad and home-country institutions," argue sociologists Alejandro Portes and Adrienne Celaya; they add that generating such synergy is the work of "an efficient and proactive state." But the Mexican government is not doing as much as it could, relying chiefly on a program called the Mexican Talent Network. It works through 24 Mexican consulates around the world, 11 of them in the United States, often relying on consuls to recruit one or two successful Mexicans in their region to establish cross-border communications. Javier Díaz de León, a former director of the program that oversees the Talent Network, who is now Mexico's consul in North Carolina, says that the program "has been very successful in building networks but has not been very successful in creating products or specific outcomes."

The Talent Network is at least based on a sound premise: It will be difficult in the foreseeable future to lure many Mexican academics and researchers home permanently as long as the differential in pay, research facilities, and living conditions remains so large. The idea instead must be to tap the knowledge and abilities of this diaspora from afar, and to build its strength and numbers.

Higher education and R & D are already becoming more of a common enterprise between Mexico and the United States as the North American Free Trade Agreement and globalization dissolve borders. But the United States is reaping a disproportionate share of the benefits. To create a more balanced circulation of talent, the U.S. government should finance a program to bring more Mexican students to top American universities. When they embark on careers, many of these students likely will stay north of the border, increasing the benefit for the United States. That outcome should be balanced by formal programs to allow these people to return to Mexico to teach or conduct research for defined periods of time, helping to build Mexico's intellectual capital. Under this arrangement, other U.S.-educated Mexicans would probably return home, and many would join the transnational professional class that increasingly links Mexico and the United States. With a creative approach, brain circulation could become a boon to both countries. ■

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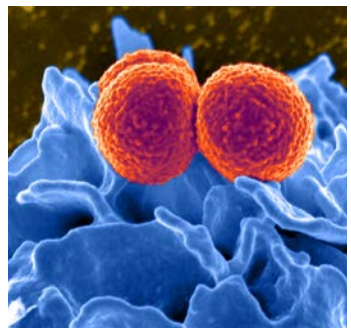

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FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

WHO'S AFRAID OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM?

THE SOURCE: "Why States Won't Give Nuclear Weapons to Terrorists" by Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, in ***International Security***, Summer 2013.

IMAGINE YOU'RE A MALEVOLENT dictator in Iran, or maybe North Korea, and your military has just built its first nuclear weapon. You finally hold the power to blast the domineering United States into an ashy mushroom cloud. But to openly wage atomic war would be folly, leaving you vulnerable to swift and severe retaliation. Much smarter would be to attack by proxy—let a weapon or two "slip" into the hands of a terrorist group and have it do the dirty work for you.

That kind of nightmare scenario is a perennial concern of U.S. policymakers and the American public, note political scientists Keir A. Lieber of Georgetown and Daryl G. Press of Dartmouth. A hard look at the evidence, though, shows that only a country with a strong death wish would give nuclear weapons to terrorists.

Any leader plotting an attack on the United States would worry first about whether an accomplice terrorist group could be identified. Using a database of more than 18,000 terrorist attacks worldwide between 1998 and 2008, Lieber and Press ran the numbers to see

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Would you give this man a nuclear weapon? Even the closest allies of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah would have good reason not to trust such a terrorist with so much power.

how often perpetrators were identified. Offenders were named in about 75 percent of all attacks worldwide that caused more than 100 fatalities. The record was even better—97 percent—when analysis was limited to attacks that occurred on the soil of the United States and its allies, and incidents that killed 10 or more people were included.

Doomsayers might argue that a nuclear blast would be different, since it would wipe out so much of the evidence. But it's also true that "the victim would use every resource at its disposal—money, threats, and force—to rapidly identify the source of the attack." And the international community would rush to provide assistance, including adversaries anxious to clear their names from the suspect list, as Iran and Pakistan did when they helped the United States gather intelligence after 9/11.

Once the terrorists were identified, finding the accomplice regime would be child's play, Lieber and Press conclude. The universe of malevolent countries armed with nukes is very small. Of the six states that sponsor terrorist groups, only Pakistan currently has nuclear capabilities, and only Iran plausibly could soon.

There's a more fundamental problem with the sponsorship plan—a regime would be handing immense power to people it couldn't control. Only a terror group that "had repeatedly demonstrated its reliability, competence, and ability to maintain secrecy" could be considered for the job. Even then, the regime would have to accept the disturbing possibility that the terrorists would divulge the origin of the weapons or even pick a different target.

What if a malevolent leader played a "loose nukes" card, claiming that terrorists stole the weapons from his country's stockpile? Such a defense "would be nearly as suicidal as launching a direct nuclear attack," since an already suspect regime would not be given the benefit of the doubt. A leader might do better to claim that the terrorists had stolen from *another* state's inventory. With 1.3 million kilograms of highly enriched uranium in stockpiles around the world, it might seem that sly thieves could easily purloin enough to build a bomb without

Instead of fretting aloud about the possibility of nuclear terrorism, officials should be talking up their ability to zero in on any reckless perpetrator.

making a dent in the global supply. In reality, though, determining the origin of fissile materials used in any bomb would not be difficult. Another alibi out.

Even if the sponsor state were identified, some argue, a victim might hesitate to retaliate if it wasn't completely positive that it had the right culprit. The authors respond with a pointed hypothetical: If Hezbollah bombed Israel, and Israel suspected Iran of contributing the weapons, is it possible to imagine that "Israel's leaders would be too restrained by their deep humanity and lingering doubts about sponsorship to retaliate harshly against Tehran?"

Instead of fretting aloud about the possibility of nuclear terrorism, Lieber and Press conclude, officials should be talking up their ability to zero in on any reckless perpetrator. The daunting risks of such an attack have deterred nuclear terrorism for more than six decades, and raising awareness of those risks is the best antidote we have to evil fantasies. ■

THE AMAZONIAN EDGE

THE SOURCE: "What Women Bring to the Fight" by Ellen L. Haring, in ***Parameters***, Summer 2013.

SERGEANT LEIGH ANN HESTER AND NINE other soldiers were trailing a military convoy in 2005 when about 50 Iraqi insurgents launched an ambush. Braving machine gun fire and rocket-propelled grenades, Hester, along with her squad leader, successfully flanked and cleared two enemy trenches, killing three of the attackers. For her actions in combat, Hester was awarded the Silver Star—the first female soldier so honored since World War II.

Heroism has not been rare among women serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, where the blurring of battle lines has frequently put them in combat situations. They have won 1,800 combat action badges, and the Pentagon's decision in January to open combat positions to women will only increase the number of badges. But critics claim that gender integration will impair unit cohesion, damaging the "brotherhood" that bonds frontline troops together.

Women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have won 1,800 combat action badges.

Nonsense, says Colonel Ellen L. Haring, writing in *Parameters*, which is published by the U.S. Army War College. "New research suggests women can enhance the combat capabilities of

the military from the squad to the joint staff without impairing cohesion."

There are two types of unit cohesion—"social cohesion," or getting along, and "task cohesion," which involves working together—and it's the latter that's more crucial to success. The social cohesion that critics fret about is a double-edged sword: too much of it, and a unit can fall into patterns of groupthink. Alternative perspectives and disagreement force everyone to up their game.

Women already serve in combat roles in other nations' armed forces. Canada, for example, a U.S. partner in Afghanistan, has discovered no "negative effect on operational performance or team cohesion" since it integrated its military in the 1980s. Famously, women make up 34 percent of the Israel Defense Forces, and most combat jobs are open to them. Their commanders say the female soldiers "exhibit superior skills" when it comes to discipline, weapons use, and alertness.

Haring acknowledges the common argument that women lack the physical strength necessary for combat positions but points out that "it is about letting those women serve who can meet the physical standards." Many women in military police units, such as Hester, regularly perform the same tasks as infantry troops, protecting supply lines and conducting raids. In 2011, more than half of the female cadets at West Point met the same requirements as male cadets on the Army Physical Fitness Test.

Women will not only serve as ably as men—they'll improve their units' task cohesion. Recent research suggests that the larger the female component of a crowd, the greater its collective intelligence. "This may be due to a trait [researchers] call 'social sensitivity,'" Haring says. "The ability to perceive and sense emotional changes leads to more collaborative patterns of group behavior, and women tend to score higher than men in this category." Women are also less likely than men to dominate conversations—which further boosts a group's collective intelligence. These results aren't limited to the laboratory: According to one study, companies boasting at least three female members on their board of directors enjoyed better financial performance than those with none.

In the business world, just over 15 percent of leadership positions are held by women, and in the military it's even less. Without more women in the platoons and top Pentagon jobs—usually filled by those who have held combat positions—the U.S. military won't be as smart as it could be, Haring argues. "If the U.S. military wants to optimize its

teams' collective intelligence and make better executive-level decisions, we must tap into the half of the population that is underutilized."■

WE'RE ALL EXCEPTIONAL NOW

THE SOURCE: "The Age of Nationalism" by Paul R. Pillar, in ***The National Interest***, September/October 2013.

STRATEGISTS ARE STILL STRUGGLING TO PIN a label on the period of international politics that began with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It has been called everything from unipolar to multipolar to nonpolar and now, because of the rivalry between the United States and China, bipolar. Some contend that the era is defined by terrorism, while others speak of a clash of civilizations or even a looming World War incited by radical Islam. Pinning a label on the era we live in is more than a name game; it helps define how we think about international affairs. Paul Pillar, a former CIA official now affiliated with Georgetown University and the Brookings Institution, thinks he's figured it out. Welcome, he writes in *The National Interest*, to the Age of Nationalism.

That might sound rather passé. After all, the modern nation-state was born in the mid-17th century, and nationalism flowered with the French Revolution. The ensuing century saw ceaseless tumult as Slavs, Italians, Germans, and others struggled to create sovereign states of their own. That brand of ethnic nationalism was the spark that famously ignited the first World War and set the stage for the second, which became an ideological conflict between fascism and its capitalist and communist antagonists.

After World War II, clashing principles, not clashing peoples, were the new source of global conflict.

After the 1940s, some analysts were sure they'd seen the last of nationalism. Decolonization became a preoccupation as the European powers retreated, but it was overshadowed by the ideological conflicts of the Cold War. Clashing principles, not clashing peoples, were the new source of global conflict.

Then the Cold War ended. Tensions between the political Left and Right that had stolen the stage for so long suddenly dissolved, Pillar says, revealing

the powerful nationalist elements that had been brewing. The basic ingredients—a yearning for sovereignty and loyalty to one's country—were centuries in the making and were expressions of fundamental human desires for attachment and community. Former colonies in Africa and Asia had recently congealed into independent states with distinct national identities. With socialism and imperialism out of the way, nationalism could finally culminate in its "full and unfettered form," Pillar explains.

And today, it's everywhere you look.

In China, the Communist Party rhetoric of yore has faded, giving way to nationalist themes better suited to the country's capitalist turn. Vladimir Putin yells in a similar key. China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and elsewhere, meanwhile, has raised the temperature of nationalism in Vietnam and other Asian countries. In Japan, a nationalist spirit that was virtually extinguished by World War II has come roaring back under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Demands for self-government have driven decades of conflict involving Israelis, Palestinians, Kurds, and others. Even the European Union, a triumph of supranational institution-building, has been hobbled by nationalist sentiments and stereotypes as it struggles to deal with an economic crisis, and nationalist pride increasingly permeates European culture, "from soccer tournaments to the Eurovision Song Contest." In Britain, nationalists demanding a withdrawal from the EU are making impressive headway—and so are Scots who agitate for secession from Britain.

Nationalism is going strong in the United States, too, though Americans know it by a different name. American exceptionalism, grown "muscular" from decades of exercise, manifests itself in bold international interventions such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the smallest gestures, such as wearing American flag lapel pins. But the "chief prescriptive implications" of living in a nationalist age all involve "knowing oneself," Pillar believes. Our first impulses are not often our wisest. Americans need to be attuned to broadly shared nationalist impulses of other countries and carefully consider whether or not to "step on someone else's nationalist sentiments." Often that will mean that the United States should do less than it might. In other cases, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it might call for doing more. ■

BAND OF OTHERS

THE SOURCE: "Explaining Rape During Civil War" by Dara Kay Cohen, in ***American Political Science Review***, August 2013.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HAS LONG HELD that rape is an inevitable evil of war, the unfortunate consequence of men taking advantage of chaos to satisfy their lusts. A new study finds that assumption to be largely false.

Groups that acquired new fighters through force—using press-ganging or kidnapping—were much more likely to rape.

Dara Kay Cohen, an assistant professor of public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, encountered puzzling facts in the literature on sexual violence during war. While rape is commonplace in some conflicts, it is virtually absent in others, she writes in the *American Political Science Review*. Gang-rape is "much more common in war than in peacetime," and culprits "are far less likely to have previously committed sexual offenses than are lone perpetrators."

After studying all 86 major civil wars fought between 1980 and 2009, Cohen found that 53 involved reports of widespread rape in at least one year of conflict. But 15 of the wars had no reported rapes at all.

The single greatest indicator for rape in civil war was how the perpetrators had been recruited. Groups that acquired new fighters through force—using press-ganging or kidnapping, both surprisingly common—were much more likely to rape. The combatants, many of whom were physically or sexually assaulted when they were abducted, found themselves fighting alongside their attackers and other people they had no reason to like or trust, and who probably felt the same way about them.

They joined in gang-rapes, Cohen believes, as a way to prove their loyalty and toughness to the group. That would explain the extraordinary brutality and public nature of so many wartime rapes, and the frequency with which the rapists loudly bragged about their crimes. Cohen's argument contradicts the common view that wartime rape stems from combatants' "biological or latent desire to rape" or serves some purposeful military strategy.

Other notions about wartime rape—that it is more prevalent in ethnic conflicts and genocide, or in areas with greater gender inequality—were

not borne out by the evidence. Rather, state collapse and weak law enforcement appeared to allow fighters to rape with impunity. Thus, in conflicts in which rape occurred, both sides were often guilty. In very few conflicts did rebels alone commit the crime. Contraband-funded armies were more likely to rape than those relying on civilian-provided resources.

To further understand how forced recruitment increases the incidence of wartime rape, Cohen scrutinized Sierra Leone's 1990–2002 civil war, reviewing interviews with and surveys of ex-combatants as well as a 2004 survey documenting war crimes in the West African country. The rebel group responsible for most of the rapes, the Revolutionary United Front, also had the highest proportion of abducted fighters. Seventy-seven percent of the RUF combatants didn't know anyone in their unit when they arrived. Most of their adversaries in the Civilian Defense Forces, a pro-government militia, had been recruited by relatives or friends. But as the conflict dragged on, the CDF began kidnapping fighters—and as it did, the number of rapes they committed increased.

Women made up a quarter of the RUF, and they joined in a quarter of all reported gang-rapes, "restraining the victims and raping them with bottles and sticks." Ex-combatants said they were rarely ordered to rape; the decision to carry out the assaults arose from the rank and file. Former soldiers recounting the gang-rapes revealed both the public nature of the assaults and the camaraderie they fostered. "Afterward, we would feel good and talk about it a lot, discuss it amongst ourselves, and laugh about it," one remembered.

When the war was over, the RUF combatants—many of whom had taken up arms as strangers to each other—were more likely than the CDF veterans to keep in touch with their new friends. ■

THEATER OF VICTORY

THE SOURCE: "Defining Victory in Victorian Warfare" by Bruce Collins, in ***The Journal of Military History***, July 2013.

IN THE MID-1860S, EMPEROR TEWODROS OF Ethiopia found his kingdom in revolt. He petitioned Britain for military aid. Britain ignored him. Hoping to seize the larger empire's attention, Tewodros imprisoned a handful of British government consuls and missionaries. He got a bigger response than he bargained for.

Thirteen thousand soldiers joined what became known as the expedition to Abyssinia (as Ethiopia was then known), war correspondent and popular historian Alan Moorehead wrote in *The Blue Nile* (1962). Also deployed were 19,000 support staff and 55,000 animals, including 44 Indian elephants trained to pull cannon. The shipment of one cohort of the giant beasts got off to an auspicious start: "The animals were slung on board without mishap at Bombay. . . . They stood back to back with their heads toward the sides, and a corridor between them to allow the attendants to pass to and fro." But things did not go so well for the pachyderms that embarked from another port on the Indian coast: "A seasick elephant was a formidable thing, and in the Calcutta moorings they had to face a cyclone."

The expensive expedition was one of many during Queen Victoria's reign, from 1837 to 1901, in which not a year passed that didn't see British troops engaged in battle. Yet the nature of warfare was changing. The campaigns among subject peoples often failed to produce conclusive results. At the same time, a growing throng of journalists connected by the recently invented telegraph put Victoria's wars almost in the parlors of Britons. And popular support was increasingly essential. In *The Journal of Military History*, Bruce Collins, professor of modern history at Sheffield Hallam, a university in England, considers how commanders defined victories—and communicated them to their fellow Britons—in a series of wars fought in theaters around the globe, not only Ethiopia but Crimea, India, China, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Zululand, among others.

"A seasick elephant was a formidable thing, and in the Calcutta moorings they had to face a cyclone."

Journalists embedded with military expeditions, dispatching their stories via the new telegraphs, intensified the pressure to deliver speedy, clear-cut victories that emphasized British daring. Far-flung commanders also felt the heat as Britain began to prioritize self-defense back home. Finally, British commanders fighting in small wars sweated to measure up to military achievements in India that, to the Victorian mind, served as proof of Anglo-Saxon supremacy over inferior races.

At times, exotic theaters of war flummoxed commanders and politicians hoping for battlefield glory. "Most of Britain's opponents did not anchor their defensive strategies upon battle," Collins writes. "For peoples or regimes which saw retreating, regrouping, and surviving as a legitimate strategy, or for whom 'warfare' consisted of seasonal raiding, the impatient, timetabled approach of British commanders seemed both alien and inappropriate." Joining French forces to march on Peking in 1860, for instance, the British found themselves in a wild-goose chase after a retreating enemy.

The peoples at the receiving end of conquest were often less than awed by the British imperial displays.

Franco-British forces would settle for a looting of the emperor's summer palace and a "choreographed military display" once a treaty with the Chinese was finally secured. It would have to do. "The presence of a large body of troops marching with confidence through the capital, with colors flying, bands playing, and every outward sign of victory, must have, indeed, impressed all with the reality of their own defeat," Field Marshal Garnet Wolseley decided.

Journalists—some of whom were handpicked by the military—amplified the propaganda in their reportage, though opportunities existed to report inglorious aspects of war at every turn. Collins notes that an officer witnessing a victory march through Cairo groused that "the length of the triumphal processions owed more to the narrowness of the streets than to the grandeur of the occasion. . . . Another contrasted impressive claims to victory with the grim reality of a British army encampment" where diarrhea was epidemic.

The press evidently preferred in most cases to go along with commanders' assessments: The number of a given people subdued by the British would be inflated, as would be their compliance, and civilian suffering downplayed. An editor at *The Times* of London, John Delane, decried Wolseley's peacocking. But such dissent was rare, and politicians and theologians shared in journalists' backslapping.

The peoples at the receiving end of conquest were often less than awed by the British imperial displays. Staged ceremonies failed to impress hardened

Afghan fighters in Kabul in 1879, during the second invasion of Afghanistan. (The first invasion had ended in disaster, with only one of 16,000 retreating British troops and support personnel surviving.) In one instance, to give the appearance of a victory, a British military tribunal had 76 Afghans summarily hanged, and ordered swaths of outlying villages burned.

Embarrassed by some press criticism of the attack—pains had been taken to install a sympathetic press corps in Kabul—and with winter approaching, commanders were eager to get troops out of the city. A ruffled Duke of Cambridge wrote to one commander, "I for my part should gladly see us well out of Cabul and yet how to accomplish this shift of policy without losing prestige amongst the Native populations not only of Afghanistan, but throughout India?" ■

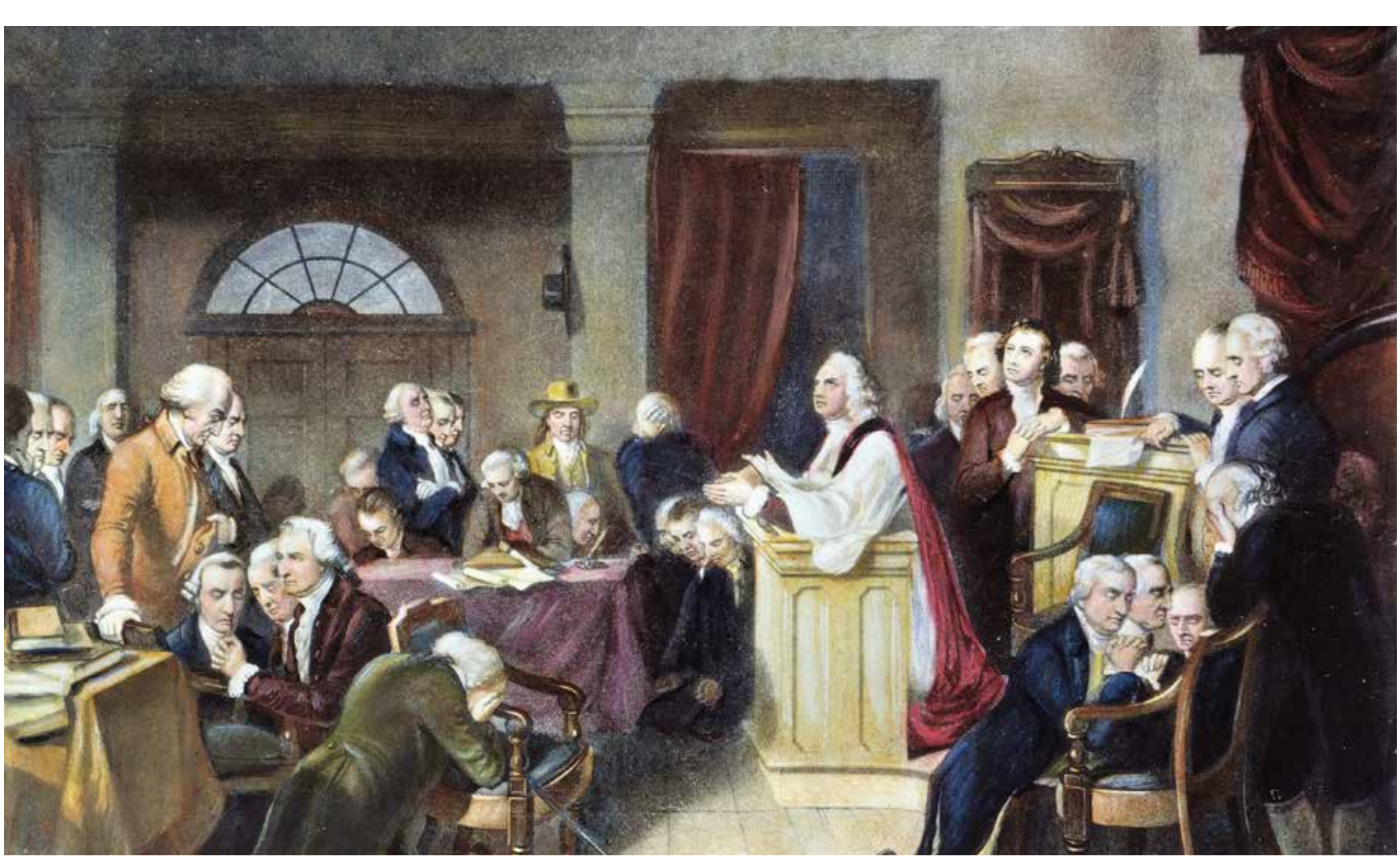
POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

THE FAITH OF A "NONE"

THE SOURCE: "Religion and the American Republic" by George F. Will, in ***National Affairs***, Summer 2013.

CONSERVATIVE COLUMNIST GEORGE F. WILL is a "none," and he's proud of it. That is, he places himself firmly among the 20 percent of Americans who simply respond "none" when polled about their religious affiliation. But there's at least one thing setting Will apart from many of his unaffiliated peers: He thinks religious institutions "play a crucial role in sustaining our limited government" and that citizens "should be friendly to the cause of American religion, even if they are not believers themselves."

Will is in good company. Many of the Founders could hardly be considered conventionally religious. "George Washington famously would not kneel to pray," and when his pastor rebuked him, he simply stayed away from church on Communion Sundays. James Madison brushed off the religious impulse



GRANGER ARCHIVE

When an eloquent Anglican clergyman gave the first prayer at the First Continental Congress in 1774, one member wrote that "even Quakers shed tears." But the Founders were a religiously diverse lot, and some honored conventional religion more in public than in private.

altogether, saying that "the mind prefers at once the idea of a self-existing cause to that of an infinite series of cause and effect." Yet the Founders emphatically backed religion—Washington called it one of the "indispensable supports" of American politics, along with morality. Two days after Thomas Jefferson wrote his famous letter calling for a "wall of separation" between church and state, he attended one of the church services regularly held in the House of Representatives.

The Founders' attitude reflected the understanding of government articulated in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, That all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men." The purpose of government, in other words, is to "secure" pre-existing rights that all people possess, not to create and dispense them.

But a government that is not in the business of defining the nature of happiness, virtue, or excellence cannot be indifferent to such questions. "Having such opinions is the business of other institutions—private and voluntary ones, especially religious ones, that supply the conditions for liberty," Will explains. The Founders recognized that "religion plays a large role in nurturing the virtue that republican government presupposes."

There is no precedent for bloodshed on the scale produced in the 20th century by secular—by political—faiths.

Such ideas, so revolutionary in their time, now sound antique to many. And Will argues that we can thank President Woodrow Wilson for that. "Wilson disparaged the doctrine of natural rights as 'Fourth of July sentiments.' He did so because this doctrine limited progressives' plans to make government more scientific in the service of a politics that was more ambitious." Casting aside natural rights and the idea of limited government, Will writes, Wilson recast the Constitution as a "living" document so that government could bend it to secure "powers sufficient to whatever projects were required for progress." Wilson wrote that government

should be "an instrumentality for quickening in every suitable way . . . both collective and individual development." Charismatic leaders in the White House—alien to the Founders' thinking—would chart the nation's course.

Of course, Wilson wasn't solely responsible, Will allows, but his ideas played a large role in creating our "modern, administrative, regulatory state, from the supervision of which no corner of life is immune."

Modern government tends to crowd out civil society by assuming its functions, and to the extent that it undermines religion, it "threatens society's vitality, prosperity, and happiness." Will quotes the neoconservative thinker Irving Kristol: "Nothing is more dehumanizing, more certain to generate a crisis, than to experience one's life as a meaningless event in a meaningless world."

People deprived of meaning look for solace in pleasures and distractions and, all too often, Will writes, in new kinds of faith. "The excruciating political paradox of modernity is that secularism advanced in part as moral revulsion against the bloody history of religious strife. But there is no precedent for bloodshed on the scale produced in the 20th century by secular—by political—faiths." ■

INHERENTLY POLITICAL

THE SOURCE: "Does Biology Justify Ideology? The Politics of Genetic Attribution" by Elizabeth Suhay and Toby Epstein Jayaratne, in ***Public Opinion Quarterly***, Summer 2013.

EVERY DAY SEEMS TO BRING NEW DISCOVeries about the role genes play in human destiny, influencing everything from our vulnerability to disease to our taste for lemons and salty snacks. What about genes' influence on politics? Conservatives seem eager to embrace genetic explanations of human behavior. After all, to the extent that inequality and disadvantage are the products of inherent "natural" differences among people, there's less reason to try to remedy them and less prospect of success if we do so. Liberals, on the other hand, have every reason to rally around the idea that "environment" is all, that people's traits and abilities are infinitely malleable and thus subject to the ministrations of government.

On closer inspection, though, public opinion about the impact of genes on society doesn't always sort itself out along neat ideological lines. Writing in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Elizabeth Suhay and Toby Epstein Jayaratne report that self-identified conservatives do indeed tend to think that genes explain race and class

differences. Analyzing data from a 2001 survey, Suhay and Jayaratne found that people who called themselves "very conservative" were 13 percent higher on the authors' "genetic explanation scales" than "very liberal" respondents.

Asked about the influence of genes on characteristics such as individuals' intelligence, liberals and conservatives gave the same range of answers.

But the positions reversed when people were asked about the origins of sexual orientation. Very liberal respondents were 20 percent higher on the genetic explanation scale than very conservative ones. Indeed, they were twice as likely as very conservative respondents to say that choice is not involved in one's sexual orientation. These results are predictable, the authors note, since genetic explanations "marginalize the role of personal responsibility" and support the idea that people "cannot be blamed or held accountable" for behavior that arises from innate predispositions, and are instead entitled to sympathy.

What surprised Suhay, who is a political scientist at Lafayette College, and Jayaratne, a research scientist in the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, was that when the questioning shifted from group differences to individual ones, the liberal-conservative split vanished. Asked about the influence of genes on individuals' intelligence, mathematical ability, drive, and propensity to violence, liberals and conservatives gave the same range of answers.

Unfortunately, it's the perception of group differences that matters most in politics, and in that realm "the public picks and chooses from a variety of available messages about influences on human characteristics with an eye toward justifying their preexisting political stances." Many scientists, meanwhile, have come to see the influences of genes and environment as intimately intertwined and often impossible to weigh separately. It behooves them and their news media popularizers to avoid reductionist headlines that supply ammunition to ideologues. ■

VOTING FOR CORRUPTION

THE SOURCE: "Lacking Information or Condoning Corruption: When Do Voters Support Corrupt Politicians?" by Matthew S. Winters and Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, in ***Comparative Politics***, July 2013.

IN JUNE, WHAT BEGAN AS PROTESTS AGAINST a fare increase for São Paulo's buses and subways ballooned into nationwide demonstrations that brought over a million Brazilians into the streets. For weeks, protests raged in more than 100 cities, and President Dilma Rousseff's approval rating plummeted to 30 percent. The Brazilian government struggled to respond; much like Occupy Wall Street two years earlier in the United States, the loosely organized movement voiced no clearly defined demands.

Most of the anger seemed to stem from frustration with Brazil's pervasive political corruption. Last year, the country placed 69th on Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index—a bit better than Liberia and China, but far worse than other Latin American countries such as Uruguay and Cuba. And while Brazil has many pressing needs, it is spending more than $13 billion to host the upcoming World Cup, creating, in the process, vast new opportunities for bribes and graft.

Brazil is a democracy, however, which raises a question: If corruption is such a problem, why don't citizens simply vote rotten politicians out of office? In fact, there's some evidence that corruption in Brazil got worse *after* democratic civilian rule resumed in 1985. Writing in *Comparative Politics*, Matthew S. Winters and Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro—political science professors at the University of Illinois and Brown University, respectively—compare two different explanations for why citizens, in Brazil and around the world, vote for crooked politicians.

"Either voters lack information about corrupt behavior and therefore unknowingly support a corrupt politician," they explain, "or they knowingly support a corrupt politician because of his performance in other areas."

Conventional wisdom suggests that in Brazil, at least, the tradeoff hypothesis is correct, and in recent surveys a significant number of Brazilians said they'd be willing to accept some shady dealings by individual politicians as long as they did their job. As a local saying goes, "*Rouba, mas faz.*" ("He robs, but he gets things done.")

But broad, cultural explanations have their limits: "In a public opinion poll, respondents may provide socially conforming answers rather than their genuine

opinions," Winters and Weitz-Shapiro say. Upper-class Brazilians, for instance, who are more likely than others to embrace international norms about corruption and governance, might provide answers they think others want to hear, instead of their honest opinions.

To short-circuit this tendency, the authors told their survey participants about "Gabriel (or Gabriela), who is a person like you." Then the participants were asked whether they thought Gabriel(a) would vote for various hypothetical mayoral candidates who varied in their accomplishment and their willingness to accept bribes. Their responses indicated that the Gabriel(a)s were adamantly anti-corruption. A clean candidate who was described as incompetent was nonetheless deemed acceptable by 62 percent of respondents, while a mere 28 percent said they would vote for a corrupt but competent candidate.

The study's findings also undermine another commonly held assumption, that the poor are much more willing to tolerate corruption than the rich. Quite the contrary. Respondents in the lowest income brackets—who were more likely to report that they had been asked for a bribe in their daily lives than those in the middle and upper classes—were also more likely than those in the higher income brackets to say that Gabriel(a) would prefer the law-abiding yet incompetent mayor over the dirty but effective one, by 65 to 54 percent.

So why, if Brazilians are inclined to vote bribe-taking politicians out of office, do so many corrupt politicians survive? A cynic might say that the voters have no choice—every politician is corrupt—but lack of information is clearly part of the answer.

Nearly three-quarters of those who agreed that corruption is rife nevertheless said they had never voted for a shady politician.

Even though Brazilian journalists have broken a number of high-profile corruption stories, and 78 percent of respondents in the study expressed the belief that it was common for politicians to accept bribes, most of the respondents evidently didn't think the particular politicians who represented them did so—nearly three-quarters of those who agreed that corruption is rife nevertheless said they had never voted for a shady politician. This finding

reminds Winters and Weitz-Shapiro of a truism about U.S. voters: "The average American hates Congress but loves her congressperson."

The contrast between how Gabriel(a) voted and how real Brazilians do may come down to the "type of information Brazilian voters typically encounter about corruption." Most voters come across stories about corruption that describe the scale of the problem but don't finger specific individuals, and, coming from partisan sources well before an election, the news is unlikely to change a voter's mind.

"These results," the researchers argue, "should cheer opponents of corruption, since presumably it is easier to repair an information deficit than to change preference[s]." A new crop of initiatives in Brazil aims to disseminate specific information about corrupt politicians in the weeks leading up to elections, and the recent protests have prompted President Rousseff to propose a bill that would elevate political corruption from a minor offense to a major felony.

Yet the fact that the upper and middle classes don't care about corruption as much as the lower class could indicate obstacles to substantial change. After all, "as opinion leaders and members of the media represent the viewpoints of the wealthy, citizens may not gain access to the information that they need in order to know who is and is not corrupt."

Rouba, não sei: "He robs, but I don't know." ■

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

KEY TO PROSPERITY

THE SOURCE: "Why Don't the Poor Save More? Evidence From Health Savings Experiments" by Pascaline Dupas and Jonathan Robinson, in ***The American Economic Review***, June 2013.

IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD, A LITTLE SPARE cash goes a long way. Chlorine tablets, mosquito nets, and other products that save lives are well within reach for all but the poorest of the poor, as are many other goods. So it's something of a puzzle that many people fail to save up for such things.

A few years ago, economists Pascaline Dupas of Stanford University and Jonathan Robinson of the University of California, Santa Cruz, headed to rural Kenya to see if they could figure out how to change that. They were armed with the modern theory of "mental accounting," in particular the concept of "labeling": the idea that the psychological act of designating certain savings for a specific purpose can help people resist the urge to splurge and ward off other claims on their money. But they often need help to make it work.

NEWSCOM

Despite great progress, malaria still kills almost 1,500 children every day in sub-Saharan Africa. Many deaths could be prevented by mosquito nets like the one protecting Siama Marjan in Nairobi, Kenya, but the $5 cost is more than many Africans can easily afford.

Dupas and Robinson asked hundreds of Kenyan volunteers to set savings goals—either a specific amount to have on hand for health emergencies or enough cash to buy a particular preventive health good such as a water filter or mosquito net. They assigned the volunteers to one of four different health-oriented savings schemes.

Some volunteers received a padlocked safe box with a key and were allowed to deposit and freely withdraw money for any purpose. Others received a lockbox *without* a key and could ask to have the box opened only after its balance met their savings goal. Members of a third cohort put money into individual savings accounts to be used only for health emergencies. The fourth group made regular contributions to community savings "pots" in which cash was pooled to pay for a water filter or other gizmo for a different member at each meeting.

The outcomes were mixed, but altogether promising, the authors report in *The American Economic Review*. In the course of one year, households that received safe boxes were 14 percent more likely to reach their savings goals than a control group (whose members also set goals but were not assigned savings plans). Households enrolled in the community pots were 13 percent more likely than the control group to hit their targets. But the lockboxes and personal savings accounts didn't help the Kenyans reach their goals at all.

The sums involved were not large. After a year, the average safe box owner had amassed a little more than $4 (though many had also made purchases with their savings during the year).

The safe box and community pot schemes probably were effective because they helped volunteers follow through with labeling, Pascal and Dupas theorize, though there may be an alternate explanation: social pressure. The Kenyans who joined community pots were expected to make contributions at public meetings with their neighbors watching. Just over four-fifths of those who used a box said it enabled them to resist the entreaties of friends or family members who asked for money—and more than 40 percent said it also helped them refuse pleas from their

The savings plans held some participants to powerful social expectations, and gave others an excuse to defy them.

spouses. The savings plans held some participants to powerful social expectations, and gave others an excuse to defy them.

The schemes caused some surprising variations in behavior. Although the safe box and lockbox were similar in every way (other than access to deposits), the lockbox users were much slower to start depositing. In fact, the average balance in a lockbox after six months was about half that in a safe box, which is likely why so few lockbox owners met their savings goals. Perhaps they were hesitant to stash too much cash where they couldn't get ready access to it, the authors reason.

All but one of the techniques flopped for "present-biased" people, those who consistently choose instant gratification over long-term gains. Like enthusiastic Americans who buy gym memberships but rarely exercise, these folks (16 percent of the total group) had trouble following through with their savings plans. Only with a public commitment to making deposits in community pots two or three times monthly—and the strong social pressure that came with it—did they increase their savings at all. In these settings, the present-biased participants managed to put away about as much as the others over the course of a year, around $6.50 on average.

Dupas and Robinson don't claim to have solved the pandemic savings problem. After all, schemes that excel in one place may falter elsewhere. But their success in Kenya was not short-lived—two years after the study concluded, nearly half of the participants were still making use of the boxes, community pots, and health savings accounts, and a handful of volunteers had even inspired their neighbors to try them out. ■

THE 10,000-YEAR-OLD ECONOMY

THE SOURCE: "How Deep Are the Roots of Economic Development?" by Enrico Spolaore and Romain Wacziarg, in ***Journal of Economic Literature***, June 2013.

YOUR COUNTRY IS POOR, THE NEOLIBERAL economists tell the people of developing nations, because it's printing too much money, its markets are too heavily regulated, and its taxes are too high. Nonsense, reply their left-wing counterparts. Your country is poor because the government hasn't invested enough money in infrastructure and education, corruption is rampant, and the social safety net is weak.

While such diagnoses may differ in substance, they share an underlying premise: that poor countries lag behind

the advanced, industrialized economies of the West due to a failure of policies.

That assumption, say Enrico Spolaore and Romain Wacziarg, ignores "the limits faced by policymakers in significantly altering the wealth of nations when history casts a very long shadow." Writing in the *Journal of Economic Literature*, the two economists—from Tufts University and UCLA, respectively—survey a raft of new academic studies in which researchers aim "to better understand the deep causes of development, rooted in geography and history."

A warm climate and fertile soil make a good breeding ground for autocracy.

Jared Diamond introduced modern audiences to the idea of historical determinants for wealth in *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997). He asserted that Eurasia's geographic advantages, such as its diversity of animals and plants, helped its Neolithic inhabitants get a head start on agriculture, which led to Europe's eventual economic and technological success.

The findings of a 2005 study by economists Ola Olsson and Douglas Hibbs support Diamond's argument. In the "Old World"—Europe, Asia, and Africa—variables related to the prehistoric environment of a country (such as the climate, size of the continent, and number of plants and animals) account for 64 percent of the variance between different nations' current per capita incomes.

Geography, however, doesn't always play a direct role—sometimes its effects are more roundabout. Rugged, mountainous terrain isn't great for growing crops or conducting trade, but one study from 2007 found that such regions in Africa nonetheless reached higher levels of development. Why? Because historically, that same treacherous landscape protected certain areas from slave traders.

In the Americas, too, geographical variables didn't always play an obvious role. Latin America enjoyed a warm climate as well as fertile soil, and the Spanish reaped far more wealth from their New World colonies than the English and the French did from their colonies to the north. But the crops Spanish colonists were able to grow, including coffee, sugar cane, and tobacco, fostered plantation economies with slavery and entrenched, wealthy elites.

Meanwhile, in what would become the United States and Canada, small-scale crops and livestock encouraged a more equal distribution of income, which benefited the two countries' political development later on.

Other studies have shown that people matter more than institutions or locations. Many poorly endowed lands have experienced a "reversal of fortune" since 1500, producing more income per capita than their past would have suggested. Those economies benefited from the European colonizers and their human capital—a familiarity with centralized state institutions, efficient agriculture techniques, and new technologies that let one generation build upon the advances of the last.

Spolaore and Wacziarg are careful to note that while genetics play a role in a society's evolution, so do cultural forces, and the two are inextricably entwined—no set of genes is "better" than any other. One of the duo's earlier papers focused on the human transmission of advantageous technologies and ideas. They found that as the "relative genetic distance" between two countries grew, it took longer for innovations to pass from one to the other. Industrialists in the United States, for example, were quicker than their Russian counterparts to build upon the assembly line process invented in England. Sharing a common language and more recent ancestors probably helped.

Are nations therefore caught in the grip of an ancient, inexorable momentum, powerless to improve the livelihoods of their citizens? Of course not. European ancestry and an early transition to agriculture account for no more than 60 percent of the difference in wealth between various nations. Japan, for instance—a country as geographically, culturally, and genetically distinct from Western Europe as any you'll find—became an industrial, capitalist society before many Eurasian countries.

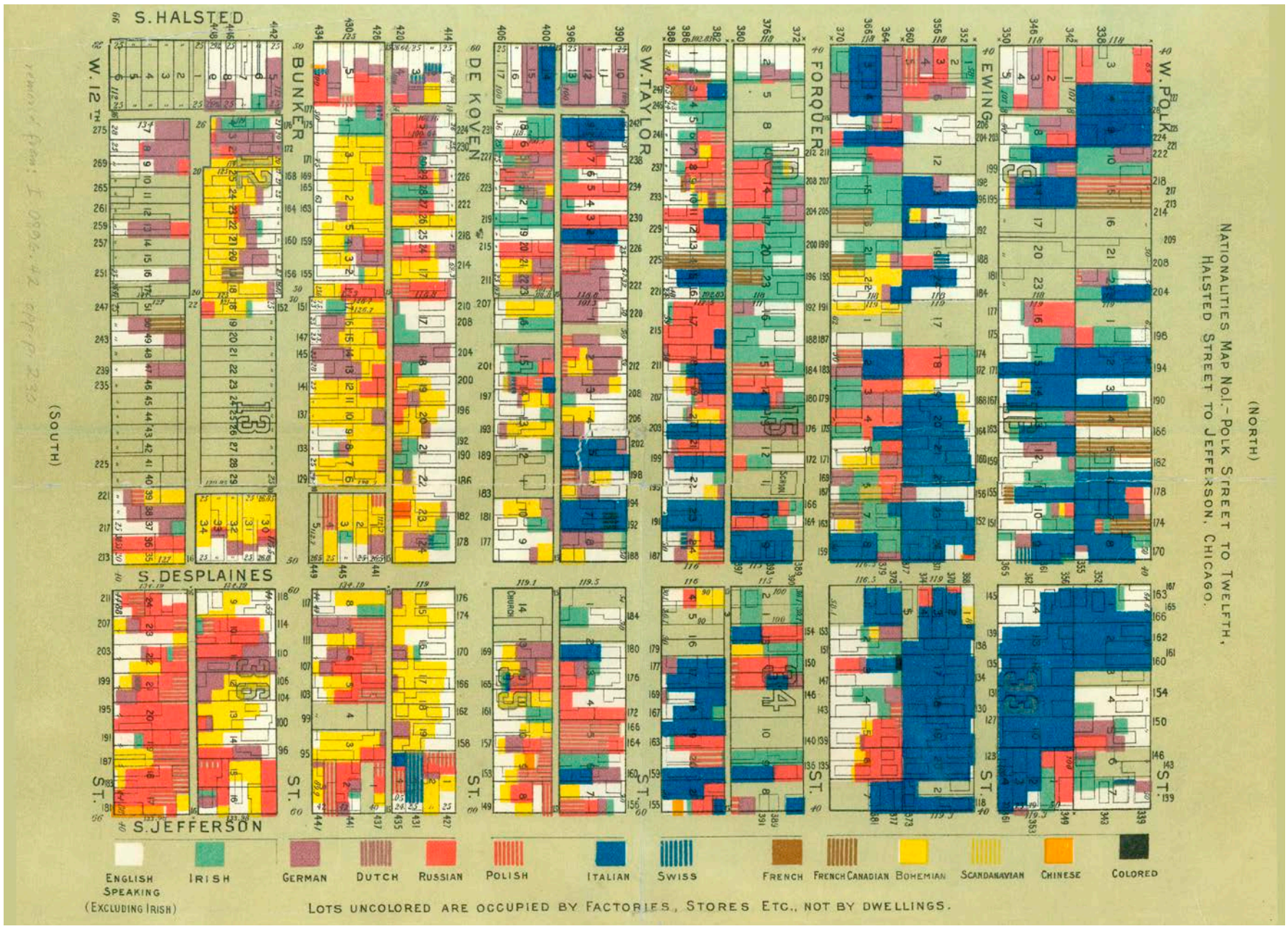
Globalization has made the spread of contemporary technology and ideas even easier, tearing down some of the old obstacles to development. "Historical variables do not explain all the variation in income per capita," Spolaore and Wacziarg remind us. "Barriers do matter," they say. But, they add, "barriers can also be overcome." ■

SOCIETY

ADIOS, MOTHER TONGUE

THE SOURCE: "Immigration and Language Diversity in the United States" by Rubén G. Rumbaut and Douglas S. Massey, in ***Dædalus***, Summer 2013.

FOR THE EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS WHO flooded into Ellis Island in the late 19th century, the language of the old country was in many cases their only one. As they started new lives and formed new communities in various parts of the United States, German, Italian, Yiddish, and Polish words began to be heard in almost every corner of the country. Many of the newcomers didn't see the use of learning English. "There are districts in this city, and in the other great cities," commented the *New York Times* editorial board in 1891, "in which a foreigner of almost any nationality can live without being subjected to much inconvenience through his ignorance of any language but his own." In 1897, Congress decided that



NEWBERRY RESEARCH LIBRARY

An 1895 map reveals the profusion of foreign languages spoken in one Chicago neighborhood, but it wasn't long before English prevailed.

arriving immigrants could take the requisite literacy test in any language they liked. By 1910, more than one in 10 Americans claimed a native tongue other than English. All signs pointed to a burgeoning polyglot nation.

Then came World War I. Immigration screeched to a halt, and non-English languages suddenly were much less commonly heard. Descendants of the first-generation immigrants were quick to abandon the mother tongue. By 1970, less than five percent of Americans had been born abroad (a sharp fall from nearly 15 percent in 1910), and native speakers of foreign languages were so scarce that the Census Bureau had stopped asking which language people spoke at home. It was the Tower of Babel story in reverse, a cacophony of dialects reduced to just English.

And it's happening again today, claim sociologists Rubén G. Rumbaut of the University of California, Irvine, and Douglas S. Massey of Princeton, writing in *Dædalus*. On the surface, linguistic diversity appears to be thriving, especially compared to the historic, anomalous lows it saw a few decades ago. Spanish and (to a lesser extent) Asian languages are particularly ubiquitous—but they won't be for long. "The mother tongues of today's immigrants will persist somewhat into the second generation," the scholars predict, "but then fade to a vestige in the third generation and expire by the fourth," much like those of earlier immigrants.

That forecast might seem absurd. After all, the number of Americans who didn't speak English at home climbed from 23 million in 1980 (11 percent of the population) to 60 million in 2010 (more than 20 percent). While many in this group also spoke some English, the adherence of so many people to their native tongues is nevertheless impressive. The number of Spanish speakers in the United States has risen from 11 million to 37 million in the last 30 years; no other non-English language has ever been as prevalent as Spanish is now.

Rumbaut and Massey say that these facts hide a vital point: Today's non-English speakers are mostly first-generation immigrants. Fully half of the Spanish-speaking people counted in 2010 were born abroad, as

Only a third of second-generation Americans could speak a non-English language as adults, even if they spoke one well as children.

were more than three-quarters of those who spoke Chinese, Hindi, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean. A single generation is hardly enough time for use of a language to dwindle.

To get a better sense of what's to come, the sociologists aggregated data from largely non–English-speaking communities in San Diego and Los Angeles. They found that history is repeating itself: "Although 84 percent of the [second] generation spoke a non-English language while growing up, only 36 percent said they spoke it well at the time of the survey." Nearly three-quarters of the second generation preferred speaking English at home.

Foreign languages are not the threat to national identity that some would have us believe.

The decay of native-language ability accelerated after that point. In the third generation (those whose grandparents were foreign born), only 12 percent could speak the native language well. Among those in the fourth generation, only two percent could—and English was preferred at home for 99 percent.

Immigrants from Latin America have been the driving force behind the wide use of Spanish in the United States, so preserving the prevalence of the language would require a renewed stream of Spanish speakers into the country. But that seems unlikely. Demand for migrant workers is nil, and a study conducted last year by the Pew Research Hispanic Center suggested that net migration over the U.S.-Mexico border had dropped to zero, or maybe even switched directions.

As foreign communities assimilate into American culture, their language loss will only accelerate. According to Census data, those who have finished college are 20 to 40 percent more likely to be strong English speakers than those who haven't.

Of course, acquiring English proficiency doesn't take generations and more education. The younger an immigrant is when arriving in America, the more likely she is to become fluent. Even among those who are 13 to 34 years old when they arrive, Census data shows, a third quickly become proficient, and 44 percent speak good English within a few decades.

Without some intervention, bilingualism doesn't stand of chance a surviving, and that's worrisome. Foreign languages are not the threat to American identity

that some would have us believe, the authors argue. Bilingualism is a precious advantage in our increasingly globalized economy. Perhaps we should begin safeguarding linguistic diversity, treating it as the miraculous—and beneficial, if endangered—creature it is. ■

DANGEROUS RIDES

THE SOURCE: "Fuel Economy and Safety: The Influences of Vehicle Class and Driver Behavior" by Mark R. Jacobsen, in ***Applied Economics***, July 2013.

AFTER THE 1973–74 OIL EMBARGO BY ARAB states, the U.S. government enacted Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, which, along with gasoline taxes, were designed to curb Americans' gas consumption. Since then, the standards have changed—1979 model cars were required to reach a fleet average of at least 17.2 miles per gallon, while 2016 models will have to achieve over 35 mpg—and so has the rationale. No longer chiefly worried about fuel shortages and oil imports, regulators push for eco-friendly cars in order to reduce pollution and fight global warming.

But there is a downside to smaller, more efficient fleets of cars: a higher risk of deadly traffic accidents. According to Mark R. Jacobsen, an economist at the University of California, San Diego, "Each one mpg increase in CAFE standards causes an additional 149 fatalities per year." In other words, the increase in fuel-efficiency requirements that began in 1978 will translate into 2,533 more deaths on the road in 2016. To put this toll in cold, hard, economic terms, these traffic fatalities cost society 33 cents—in lost productivity, medical expenses, and more—for every gallon of gasoline saved. The environmental costs of carbon emissions and the health effects of air pollution, meanwhile, come to 38 cents per gallon used.

Each one mpg increase in CAFE standards causes an additional 149 fatalities per year.

"Larger and heavier vehicle classes are the safest to be inside during an accident but also impose much greater risk on others in the fleet," Jacobsen explains in *Applied Economics*. The fact that CAFE regulations mandate tougher mileage standards for passenger cars than for light trucks has changed the mix of vehicles on the road as passenger cars have become smaller and lighter,

while SUVs and pickup trucks remain disproportionately dangerous to the cars around them. The largest Ford Expedition weighs more than 6,000 pounds—twice as much as a Toyota Prius—and accidents have increasingly pitted such disparately sized automobiles against each other.

It's not just the vehicles that make a difference. "The most dangerous drivers (pickup truck owners) are nearly four times as likely to be involved in fatal accidents as the safest drivers (minivan owners)," Jacobsen reports, even after accounting for the safety features of their vehicles. And a person behind the wheel of a large sedan poses a greater risk than the driver of a smaller car.

Before you start wondering what's more important—reducing auto emissions or preventing fatal accidents—Jacobsen offers a few ways out. One alternative is to create a single fuel economy standard for all passenger vehicles, which would reduce the number of trucks and SUVs on the road. That would result "in an increase of only eight fatalities per year" for each increment of one mpg in the standard. Another approach is to set mileage goals based on the size of the vehicle: the larger the vehicle, the lower the efficiency target. The result would potentially be no further increase in fatalities as CAFE standards continued to rise.

Boosting the fuel economy of cars and trucks doesn't have to mean putting ourselves at risk: If we're trying to protect our future, after all, we want to be there to enjoy it. ■

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

THE ELEPHANT WITHIN

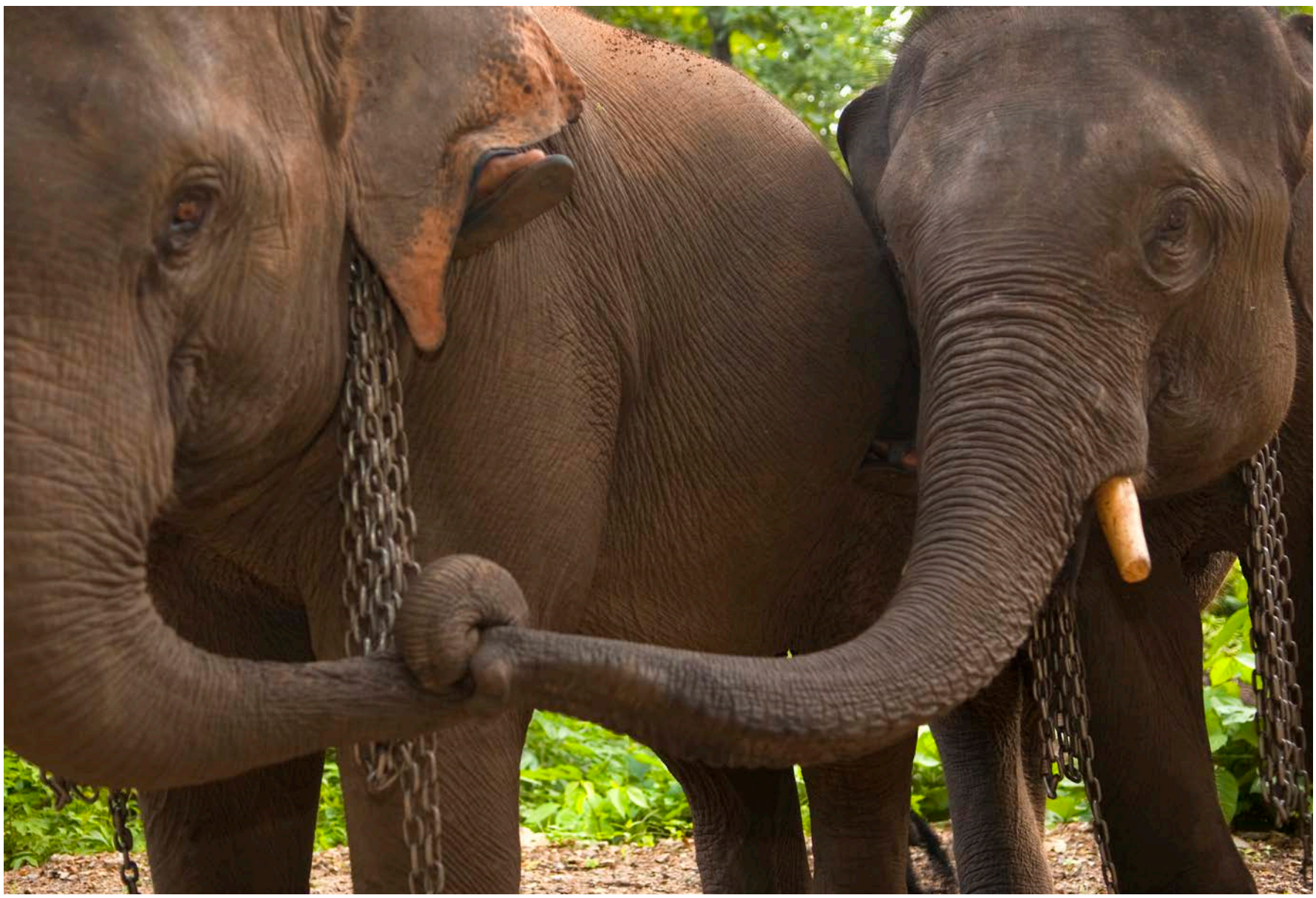
THE SOURCE: "Do Elephants Have Souls?" by Caitrin Nicol, in ***The New Atlantis***, Winter/Spring 2013.

A WILD ELEPHANT ACCIDENTALLY BREAKS the leg of a passing camel driver, then scoots him under a tree and stands guard for a day until the man is discovered by a search party.

Upon being captured, a bull elephant audibly weeps, tears streaming from his eyes. Around him other captive elephants lie prostrate, silently crying.

Placed in a sanctuary for elephants retired from zoos and circuses, two elephants who'd once worked in the same circus are reunited. It's been 22 years. Put in adjacent stalls, they explore each other with their trunks and then try to climb in together. They both begin to roar loudly. Allowed in the same pen, they become inseparable from that day forward.

These and other stories collected from people who've worked or lived among elephants, and recounted in a long



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

An elephant pair clasps trunks at the Elephant Nature Park in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

essay by Caitrin Nicol in *The New Atlantis*, raise a two-part question: Do elephants have consciousness? In other words, do they feel intensely, are they self-aware, do they think? And if they do, how should that change how we treat them?

Nicol considers these questions throughout her giant digest of popular writing about elephants, deciding, along the way, that a central obstacle to finding an answer is our taboo against anthropomorphism. One reason the taboo exists, she writes, is that "in modern Western science, the whole concept of life is so mechanical that, if you look closely, not even people are supposed to be anthropomorphized . . . terms such as *love*, *sorrow*, and *concern* have no place in an impoverished language of chemical transactions at the micro level." Another reason for the taboo? It's hard enough to interpret other humans' thoughts and motives—let alone an animal's.

Nicol starts her investigation with the basics. In his 1985 essay "Tool, Image, and Grave," philosopher of biology Hans Jonas considered the activities regarded as unique to humans. As it turns out, Nicol notices, all three of these "indicators of important mental and spiritual qualities" are also associated with elephants.

While elephants do not fashion tools in the form of reusable objects, they do use sticks to scratch themselves and twists of grass to clean their ears. They dig ponds, and cover the water with bark and grass to hide it. Asian work elephants have been found plugging their collar bells with mud, the better to sneak out at night and steal bananas.

Elephants have also been observed making images, an activity that requires transferring an idea into a concrete form. Zoo elephants have occupied themselves with doodling in the sand, and, given art supplies, have used them to draw. One matched paint colors to visitors' clothing. Whatever meanings the drawings may have are anyone's guess—they are either random scribbles or abstract art, depending on your aesthetic sensibility.

Elephants have been proven to pass a different "image test": Positioned in front of mirrors, they—like very few other creatures, including dolphins, great apes, and

Positioned in front of mirrors, elephants—like dolphins, great apes, and the average 18-month-old human baby—can recognize themselves.

18-month-old human babies—can recognize themselves.

Finally, and perhaps most hauntingly, elephants are the only animals known to commemorate their dead. They sometimes bury a fallen friend, and they stand vigil, even when coming across skeletons of strangers, or of the long departed. They react to ivory—in one case, to a bracelet worn on the wrist of a safari-going tourist.

Africa alone was home to 26 million elephants two centuries ago; that population has dropped 98 percent.

An elephant is born with a brain one-third its adult size, compared to one-quarter for humans, one-half for chimps, and 90 percent for most other mammals. The "greater span of growth outside the womb…accompanies a more important role that nurture and learned skills play in the animal's maturation," Nicol notes. The literally civilized animals have developed sophisticated communication systems to impart learning. One system uses low-pitched rumbles that travel through the air. In the 1990s, an insect biologist, Caitlin O'Connell-Rodwell, discovered that elephants tap into these rumbles seismically, through their front feet or by laying their trunks on the ground; they can also detect distant footfalls in this manner.

"Ironically, it has been the elephant's misfortune that people find it wonderful," Nicol writes. Hunters prize them as game. Their ivory is coveted for its beauty. They captivate audiences in circuses and zoos. But if elephants are intelligent and sociable enough to be capable of great psychological distress, they require special protection. Just how much and of what sort, however, is a thorny question.

Abolishing trophy hunting might seem a no-brainer to urbanites, but locals scratching out a living on the same ground as elephants sometimes regard them as intrusive pests. Animal welfare advocates will have to take people's needs into account, too. On the other hand, conservationists must take a harder line with the ivory trade, which is responsible for the poaching of 25,000 elephants a year. (Africa alone was home to 26 million elephants two centuries ago; that population has dropped 98 percent.) African countries maintaining healthy elephant populations argue that they should

be allowed to sell their ivory, but poachers who work elsewhere can easily launder their wares through these countries.

Elephants eat a lot—50 pounds of roughage per animal per day—and those confined to parks are routinely culled to prevent overpopulation. This solution is troubling for a few reasons. First, elephant populations self-regulate according to the environment ("births go down in the years following a major drought"), and second, because of the animals' social nature, decimating herds has contributed to the "collapse of elephant society" and "disrupted the transmission of elephant culture from one generation to the next."

What of keeping these enormous animals captive for our entertainment? The best facilities cannot support the herd environment elephants are adapted to, and some animals live without a single pachyderm companion. Living in pens, the animals are bored, even when they are not in physical discomfort—and they often are. The structure of elephants' feet, made to absorb seismic waves, makes them "especially susceptible to distress . . . severe elephant foot problems are depressingly common in zoos and other captive situations, where the animals must stand on concrete." Some American zoos, deciding that the elephant cannot ethically be kept captive, have sent their star attractions to sanctuaries.

The elephant is due these kindnesses, even if, Nicol concedes, its inner life remains opaque to us. She quotes the naturalist Henry Beston, who, in *The Outermost House* (1928), wrote, "We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals. . . . In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time." ■

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

I WANT A NEW DRUG

THE SOURCE: "An Improved Approach to Measuring Drug Innovation Finds Steady Rates of First-in-Class Pharmaceuticals, 1987–2011" by Michael Lanthier, Kathleen L. Miller, Clark Nardinelli, and Janet Woodcock, in ***Health Affairs***, August 2013.

GRISLY STORIES OF FLESH-EATING BACTERIA and uncontrollable staph infections have raised the alarming possibility that pharmaceutical scientists are losing the race with disease. It's true that the number of new drugs approved each year by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration hasn't changed much since the 1980s. Indeed, there has been a sharp drop in approvals since the mid-1990s. But Michael Lanthier and his colleagues, all of whom hold research or other positions at the FDA, say that all drugs are not created equal. Grouping new drugs by their level of significance reveals a far more encouraging picture.

The researchers divided new drugs—what they call "new molecular entities"—into three categories. The most valued of all were "first-in-class" drugs that have opened "a new pathway for treating a disease." The antidepressant Prozac and the statin Mevacor (which lowers

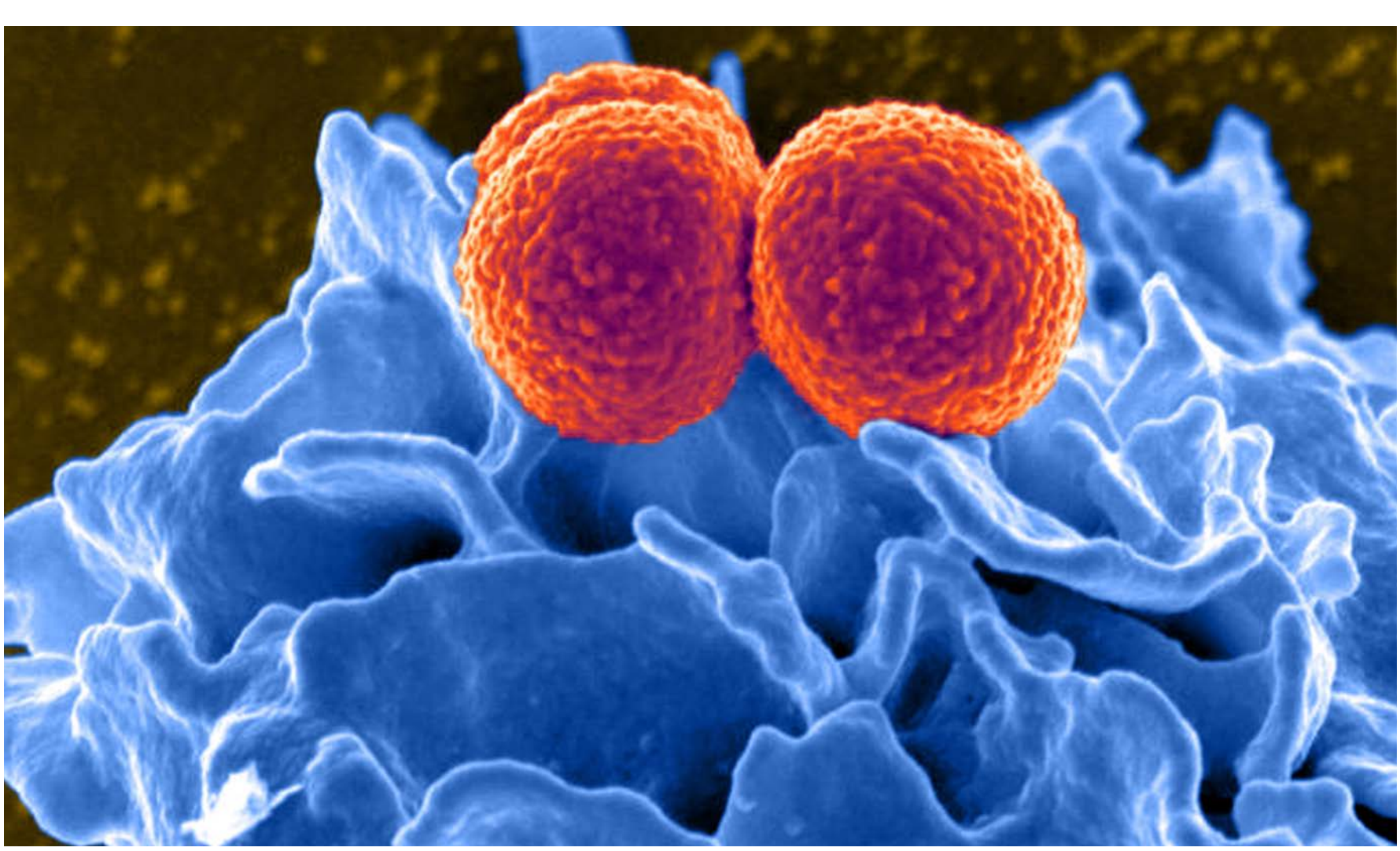


PHOTO RESEARCHERS

Drug-resistant MRSA bacteria, shown here with a white blood cell by an electron micrograph, have caused a large increase in hospital-related infections and highlighted the need for new breakthrough pharmaceuticals.

cholesterol), both approved in 1987, are good examples. Both were breakthrough pharmaceuticals that paved the way for many other new drugs. The second category was "advance-in-class," which included pharmaceuticals that "potentially offer major advances in treatment" within an existing class of drugs, often targeting serious diseases such as cancer and HIV. "Addition-to-class" was the label applied to a compound that isn't safer or generally more effective than existing drugs (though some individuals may benefit from its use significantly). For example, beta-blockers, which are used in the treatment of high blood pressure, have been around long enough to spawn many addition-to-class versions.

After winnowing certain drugs (such as those intended only for military use) from the list of those approved between 1987 and 2011, Lanthier and his coauthors came up with a total of 645 new drugs. Thirty-two percent of them were first-in-class drugs, while 22 percent represented significant advances. Forty-six percent were addition-to-class drugs.

Throughout the 25 years covered by the researchers, first-in-class drugs steadily appeared at an average rate of eight per year. Small and large pharmaceutical companies produced the same number of breakthrough drugs, on average, but after 1996 the innovative edge seemed to shift to the smaller firms, which increased their share of all drug approvals from about a third to half.

The apparent decline in approvals of new drugs since the mid-1990s is largely a mirage.

What about the decline in drug approvals since the mid-1990s? That is largely a mirage produced by a momentary surge in new addition-to-class drugs in 1996 and '97. Lanthier and his colleagues can't explain the increase, but they note that it came on the heels of the Prescription Drug User Fee Act of 1992, which brought with it a big increase in the number of FDA staff drug reviewers.

None of this argues for complacency, the authors note. There's an urgent need for innovative new drugs, especially for the treatment of "antibiotic-resistant infections and rare pediatric disease." Policymakers have already done much to speed innovation; the focus now is on pouring more money into research and speeding the drug approval process. Such efforts "should have an impact on innovation in drug development during the coming decades." ■

FORGET YOUR WORRIES

THE SOURCE: "Repairing Bad Memories" by Stephen S. Hall, in ***MIT Technology Review***, July/August 2013.

PICTURE A FAT, HAIRY TARANTULA. IF YOU'RE among the millions who suffer arachnophobia, even imagining an eight-legged monster can conjure up intense feelings of fear and anxiety, deeply rooted in bad memories.

Daniela Schiller, a neuroscientist at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, thinks she can help. As science writer Stephen S. Hall reports in the *MIT Technology Review*, Schiller's work has turned the conventional wisdom on its head, showing that human memories are by no means immutable. Rather, Hall explains, they're "malleable constructs that may be rebuilt every time they are recalled"—so malleable that our most traumatic memories could possibly be reconfigured to cause us less stress.

For most of the 20th century, scholars envisioned a memory as a permanent imprint on the brain that strengthened with time. That view, known as "consolidation theory," held that any memory act—recalling a friend's birthday, remembering how to drive, or shuddering at the thought of a spider—amounted to simply retrieving a certain file from a mental filing cabinet.

Consolidation theory started to break down with the revelation that memory could be manipulated under the right conditions, beginning with an experiment at Rutgers University in 1968. Researchers conditioned lab rats to expect a small electrical jolt whenever they licked water from a drinking tube after hearing white noise. Immediately after this conditioning, some of the rats received a stronger electroconvulsive shock to the head. The next day, most of the rats were still hesitant to drink when they heard the white noise, lest they invite another jolt—but the group that had received the second zap lapped up water eagerly, their fears erased.

In 2000, New York University psychologists managed to clear rats' memories with pharmaceutical help. Having also trained rats to expect a shock after hearing a particular sound, they injected a drug straight into each animal's amygdala, the part of the brain thought to harbor fear memories. Upon receiving the drug, which stopped the brain from synthesizing proteins, the rodents no longer froze in terror at the sound. The implication was huge: In rats, at least, memories could be amended, or "reconsolidated."

Was the same true for humans? Schiller and her colleagues at NYU designed an experiment to find out. Volunteers were shown a computer screen featuring a blue square, then given a small but unpleasant shock. That procedure was repeated until the subjects firmly expected to be zapped whenever they saw the blue square. This new memory was given time to solidify—10 minutes for some volunteers, six hours for others. The subjects were then shown the blue box again, but this time, in an attempt to modify the memory, they weren't shocked afterward.

For the 10-minute group, the treatment worked. Breaking the connection between the blue box and the shock rewrote their memories so that they stopped reacting to the box. But the treatment failed for the group that went six hours before receiving it; their memories had become embedded. Schiller and her colleagues published their results in *Nature* in 2010. "By mastering the timing," explains Hall, "the NYU group had essentially created a scenario in which humans could rewrite a fearsome memory and give it an unfrightening ending."

Schilling is now trying to help people afflicted with arachnophobia, overhauling their neural responses as they stare at a live tarantula.

This finding has spurred research into drug-free treatments for a host of memory-related conditions. Researchers in Beijing have used it to help heroin addicts alter their reactions to environmental stimuli that trigger cravings. Schilling herself is now trying to help people afflicted with arachnophobia, overhauling their neural responses as they stare at a live tarantula.

Her lab is also investigating how memory therapy could benefit from beta-blockers, drugs that are usually used in treating heart conditions. Her team is hopeful that new pharmaceutical treatments will lengthen the period in which a memory can be rewritten. If they're right, it could be a boon for patients with ills such as posttraumatic stress disorder, allowing them to be treated as they summon traumatic memories.

Schiller's work could bring about not only a new era of psychological research, but a complete shift in how we understand history. "Every memoir is fabricated," Hall marvels, "and the past is nothing more than our last retelling of it." ■

OTHER NATIONS

IS THIS WHERE WE PART COMPANY?

THE SOURCE: "The Birth of Kurdistan?" by Martin Fletcher, in ***Prospect***, August 2013.

REMINDERS OF SADDAM HUSSEIN'S GENOcidal oppression of Iraq's five million Kurds are everywhere in the country's three northernmost provinces. Gone are 4,500 towns and villages, their buildings razed and replaced with concrete-block eyesores, writes reporter Martin Fletcher in *Prospect*. Minefields and memorials to dead loved ones dot the mountainous landscape. In Sulaimaniya, Saddam's intelligence headquarters still stands, tanks rusting in the courtyard; inside are the rooms where prisoners were tortured, raped, and killed. The cemetery of a town where 5,000 civilians were gassed to death on March 16, 1988, contains three mass graves. "To this day, mustard gas—being heavier than air—lingers in the odd cellar, making it inaccessible," Fletcher writes.

And yet, since the U.S. invasion of 2003, Kurdistan, a semi-autonomous region of Iraq, has become an oasis in

NEWSCOM

This is Iraq? Families celebrated the Persian New Year last March at a downtown park in the Kurdish Iraqi city of Erbil.

an otherwise anarchic and dangerous country. The veteran journalist describes celebrations marking the Kurdish New Year in Sulaimaniya: "Never before had I, a Westerner, been able to walk safely through a vast throng of Iraqis, or experienced such tolerance, friendliness, and absence of fear or religious stricture. Women with uncovered heads wore makeup and golden jewelry. Teenagers discreetly flirted. A few obviously gay men, and the odd drunk, wandered uncensored through the crowds."

Kurdistan already has its own flag and national anthem.

With life so good for so many Kurds today, and so bad in the rest of Iraq, might Kurdistan secede?

Kurdistan already has its own flag and national anthem. Its government, though fractious, corrupt, and imperfectly democratic, has a provisional army and a judiciary, and issues its own visas. The economy is experiencing double-digit growth. Underground are vast oil reserves, and foreign investors have flooded the region with billions of dollars. Erbil, one of its major cities, flaunts several luxury car dealerships. "From next to nothing, Kurdistan now boasts 20 universities, 60 hospitals, and 13,000 schools," and the region's airports "probably receive more flights from Europe and the Middle East than Baghdad."

Some might wonder why Kurdistan would remain part of the country that has treated it so cruelly, but it has its reasons.

The autonomous region is allotted 17 percent of Iraq's $119 billion national budget—more than it pays in. Also, breaking away from Iraq would force a decision on disputed territories south of the border, including the city of Kirkuk. "The U.S. has strongly opposed the breakup of a country where it expended so much blood and money," Fletcher notes. "So, at least in the past, have Turkey, Iran, and Syria who feared their own sizable Kurdish minorities would rise up if their Iraqi kinsmen gained independence." He quotes Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, Kurdistan's High Representative in the United Kingdom, who observes that "at a bare minimum, you would need the support of one regional power and one international superpower" for her landlocked homeland to secede.

And yet.

With the development of its oil fields, Kurdistan is poised to send more cash to Baghdad than it receives,

an imbalance bound to stick in the Kurdish craw. And after a new pipeline to Turkey begins operation later this year, Kurdistan won't have to depend on the ones running south.

Unrest in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, is pressing the issue of a Kurdish state.

Meanwhile, Iraq's Shia-dominated government has been growing more authoritarian, even as the United States has continued to beef up the Iraqi military, outfitting it with tanks and F-16 fighter jets. This trend alarms the country's Kurds, who are moderate Sunnis. They also "fear that Iraq's Shia and Sunni communities are sliding toward war."

Unrest in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, is also pressing the issue of a Kurdish state. Many of northeastern Syria's two million Kurds, who are aligned with the rebels fighting the Shia-backed regime of Bashar al-Assad, are pouring into Iraq's Kurdish north. Meanwhile, Kurdistan is enjoying "dramatically improved relations" with predominantly Sunni Turkey, which has bridled at any notion of a Kurdish state and brutally suppressed its own Kurdish population in the past, but is now loosening its hold on the ethnic group. Finally, U.S. influence is waning with the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq.

As various cultural, economic, and political puzzle pieces snap in place, some analysts believe the picture emerging looks a whole lot like an independent Kurdish republic. ■

THE ONCE AND FUTURE CHIEF

THE SOURCE: "The Roots of Resilience" by Carolyn Logan, in ***African Affairs***, Summer 2013.

ONE DAY LAST YEAR IN A VILLAGE IN SOUTH Africa, a court heard two different cases. A man whose wife had run off demanded that her father return the cows he had provided as a bride price. Another man stood accused of letting his cows graze on public land marked for conservation. Presiding over the court was not an official magistrate but Chief Luthando Dinwayo and a tribal council of four women and five men. This arrangement was no anomaly. The council's word was law, and the villagers paid it heed. Similar stories could be told in much of Africa, where traditional authorities wield considerable power in some areas of life.

That's disastrous, say critics. Many see the survival of traditional authorities as a troubling sign of governmental weakness, especially in Africa's young democracies. Some argue that unelected tribal chiefs wield power only because they control land or other valuable resources, and that they are prone to abusing their authority. Anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani of Columbia University, perhaps the harshest critic, argues that traditional authorities were willing tools of the European powers during the colonial era and have an equally corrupt relationship with central authorities today.

But Carolyn Logan, a political scientist at Michigan State University, draws on a wide-ranging survey of African countries in arguing that traditional authorities enjoy popular legitimacy and play an important role in resolving local conflicts and allocating land in their communities.

Indeed, in 17 of the 19 nations polled, a majority of those surveyed said traditional leaders wield "significant influence," and in 16 of those countries, most respondents believed that the influence of traditional authorities should *increase*. Support wasn't limited to the hinterlands, the usual bastion of tradition: Relatively affluent urbanites didn't differ from poor farmers in their support. And although traditional institutions are commonly assumed to be detrimental to the interests of women, men and women were equally likely to praise them—at least in the presence of pollsters.

Africa is an enormous and diverse landmass, of course, and the tribal councils of South Africa wouldn't find exact counterparts in, say, Mali. "The nature, scope, and sources of their authority, as well as their titles, their official status, and the perks of office that they enjoy, vary widely across communities and countries," explains Logan, writing in *African Affairs*. They do, however, enjoy broad popular support in only two roles, solving local disputes and allocating land.

Traditional authorities have had to overcome the taint of their collaboration with colonial-era European rulers as well as the animosity of dictatorships. In Tanzania, for instance—one of the two countries Logan surveyed that reported weak influence from traditional authorities—the independence leader Julius Nyerere long ago reshaped society by forcibly relocating rural people into artificial, *ujamaa* villages in which tribal leaders had no power.

Today, there's little competition between government and the traditional authorities. And there's no evidence that embracing tribal leaders means rejecting

the central government or democracy. Logan found that the more likely people were to view the government as legitimate, the more likely they were to view traditional authorities as legitimate, too. "Rather than being a zero-sum commodity, popular legitimacy appears to be mutually reinforcing."

There is an important lesson for Africa's national leaders in the continued popularity of their erstwhile rivals, Logan says. The surveys revealed that people value tribal leaders simply because they *listen*. "African governments may be doing a much better job of protecting individual freedoms . . . but their ability to interact with and respond to popular needs, priorities, and demands lags far behind."

Many Africans value tribal leaders simply because they *listen*.

"That said," Logan admits, "idealizing chiefs will be no more helpful than demonizing them." They're as prone to corruption, human rights abuses, and incompetence as the next authority figure. Plus, there is always the danger that they will play tribal favorites and exacerbate ethnic tensions.

Still, the fact that traditional authority figures possess an "enduring worth in the eyes of a sizable majority of Africans" suggests that they will—and should—continue to play a role in Africa's democratic development. ■

INDIA'S CAN-DO AUTOCRATS

THE SOURCE: "The Rise of the Rest of India: How States Have Become the Engines of Growth" by Ruchir Sharma, in ***Foreign Affairs***, Sept.–Oct. 2013.

IN THE EARLY 1990S, INDIAN FINANCE MINister Manmohan Singh championed a host of reforms that started his country on a 20-year streak of economic growth. But when Singh became prime minister in 2004, he seemed to leave his reformist magic behind. India, which once promised to challenge China as the developing world's most dynamic economy, has faltered badly and now threatens to sink back into its old role as a chronic economic underperformer.

Not to worry, writes Ruchir Sharma, a Wall Street emerging markets specialist and author of *Breakout Nations: In Pursuit of the Next Economic Miracles* (2012). The secret to India's revival lies far from New Delhi, in the nation's 28 state capitals.

As late as the mid-1990s, state governments were fragile and largely

ineffective, weighed down by a politics based on caste-based coalitions and religion. But a new generation of leaders realized they could do better by appealing to voters' rising economic aspirations. Empowered by Singh's reform of the interventionist "license raj" that had long stifled business, a half-dozen chief ministers have built especially impressive track records since the mid-'90s.

In Ahmadabad, capital of the state of Gujarat, for example, "the sun sets red," thanks to rapid industrial development that is occurring under Chief Minister Narendra Modi. The pace matches what has often been seen in southern China. Modi has also used his popularity to institute painful reforms, cutting state subsidies and raising electricity rates. In the poverty-stricken state of Bihar, meanwhile, Nitish Kumar began his career catering to his own small Kurmi caste, but after becoming chief minister in 2005 he pursued a broad agenda, cracking down on the state's notorious crime and corruption and building "one of the fastest-growing state economies in India."

India "is rediscovering its natural fabric as a nation of strong regions," Sharma writes. It is a huge place, better thought of as a continent than a country. It is not even united by language: Only 40 percent of Indians speak some form of Hindi, the nation's leading language. Bihar and Gujarat "are as different as Germany and Greece." Yet the past decade of change has reshaped the landscape of wealth, allowing the poorer inland and northern states to close some of the gap with the richer ones on the coast.

The regional political parties and the relatively young national Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party, have gained ground at the expense of the long-dominant Congress party. Congress now controls only two of the nation's 10 largest states, and this loss of sway has weakened the party's authority in New Delhi. Its aging, "genteel Brahmans . . . have never been comfortable promoting what they see as crass commerce."

Bihar and Gujarat "are as different as Germany and Greece."

But it's an open question whether any of the state leaders can step up to the top spot in New Delhi. Their political styles and coalitions are tailored to the peculiarities of their home turfs. And they have a pronounced authoritarian

streak—Sharma calls them "can-do autocrats." Modi, for example, has been criticized as a Hindu chauvinist and accused of failing to intervene to stop anti-Muslim riots in 2002 that left more than 1,000 Muslims dead in Gujarat.

He was nevertheless named the BJP's candidate for prime minister in elections slated for next May, after Sharma's article was published. The betting now is that the Congress party will lose, perhaps to be replaced by a coalition government.

Sharma argues that India should abandon its unworkable ideal of a strong central government and adopt German-style federalism. There are scattered signs that it is moving in that direction. Recently, for example, the fraught decision about whether to allow big retailers such as Walmart to open stores in India was bumped down from New Delhi to the state level. For all their flaws, Sharma says, the regional parties "represent hope: They are young, energetic, focused on economic development, and very much in sync with the practical aspirations of the youthful majority." ■

CURRENT BOOKS
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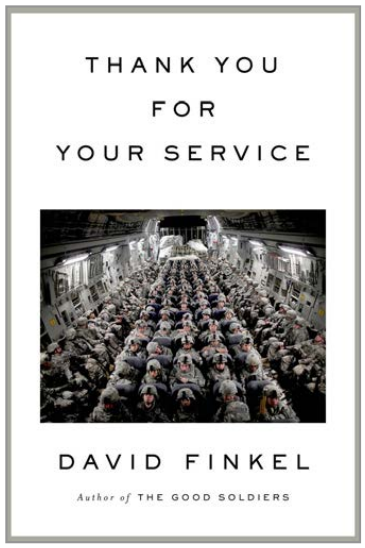

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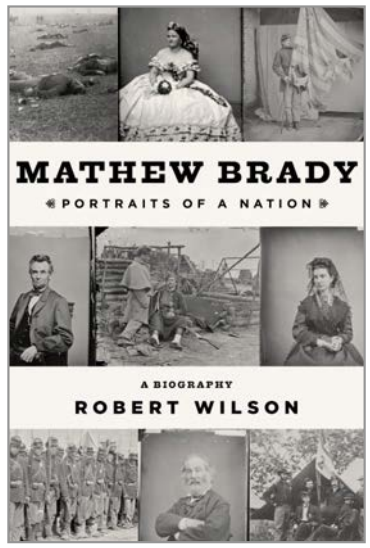

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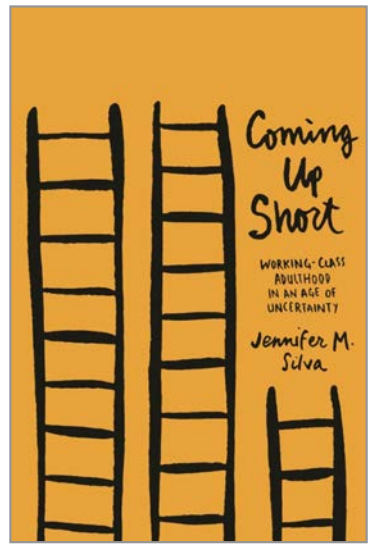

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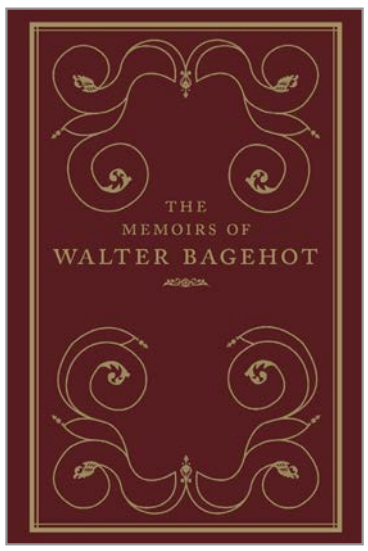

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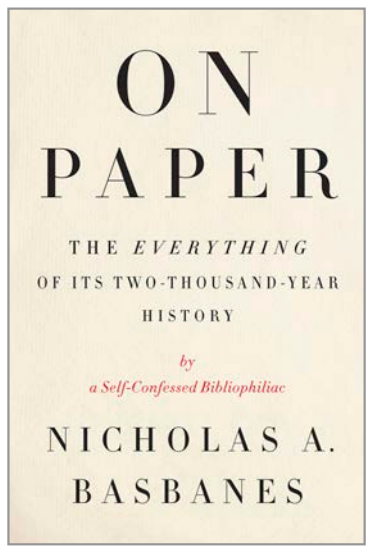

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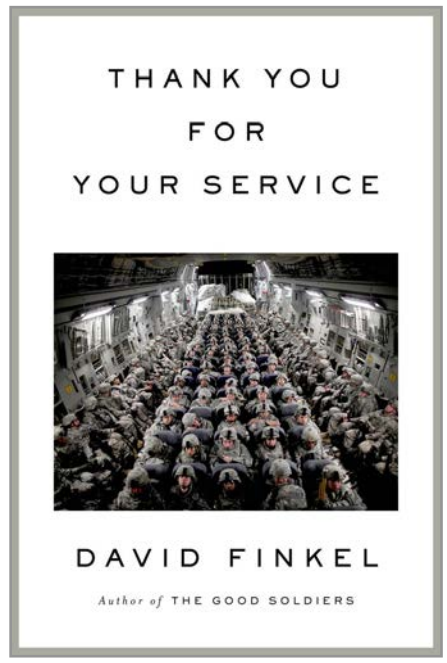
The Home Front

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

REVIEWED BY **ALEX HORTON**



By David Finkel
Sarah Crichton Books
256 pp. $26

THE SOLDIER IN TAUSOLO AIETI'S DREAMS is on fire.

On a hot July day in 2007 at the height of the Iraq surge, five infantrymen, including Aieti, climbed into a Humvee to patrol one of Baghdad's most volatile neighborhoods. Later that afternoon, a buried bomb exploded under the vehicle, eviscerating it. Four of the men were able to escape, two of them thanks to Aieti, who pulled them from the truck. But the blaze became so intense that it was impossible for him to save the fifth, who was trapped inside. Yet the valorous rescue of two soldiers isn't what visits Tausolo Aieti in bed, years after his tour. Instead, it's James Harrelson, forever 19 years old, engulfed in flames. He asks Aieti only one thing: "Why didn't you save me?"

Conventional wisdom suggests that traumatic experiences in war derive from what soldiers do—the enemy troops they kill or the civilians they brutalize. But just as significant is what soldiers *don't do*—fail to realize a car is loaded with explosives, or, in Aieti's case, reach a trapped soldier before he burns to death. Mental health clinicians call this kind of trauma "moral injury": an act (or failure to act) that violates a person's internal code and results in an existential moral tear. Many distinguish moral injury from posttraumatic stress disorder, whose definition includes the physiological effects on the brain that can result from traumatic events. Moral injury is not a psychiatric diagnosis, but rather a violation of how the world should work. Children shouldn't die. Aieti will be quick enough to save Harrelson.

REDUX

Army Spcs. Frank Casillas waits for a ride home outside Fort Drum, New York's Magrath Gymnasium in March 2011 after a yearlong deployment in Afghanistan.

Wars are violent, loud, and gruesome. But combat is fleeting, and for young troops, what remains is a lifetime of untangling the dense consequences of decisions and actions made (or not made) in uncompromising conditions. A single moment in combat can bring a soldier home with honor or send him back broken and ashamed, unprepared for what *Washington Post* staff writer David Finkel calls the "after-war."

In *Thank You for Your Service*, Finkel exhaustively documents the course of the after-war for the members of

A single moment in combat can bring a soldier home with honor or send him back broken and ashamed.

an Army infantry battalion known as the 2-16 Rangers, stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas. In his first book, *The Good Soldiers* (2009), Finkel chronicled the battalion's bloody 15-month tour in Iraq. He spent eight months embedded with the unit and was present

for many of the pivotal moments described in the book; 2-16 was responsible for patrolling the area where two Reuters journalists and several Iraqis were killed by U.S. helicopter fire in an attack that was recorded in a video and released by WikiLeaks under the title *Collateral Murder*.

Thank You for Your Service is billed as a follow-up, but it's more of a continuation of a story not yet finished. The book's title itself is an ironic reference to the phrase muttered by passengers in airport terminals when they see a soldier in uniform—a hollow gesture that avoids the gravity of war and its effects, and is often mocked by troops and veterans.

At the center of the story is Adam Schumann, a gifted IED spotter whom Finkel described in *The Good Soldiers* as "one of the best soldiers in the battalion." In *Thank You for Your Service*, Finkel takes up the story as Schumann returns from his third tour, ahead of the rest of his men. His wife, Saskia, had pleaded with him to come home because she was worried about his mental condition. The catalyst for his sudden exit, as it tends to be for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, was a bomb blast. A soldier who had taken Schumann's place on a mission was killed while Schumann remained behind at the base in Baghdad to video-chat with Saskia. "None of this shit would have happened if you were there," another soldier told him following the mission. It was meant as a compliment to Schumann's ability to sniff out bombs. But Schumann heard a piercing judgment.

Banners and signs and throngs of ecstatic families don't greet Schumann when he comes home. They never do for those who leave the war early. Gunshots and amputations are tangible reasons for a departure from a war zone, a buffer from the guilt of leaving a unit behind. Schumann's mental injuries carry no outward mark, only ceaseless agony over James Doster, the soldier killed on the mission. When Schumann arrives at the airport, Saskia is there to greet him. So is Doster's wife, Amanda. "Can you tell me what happened to my husband?" she pleads. And so the war reaches a tarmac on a cool Kansas night.

Adam and Saskia share their home with their two young children, but suicide is a houseguest. Saskia frets about the many guns in the house and the extensive list of the prescription drugs her husband gulps each day. In one of the ghastliest scenes in the book, Schumann holds a shotgun to his head and dares his wife to pull the trigger. He says it's about being a bad father and a disappointment,

but it's really about Doster and the war ravenously searching for another casualty. In a way, Saskia wants to oblige her husband. Their crying baby interrupts their breakdown. The after-war will have to wait.

Finkel sets Schumann's story and others against the backdrop of the Army's increasingly well-funded (and increasingly befuddled) suicide prevention efforts. General Peter Chiarelli was once tasked with leading soldiers, but with his appointment as Army vice chief of staff in 2008, he was ordered to help save them from suicide. Chiarelli is the book's tragic hero, a crusader for best practices and lessons learned in an institution that still can't answer the fundamental question: Why do most troops come back from war just fine while others kill themselves to escape its lasting effects? Some point to the macho military culture's ethos of avoiding asking for help, accentuated in tough frontline infantry units. Others suggest that lax recruiting standards after the invasion of Iraq produced troops who buckled under the stress of the surge, and blame some suicides on soldiers' preexisting mental-health issues.

But sustained and costly efforts to address those issues have left the military clutching for answers and solutions. Last year, suicides eclipsed combat- and transportation accident-related deaths in number. Even more vexing, a study published in August in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* cast doubt on the common notion that suicide is related to combat trauma—it found that suicide rates weren't associated with number or length of deployments, but on such factors as substance abuse, depression, and being male. In any case, Chiarelli, who retired last year, could not halt the procession of suicides. During his tenure at the Pentagon, Chiarelli reviewed each Army suicide case with his team in the Gardner Room—a purgatorial last stop for wayward souls who couldn't endure war's last battle.

As Aieti and Schumann seek and enter treatment, Finkel never quite puts into perspective for the reader the fact that their stories are not typical. At the beginning of the book, he does mention the commonly cited statistic that 20 to 30 percent of soldiers who serve in war zones return with psychological issues, while most successfully reintegrate into society. But his relentless narrative may encourage the conclusion that the military is a collection of suicidal basket cases, and that veterans are unstable psychopaths—already a prevailing notion in the media and popular culture. Active-duty personnel are sequestered from

the public on large, often geographically isolated bases, and many communities never encounter their stories of constant war—leaving movies, TV shows, and journalists to fill the gaps.

"Thank you for your service" has become a mantra of arm's length, fleeting admiration.

Films that have focused on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are replete with murderous goons (*Redacted* and *In the Valley of Elah*) and reckless cowboys (*The Hurt Locker*), or centered on the Special Forces (*Zero Dark Thirty*). Few publicly consumable narratives have shined a comprehensive, realistic light on the troop or veteran experience as of yet. Finkel captures grimness as well as redemption, and he tells this essential story as delicately as possible. Convincing in the role of omniscient narrator, he probes the psyches of his subjects and—in an impressive display of newsgathering skills—reveals thrilling moments in which he acts as both a witness and an interviewer of soldiers and the people who care about them in their most fragile moments.

Thank You for Your Service has already morphed into a possible Hollywood project, with Steven Spielberg and Daniel Day-Lewis rumored to be attached. *The Good Soldiers* and its kinetic war scenes might seem more cinematic, but we have seen that movie before. If this new book is adapted to the screen, it will tell a truer war story than most have seen or heard, not of gun battles and heroic feats, but of the concussive blasts of moments and decisions that ripple through living rooms and in pickup trucks barreling through the Kansas countryside.

"Thank you for your service" has become a mantra of arm's length, fleeting admiration. Finkel's book shows the after-war in all of its post–September 11 tenderness and agony—something ordinary citizens will have to grapple with as the after-war lingers, decades after the last American soldier has left Afghanistan, falsely believing that once it ended, the war is confined to history. ■

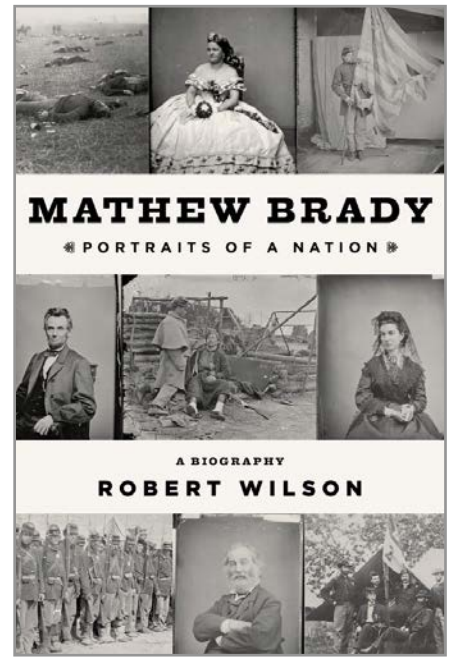
ALEX HORTON served as an Army infantryman in Iraq with the Third Stryker Brigade, Second Infantry Division, during the 2006–07 troop surge. Until recently, he was a public affairs specialist with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. His work has been published on TheAtlantic.com, Time.com, and *The New York Times*' At War blog.

War Pictures

MATHEW BRADY:

PORTRAITS OF A NATION

REVIEWED BY **MAX BYRD**

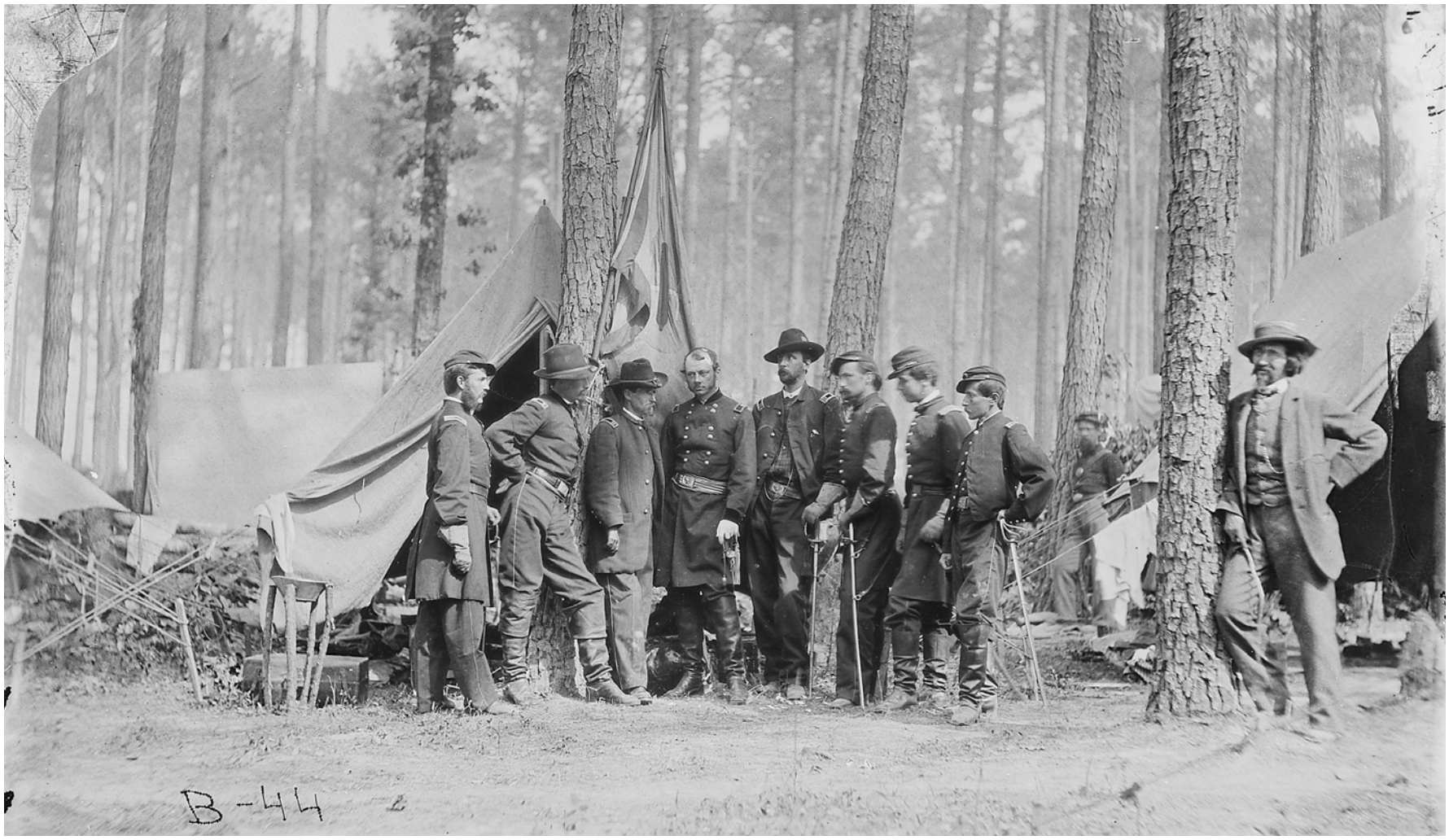


By Robert Wilson
Bloomsbury
288 pp. $28

IF YOU WERE ONE OF WASHINGTON'S elite in the late 1850s, sooner or later you would have found yourself at 350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., climbing a flight of wooden stairs to a skylighted room, outside of whose windows hung an enormous painted sign for all to see: "Brady's National Photographic Art Gallery."

Frock-coated photographer's assistants would have escorted you through the gallery itself—a long, comfortable room lined with photographs of the famous, the wealthy, and the merely congressional. Two more flights of stairs would have taken you to a dressing room with a marble washstand and, next to it, under a skylight, the sitting room, where a carved oak chair and a few props awaited you—books, a clock (which always read 11:52), a toga for the senatorially inclined, and a metal clamp to hold your head steady in front of the big, black-draped camera. Usually an assistant operated the camera, but if you were lucky, Mathew Brady, a small, bushy-haired Irishman with a pointed beard and a big nose, might step into the room at the last moment and arrange your pose.

Robert Wilson, the author of a new biography of Brady, is editor of *The American Scholar* and a prolific essayist on American topics. In his excellent 2006 life of the American explorer Clarence King, Wilson took on the challenge of dealing with a dramatic, oversized, highly contradictory personality—on the one hand, a fearless conqueror of the wild and rugged Sierra Nevada, on the other, a witty sophisticate who felt perfectly at home among Henry Adams's exquisite porcelains and watercolors, a beloved member of that most exclusive of 19th-century clubs, "The Five of Hearts." To the delight



ARCHIVES

Mathew Brady appears leaning against a tree in this June 1864 photograph he took of Union General Robert B. Potter (hatless) and his staff.

of any biographer, King left a copious record of his exciting life—books, letters, numerous geological reports, memoirs by his many friends.

By contrast, Wilson's new subject, Mathew Brady (always spelled that way), lived mostly in hotels, never traveled west of Virginia, and left no more than a handful of letters and newspaper interviews. But he was without question the most important figure in early American photography, and if the written record is scant, and if his personality appears to have been no more than affable, smiling, a little bland, the images he gave the nation before and during the Civil War are the work of a great and passionate artist.

He was born around 1823 near Lake George, New York, the son of an Irish immigrant. From childhood, he suffered very poor eyesight, an irony the future "sun drawer" recognized when he told a friend that, even as a boy, "I felt a craving for light." At 16 or 17 he moved to New York City and, like a real-life Horatio Alger, quickly became acquainted with three classic American visionary hustlers—the artist and inventor Samuel F. B. Morse, the showman P.T. Barnum, and the merchant prince A. T. Stewart, whose "Marble Palace" on Broadway was America's first department store. Soon enough, with his friends' methods of self-promotion well in mind, Brady entered the new

and wildly popular business of making and selling daguerreotypes. Commercial photography came in existence roughly at the same time that he arrived in the city, but when he opened his studio a few years later, in 1844, there were already numerous established studios catering to a public in love with the idea of cheap, faithful portraits of themselves—"sun drawings," "sun pictures," "heliographs," as the earliest names for photography had it. Photography, Wilson shrewdly observes, was "among the first examples (along with the telegraph and the railway) of a phenomenon that has become almost commonplace in our time—an advance in technology that transforms rapidly from a state of inconceivable mystery . . . to something that everyone could and must have access to."

For two decades, Brady enjoyed unmatched success as a photographer of the successful and the talked about. (With no evident trace of despair, Wilson notes that Brady "helped invent the modern idea of celebrity.") He had a genius not only for improving the techniques of photography, but also for using light and contrast—there were a clarity and an authenticity to his portraits, people agreed, that no one else could achieve. Much of what we remember—what we see—of antebellum America comes from his unforgettable photographs of such notables as Edgar Allan Poe, General Winfield Scott, and the "Swedish Nightingale," Jenny Lind. His beautiful and delicate photograph of the young Henry James with his father is worth volumes of scholarship.

This was no haphazard achievement. Brady's ambition, as he himself declared, was "to form a gallery which shall eventually contain life-like portraits of every distinguished American now living." But as Wilson reminds us, the word "photography" means "writing with light." Brady's ambition to form a national gallery evolved into something grander. Toward the end of his life, Walt Whitman recalled that he and Brady had "had many a talk together: the point was how much better it would often be, rather than having a lot of contradictory records by witnesses and historians—say of Caesar, Socrates, Epictetus, others—if

Much of what we remember—what we see—of antebellum America comes from his unforgettable photographs.

we could have three or four or half a dozen portraits . . . that would be history—the best history—a history from which there would be no appeal."

When the war came, the historian seized his chance. Wilson traces in fascinating detail Brady's enterprise of making a photographic record, from which there indeed would be no appeal, of the Homeric struggle to restore the Union. He is especially good on Brady's close relationship with Abraham Lincoln—in all, Brady and his assistants gave us at least a dozen photographs of the president—and on his business rivalry with Alexander Gardner, his onetime assistant and partner. These two were hardly the only photographers of the war—hundreds of camera wagons and camera operators followed the Union armies wherever they went. (For a variety of reasons, photographers who attached themselves to the forces of the Confederacy took far fewer pictures.) The operators almost never attempted to photograph actual combat—their cameras required too long an exposure time—but their portraits of camp life and celebrated generals were on display all over the North.

Then, at Antietam in 1862 and Gettysburg the following year, photographic journalism took a decisive step. Alongside bucolic images of men gathered around a cooking fire or stacking muskets, now came shocking images of gray corpses left unburied on the field, of soldiers bloody and torn, white bones and skulls. Gardner showed a particular affinity for such photographs—at Gettysburg, he actually moved a Confederate corpse to a more dramatic position and repositioned the dead soldier's rifle beside him—but Brady excelled in the kind of portraits he had mastered before the war: faces and settings that revealed, as nothing else could, the essentials of a personality. As Wilson notes, he seems simply to have moved his portrait studio outdoors. In one great photograph, Ulysses Grant leans against a tree shortly after the last terrible, almost suicidal assault at Cold Harbor in 1864, an assault that Grant would confess in his *Memoirs* he had always regretted ordering. Yet even at such a moment, no one can miss the placid, mysterious, indomitable confidence in Grant's expression, a deep inner character exposed by the artist to light.

Alongside bucolic images of men gathered around a cooking fire or stacking muskets, now came shocking images.

Wilson analyzes a number of such photographs—he is especially good on Brady's sly practice of including himself, Hitchcock-like, in some of his wartime pictures. In perhaps the best of these, taken after the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864, the photographer arranged the Union general Robert Potter and members of his staff according to height in front of their tents. The men, wearing hats, look at their bareheaded general, who stares grimly ahead at the camera. Above them, the silvery Virginia pines stretch to the sky. And to the right of the frame stands a well-dressed civilian, hand on hip, leg casually cocked. It is, as Wilson tells us, the author of the image: "Brady has posed himself as what he was, not the subject of the photograph but its presiding intelligence."

Brady's life after the war makes for sad reading. Childless, a widower, he began a slow descent into poverty. Late in life he would claim that the ruinous expense of photographing the war had put him on the road to bankruptcy. Wilson makes it clear, however, that Brady's own prodigality, a lifelong trait, was the real cause of his declining fortunes. For several more decades, he held on to his studio in Washington. But business fell away, and his efforts to sell his great collection of Civil War negatives came to little. He died in poverty in New York at the age of 72, without enough money for a headstone.

There have been other biographies of Brady and several fine discussions of his art—Mary Panzer's *Mathew Brady and the Image of History* (1997), for example. But Wilson's book is notable for its thorough, up-to-date narrative. And his responses to Brady's work are criticism of a high order. In a beautiful passage about the Gettysburg photographs, he ponders a series of pictures of Brady studying the landscape where General John Reynolds had died—"the photos," Wilson says, "introduce in an explicit way a human consciousness of the violence that had been played out in these now-serene fields."

To the argument that such images are no more than a chemical recording of lights and darks, he replies that Brady in fact created what might be called "first-person photography." The drama and intensity of his works make plain that "a photograph is not just the doings of a sunbeam, an objective rendering of a scene, but a view created, in effect, by an individual consciousness. . . . They steal photography from the sun." ■

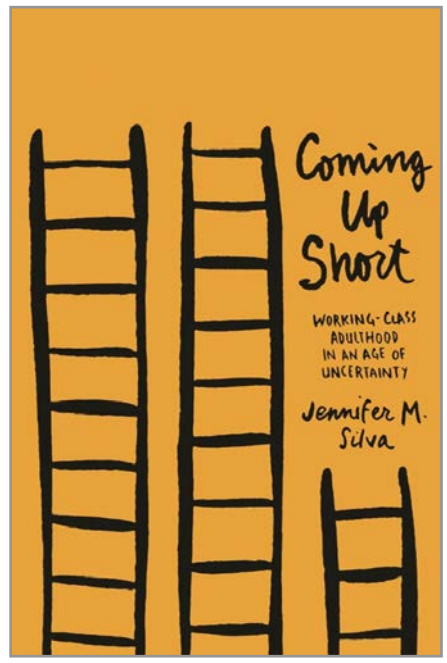
MAX BYRD is a contributing editor of *The Wilson Quarterly* and the author, most recently, of the historical novel *The Paris Deadline*.

Life on the Margins

COMING UP SHORT:

WORKING-CLASS ADULTHOOD IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

REVIEWED BY **SARAH L. COURTEAU**



By Jennifer M. Silva
Oxford Univ. Press
192 pp. $29.95

AMERICA'S WORKING CLASS IS AN ENDANgered species. The factory work's gone overseas, the unions' backs are broken, and everything's been automated, anyway.

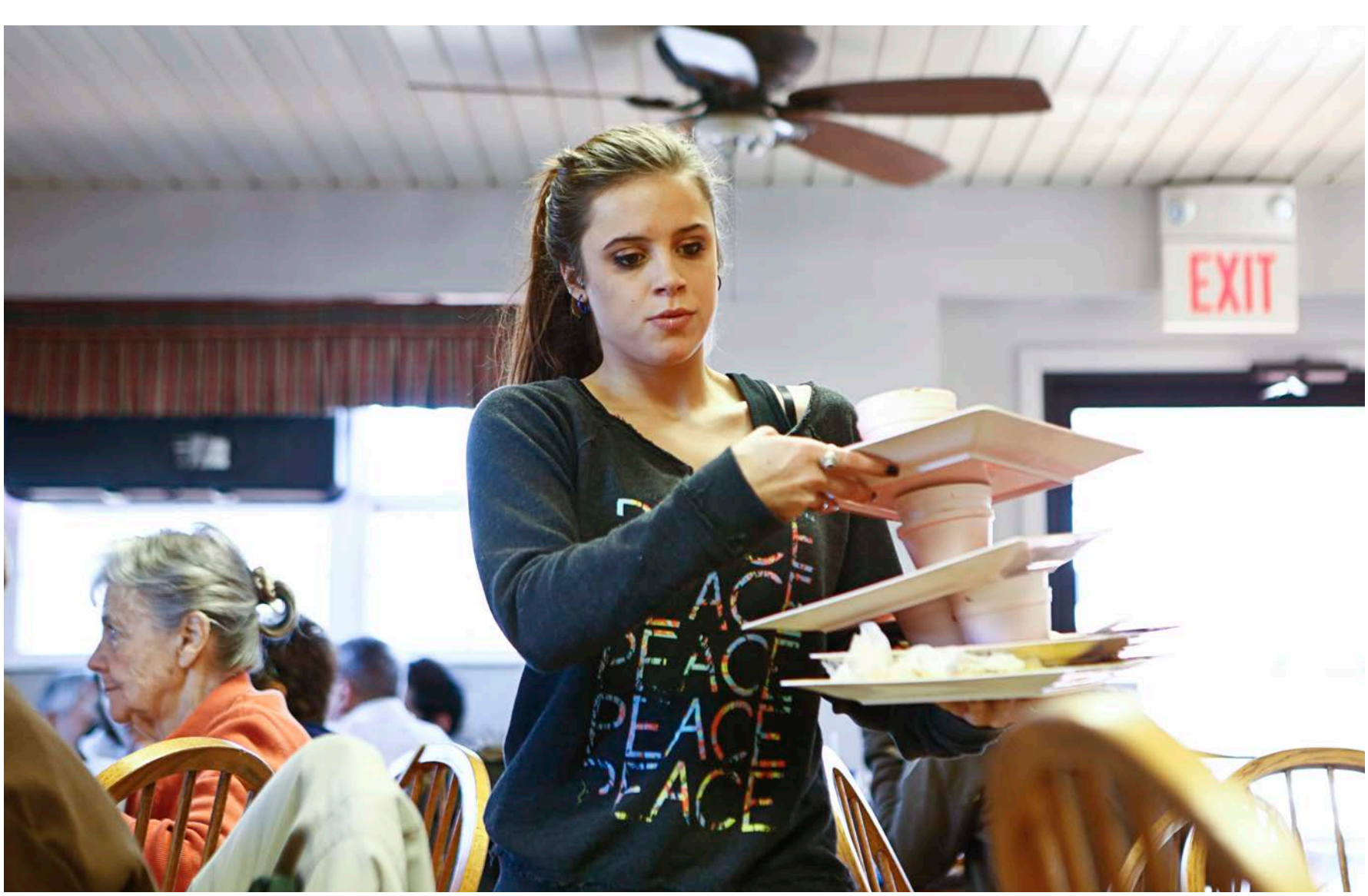
That is and isn't true, of course. With the exception of trades such as law enforcement and firefighting, which can't be outsourced or diced up into penny-ante shifts, many traditional blue-collar jobs have become rarer. But the working class itself is still around, its members surfing relatives' couches, living off credit cards, taking out staggering college loans for degrees they can't finish or can't use, and piecing together work at coffee shops, retailers, and security companies. Yes, as documented in *Coming Up Short* by Jennifer M. Silva, a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the working class is still very much with us.

What's changed is lower-wage workers' status in a postindustrial economy, and with it, their sense of identity. The hard-workin', hard-livin' man of country song who "wears denim, drinks American beer," actively participates in his local church, union, or neighborhood

They expressed suspicion of the government and of institutions in general, but also believed they were the ones to blame for the detours and wrong turns they'd made.

bar scene (perhaps all three), and swears by "hard work, family, God, and the promise of the American dream" is harder to find. Ditto the down-to-earth heir to Rosie the Riveter, a family anchor with her sleeves forever rolled up.

In their place is a new generation of anxious and unsettled young adults who literally can't afford to buy a home, get married, or have a stable family (though many do end up with kids anyway). Only about a fifth of the people Silva interviewed for her book were married. A large number had bought the message that education is the key to a better future. But they were struggling to figure out how to secure financial aid—even if they qualified—and didn't know how to translate a degree into a career. (Without that knowledge, Silva writes, "community college simply acts as a holding pen for working-class youth slated to eventually enter the service economy—but with loan debt to pay off.") Confused about what they should even aspire to, they expressed suspicion of the government and of institutions in general, but also believed they were the ones to blame for the detours and wrong turns they'd made. They were loners.



REDUX

Working class jobs have dwindled, but working class people are still around.

From October 2008 to February 2010, during the depths of the Great Recession and the beginning of the slow recovery, Silva spoke to about a hundred working-class men and women ages 24 to 34. Defining "working class" as people whose fathers hadn't attended college, she sought to trace how "the children of the working class of a generation ago are recreating what it means . . . to be working class." She focused on Lowell, Massachusetts, and Richmond, Virginia, because these two cities embody the new economy of dwindling industrial work, diminished government funding, and the proliferation of low-paying "May I help you?" jobs. (Barbara Ehrenreich memorably put the lie to the claim that service jobs can adequately support one person, much less a family, in her 2001 book *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America.)*

In intimate and sometimes wrenching conversations, Silva—herself a first-generation college student and the daughter of a firefighter—draws out her subjects on their histories, their aspirations, and the myriad obstacles they face in trying to achieve the traditional markers of adulthood—the house, the spouse, and a steady paycheck. *Coming Up Short* bears the earmarks of a dissertation cum book, with observations such as "Traditional conduits of adulthood are deeply gendered" and references to Marx and Engels, but through her interviewees' voices, it breaks free of the academese and says something important and new about the changing American character.

Particularly striking is the sense of betrayal many of Silva's subjects feel toward education. Take the young black man she calls Brandon. (All names were changed.) He graduated in the top tier of his high school class and attended a private university in the Southeast, excited about becoming an engineer. But he couldn't pass calculus or physics, so he switched his major to criminal justice. Graduating with $80,000 in debt, he applied to three police departments, but was dinged at one by a lottery system, at another for failing a spelling test, and at a third for participating in a college prank that wasn't even on record at his school but that he'd confessed to in the interest of being honest. Eleven years later, he works as a manager at a clothing store chain and can barely keep one step ahead of his student loan payments. "You have to give Uncle Sam your firstborn to get a degree and it doesn't pan out!" he says.

Because they haven't been able to walk the same path to adulthood followed by past generations, these young people have

"You have to give Uncle Sam your firstborn to get a degree and it doesn't pan out!"

had to develop their own measuring stick for growth. So they've taken the American ethos of self-reliance, mixed it with the "neoliberal" bent of America's free-market economy (Silva deploys the term like a dirty word), and embraced a self-help approach to life that seeks to make meaning from what they've overcome—addiction, alcoholism, mental health issues, and troubled family histories. As Silva points out, this is a stark change from the "stoic, taciturn" working stiff of the public imagination. Today's young working-class Americans were raised on Oprah, and they're not afraid to use her.

Reading these accounts can be painful. Often, internal transformation is all these young people have to cling to, and they wield therapeutically tinged language to describe their attempts to overcome the challenges in their lives. "You just got to figure out that it's all in your head and you almost got to talk yourself out of it," says a man who lost his managerial position at his company because of anxiety attacks. Eileen, who was diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder after she discovered that her boyfriend was molesting their four-year-old daughter, wants to pass on to her kids the lesson that "we aren't perfect, that we make mistakes and we try to learn from it." "I've . . . learned you're not going to get better if you don't want to," says a woman who was neglected by her mother and flunked out of college because of her drinking.

Another young woman bedeviled by alcohol, Monica, 31, is a photography student at an art college where she is, she says, "just hanging on by a thread all the time financially." An alcoholic from the time she was a teenager, she worked a string of jobs through her twenties as she struggled with addiction. Now committed to sobriety, she reflects that "there's tons of stuff that I don't feel proud about that I've done, like tons of stuff. But I can't change that, and I wouldn't be who I am today if I didn't go through everything that I did. And I feel like I've had a very, like, live-out-loud, colorful growing up and maturing, and you know a lot of life's lessons that I had to learn and I had to go through *myself*."

Silva's focus on the Isolated American

may ring familiar to those who read Harvard social scientist Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000). That seminal book, which expanded from the statistical insight that Americans today tend not to bowl in leagues, argued that the country's sense of community and civic engagement have both badly eroded. Silva is one of Putnam's research assistants, and his observations about the decline of a sense of community resonate throughout the book.

Silva hopes that young working-class Americans will be able to reconnect, and she's particularly rueful that the power of unions and the movements to empower minorities and women have dwindled in the last few decades. Her working-class subjects may feel that the government, the education system, and in some cases the military (several are or have been enlisted) have let them down. But they're suspicious of one another as well.

She credits the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and the Affordable Care Act—all major legislative initiatives of the Obama administration—with attempting to offer some of the social protections that would help ensure that young working-class adults aren't hung out to dry. But it's hard to come away from her book without hearing, in the stories she tells, a deeper loss and yearning than a strengthened social safety net would remedy, and wondering what the ultimate cost will be to a country that has come to depend on the service of strangers. ■

SARAH L. COURTEAU is literary editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

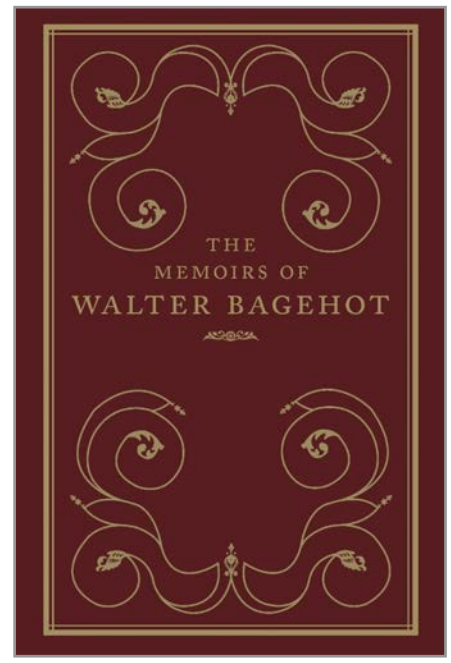
An Economists' Oscar Wilde

THE MEMOIRS OF WALTER BAGEHOT

REVIEWED BY **MARTIN WALKER**

FEW PEOPLE CAN HAVE READ THE autobiographies of Edward Gibbon and John Stuart Mill without musing on the agreeable prospect of parallel works by similar figures. The qualifications are simply stated: Such an author would need to possess great intellectual gifts along with a compelling writing style and an interesting life in stirring times, lived in the company of remarkable acquaintances.

During the years of the recent financial crisis, marked as they have been by heroic, if controversial, measures by our central bankers, one such candidate stood out. It was he who, some 140 years ago, coined the central banker's golden rule in times of such disaster: The lender of last resort must lend freely, against good collateral, and at interest rates high enough to dissuade borrowers not genuinely in need. For good or ill, our current central bankers have been much more generous, bending this classic mantra which Walter



By Frank Prochaska
Yale Univ. Press
207 pp. $38

Bagehot first articulated in *Lombard Street*, the 1873 book that established him as the pioneering theorist of the modern financial system. But Bagehot (1826–77) was far more than just an economist. During his 17 years as the editor of the London-based weekly *The Economist*, he increased the magazine's influence and produced a stream of articles and books that, in many cases, are as relevant today as they were in his lifetime.

A decade and a half ago, during the crisis of the British monarchy brought on by the death of Princess Diana, Bagehot was once again the sage whose wisdom was widely cited. Bagehot's 1867 book *The English Constitution* stressed the distinction between the

BRIDGEMAN

Walter Bagehot (mezzotint) by Norman Hirst

"Efficient" part of the system, which did the work, and the "Dignified" (we might say decorative) part, which was symbolically important but functionally feeble. The monarchy, Bagehot noted, provided the dignity, while the royal family offered an institution to the public of comforting familiarity, with wayward sons, mad aunts, saucy grandmothers, and drunken cousins. "A family on the throne is an interesting idea," he observed. "It brings down the pride of sovereignty to the level of petty life." Constitutional stability, and not just good manners, required a certain discretion about the regal family's intimacies. "We must not let in daylight upon magic," as Bagehot put it.

It is indeed remarkable to consider the many modern tropes Bagehot addressed in the years of Queen Victoria's reign. In weighing the controversies over the single European currency, there are few better places to start than the preface of his 1869 book *A Universal Money*, in which he suggested that a good idea in theory may in practice bring unexpected calamities. In the current debate over the widening gap between rich and poor, it's worth remembering Bagehot's observation that "in truth, poverty is an anomaly to rich people. It is very difficult to make out why people who want dinner do not ring the bell. One half of the world, according to the saying, do not know how the other half lives. Accordingly, nothing is so rare in fiction as a good delineation of the poor. Though

perpetually with us in reality, we rarely meet them in our reading." (A curious comment, this, from one who greatly admired George Eliot and visited her regularly in St. John's Wood, where they would discuss the money markets and the pain she felt in composing her novels.)

In today's discussions about the balance between personal freedom and national security, Bagehot again sets the tone: "So long as war is the main business of nations, temporary despotism—despotism during the campaign—is indispensable." Bagehot even has something useful to say regarding the recent arguments between atheists and believers: "The whole history of civilization is strewn with creeds and institutions which were invaluable at first, and deadly afterwards."

Bagehot's epigrams rival even those of Oscar Wilde. One of my favorites, and a word to the wise for those of us who earn our livings from our pens, is his dry observation that "the reason why so few good books are written is that so few people who can write know anything." Wilde himself would have been proud to concoct Bagehot's observation that "it is good to be without vices, but it is not good to be without temptations." And when it comes to relations between the sexes, I cannot decide which of Bagehot's gems I prefer. "Men who do not make advances to women are apt to become victims to women who make advances to them" is a classic. But how can one resist "A man's mother is his misfortune, but his wife is his fault"?

During the crisis of the British monarchy brought on by the death of Princess Diana, Bagehot was once again the sage whose wisdom was widely cited.

Bagehot's admirers have been many and illustrious. For Margaret Thatcher, "He was, perhaps, the most distinguished of all financial journalists." Britain's great Liberal prime minister William Gladstone, a personal friend, wrote that Bagehot was "a man of most remarkable gifts," and for the historian G. M. Young, he was simply "the greatest Victorian." Perhaps his biggest fan was Woodrow Wilson, who leaned heavily on Bagehot's constitutional writings in composing his own *Congressional Government* (1885). For America's 28th

president, Bagehot was both wit and seer: "Occasionally, a man is born into the world whose mission it evidently is to clarify the thought of his generation, and to vivify it; to give it speed where it is slow, vision where it is blind, balance where it is out of poise, saving humour where it is dry—and such a man was Walter Bagehot."

The tragedy is that Bagehot, in the vast range of his writings, left no autobiography. But that lacuna has been splendidly filled by an American scholar of Britain, Frank Prochaska, who has taught at Yale and at Oxford, where he was a visiting fellow at All Souls College. He has written on the British monarchy, and on women and philanthropy and Christianity in Victorian England, and has immersed himself so deeply in the life and times of Bagehot that the man's voice appears to be speaking to us eerily from the grave.

Written in the first person, the book daringly presents itself as Bagehot's own memoir. Pedants may question this impertinence, particularly when Prochaska writes of such personal matters as the mental illness of Bagehot's mother. ("Every trouble in life," Bagehot once remarked, "is a joke compared to madness.") But Prochaska has delivered a work of extraordinary scholarship and profound human sympathy that is also a pleasure to read. He ranges across his subject's varied interests—from finance to poetry, from governance to national character, from the science of evolution to the mysteries of religion. And all is peppered with Bagehot's epigrammatic wit. It is not the real thing, but it comes exceedingly close.

Bagehot read for the bar, but initially followed in the family footsteps to become a country banker before transforming himself into that classic Victorian figure, a man of letters. Besides the firsthand experience of banking, the family firm allowed him the opportunity to alleviate the occasional bout of melancholy by descending to the vaults and running his hands through a comforting heap of gold sovereigns. He was a polymath by instinct, but also perhaps by education, his being slightly unorthodox for an Englishman of his class. Instead of one of the old public schools, he attended Bristol College and then, at the age of 16, went to University College, London, rather than Oxford. He studied the usual subjects—Greek and Latin, Hebrew and German, mathematics and literature—and read widely.

He had a happy if childless marriage to the woman who became his employer. *The Economist* had been founded in

1843 by James Wilson, who later became financial secretary to the Treasury (in effect, Britain's deputy minister of finance). Befriended by Wilson, Bagehot married his eldest daughter in 1858 and was named one of the publication's directors. Wilson died in India in 1860, leaving *The Economist* to his six daughters, who appointed Bagehot to the editorship the following year at a handsome annual salary of 800 pounds. (In 1851, according to census data, only around two percent of Britons had an income above 150 pounds a year.)

Bagehot enjoyed travel and was particularly attached to France; he was in Paris for the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon in 1851 that restored, for two brief decades, the French Empire. Prochaska's account of Bagehot's experience—clambering over barricades, nervously awaiting the arrival of the troops, trying but failing to hire a window from which he could watch the storming of a fortress in relative safety—is particularly good, and rests heavily on Bagehot's letters to *The Inquirer*, a Unitarian church publication back in England.

Prochaska makes astute use of this episode to explore the deep-rooted conservative instincts that underlay Bagehot's liberalism. Bagehot supported the coup, on the grounds that the latest French constitution ("a government of barristers and newspaper editors," writes Prochaska, channeling Bagehot) was unworkable and that by restoring order, Louis Napoleon restored commerce and put food back into the shops. "The protection of industry and employment is the first duty of government," argues Prochaska (again, as Bagehot). "The real case for Napoleon was that within weeks of the coup d'état, society was no longer living from hand to mouth but felt sure of her next meal."

The coup came three years after the ferment and revolution that swept Europe in 1848, and, as Bagehot waspishly noted, after the new drafts of constitutions and parliaments, the dreams and slogans all followed by the inevitable counterrevolutions, all that remained was a parliament in Sardinia. In Britain, by contrast, the political system was able to adapt to the emergence of the new manufacturing cities and social classes. The Reform Act of 1832 widened the franchise to about a fifth of Britain's adult males, and a second reform, in 1867, enfranchised roughly half of them. Bagehot was not an unqualified admirer of this process; indeed, Wilson concluded, "he has no sympathy with the voiceless body of the people, with the 'mass of unknown men.' He conceives the work

of government to be a work which is possible only to the instructed few."

Bagehot concluded that order and stability must come first, then law.

It was not simply that Bagehot was an elitist. He was also a significant political theorist, and perhaps his most ambitious book was *Physics and Politics, or, Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of 'Natural Selection' and 'Inheritance' to Political Society*, written in the decade after Darwin's revolutionary *On the Origin of Species* came out in 1859. Bagehot concluded that order and stability must come first, then law, and only then the delicate and risky task of improvement and reform. He was persuaded that the heart of politics lay in national character, and that parliamentary government worked in Britain because the people were endowed with the useful virtue of stupidity. In lively and quick-spirited France, by contrast, Prochaska has Bagehot write, "There is some lurking quality in the character of the French nation which renders them but poorly adapted for the form and freedom and constitution of the state which they have so often, with such zeal and so vainly, attempted to establish."

Quoting from Bagehot's actual writings, which assert that free institutions thrive among dullards, Prochaska goes on, "The English are unrivalled in stupidity, by which I meant the roundabout common sense and dull custom that steers the opinion of most men. Stupidity is a characteristic suited to our carelessly created Constitution and its institutional freedoms."

While a brilliant and captivating man of his time, and one of the greatest journalists who ever lived, Bagehot was constrained by the limits of the profession. He could describe, analyze, and criticize, but with the important exception of his work on banking and finance, he could neither build nor create. As Wilson put it in a long and admiring essay after Bagehot's death, "You are not in contact with systems of thought or with principles that dictate action, but only with a perfect explanation."

In that regard, Bagehot lives on in the pages of today's globally influential *Economist*, of which he was the greatest editor. In his tradition, it has a fluent pen, a dashing style, a gift for explaining complex matters simply, and a knack for being just a careful inch or so ahead

of the conventional wisdom. And if it can be said to stand for any great principle, it is Bagehot's broad embrace of free markets, free trade, free ideas, and free institutions. It is the great legacy of a great man, and thanks to Prochaska's delightful confection, we now have a seriously entertaining account of how Bagehot came to be the extraordinary figure he was. The autobiographies of Mill and Gibbon will not be disgraced if this book is placed on the shelf alongside them. ■

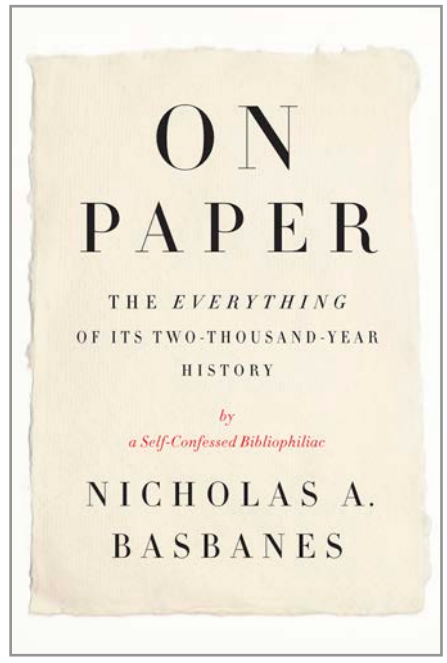
MARTIN WALKER is a Wilson Center senior scholar. His latest novel, *The Devil's Cave*, was published earlier this year.

Sheet by Sheet

ON PAPER:

THE EVERYTHING OF ITS TWO-THOUSAND-YEAR HISTORY

REVIEWED BY **CHRISTINE ROSEN**



By Nicholas A. Basbanes
Knopf
448 pp. $35

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY TECHNOLOGIES we take for granted, perhaps none so much as paper. Despite our increasing devotion to our smartphones and hyperbolic talk about a coming "paperless" society, the idea of going a day without a ream of paper in the office copy machine would alarm most people accustomed to using it. Because so many of paper's duties are humble or mundane—facilitator of personal hygiene, bureaucracy, and currency exchange, to name but a few—it is easy to overlook the central role it plays in our lives. Yet, as Nicholas Basbanes reminds us in his wide-ranging new study, *On Paper*, it is precisely this versatility and ubiquity that make paper worthy of respect, even in a digital age.

Basbanes identifies himself as a "bibliophiliac." His interest in paper grew out of a career exploring the culture of books in books of his own, including *Patience and Fortitude* (2001), about book preservationists, and the supremely entertaining *A Gentle Madness* (1995), about extreme book collectors and other bibliomanes. *On Paper* represents a new contribution to an ongoing dialogue about the future of reading and print. In recent years, writers such as American journalist Nicholas Carr have plumbed our collective cultural anxiety about the fate of the book, and of literacy itself. Recent studies such as English novelist Philip Hensher's ode to the lost art of handwriting betray a broader concern for the material culture of reading, writing, and publishing. The British writer Ian Sansom subtitled his own recent study of paper *An Elegy*.

Basbanes is more optimistic about

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Still rolling: Paper is a surprisingly durable material.

the future of paper, in part because he has so thoroughly explored its past. "In contrast to the explosive manner in which the Internet has galloped its way from continent to continent over just a few recent decades," he writes, "paper took root methodically, one country at a time. Yet, as 'paradigm shifts' go, it was monumental, offering a medium of cultural transmission that was supple, convenient, inexpensive, highly mobile, simple to make . . . and suited to hundreds of other applications, writing being just the most far-reaching."

As Basbanes demonstrates, this humble technology played a key role in many crucial historical moments: Gutenberg's printing press was remarkable, but it was nothing without paper on which to print. Paper was a key component of the first hot-air balloon, developed in 18th-century France, a great advance in the technology of flight. It has figured prominently in rebellions and political scandals over the centuries: Taxation of official paper documents in the American colonies by means of the Stamp Act of 1765 helped foment revolutionary

war with Britain. The Zimmermann Telegram, the coded message the German government sent to its ambassador in Mexico in 1917 authorizing him to promise U.S. territory to Mexico if it entered World War I on the German side, helped goad America into entering the war after the British deciphered it. Today, with the U.S. government pulping about one hundred million top-secret documents every year, our country's most sensitive records are being recycled into pizza boxes and egg cartons.

To give readers a sense of paper's past significance and continued popularity, Basbanes travels to China and Japan to witness the ancient art of papermaking. He describes how the Chinese invented paper two millennia ago, after which the innovation spread east to Korea and Japan, and west through Central Asia and, eventually, Europe. Early paper, made by combining the inner bark of trees with scraps of cloth, hemp, and fishing nets that were soaked, beaten into pulp, then stretched and dried across a bamboo frame, was a vast improvement on the clay tablets and papyrus scrolls used in previous eras. Buddhist monks intent on disseminating their sacred sutras were some of paper's most enthusiastic early purveyors. By the 17th century, papermaking was becoming industrialized; demand was high, fueled in part by the rise of newspapers. Among his polymathic pursuits, Benjamin Franklin was a paper merchant in the American colonies.

Buddhist monks intent on disseminating their sacred sutras were some of paper's most enthusiastic early purveyors.

Basbanes also considers basic human conveniences, such as facial tissue and toilet paper. Many of these products are manufactured by the U.S. megacorporation Kimberly-Clark, whose philosophy of paper use is summed up by one of the company's slogans, "One and done." Evidently, Americans have long had the odd distinction of being far more enthusiastic users of toilet tissue than people in other countries. Basbanes notes, "The legendary World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle reported how a chaplain who had gone through the pockets of 10 Americans killed in battle had found more packets of toilet paper than of any other item." He cites another historian who claims that the British army supplied

its soldiers with three sheets a day, while the Americans required a whopping twenty-two and a half. Today we remain enthusiastic consumers of toilet paper, but, in response to pressure from environmentalists, Kimberly-Clark increasingly relies on recycled materials to satisfy our habits.

Perhaps the most valuable form of paper, today as in the past, is money. Basbanes visits the Crane paper factory in Dalton, Massachusetts, which counts the U.S. Treasury as one of its largest clients. One Crane executive couldn't resist boasting to Basbanes that although the British five-pound note features fancy watermarking and illustrations, it only lasts an average of 12 months in circulation. By comparison, the American dollar enjoys a more robust three-and-a-half-year life.

Basbanes also examines the importance of paper for documenting identity and nationality, citing Czeslaw Milosz's observation in *The Captive Mind*: "The emperors of today have drawn conclusions from this simple truth: Whatever does not exist on paper, does not exist at all." Ownership of a passport has often been a matter of life and death, particularly during wartime, and Basbanes offers glimpses of the thriving black market in forged documents that has facilitated both crime and espionage.

As critical as certain pieces of government-issued paper can be, there's an awful lot of it that simply ends up in a file or a box somewhere, filed by bureaucratic record-keepers. After considering the Sisyphean task of archiving and storing federal government records, Basbanes approvingly cites Balzac's characterization of bureaucracy as a "giant power set in motion by dwarfs." Paper might seem ephemeral, but on a bureaucratic scale, it can pose an insurmountable challenge to render unreadable—as the East German secret police discovered when they attempted to destroy Stasi files in 1989 as the Berlin Wall fell.

Paper might seem ephemeral, but on a bureaucratic scale, it can pose an insurmountable challenge to render unreadable—as the East German secret police discovered when they attempted to destroy Stasi files in 1989.

Finally, Basbanes explores paper's invaluable role as a medium for creative work. Without access to paper, Leonardo da Vinci would not have been able to brainstorm his way through all those notebooks. Basbanes also offers a glimpse of a heterodox group of paper obsessives—the document chasers, antiquarian book collectors, philatelists, and others consumed by passion for particular kinds of paper. After showing Basbanes a draft copy of the Munich Agreement, annotated by both Hitler and Chamberlain, one renowned collector enthused, "When you ask me about the power of a piece of paper, I say the power of the document you are now holding in your hands is staggering. This is the document that starts World War II."

Readers searching for an overarching theme beyond paper's extraordinary history and utility will be disappointed by *On Paper*. The book is more a loose collection of essays on the many uses of paper than a chronological history. And parts of it, such as Basbanes's descriptions of particular papermaking techniques or the corporate histories of paper companies, suffer from a surfeit of detail. Although he promises an exploration of "the *idea* of paper," he doesn't quite deliver one. His explorations of the creation, culture, and endurance of paper are worthy subjects in their own right, however, and Basbanes is an excellent guide to them.

In the book's final chapters, Basbanes reflects on the paper that swirled around Lower Manhattan in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. In a few short hours, business documents, notes, cards, and other everyday paper ephemera were transformed into a horrifying kind of debris—singed, bloodstained reminders of the people who had perished. That so many pieces of paper survived while the steel-and-glass buildings that had housed them collapsed seemed surreal to those who witnessed that day. Today, we understand those papers not merely as material objects, but as symbols of loss and survival in which we invest great meaning. As Basbanes's book shows, paper, that most remarkable technology, has always been the most effective medium for capturing what is both practical and passionate about being human. ■

CHRISTINE ROSEN is a Future Tense Fellow at the New America Foundation and senior editor of *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology & Society*. Her newest book, *The Extinction of Experience*, will be published in 2014.

THE WILSON QUARTERLY

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