

# HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL REVIEW

Spring 2009

Volume 9

## CHANGE.



### *INSIDE THE REVIEW:*

MANAGING THE MOVEMENT: NEW GRASSROOTS POLITICS  
LEADING THE CHARGE: LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
FEELING THE PINCH: THE IMPACT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

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## FOREWORD: FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of the *Harvard Kennedy School Review* is about change – both climate change and President Barack Obama’s campaign for change. But we are not focusing on broad global warming challenges or on Obama’s sweeping promises to reform our government. Instead, our focus is on how grassroots action in these and other important areas of public policy has transformed the manner in which change is delivered.

In *Leading the Charge: Local Action on Climate Change*, we feature stories about local entrepreneurs and governments tackling climate change and other environmental issues in the absence of international agreement. In *Managing the Movement*, our authors analyze how a long-shot political campaign organized neighbors and friends through sophisticated technology, and then institutionalized bottom-up politics in the Democratic Party.

Throughout the *Review*, we explore the themes of local action, grassroots democracy, leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship. We included articles about the ways in which school boards can better represent the interests of students; about how gays, lesbians and allies are standing up for gay rights in socially conservative India; about on-the-ground solutions to the AIDS epidemic in Africa; and about how small loans to hard-working entrepreneurs can combat entrenched gang violence in El Salvador.

This year’s *Harvard Kennedy School Review* also emphasizes the human impacts of change. Kennedy School students report on their experiences on the ground—they tell us about the impact of school closings on students and teachers in Washington D.C., about life in refugee camps in Kenya and Lebanon, and about families trying to make ends meet in Mexico City.

In *Feeling the Pinch*, the financial crisis (arguably this year’s most glaring indication of change for many Americans) takes center stage. We look backward to explain what happened, and look forward to explain what it all means for the rising costs of health care, the potential failure of our social safety net, and the change the financial crisis may bring to our culture through its impact on the arts.

The *Harvard Kennedy School Review* is student-run, student-edited, and student-written. In this issue, we take advantage of the diversity of policy and regional expertise represented in our student body to look at change worldwide through the eyes of policymakers and entrepreneurs, as well as families, friends, and neighbors.



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# LOST IN TRANSLATION: LESSONS OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS FOR POLICYMAKERS (AND EVERYONE ELSE)

*by Evan Scott Simpson*

Most of us don't get captivated when reading about the financial crisis. The language is overwhelmingly technical, and the lessons learned remain lost in translation. With terms like "subprime mortgages," "securitization," "leverage," and "mark-to-market" bouncing all over the pages, it's no wonder our eyes glaze over, and we find ourselves tempted to relinquish understanding of this major event in public policy to "the experts." The problem is that those same experts are the ones who never saw this coming. Each of these concepts plays a vital role in the financial crisis, but until a year ago, few of us knew that any of these things existed. This article translates the jargon and makes a case for more attention to unintended consequences in future financial policy making.

## SUBPRIME FOR ALL

The immediate cause of the financial meltdown was that Americans couldn't pay their subprime mortgages—mortgages for those without the credit history or income to get traditional prime mortgages. Because the recipients of subprime mortgages were less likely to be able to pay them off, these more creative alternative loans generally had higher interest rates to compensate for the increased risk of default.

Some subprime loans were adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) that started at low interest rates but shifted higher after several years. Many required no down payment. Others were "interest only," where the amount owed would stay constant over time, with the borrower paying back only the interest each month.

And then there were "NINJA" loans. More than an amazing acronym, they were usually high-interest loans given to borrowers with "no income, no job, or assets."

There is nothing inherently wrong with ARMs. For home owners who expected the value of their home to continue to rise in the future, ARMs meant low-interest payments over the first years of a mortgage and refinancing when higher rates kicked in. Lenders liked this system too: with housing prices rising so quickly, any house they foreclosed on would likely be worth more than the value of the mortgage. The problem is that this whole system relied on the premise that housing prices would continue to rise for the indefinite future. When housing prices began to slump, the relationship between subprime mortgages and housing prices broke down.

*Policymakers tread a difficult path between dealing effectively with today's crisis and sowing the seeds of tomorrow's.*

This is the first lesson in unintended consequences, since public policy encouraged and enabled subprime lending. Setting out to create an "ownership society," the government helped to sow the seeds of our financial demise. Alan Greenspan, former chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, has been criticized for inflating the housing bubble by keeping interest rates too low for too long following the dot-com collapse. Today's Fed has similarly responded to financial concerns by dropping interest rates swiftly and sharply.

## FEELING THE PINCH

The lesson here is that policymakers tread a difficult path between dealing effectively with today's crisis and sowing the seeds of tomorrow's. But surely this new presidential administration is looking at the big picture to make sure that the global economic system is not heading toward another failure. Right?

### INSECURE SECURITIES

The next step along the causal trail of the financial crisis lies with a particularly hazy term: securitization. In addition to evoking images of brokers on Wall Street, securities are pieces of paper entitling the holder to the future earnings of something like a company. In the current crisis, mortgage-backed securities (MBSs) are nothing more than bundles of mortgages chopped into pieces and sold to investors. They entitle the holders to money from mortgage repayments.

*Policymakers encouraged securitization by establishing a variety of quasi-public institutions, like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and enabling them to borrow heavily at below-market rates.*

First, the bank that originally gave out the mortgage will sell that mortgage to an investment company. The investment company raises the cash it needs to buy the properties by selling these securities to investors, making the investors entitled to the loan repayments. In this situation, by diffusing the risk from mortgages throughout the financial system, MBSs allowed for more home loans at lower interest rates. And these securities were so easy to buy and trade that they rapidly spread to investors all over the world.

However, when the company that issues the mortgage immediately sells it to someone else, that

mortgage originator has less incentive to carefully assess risks. This is a classic case of moral hazard; securitization is what led to those oft-cited "lax lending standards."

Again, public policy is in large part responsible for developing securitization to a risky state. Policymakers encouraged securitization by establishing a variety of quasi-public institutions, like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and enabling them to borrow heavily at below-market rates to buy these mortgage-backed securities—securities that we now know were backed by questionable loans.

### LEVERAGING OURSELVES

But securities backed by bad loans still don't explain the full extent of the financial crisis. For that, we must take on yet another piece of jargon: leverage. Leverage describes the use of borrowed money to generate higher returns on an investment.

Here's how it works: we borrow some money to pay for a project instead of financing it with cash. If the interest rate for the loan is low enough, and the returns from the investment are high enough, we can spend less, even including interest, and improve the percentage return on the money we've invested. Leverage is what allows us to borrow money for a policy degree, for example. We leverage with the expectation that the education we are purchasing will generate enough long-term benefits to pay off the principal and the interest.

*Public policy greased the wheels of the dramatic overleveraging of the U.S. economy, this time through the tax code.*

But what happens if the returns on investment are not as good as we think they will be? We have to pay the interest on our loans plus any losses we have

in the returns on the project. To make things worse in this financial crisis situation, the rate at which investment banks were leveraging their investments was extraordinary. Say, for example, that a company invests with equal parts borrowed money and its own cash. Then it has a leverage ratio of only 1:1. In contrast, leverage ratios of 30:1 were common for investment banks at the beginning of the financial crisis.

Public policy greased the wheels of the dramatic overleveraging of the U.S. economy, this time through the tax code, which encourages companies to borrow by offering a deduction for interest payments on debt. The alternative to debt is to raise cash from shareholders and pay them back in stock dividends. But the tax code offers no corresponding deduction for returns to shareholders. As a result, companies quite reasonably decide on debt, which makes U.S. companies systematically overleveraged. And, clearly, when bets on securitized assets using borrowed money go bad, the losses can be swift and devastating.

### HOW TO ACCOUNT FOR MARK-TO-MARKET

After understanding how policy choices shepherded subprime loans into securitized assets utilizing vast amounts of leverage (whew, that's a mouthful), the final step is to understand how losses on subprime assets morphed into a global financial panic. So what do Dick Fuld, the former CEO of Lehman Brothers, and Robert Rubin, former Secretary of the Treasury and former chairman of Citigroup, have in common, besides their humiliating departures from their respective Wall Street firms? Both have blamed the mark-to-market accounting rule for exacerbating the financial crisis.

Understanding mark-to-market requires delving into the secret world of accountants. Courage, fair readers! The rule simply requires companies

to label assets on their balance sheets with the market price, where those prices are available. Previously, long-term assets (like mortgage-backed securities) could be held on the books at the price that was paid for them. Mark-to-market was a well-meaning reform: investors care about how much their company's assets will sell for today a lot more than ten years from now.

*These write-downs lead to a phenomenon known as the death spiral. Unlike some other terms in the financial crisis, this one is pretty self-explanatory.*

Mortgage-backed securities are long-lived assets—they pay out over the life of the mortgages. So while in the past, an investor might have chosen to hold the MBS this whole time, recognizing payments as they came in, and eventually recognizing a gain or loss based on the initial purchase price of the MBS, they could no longer do this. Under mark-to-market rules, companies are now forced to write down the value of their assets when the market price falls, even if they don't want to sell into that market just then.

These write-downs lead to a phenomenon known as the death spiral. Unlike some other terms in the financial crisis, this one is pretty self-explanatory. When investors see their assets being marked down to low prices, they get worried and sell those assets at fire-sale prices, causing further write-downs, and so on.

The losses on bad subprime loans, rather than being spread over the course of years, hit investors over a short period of time. And the fact that investors could, in theory, write up the value of assets when times get better is of little consolation to Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, etc.

## FEELING THE PINCH

The mark-to-market experience stands as a warning to policymakers that even minor changes in esoteric rules with the best of intentions can have devastating consequences under certain circumstances.

### THE RISK OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES IN PUBLIC POLICY

In retrospect, it is difficult to understand how more policymakers did not see the crisis coming. Housing prices were growing far faster than household income, and companies and households had been borrowing money as never before.

Nevertheless, these warning signs were largely ignored by the policy community. This could be due to the fact that financial experts did not write about them in our language.

At the end of the day, policymakers should take away from this experience an understanding that shortsighted goals can create troubling long-term implications. We can only hope that today's solutions to the financial crisis don't leave us inching toward the next meltdown.

*Evan Simpson is a joint degree student at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Harvard Law School. He is pursuing a career in international corporate and securities law.*

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## FROM MALTHUS TO PAULSON: PUTTING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS IN CONTEXT

*by Mikra Krasniqi*

The spectacular meltdown in the financial markets is not an end in itself but another leap in the long journey that mankind set off somewhere at the dawn of the 18th century. Before the Industrial Revolution lifted the thick veil of darkness and poverty that had engulfed the world for millennia, millions of people led the kinds of lives described by British political philosopher Thomas Hobbes as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Although modern markets are plagued by different problems than those that defined the Hobbesian world, studying the era before Industrial Revolution is crucial to understanding the dynamic and volatile nature of today's economic order and financial crisis.

When Hobbes was writing in the 17th century, his home of England was one of the two most economically advanced countries in the world. Yet the

quality of life was no better than it was for those who lived during the early agricultural era thousands of years earlier.

*At the heart of this domino effect is human irrationality, compounded by consistently unpredictable behavior.*

The concept sounds strange, but the explanation is quite simple: it's called the Malthusian Trap. Named after the famous British economist, Thomas Malthus, the idea is that any income gains would always be canceled out by population growth when not balanced by increased productivity and innovation.

The Industrial Revolution ended the Malthusian era, as capital markets introduced humans to the

secrets of productivity. These times illuminated the power of human ingenuity and sparked two centuries of technological innovation and unprecedented economic growth. And while the onset of capitalism and modern financial markets transformed millions of lives for the better, it also introduced the world to the problems that arise when markets are based solely on principles of human rationality and consistency in increasing economic welfare.

In its classic study of boom and bust, *Manias, Panics, and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises*, Charles Kindleberger suggests that the very root of all financial crises throughout modern history lies in the psychology of crowds. During an economic boom, like the most recent one, any sudden shock will spark a vibration throughout the system. As word spreads, investors—lacking any real information about the state of the immediate future—start to panic and withdraw their money from the market. As money dries out, prices of overvalued assets begin to fall, which, in turn, exposes myriad bad investments. At the heart of this domino effect is human irrationality, compounded by consistently unpredictable behavior.

Former Federal Reserve Chief Alan Greenspan said we were living in a “once-in-a-century type of event.” Perhaps. Crises of such magnitude are rare, but this is not because we learn from our mistakes. In fact, the crises happen because decision makers at the center of financial bubbles usually have no living memory of the last major crisis. Confronting these difficult times calls for policy making rooted in pragmatic ideas and strong will that never loses sight of the big picture.

*Mikra Krasniqi is a 2010 MPA candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He has previously worked in economic consulting for firms and organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, Bearing Point, and KPMG.*

### DR. BANKRUPTCY, OR:

#### *HOW WE LOST ALL OUR MONEY AND LEARNED TO LOVE THE MINIMUM WAGE*

*The following is a timeline of the events that led to the current U.S. financial crisis.*

*2/27/07: Freddie Mac announces that it will stop purchasing risky subprime mortgages and mortgage-backed securities.*

*8/6/07: American Home Mortgage Investment Corporation, a major player in the subprime market, files for bankruptcy protection following losses related to mortgages.*

*2/17/08: Northern Rock, one of the largest British mortgage lenders, is taken over by the state.*

*3/14/08: Federal Reserve approves the financing for JP Morgan's takeover of Bear Stearns.*

*4/15/08: Lehman Brothers Holding Co. files for bankruptcy protection.*

*10/3/08: Congress passes and President Bush signs legislation establishing the Troubled Asset Relief Program.*

*12/19/08 : Treasury approves loans of \$13.4B for General Motors and \$4.0B for Chrysler.*

*2/17/09: President Obama signs the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law, including a variety of tax breaks and spending proposals to jumpstart the economy.*

*3/23/09: The Treasury announces plans for Public-Private Investment Program to encourage private investors to purchase mortgage-backed securities from financial institutions.*

# THE FINANCIAL CRISIS: A REAL ARTBREAKER

*by Thor Steingraber and Jason McCoy*

The walls of the Pentagon are covered with art—portraits, paintings of battle scenes, quilts sewn by admiring citizens, and crayon drawings made by schoolchildren. The prominence of these pieces serves as testament to the power of art to convey and preserve the values of America's military leadership and, indeed, the history of a nation.

*Foundations have lost nearly one-third of their assets, and some contributors will reduce funding by as much as 50 percent in the coming year.*

Most American arts organizations, however, are nonprofits operating at the margins and relying on charitable contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations. In the current economic downturn, these supporters are retreating. According to the 10 February 2009 issue of *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, foundations have lost nearly one-third of their assets, and some contributors will reduce funding by as much as 50 percent in the coming year. Americans for the Arts predicts that 10 percent of all arts organizations will shut down operations.

The crisis has extended its reach to every corner of the sector. In Massachusetts, Brandeis University announced the closing of its Rose Art Museum. "The Rose," a campus landmark with an international reputation, functioned as a self-supporting, independent operating unit. Nonetheless, in January the school's trustees voted to close the museum and liquidate its assets, selling its Picasso, Warhol, and many other valuable artworks in a depressed marketplace where they would be undervalued. The school has since backtracked a bit on this, stating that it will form a committee

to evaluate the future of the museum. Regardless, this decision sent a chilling message: during tough economic times, the arts are dispensable.

In Los Angeles, longtime philanthropist Eli Broad prevented the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) from facing a similar fate, hatching a \$30 million rescue plan for one of the institutions that has been so prominent in the revitalization of downtown Los Angeles. Cities nationwide have recognized the benefits of arts organizations as magnets for community development and urban renewal. Studies consistently establish that the return on investment in the arts is sizable. Beyond the cultural benefits, museums such as these generate jobs, revenue, and a sizable tax base. One study by Americans for the Arts attests that this is a \$166.2 billion-dollar industry, generating nearly \$30 billion in taxes. In times like these, one cannot overlook the capacity of the arts as an economic engine.

The arts are under siege in Congress as well. The Setting Priorities in Spending Act of 2005 pitted charitable causes against each other, proposing to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education's "Arts in Education" program and reallocate its funds toward Hurricane Katrina disaster relief. The arts have also been singled out from the rest of the nonprofit sector by Congressional Republicans who have threatened to eliminate their federally guaranteed tax-exempt status as charitable organizations. More recently, U.S. President Barack Obama's stimulus plan provoked an outcry against the \$50 million allotment for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)—an amount equal to .00625% of the total package. As Representative Jack Kingston (R-GA) exhorted in a 5 February 2009 *Boston Globe* article, "We have real people out of work right now and putting \$50 million in the NEA and pretending that's going to save jobs . . . is disingenuous."

Sadly, this is a problem faced perennially by the arts sector. The value of hospitals, schools, shelters, and other charities are embraced in good and bad times alike, but arts organizations are repeatedly required to defend their public value. If the arts sector is to withstand the collective onslaught it currently faces, immediate and progressive leadership must come in two forms.

*[The arts] is a \$166.2 billion-dollar industry, generating nearly \$30 billion in taxes.*

First, the arts must develop and promote strong leadership within the sector itself. Arts organizations are lean operations, often headed by artists who have climbed up through the ranks. At even the most sophisticated organizations, leaders find themselves unprepared for the present challenges. On the other hand, Michael Kaiser, president of Washington, D.C.'s John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, has provided exemplary leadership in the field. An alumnus of MIT's Sloan School, Kaiser launched a new initiative called "Arts in Crisis," a program that supports and trains leaders from all arts disciplines around the nation. The program emphasizes the importance of sound management practices and provides a network for sharing effective management strategies in the face of the current crisis.

Secondly, the federal government should pursue a more comprehensive and innovative approach to arts policy. Whereas the governments of most developed nations have ministries or secretaries for arts and culture, the U.S.'s NEA is a sub-sub-agency, tucked into the National Endowment for the Humanities, which is itself under the Department of the Interior. Its \$160 million-dollar annual budget pales in comparison to that of other countries. For every per-capita dollar the NEA spends, France's Ministry of Culture spends

more than \$13,000. Admittedly, policy is not built upon dollars and cents alone, but rather on substantive programs that aim to produce specific benefits. Two examples are found in a report to President Obama.

Sixteen professional arts organizations contributed to the Recommendations to the Office of Presidential Transition, describing major policies intended to produce far-reaching results. The recommendations include the deployment of the arts as a tool to prepare schoolchildren entering an economy that increasingly values creative thinking, as well as the engagement of artists as positive agents in international cultural exchange and American image-building abroad.

*Sixteen professional arts organizations contributed to the Recommendations to the Office of Presidential Transition.*

Perhaps the greatest challenge for this industry is one of public relations. During a recession, the arts are often first on the chopping block, criticized for being elitist, intellectual, superfluous, and even subversive. Arts leaders and policy makers must join forces to reframe this debate. Their approach must be as inclusive as it is visionary, emphasizing the unique capacity of the arts to build communities, create economic opportunities, educate young people, and act as a powerful tool in building the values of institutions and nations. If the Pentagon seems an unlikely example in this argument, it is only because the definition and purpose of art has been misrepresented for far too long.

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# PUTTING PRICES ON YOUR DOCTOR'S MENU: HELPING YOUR DOCTOR HELP YOU

*by Neel Shah*

Over the last four years, I've had the opportunity to work at the best academic medical centers in the country, alongside some of the most competent and caring doctors one can imagine. These doctors made every effort to address the needs of their patients, diligently and compassionately attending to each physical symptom. But even the best doctors neglect something critical: the bill.

*The United States spends \$700 billion (an amount comparable to our total spending on the Iraq War) each year on medical tests and procedures that do not measurably improve health outcomes.*

In a time when tightening belts and pinching pennies has become especially important, we too often pay exorbitant amounts—enough to bankrupt two million American families a year—on medical care we may not even need. As patients, we'll spend hundreds of dollars on a medication we are prescribed, even when a generic version is available that contains the exact same stuff and is 90 percent cheaper. We might pay thousands of dollars for an MRI, even when its results are unlikely to be informative.

The reason is painfully simple. Information on the prices patients face is rarely available to doctors when they are deciding which tests and treatments will go on the bill. A 2003 American Medical Association study showed that fewer than one in five doctors understands how much their patients pay for care.

In fact, health care is the only sector in our market economy where we routinely contract for services without knowing what the costs are or even exactly what we are buying. For good reasons, we trust doctors to make purchasing decisions for us. But when doctors are looking at menus without prices, it's easy for them to order filet mignon at every meal—even when their patients are the ones picking up the tab.

True, when we are sick, certain tests and treatments may be appropriate no matter how much they cost. Doctors weigh several factors when ordering tests, including how sick the patient is and how good the test is. However, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the United States spends \$700 billion (an amount comparable to our total spending on the Iraq War) each year on medical tests and procedures that do not measurably improve health outcomes.

Given this evidence of wasteful spending, and the impact it has on Americans, it would be sensible to also make costs part of that calculus.

This is especially true given the potentially catastrophic impact of the rising costs of health care. Today, spending on health care is approximately 16 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), up from 8 percent twenty years ago and 4 percent twenty years before that. In the near future, Medicare and Medicaid, which account for half of this spending, will become unsustainable. Investment in other things that matter to us—roads, schools, security—will be crowded out.

To add insult to injury, we're not even getting much bang for our buck. A 2008 Health Affairs report compared health care spending in the United



States to other countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Per capita, the United States spends double the amount everyone else does, but we rank in the bottom half of developed countries for most health-quality indicators.

Debates about this cost-quality discrepancy are inevitably abstracted to the population as a whole—the millions who cannot afford coverage, the staggering percentages of GDP. The underlying problem is often framed as an irreconcilable tension between the interests of individual patients to have everything possible done and the collective interests of all of us to have a sustainable system. But there may be a simple solution.

Doctors are trained to focus entirely on the patient in front of them. Unlike policy makers, they are not trained to assume responsibility for entire populations—and rightly so. If you were sick, you would want your doctors to make

decisions about your care based on their assessment of you, and only you.

It's no wonder that high-level policy discussions about the macroeconomic implications of health care sometimes fall flat at medical conferences. The debate must be reframed in terms of the potential financial burdens a doctor's decisions may impose on the patient in front of them. The availability of price information at the point of care would do just that.

Putting prices on doctors' menus offers an opportunity to move beyond the apparent tension between individual and collective interests. In the end, doctors, policy makers, and patients can all agree that we don't always need to order the filet mignon.

*Neel Shah recently completed the requirements for his medical degree and is currently launching Costs of Care, a nonprofit organization aimed at preventing medical bankruptcy by providing doctors with price information.*

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## MAKING WELFARE WORK (IN THIS JOB MARKET)

*by Kristen S. Joyce*

Americans love work. Employees in the United States work more hours than their counterparts in the rest of the industrialized world and are proud of their strong work ethic.

When former U.S. President Bill Clinton announced in 1996 that welfare as we knew it was over, and welfare recipients could no longer evade employment, he received bipartisan support in his mission. However, tying eligibility for the social safety net to work assumes that needy families have the ability to work for their benefits. With increasing layoffs and companies going bankrupt daily, this assumption may no longer hold.

The safety net in the United States mainly comprises two federally funded programs: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). TANF, which replaced the old welfare system in 1996, provides short-term income support to families with earnings below a certain state-determined threshold. To receive benefits, adult family members must be engaged in work or work-related activities. The EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for working individuals and families based on labor market earnings. Both of these programs help millions of families each year, but only families that can find work. So what happens when that work disappears?

## FEELING THE PINCH

In August 1996, when Congress passed welfare reform, unemployment was 5.1 percent and on the decline. But even in these healthier economic times, mothers who moved into the labor force still needed government-sponsored support to make ends meet. Many of the jobs for which they were qualified offered only part-time work without benefits or paid only the minimum wage. They still needed child care subsidies and income support to reach self-sufficiency.

*Since the recession began in December 2007, there are now 3.6 million more Americans without work.*

Today, this situation is even more precarious. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that since the recession began in December 2007, there are now 3.6 million more Americans without work (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009). A November 2008 Boston Globe article cited the current national rate of unemployment growth as the fastest seen in 26 years (Wallack 2008). In December 2008, this growth continued, with the unemployment rate reaching 7.2 percent (Uchitelle 2009). Many of the job losses were in traditionally working-class industries: manufacturing, construction, and the service sector. Those already struggling at the lowest end of the economic ladder are facing unprecedented job and income insecurity.

As these trends continue, we will see more jobs lost in the coming months and a deeper and more painful recession. But unlike the last time the United States was in recession, the country now has a much thinner safety net.

Under the current federal welfare rules, families can only receive benefits for a maximum of five years. And some states have adopted even more stringent time limits. In Massachusetts, for instance, families can collect for only two years within a five-

year window. While collecting, able adults must be actively looking for employment. If they cannot find a job, they can take training courses or volunteer for some time. But eventually they will be removed from the rolls, cut off, and denied support. Many families may have already reached this threshold. If they find themselves unemployed in the coming months, they will be turned away at the TANF door.

Without TANF, some families will look to Unemployment Insurance (UI) to catch their fall. Unemployment Insurance, a joint federal-state program, allows workers to collect benefits when they lose their job through no fault of their own. The amount of available benefits is based on how long an individual has worked, and the program is funded by taxes levied on employers. But as Brookings Economist Rebecca Blank testified in September 2008 before the Joint Economic Committee, "less than 40 percent of the unemployed receive unemployment assistance" (Blank 2008). She explains that many low-wage workers are ineligible because they haven't held their job long enough or worked the necessary hours.

*Less than 40 percent of the unemployed receive unemployment assistance.*

Without public assistance or unemployment insurance, the outlook for many families is grim. Some will be able to turn to extended family members for support. But others will not have a network to rely on and will face unemployment alone. These families will begin to deplete whatever savings they may have, cut spending, eat less, and may eventually become homeless.

Local nonprofits offering food and temporary shelter will do their best to try to fill the void. But in a widespread recession, local action will not be enough. As of December 2008, food banks across

the country were reporting a 30 percent increase from the year before in requests for emergency food assistance, according to a survey conducted by Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger relief organization (Feeding America 2009). Middle- and upper-class families will likely step up to try to support these organizations.

A recent study conducted by Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy showed that during the previous four long-lasting recessions, growth in individual giving to nonprofit social service organizations has doubled to five percent (Philanthropy Journal 2008). But although this growth is encouraging, the center states even this is not enough to help agencies keep up with the growing demand.

Given this harsh economic situation, there are two important steps the federal government can take to help ensure low-income families stay afloat: (1) extend and expand the Unemployment Insurance program, and (2) increase funding for local support services.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, signed into law on 17 February, does just this. The act allocates \$35.8 billion to extend unemployment benefits through the end of 2009 and increases the weekly payment by \$25. Additionally, \$4.2 billion will go to states in the form of one-time grants to modernize their systems and cover administrative costs to increase coverage among low-wage and part-time workers.

Although this expansion will cost a total of \$40 billion, economists predict that every dollar invested in UI benefits results in \$1.73 in economic output. The Recovery Act will go a long way toward cushioning the fall for many newly unemployed Americans, but as the recession goes on, more may be needed.

Expanding UI is a politically viable policy option, since eligibility is still tied to work. UI is also

available to workers without children, who are hit just as hard by the recession but have fewer options for support. Yet there will still be families whom UI cannot help. Some adults face multiple barriers to employment, such as low education, substance abuse, and mental health issues. These barriers may have prevented them from working even in good economic times.

*The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009... allocates \$35.8 billion to extend unemployment benefits through the end of 2009 and increases the weekly payment by \$25.*

For these families, local support services will likely be the only option left. The Recovery Act allocates \$100 million to organizations providing emergency food and shelter, since they will face growing demand from those turned away from more traditional government support programs. Funds for these services will become increasingly important as more Americans begin to rely on them.

Ending welfare as we knew it moved families off the rolls and into work. It decreased welfare dependency and welfare spending. But as we find out more and more each day, work alone cannot serve as a safety net for unemployment. In times like these, when the less fortunate have lost their ability to work and the fortunate have lost their ability to give enough, strengthening and expanding our safety net will ensure that all Americans have the chance to work again.

*Kristen S. Joyce is a 2009 MPP candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University studying poverty and inequality. Her areas of interest include welfare, the low-wage workforce, and income supports.*

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## GETTING ON BOARD: HOW TO MAKE SCHOOL BOARDS REPRESENT STUDENTS

by Jason Cabico and Erica E. Harrison

In March 2007, police officers stood on guard, and news media swarmed as the Clayton County, Georgia, School Board members took their seats. An outraged mob of parents and other taxpayers had descended on the meeting after the state of Georgia threatened the accreditation of the district, citing severe mismanagement by the school board. Only four times in U.S. history has a school district's accreditation been revoked.

To save the district (and appease the mob), the school board ousted one of its own members by a vote of five to three, after accusations that the board member did not even live in the county. The crowd rejoiced, taking the ejection as a sign of change and increased accountability. Unfortunately, the removal of the board member also validated the community and the state's claims that the school board had been poorly managed.

*The underwhelming progress of U.S. public schools... can no longer be ignored. School districts must be reformed systematically, and reforms should start with school boards.*

Controversies like the one that engulfed Clayton County are increasingly common. Last year, Howard Blume reported in the September 3 2008 issue of the Los Angeles Times that Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa had attempted to take over the Los Angeles Unified School District. In the end, the mayor was granted authority to introduce reforms that the school board had previously failed to institute in ten schools in the chronically low-performing district. More recently, the Associated

Press disclosed that a member of the Kansas City school board resigned from her seat, frustrated with the inability of the school board to confront its faulty practices: as her district's performance languished, her colleagues had just fired the twenty-fourth superintendent in thirty-nine years and refused to address their own accreditation problems.

Admittedly, not all cases are this dismal. In some school districts, school boards work effectively: public schools thrive, teachers and faculties are productive, and students perform well on assessments. For these flourishing (often wealthy) districts, school boards deliver a good education.

If these successes were the rule, rather than the exception, perhaps the United States would lead comparable countries in student performance. Perhaps there would be no achievement gap, campaign rhetoric on education policy, frowns at the mention of standardized testing or teacher pay incentives, or alarming high school absenteeism statistics. But the underwhelming progress of U.S. public schools to meet national expectations can no longer be ignored. School districts must be reformed systematically, and reforms should start with school boards.

### THE CONUNDRUM OF SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

The failure in U.S. schools cannot be reduced to a simple failure of students to pass certain tests. Institutional obstacles hinder improvement in public education systems; namely, school boards are not equipped with formal feedback channels, so members pursue interests that are misaligned with student achievement.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Governance problems persist for three reasons:

1. Electoral structures take away incentives for board members to act in the interest of education.
2. School boards are resistant to changing the way they govern themselves, making reform extremely difficult.
3. It is difficult to identify those responsible for student achievement failures and those who should be held accountable for improvements.

Given the current school board structure, elections are probably not the best mechanism for choosing education policy leaders. By necessity, a candidate must emphasize political prowess over leadership by first capturing a constituency and a public endorsement before he or she can successfully compete. Campaigns may focus on the candidate's resentment against federal policies (like No Child Left Behind) instead of emphasizing immediate plans to raise student achievement in the community. Furthermore, school board elections rely on the votes of property owners, who prefer lower property taxes to raising funds for school district improvements.

*Given the current school board structure, elections are probably not the best mechanism for choosing education policy leaders.*

This political climate makes board members more susceptible to self-promotion, self-aggrandizement, and infighting once in office. Because board members set board-meeting agendas, they can strategically distance themselves from other administrators and shy away from critical issues. However, when this happens there is no "real-time" mechanism for citizens to reclaim the focus. Opinions go unheard until the next election cycle, or longer.

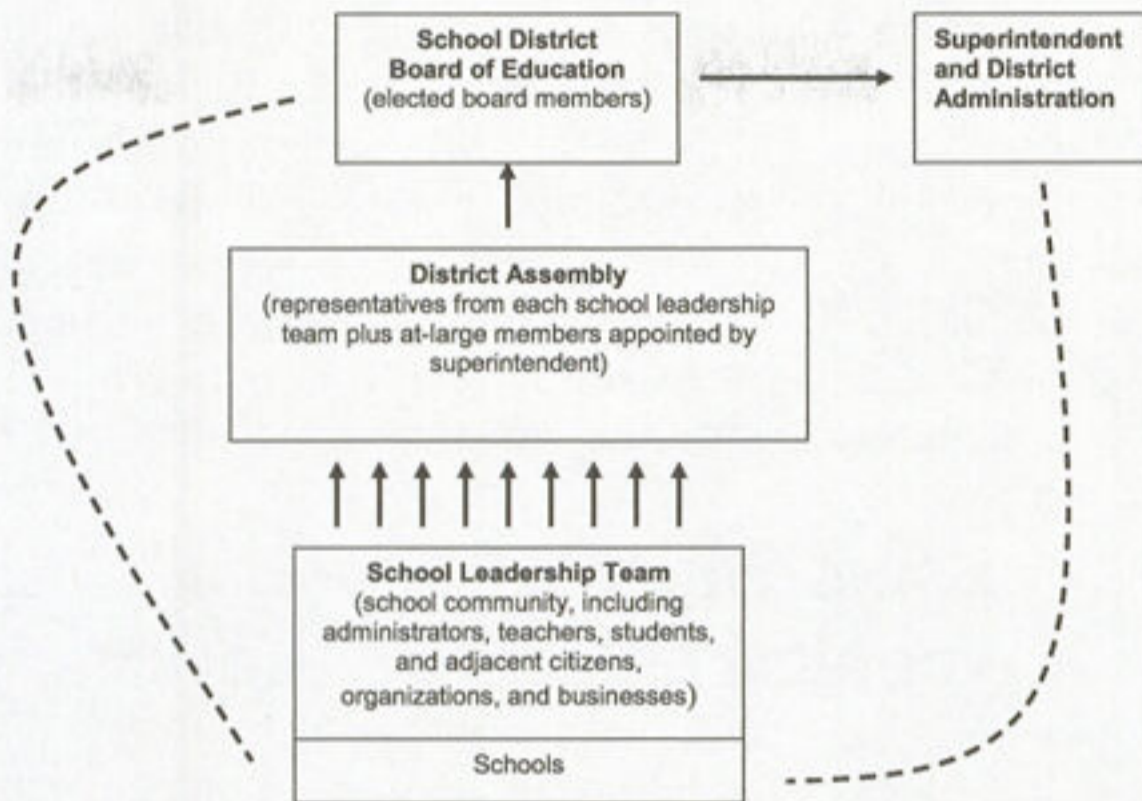
The second explanation of school board intractability speaks to the traditionalism of the U.S. education model. School boards are an accepted part of local educational governance, and most localities retain autonomous control. The National Center for Education Statistics counts more than 97,000 public schools overseeing the education of nearly 49 million students in the United States. Those boards' decisions, however, are regulated by two other tiers of government: (1) the federal government, via Congress and the U.S. Department of Education, and (2) State Boards of Education (BOEs). State BOEs battle with state and federal education departments when they intrude on issues traditionally decided under the purview of local school boards.

*School boards lack the expertise, familiarity, and electoral mandate to act as intensive hands-on managers.*

While district administration is the responsibility of the superintendent, it is not uncommon for school boards to issue mandates that affect how administrative operations are carried out. Additionally, school board members (perhaps in order to appear responsive to constituents) are commonly known to contact principals directly with requests. However, school boards lack the expertise, familiarity, and electoral mandate to act as intensive hands-on managers; they should be focusing on district-level policy and vision-setting, not intrusive micromanagement of superintendents and educators.

Our suggestion to overhaul how school boards operate is clearly not only politically disagreeable, but systematically delicate. How then, should school boards change so that their decisions enable student achievement without micromanagement, and who should be responsible for implementing the required reforms?

**SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLY MODEL**



*The School Leadership Team and District Assembly Model (SLT-DA) proposal prioritizes local needs and feedback of each school and transmits them to a representative district assembly. It has two new tiers, both which have a deliberative function: the school leadership team (SLT) and the district assembly (DA). The name of the model is taken from New York City schools, where SLTs are “school-based organizations composed of an equal number of parents and staff. They meet at least once a month and determine the structure for school-based planning and shared decision-making,” according to the New York City Department of Education. The “school leadership team” moniker better conveys the greater inclusivity and coordinating role of the deliberative school-level body than does the idea of a “council.”*

**OUR PROPOSAL: THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLY MODEL**

The restoration of American school board governance depends on increasing public participation, giving school-level decision making back to the schools, allowing the community partial control of school board agendas, and committing the school board to a district-level policy-making body for the advancement of student achievement. School districts can be reoriented using a two-level deliberative process. Our model relies on public wisdom, participation, increased transparency, and citizen control.

Often, schools are the most disempowered units of the school system, even though they are the obvious centers of educational activity and related community interactions. In fact, information and feedback rarely come up from schools as quickly as they flow down to them, causing school boards to become detached from their own

communities. To counter these conditions, citizens must be given leverage in school boards. Periodic, retrospective elections evaluate the previous performance of school board members in some ways, but they are not a panacea. Instead, concerns must be heard at the same time as decisions are being made, if not before.

**THE SLT-DA MODEL: CAPTURING A SUFFICIENT PUBLIC CONSENSUS**

Schools are the heart of education: each has its own character and culture, guided by its administration. Our model respects this uniqueness and does not interfere with the ways in which schools operate. Each school, instead, forms deliberative bodies that draw upon internal groups (administrators, teachers, parents, students) and upon external community stakeholders (support organizations, education reformers, and private and nonprofit companies) to determine goals and plans for the school community. If there is a functioning parent outreach committee already

## LESSONS LEARNED

present in a school, in most cases it can be converted into this deliberative body and still meet the aims of the model. The SLT deliberates about the most important issues connected to student achievement. It also advances larger, overarching priorities (i.e., curriculum textbooks or placement testing guidelines) to the district assembly.

The district assembly would comprise delegates from each SLT, as well as several at-large members appointed by the district superintendent. School representation will help ensure communication of the public interest, while district administrative representatives would infuse technical and institutional knowledge that may not be possessed at the school level. Other community supporters could also provide assistance, expertise, and perspective; however, only actual SLT representatives would have voting power to decide the concerns that are prioritized into a formal proposal.

*The SLT deliberates about the most important issues...[and] advances larger, overarching priorities (i.e., curriculum textbooks or placement testing guidelines) to the district assembly.*

A successful district assembly produces a report that is presented for use at each upcoming school board meeting. As part of this new model, a DA has discretion to designate up to half of the agenda items at each school board meeting. This makes the community's priorities clear to the governing school board. The school board, however, retains final decision-making authority after considering all information from DAs, the superintendent, and its own staff.

This process becomes cyclical as new community priorities and interests form in response to school board and potentially also state- and national-

level decisions. The SLT-DA process carries feedback up the chain so that the board can make necessary changes. Thus, decisions and policies are constantly formulated, assessed, and adjusted in response to changing conditions and needs. The public would be able to judge school board performance more objectively. Furthermore, the community could determine whether performance has improved in the areas it raised before the school board. So although the school board can rule against public opinion, it must now justify its actions to the community in order to retain legitimacy.

### USING THE SLT-DA MODEL TO ADDRESS EXISTING PROBLEMS

Under our model, school boards are much more likely to govern on issues the community perceives as most significant. The school board can turn school management over to the superintendent without having to monitor affairs within the schools. The prioritized district assembly reports give the board plenty of work, assuming they take the briefings seriously.

The system further makes accountability quite simple. Even residents who do not participate in the process would be able to use the Internet to view the most current DA report. These reports are public relations tools and performance metrics, as well as a mechanism to raise the level of competency expected from board members.

For a board member to simply attend meetings, make public appearances, and muddle through issues would be unacceptable. Members could no longer spend their time giving lip service to issues; they must bring the bacon home in the same way legislators are expected to provide for their district. Moreover, new open participation opportunities minimize the ability of special interests to seize district attention.



## THE DIFFICULTIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Because the success of this model does not depend on a top-down, directive-ridden prescription, it will still work where school districts are already strapped for resources—a complication that precludes many school reform initiatives from achieving their intended results. The central elements of this proposal are the community organization it creates and the direct authority it awards for those collective efforts. Our proposal does not tell communities what to do. Communities tell their school boards what they want to do.

*No longer must the principal be the sole voice of the school; the school and its community are now involved.*

The model will pay for itself. Initially, the district assembly will need resources to facilitate communication, organize records, and operate meetings, but little more is required. Moreover, the minimal costs involved in this request will be offset by the benefit of reducing costs elsewhere. School districts will no longer need to invest money into programs that the community does prioritize. Boards can operate in a sphere of informed decision making.

Many schools already engage in deliberations; our proposal only formalizes this process and gives schools an appropriate method by which to advance community interests. No longer must the principal be the sole voice of the school; the school and its community are now involved. Punitive consequences are not needed, as non-involvement ultimately hurts the school, especially as other schools in the district increasingly organize and participate.

Our proposal may seem time-consuming for participants, but in fact, many community residents already devote significant time to their school districts. At many schools, teachers already serve on school committees or go to district-wide trainings, and even the poorest of schools have some level of parental involvement. While we accept that the SLT-DA Model calls for an increased layer of responsibility, we believe that the power to control agenda items for the board provides more than enough incentive for community involvement. The proposal may even serve as a protection against the kinds of impasses that lead to drastic action, like mayoral capture of a district.

## GETTING BEYOND THE STATUS QUO

The SLT-DA model is a low-cost, high-impact reform. Residents can participate as much or as little as they like. So long as a consistent proportion of the community is involved, more informed decisions will be made. Furthermore, the SLT-DA model is inherently more desirable than the status quo of most school board governance arrangements because it generates bottom-up consensus, internal capacity, and local control.

If anything, the political hurdle of establishing the model is the greatest barrier preventing its adoption and full implementation, especially because the model has the potential to undermine the power of existing players—the BOE, teachers' unions, and strong individual actors. School board leaders, school administrators, or other entrenched factions may initially oppose this proposal, but the SLT-DA model actually benefits them. School board members make their job more salient by listening to community concerns. School administrators also benefit because teachers, parents, and residents will be more easily mobilized when schools need the help of volunteers and classroom assistants.

## LESSONS LEARNED

In addition, the number of parents and taxpayers disgruntled with school district decision making and resource allocation provide the needed support for reconfiguring school boards.

It is difficult to downplay the potential impact of providing for greater scrutiny of the problems and choices facing a school district. If school board policies and governance are not, in fact, problems holding back student achievement, then the real culprits will likely be exposed when our model is adopted. Furthermore, the model's reliance on consensus and cooperative participation supports the decision-making ability of all school system actors. Decision makers at the top are driven to take notice and improve district policies that benefit the entire district. In the process, the model

can empower school communities—which, for too long, have remained at the bottom—to lead themselves to the necessary success for their schools.

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## CLOSING THE GAP:

### THE HUMAN IMPACT OF D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL CLOSINGS

*by Roy Chan*

“Do you know what you’re getting yourself into?” Dianna Robinson threatened me, in a tone that sounded as if she was concerned for my safety. “Marion Barry will cut your head off.”

As I pictured the former Washington, D.C. mayor decapitating me, she continued, “You must be new here, so you have no idea how important this is to Councilman Barry. He will make sure you never work in this town again.”

*Earlier that day, maintenance and security personnel at the school had reported fights in classrooms and hallways, damaged property, and guns brought into the building.*

Ms. Robinson was referring to my claim that the East of the River Academy—a summer work program she ran at P.R. Harris Middle School—was no longer serving its purpose. This summer program owed its existence to a 1979 act created by then-Mayor Barry, entitled the District Youth Employment Act, which guaranteed a paid summer job to every D.C. youth ages fourteen to twenty-one through programs operated by community agencies.

Earlier that day, maintenance and security personnel at the school had reported fights in classrooms and hallways, damaged property, and guns brought into the building. Meanwhile, teenagers were sitting in the school’s auditorium—occasionally picking fights with each other and vandalizing school property—for four hours each day but signing their time sheets for and being paid for six.

On 25 July 2008, nearly four weeks after my conversation with Ms. Robinson, the city shut down the East of the River Academy summer work program. As promised, Councilman Barry was upset.

"The city illegally and irresponsibly shut this program down," Barry claimed. "These young people have been done an injustice."

*Located in Southeast D.C.'s troubled Ward 8, P.R. Harris was one of the twenty-three public schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee decided to close after the 2007-2008 school year.*

*The Washington Post* reported that leaders of the program, including Ms. Robinson, threatened to sue the city. On the other hand, some of the youth who participated in the program were glad it had been terminated. "I was put to work cleaning toilets," said seventeen-year-old Shannon Simms. "If that's what you think of us, I don't even want a summer job." Timothy Williams, fifteen, added, "I feel a little bit unsafe up there because it's a beef with my neighborhood" (Birnbaum 2008).

My primary concern was not how Ms. Robinson ran her work program, or even the well-being of its participants. I had come to the school in the summer of 2008 as part of a team on school opening and transition from the D.C. Public School (DCPS) Administration to prepare the school for its closing. More specifically, I had come to assess the damage done to P.R. Harris's desks, chairs, and computers, all of which would soon be distributed to other D.C. schools.

Located in Southeast D.C.'s troubled Ward 8, P.R. Harris was one of the twenty-three public schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee decided to close after the 2007-2008 school year. The closings were an effort to save the district money: D.C. spends

more money per pupil than any other state in the United States except for New York and New Jersey. Yet it ranks near the bottom in many measures of urban student achievement, prompting many parents to send their children to charter, private, or parochial schools. According to *The Washington Post*, during the 2008-2009 school year enrollment in D.C. public schools was down 8.7 percent from the previous year, while charter school enrollment shot up by nearly 20 percent (Turque 2008). From the district's perspective, closing schools was an effective and immediate solution to reduce costs while addressing the issue of declining enrollment.

Many of the schools that were shut down, including P.R. Harris, were housed in large buildings that consumed vast resources in daily maintenance and operations but served only a small number of students. For instance, P.R. Harris's three floors were meant to serve 1,700 K-8 students, but declining enrollment shrank its student population to only 500 in 2007. For the 2008-2009 school year, its students would be diverted to four other schools: middle school students would enroll at Hart Middle School, while K-6 students could enroll at any of three neighborhood schools. School supplies, student records, and sometimes teachers were to follow the students to their new schools.

### SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

In many respects, closing schools was a necessary response to downward trends in student enrollment. Its effects, however, went far beyond the district; it impacted individuals in schools and communities as well. When news of school closings became public, students and staff at both the closed and receiving schools were anxious. Jeffrey Grant, the former principal at P.R. Harris, learned that his school would be closing by reading it in the paper.

Everyone was upset," Grant said. "Lots of people had been there for years. We'd been seeing growth

## LESSONS LEARNED

in achievement and the culture of the school. These things were a blow to a lot of people because they were putting in a lot of hard work.”

Most of the staff eventually found work at other schools in the district, but the uncertainty of where they would be going lingered well into the summer. Jasmine Coleman, an administrative aide at P.R. Harris, is now working as a behavioral technician at a school that serves only special education students. For most of the summer, she didn't know whether or not she would even have a job. “I found out my placement right before school started,” Coleman said. “I started the second day of school. . . . Yeah, I was a little worried.”

Even staff at schools that weren't being shut down faced uncertainty. Roberta Felder, a data entry clerk who had worked at Patterson Elementary School for the past twenty-five years, learned last June that the school could no longer afford her salary. “The district said if the enrollment went up my position would be saved, but it didn't happen,” she told me.

Late in the summer of 2008, Patterson's enrollment reached a point where it would be able to keep Felder's position on staff, but the district had already finalized the school's budget—without her position. Patterson's new principal eventually managed to keep Felder at Patterson as the after-school coordinator. “It put a lot of stress on me. I didn't know if I would have a job at the district or Patterson up until a week before school opened,” she said. In February of 2009, Ms. Felder found herself changing jobs again when she became the school's new morning academic dean.

### STUDENTS FACING TRANSITION

Meanwhile, students at P.R. Harris were upset they were being forced to leave their schools. “The majority of them did not want to leave P.R. Harris. Many of them had been there since they

were three,” Grant said. Students at receiving schools were also concerned. “There were community issues. There were issues about how they were going to interact, and gangs at the same school were a concern,” Grant said. “Gangs identified themselves by streets and neighborhoods, and it's not a thing where they just fight; it becomes deadly.” Parents and other community members raised similar concerns about school safety and the ability of their children to get along with their incoming peers, while those who had lost their school wondered what the city would take away from them next, or if the district was acting with their interests in mind or just looking to save a buck.

*Those who had lost their school wondered what the city would take away from them next.*

One of my primary responsibilities last summer at DCPS was to ensure a successful transition for both closing and receiving schools. During my time at the East of the River Academy, it became clear that the summer program was interfering with the activities needed to close P.R. Harris: teachers packing up classrooms, administrative staff completing student paperwork, and movers transporting school property and records.

Even after the summer work program's termination in late July, challenges persisted into August and up until the first day of the new school year. The first issue involved the student records for P.R. Harris's K-6 students. Among closing schools, P.R. Harris was unique in that it had three receiving elementary schools. However, because many parents didn't register their children until the first day of school, none of the three receiving elementary schools knew which or how many of P.R. Harris's students it would have enrolled.

At each elementary school, school budgets and planning were being based off of rough estimates of

expected increases in student enrollment, with no exact figure on the needed number of books, chairs, teachers, or even classrooms.

In early August, I asked Coleman and another P.R. Harris staff member to call the homes of all 317 P.R. Harris elementary students to determine which school the children would be attending and to encourage parents to register their children earlier before school started. The vast majority of parents indicated they would be sending their children to Patterson. Phone responses pushed projected enrollment at the school past 500—well beyond its capacity. With only a few weeks of the summer remaining, Patterson's new principal and vice principal scrambled to find extra rooms and teachers.

*"It's the worst year ever. I've talked to teachers who've taught here as long as I've been living. They're ready to retire."*

To make matters worse, building renovations at the school had been stalled by the city council, who unexpectedly froze spending on school construction projects. Despite the summer chaos, the school year started fairly smoothly at Patterson. The drinking fountains and air conditioners, formerly incapacitated, were fixed. Additional rooms and teachers were found and prepared for the influx of students.

### THE RECEIVING END

Soon after, however, things began to worsen, and staff placed the blame squarely on the former P.R. Harris students. Of Patterson's 470 students this year (compared to 265 from the year before), approximately half are former P.R. Harris students. "Kids are out of control. This has been a nightmare," said Ms. Leslie, a Patterson staff member. Another staff member, Ms. Weiss described the school's environment:

It's never been like this. It's the worst year ever. I've talked to teachers who've taught here as long as I've been living. They're ready to retire. Last year, we had active parents come in and volunteer, and we don't have that this year. We have parents who don't even want to pick up their students this year after they've been suspended.

Ms. Weiss described the disciplinary problems with the students themselves:

We have children peeing on each other so we have to keep the restrooms locked, and we never had to do that before. Kids are stealing things. Kids are playing hooky. School property is being vandalized. The gate on the side of the building is off. We're really suffering here, and it's not good place to come to work.

Ms. Leslie continued:

I just think that those children, they were taught differently than our children. When I speak to the children from P.R. Harris, the first thing they say is, "I don't care, this is what I did at P.R. Harris."

Despite its struggles, not everyone at Patterson is ready to give up. Patterson's principal left in early February, and the interim principal has reached out to other staff to develop discipline strategies.

"We have good teachers, good staff," Ms. Leslie said. "The P.R. Harris students are going to have to come around. Everyone in the school must be respected. People talk all the time about not being here next year, but I'm committed to the kids. Not even P.R. Harris can run me away."

Hart Middle School, which took in P.R. Harris's middle school students, has had its challenges

## LESSONS LEARNED

as well. Like Patterson, renovation at the school had been stalled, and it had not been completed on time. On the first day of school, Hart students entered their classrooms with wires dangling from unfinished ceilings. The new principal and the new teachers were unprepared to accommodate the 100 former P.R. Harris students. Students roamed the hallways without class schedules, and teachers were not sure where and when students were supposed to be at any time. Hart's principal was dismissed in November 2008; at the time, 80 of Hart's 625 students were serving suspensions, and three teachers had been assaulted according to the *Washington Post*. Despite the rocky start, community leaders and staff members are optimistic about the school's future.

"I think everyone is starting to gel with each other. As far as gang violence, there have been a couple of fights. But it hasn't been as bad as last year," a Hart staff member said. Reverend Ricardo Payne agrees. His church operates out of Hart's basement, and he maintains a close relationship with the school's students and staff. In regard to the reports of violence at Hart, Payne explained:

"It's just the media spin on the matter. People like the negativity. The media doesn't accentuate the type of violence in a school on Capitol Hill, or in Northwest, or in Southwest. I think there's a stigma associated with being in Southeast and that there's nothing good that comes out of Southeast."

"Things are getting better, but it will not be until the end of the school year before we can look back and see what has been accomplished. I know that the test scores are moving upwards. Something is happening to those children in terms of instruction."

Though Jeffrey Grant is now the principal at Walk-

er Jones Elementary School, he still keeps in touch with many of his former P.R. Harris students. "They say, I want to be in your school. Dr. Grant, why'd you leave us? We miss you, Dr. Grant." He talks to them not only because he is interested to hear how they are adjusting, but also out of a sense of commitment. "I had worked to gain their trust, and in three years, I'm proud to have made a great impact on their philosophies of education, but I felt like I was abandoning them. And they felt abandoned," he said. "Unfortunately, a lot of them had gone through that a lot in the past."

*"The media doesn't accentuate the type of violence in a school on Capitol Hill... I think there's a stigma associated with being in Southeast."*

Although the number of school closings in the summer of 2008 has often been cited among Chancellor Rhee's list of sweeping reforms, little attention has been paid to its effects on teachers, principals, staff, students, and families. In the end, school closings may be judged by cost savings, enrollment figures, and test scores. But school reform ultimately impacts adults, children, and communities in other immeasurable but nonetheless important ways.

As the 2008-2009 school year nears its end, many concerns have been allayed, and many still linger. Though problems persist at both Hart and Patterson, its staff and community leaders remain committed to the idea that, one day, the district's changes will improve the education of its children. "It's unrealistic to expect that success happens right away," Payne said, "but there's a sense of hope and optimism."

*Roy Chan is a second-year MPP student at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Roy has worked at a Washington, D.C., public schools, he taught in the Philadelphia school district for two years as a Teach for America corps member.*

# MANAGING THE MOVEMENT



Photo by Adam Heilemann.

“IT WAS A LEAP OF FAITH...”

-DAVID PLOUFFE

DATA DRIVEN: THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN AND THE  
NEW POLITICS OF NUMBERS

by Jim Secreto

THE NEXT LEAP: CAN OBAMA ORGANIZE AMERICA?

by Tom Gill & Anna York

## MANAGING THE MOVEMENT

# DATA DRIVEN: THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN AND THE NEW POLITICS OF NUMBERS

by Jim Secreto

Two days before the 2008 Democratic Iowa Caucus, David Plouffe's data told him Senator Barack Obama would win the state.

Pundits and public polling told a different story. Most polls showed Obama locked in a tight race with Senators John Edwards and Hillary Clinton, whom conventional wisdom pegged as the front-runner. The Obama campaign's internal survey numbers showed an equally close race. Mark Penn, Clinton's chief strategist, even mocked a highly anticipated poll released by the Des Moines Register that showed Obama leading by significant margins, describing it as "out of sync" and its results as an "unprecedented departure" from normal turnout models. Talking heads wondered out loud who would actually turn out to caucus on a cold, snowy day, and political reporters tried to wrap their heads around which way undecided voters would break.

But for more than a year, Plouffe, Obama's campaign manager, had quietly overseen the development of what would become the most advanced data-generating machine of modern political campaigns. For months, more than a hundred organizers scoured the state—at community meetings, libraries, grocery stores, and local restaurants—as part of a massive field operation tirelessly searching for and identifying Obama supporters. Meticulously tracking their results, the organizers reported nightly on a series of carefully selected metrics, working toward individualized performance goals. Techies in Chicago compiled this data into a massive voter file, a type of database used to track voter preference, ensuring the technology worked seamlessly with all other parts of the campaign. And on New Year's Day, when the campaign reached

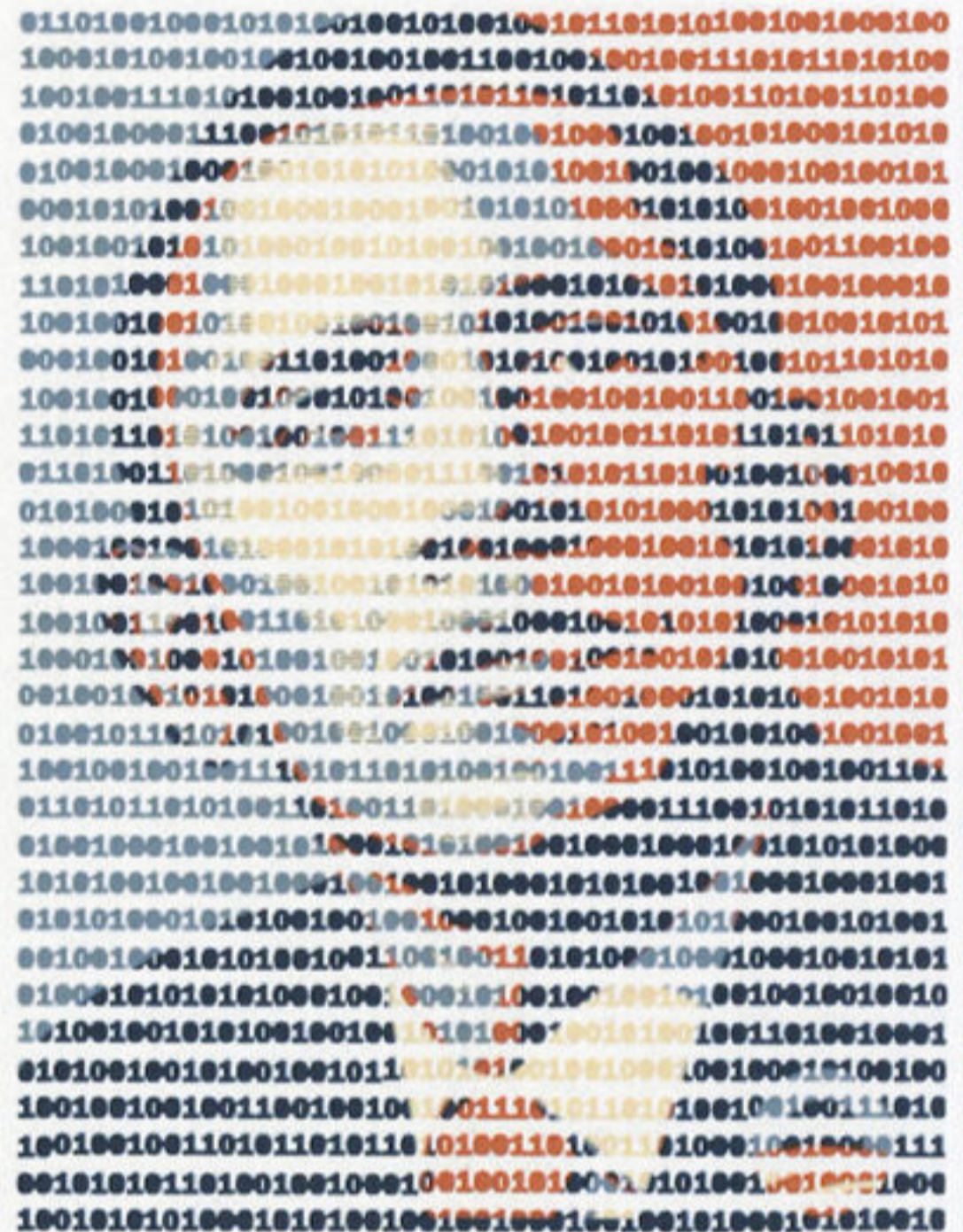


Photo art by Jim Secreto, based on Shepard Fairey's interpretation of an AP photo.

its goal of identifying 90,000 caucus supporters, Plouffe knew Obama would win.

"If you believed our field data, it was a leap of faith because two-thirds of our supporters had never caucused before," said Plouffe at a conference on the 2008 presidential race held by the Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. "But if you believed they were going to come out, we were going to win—and with some margin."



Win they did—not just the Iowa Caucus, but the party’s nomination and eventually the presidency itself. And it was the campaign’s positive early experience with field data in Iowa that gave it the confidence to use data to shape strategy in ways unprecedented in previous political campaigns. The sophisticated use of data and performance measurement - management techniques long used in the private sector but slow to catch on in the political world - provided the Obama campaign with a powerful tool that became central to its ultimate success. By tracking every aspect of its operations, setting goals for each staffer, and creating an exhaustive source of real-time information, the Obama campaign built the foundation for its future victory.

“Campaigns are about message delivery at the candidate level,” Plouffe said. But at the organizational and management level, “it’s about numbers.”

### TECHING IT BY STORM

Earlier campaigns were not complete strangers to data. Nearly all modern campaigns use research through polling and focus groups to develop and test messages and gauge progress. Campaign voter files and database technologies that track individual voter preference have been around in at least some form since the late 1970s. But the Obama campaign, faced with a front-runner in Clinton who enjoyed majority support among Democratic Party elites, needed to build an organization that could summon grass-roots support. As a result, it took a risk in its use of data, investing heavily in the technological infrastructure that allowed it to develop innovative metrics and create the multiple sources of data the campaign relied on to set strategy and allocate resources.

These innovations were clear to Michael Simon, the Obama campaign’s targeting director and a veteran of presidential campaigns. Simon first

began tracking data for campaigns as an organizer in Michigan for former U.S. Vice President Al Gore’s 2000 presidential campaign, marking each voter’s preference on small blue index cards that had to be hand-delivered to the campaign’s headquarters for processing at the end of each week. For Simon, the Obama campaign’s investment in technology allowed it to think more scientifically about the ways it could identify and turn out its supporters.

*“Campaigns are about message delivery at the candidate level,” Plouffe said. But at the organizational and management level, “it’s about numbers.”*

“The campaign early on made a huge investment in technology - substantially larger than in previous presidential campaigns - and built an infrastructure to support a very sophisticated use of data,” Simon said.

The investment, estimated at upwards of \$20 million by the end of the campaign, included the campaign’s Chief Technology Officer Michael Slaby and a new technology department filled with up to fifteen serious database professionals involved in the massive organizational undertaking. The campaign’s voter file, a product of the political technology firm Voter Activation Network, was built off data gathered in previous elections and allowed staffers to structure their work, integrating it seamlessly with all of the campaign’s technology. Every organizer received a laptop and extensive IT support. In Chicago, “data desks” staffed every region of the country, and in each state, voter file managers and their deputies ensured organizers were able to use data effortlessly.

“Data entry captains” played an integral role in ensuring voter contact data was processed and reported quickly. The campaign even held a “data camp” in the early summer of 2008, flying field staff

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who showed promise in the primaries to Portland, Oregon, for training before sending them to work in targeted states.

In contrast to Senator John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign, where pollsters had a monopoly on campaign data, the Obama campaign's investment in technology allowed it to look at multiple indicators of progress and rely on its field data for more than measuring the size of its voter contact operation. While the Obama campaign used more than five pollsters, they did not dominate as the only sources of campaign data.

"The Obama campaign was very interested in various sources of knowledge. We wouldn't just rely on polling," Simon said. "If the data showed different things, for example, if polling showed a surge in one place but field data didn't, we would look at both equally."

"Polling was just one way we viewed how we were doing in a state," Plouffe said. "We had a lot of voter identification work. We had a lot of field data. So

we put all that together, and we modeled out the elections in those states every week. We'd say, ok, let's say the election was held this week, based on all our data, put it all in the blender, where are we?"

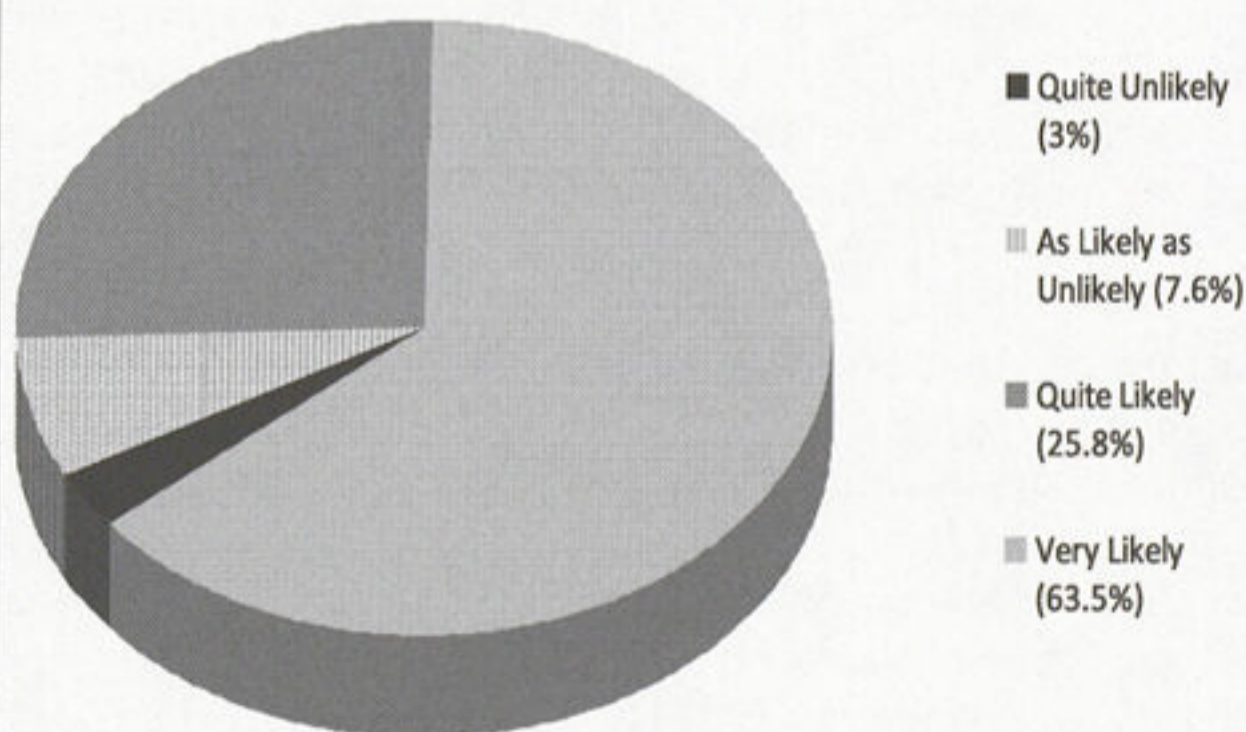
The investment in technology and robust voter contact programs permitted the campaign to use microtargeting in elaborate ways, building statistical models of the election and identifying persuadable voters both at the group and the individual level. Based on field data and other public and private sources of data, the campaign could perform regression analysis on hundreds of variables and "score" voters on a numeric support scale.

This process enabled the targeting of resources - including direct mail and get out the vote efforts - to only those voters the campaign identified most likely to support Obama.

With the ability to track different types of data from its massive army of field organizers, the campaign was able to build its organization.

## DOES OBAMA ONLY INSPIRE THOSE ALREADY CONVERTED...

Prior to the presidential election, how likely were you to enter into public service?



Of approximately 170 American students at the Harvard Kennedy School, nearly 90% claimed to have been "very likely" or "quite likely" to enter into a career of public service (broadly defined to include government service, non-profit work, and private sector work with a public service element) prior to Obama's election. However, even in this heavily service-inclined group, 41% reported being "more inclined" or "much more inclined" to enter public service now that Obama is the president. Only 3% claimed to be "less likely" or "much less likely" to choose public service.

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It took a risk by selecting unique metrics to evaluate its organizers. Starting in June 2007, Deputy Campaign Manager Steve Hildebrand and Voter Contact Director Jon Carson told the campaign's Iowa organizers for the first three months that they would not be evaluated by how many voter contacts they made, but by how many volunteers, precinct captains, and neighborhood team leaders they recruited, and by how many house meetings they held.

"It was recognition [that] one of the ways you drive priorities [is by] what you force people to report [and] how you evaluate them," Simon said. "Tracking these metrics meant organizers spent time building the organization and not just producing numbers for numbers' sake."

By the fall of 2008, the campaign had used its massive collection of data to set vote and voter contact goals for every organizer in every state, evaluating each organizer on the percentage of each goal reached to allow for comparisons across states and organizers. Staffers in Chicago sent

out a weekly e-mail with a compiled report that allowed the campaign to view how each region compared to one another, including a ranking of each organizer in the state.

By the end of the campaign, organizers were competing against one another, and individualized data scores facilitated a sense of competition throughout the campaign organization.

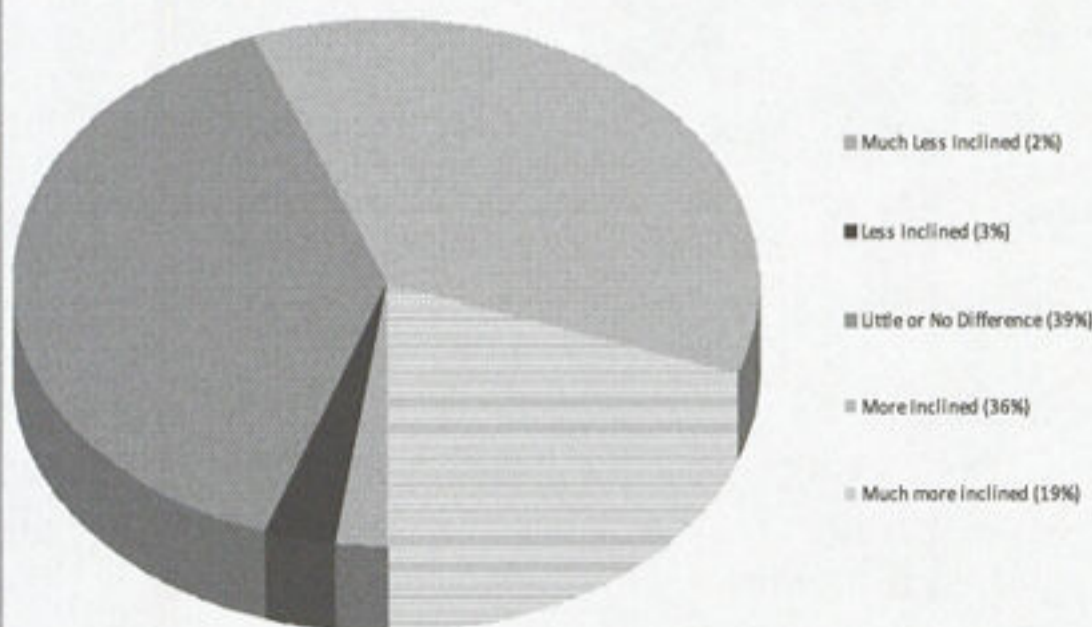
"It makes you enormously agile," Plouffe said. "You've got real-time data, and that makes scheduling decisions, resource allocation decisions, and [decisions about] where to send surrogates. And you're adjusting those, by the end, multiple times a day. Not just down to the media market, but down to the chunks of voters in those media markets."

"The rubber hits the road, and you can see what happens."

*Jim Secreto is a joint degree student pursuing an MPP at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a law degree at Georgetown.*

## ...OR IS HE BRINGING NEW PEOPLE TO WASHINGTON D.C.?

Are you more or less inclined to take a Public Service job in Washington, DC now that Obama is President?



The biggest winner, however, might be the District of Columbia— 55% now say they are "more inclined" or "much more inclined" to seek a public service job in the nation's capitol. A majority of those claiming to be "less inclined" or "much less inclined", which only constituted 5% of the total, were self-reported Republicans or Independents. As one member of this group pointed out to KSR, "Republican staffers (and future staffers here at school) have fewer options in DC as of [the Inauguration]."

*Graphs and information compiled by Features Editor Forrest Dunbar, an MPP candidate at the Harvard Kennedy School.*

# THE NEXT LEAP: CAN OBAMA ORGANIZE AMERICA?

by Tom Gill & Anna York

## THE RISING

When Bruce Springsteen opened the “We Are One” concert two days before Barack Obama’s inauguration, instead of playing one of his classic Americana hits, he performed “The Rising.” After all, he was performing for a soon-to-be president who rose farther and faster than anyone imagined. Now, with an economy in crisis and jobs disappearing, it is Obama’s responsibility to make sure he brings the country up with him.

*U.S. presidents and political parties arguably do not have a great deal of historical success leading the country from the apex of a movement.*

In the closing days of the campaign, as summer turned to fall, the only thing that may have been rising as quickly as the nominee was the unemployment rate. Obama’s speeches and policy proposals responded in ever-more specific and urgent terms to the grim economic realities facing the country. It seemed the more upwardly mobile he became, the more downwardly mobile he tried to appear—always trying to move closer to middle- and lower-income Americans.

The disparity between Obama’s rise and the country’s fall was especially evident to his thousands of staffers upon achieving their goal of his election. The long campaign, a way of life for many, is over.

So at this pivotal moment, when collective action remains suspended between celebration and anticipation, we ask: what will become of Obama’s movement for change?

What is at stake in this transition out of the election campaign and into a new era of governance? And how might the emergent infrastructure—the people, the networks, their skills, enthusiasm, and idealism—so carefully nurtured during the campaign integrate into the brutal realism of the political world?

## ORGANIZING FOR AMERICA

The January announcement detailing the creation of a new organization called Organizing for America answered some of the immediate questions about how the Obama administration will continue to take advantage of its groundbreaking campaign infrastructure.



Photo by by Jon Paul Swan

Organizing for America, now housed within the Democratic National Committee (DNC), will be headed by key field and strategy staff from the Obama campaign. This will no doubt make for an interesting sideshow, since U.S. presidents and political parties arguably do not have a great deal of historical success leading the country from the apex of a movement.

It is yet to be determined whether the budding relationship between the president, the DNC, and Organizing for America will be a marriage of love or convenience. Like any marriage, there are no guarantees that hearts will not be broken. There is much at stake for President Obama and his administration, for those invested in his message of hope and change, and for the institutions that have been preceded (and may yet be displaced) by Organizing for America. This grand and hopeful experiment in civic renewal may turn out to be a costly gamble.

For the new president, Organizing for America represents change—a new way of doing business in Washington, D.C., and a new social contract with the American people. So far, the electorate has responded enthusiastically to a call for greater service, contribution, and sacrifice, but there is a latent expectation that the Obama administration will keep its end of the bargain by involving campaign activists in the business of governing.

By claiming to open his administration to greater scrutiny and holding himself and his cabinet to a higher set of ethical standards, Obama necessarily cedes some of the power invested by former President George W. Bush in the institution of the presidency. Obama is thus endowing the movement with a grave responsibility: in the absence of the traditional tools of power wielded by presidents past, Obama may instead need to rely more heavily on the mobilizing and persuasive power of the movement for change. At stake for the president are not only his sky-high approval ratings and reelection prospects, but perhaps also the administration's entire first-term agenda.

The DNC is also taking a gamble, though perhaps more out of necessity than faith. While Organizing for America will be incubated within the DNC, it will, it appears, grow as a parallel body to the formal party, with a separate and distinct leadership

and mission. This is an untested relationship, and it is not yet clear whether it will emerge as a mutually complementary arrangement or a destructive two-headed monster. For the moment, it would seem the DNC lacks the grassroots organizational strength to compete with or resist the encroachment of the Obama organizing movement. But it is also unclear how a clash of interests between the sister organizations might be resolved.

*It is not yet clear whether [Organizing For America] will emerge as a mutually complementary arrangement or a destructive two-headed monster.*

And what about those who toiled at the grassroots during one of the longest presidential campaigns on record?

Obama's celebrated e-mail list, which grew to tens of millions of supporters throughout the campaign, will surely help maintain their involvement. In the days immediately after the election, this list became the symbol of the campaign's legacy, and pundits argued over what its ultimate fate might be as if it were the political equivalent of the nuclear launch code. After all, direct access to an active and engaged portion of the electorate provides the new president and his White House with the ultimate path around the press corps—the ability to present an unmediated message. But the speculation over whether the list comprised 12 or 15 million names failed to locate the real source of its power—the devotion of the followers. The legacy of the Obama campaign is not a list, but a movement.

Unlike a list, a movement is made up of people who are invested in a cause—motivated by and committed to a goal greater than themselves. Unlike a list, a movement is skilled—an association of people who know how to organize a successful house party, who can raise a small army to canvass

## MANAGING THE MOVEMENT

twelve city blocks in an afternoon, and who can recruit and train emerging leaders on the job.

And unlike a list, a movement talks back, as activists generate their own ideas for the focus of their efforts and develop their own expertise in the tactics and strategy they deploy. It remains to be seen whether this movement will be willing to get down and dirty in the murky world of Washington, where tradeoffs must be made, and lofty ideals must be compromised in favor of political reality.

### SEIZING THE POTENTIAL

Organizing for America is not only a continuation of a successful election campaign, it is a significant experiment in participation and governance. A grassroots movement run out of the White House could be a revolutionary force in U.S. politics, or it could stymie the most expectation-laden presidency in modern American history.

*A Pew Research Center poll confirms that 62 percent of Obama voters expect they will ask others to support the policies of the new administration over the next year.*

Obama's own background in grassroots community organizing reflects a deeply held belief that change comes from the bottom up. But the Obama campaign's deliberate investment in civic capital has also rendered a real and powerful political force that identifies strongly and exclusively with one man—Barack Obama.

While it may seem a gamble for the man in the highest office to hand some of his power down to the people, this shift may yet prove to empower the presidency with an unprecedented

strength of persuasion and the ability to mobilize a skilled and committed constituency in favor of his agenda. This, at least in theory, is the political potential of Organizing for America.

Organizing for America's new leadership team has taken care to provide opportunities for those involved in the campaign to have their say on the future of the movement. Through a series of surveys, conferences, phone calls, and house parties this winter, active volunteers reportedly told the campaign leadership that they wanted to remain active and that they wanted to work in support of President Obama's policy agenda. A Pew Research Center poll confirms that 62 percent of Obama voters expect they will ask others to support the policies of the new administration over the next year. Still, the country has never seen a campaign quite like this one. The many people that made it exceptional are hoping to experience that same power in the new administration.

Indeed, Organizing for America may not be the only outlet for this new participatory enthusiasm. A call to service and engagement at a time of national crisis may engender a range of responses: a renewed civic base, greater contributions to charity, increased volunteer work, and more active community organizations, faith-based efforts, and labor unions. Boston-based Be the Change, for instance, is seeking to make the most of a new atmosphere of contribution by expanding opportunities for service across the country.

These organizations may have to fight for the attention and commitment of these newly skilled and dedicated activists emerging from the campaign. The DNC will want to keep tabs on the emerging army of Obama-inspired campaigners too, and it has an opportunity to do this through Organizing for America. But it is possible—if not likely—that the spin-off from the campaign will be far more diffuse than anything associated with a formal political party.



*Drawing by Roy Chan.*

Over the course of the campaign, Barack Obama achieved rock-star status. If he is Bruce Springsteen, then his E-Street Band consists of millions of supporters around the country—indeed, around the world. At this point, the future of the band is unclear: whether it will continue to play the same tune or if Obama can afford to go solo.

After all, we do not know what Barack Obama looks like as a one-man show—and there are thousands of people who are hoping that we never find out.

*A native Clevelander, Tom Gill served as a deputy field organizer on the Barack Obama campaign in Mansfield, Ohio. He will complete his MPP at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in June 2009.*

*Anna York is a 2010 MPP candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University from Sydney, Australia. She has previously worked as a public servant, a political advisor, and a student organizer. She has been an active member of the Australian Labor Party for seven years.*

## LATTER DAYS: MORMONS IN POLITICS

By Matt Homer

A cursory glance at 2008 might suggest it was the year in which Mormons firmly cemented their loyalty to the GOP. Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney was the most serious contender for the U.S. presidency in the church's history. And heeding the Republican call to "protect traditional marriage," the Mormon Church (officially known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) played a decisive role in the battle to prevent same-sex marriage in California.

*The fact that Mormons were found on both sides of the aisle in the 2008 elections points to a church that is politically beginning to look more like the rest of America.*

But this largely Republican church may actually be turning more politically diverse. During the 2008 election season, Democrats made inroads not only in the West, but among Mormons as well: New Mexico elected a Mormon Democrat to the U.S. Senate, a Democratic presidential candidate won Salt Lake County for the first time since 1964, and Mormon Democrat Jim Matheson was reelected to his House seat with a whopping 40 percent of Republican and 51 percent of Mormon voters in his district.

The fact that Mormons were found on both sides of the aisle in the 2008 elections points to a church that is politically beginning to look more like the rest of America. Although Mormons currently identify as Republican at a higher rate than any other religious group—

52 percent of Mormons identify as Republican, compared with Evangelicals in second place at 38 percent—changes within the church are set to challenge a long-standing loyalty. But before we get to that, it's important to discover how they became so Republican in the first place.

### HOW MORMONS BECAME THE REDDEST OF ALL RELIGIONS

Before they were devoted Republicans, Mormons were communitarians who lived in an egalitarian social order. The first Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, taught that church members should consecrate all of their property and earnings to the church, which would then redistribute them according to need. Despite its initial radicalism, the church's rocky relationship with the government pushed its members into the conservative camp. Having been successively pushed out of Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois in the first half of the 19th century, Mormon pioneers developed a significant distrust toward the federal government by the time they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.

*The roots of the church's social conservative alignment began in the civil rights era, when black members of the church were barred from holding the priesthood.*

Distrust of the government grew in 1857 when the GOP inscribed polygamy in the party's platform as one of the "twin relics of barbarism." Three years later U.S. President James Buchanan irked Mormons even more when he sent one-third



of the U.S. Army to Utah to put down an alleged uprising and curb the ambitions of Mormon Church President Brigham Young. Over the next forty years, Mormons were the target of legislative action aimed at ending polygamy and the church's grip on all aspects of life in the territory.

*Proposition 8 drew undesired attention to the church's past with polygamy because of the uncomfortable irony that it now sought to prohibit another form of marriage.*

When Utah attained statehood in 1897, the federal government's efforts appeared to have been largely successful. But when Utah elected Mormon Reed Smoot to the U.S. Senate in 1903, a series of hearings revealed that polygamy was still being practiced in secret. The church was compelled to recommit to abandon polygamy and at this point, according to Richard Bushman, professor of Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University (speaking at a Pew Forum conference in May 2007), "turned to laissez-faire liberalism, having no confidence in the government."

Today few Mormons would cite these reasons to explain their conservatism. Although this history provides a foundation, it is only half of the explanation. In order to justify their political beliefs today, members of the church—like Evangelicals—are far more likely to cite the "value issues" of abortion and same-sex marriage and the "moral deterioration" of family and society as driving factors in the way they vote.

In particular, the roots of the church's social conservative alignment began in the civil rights era when Black members of the church were barred from holding the priesthood. Although the church eventually allowed blacks full membership rights, the controversy triggered an increasing

discomfort with the rights-based movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The church's involvement in these movements picked up steam with its fight against the Equal Rights Amendment when the church officially instructed its members to actively campaign against the measure.

## MORMON PROBLEMS WITH THE GOP IN 2008

Today the Mormon Church, in its annual election letter, instructs its members to "support those [candidates] you believe will most nearly carry out your ideas of good government." And in the past few years the church has added that "principles compatible with the gospel may be found in various political parties" in order to signal acceptance for voting Democratic. But many members still see politics as primarily a fight over "values," which have become so narrowly defined that they rarely include anything more than abortion and same-sex marriage.

This was certainly evident in the battle over California's Proposition 8 to ban same-sex marriage, as it was the most robust official church involvement in politics since the Equal Rights Amendment. Having instructed its members in official statements read from the pulpit of each California congregation "to support the proposed constitutional amendment by donating of your means and time," the Mormon Church produced donations (estimates range as high as \$20 million) from its members surpassing those of any other religious group. And the church itself, which rarely inserts itself officially into political affairs, spent close to \$190,000 on transportation, accommodation, and salary costs for church employees involved in the effort.

The decisive role of these efforts in the proposition's outcome suggests the formidable impact Mormon voters can have when they organize to support a

particular issue. However, it also underscores the downsides of direct church involvement. Proposition 8 drew undesired attention to the church's past with polygamy because of the uncomfortable irony that it now sought to prohibit another form of marriage. The church also became a target because of its disproportionate success at mobilizing its members. If church members had played a role more commensurate with that of other religious groups, it is unlikely it would have been as singled out in the aftermath of the vote. As a result, this experience may temper future official church involvement in similar hot-button issues. And prominent members of the church such as Bill Marriott and Steve Young who declined to support the measure may have also paved the way for greater acceptance of those who disagree with the church's political views.

*A USA Today/Gallup poll found that only 66 percent of Republicans said they would vote for a Mormon, compared with 72 percent of Democrats and 77 percent of Independents.*

Romney's failed run for the presidency also reveals that Mormonism is a bigger handicap in the GOP than in the Democratic Party. A USA Today/Gallup poll found that only 66 percent of Republicans said they would vote for a Mormon, compared with 72 percent of Democrats and 77 percent of Independents. Another poll showed that among Evangelicals, who make up nearly a third of GOP voters, close to half don't consider Mormons to be Christian—a particularly significant figure considering that 58 percent of Republicans think it's important to find a presidential candidate who shares their religious beliefs. All of this reveals what the Washington Post's Chris Cillizza described as Romney's real challenge: "convince Republicans—not the American public at-large—that his Mormonism shouldn't be an issue" ("Parsing the Polls," Washington Post, 14 February 2007).

Many Mormon Church members hoped Romney's presidential run would make Mormonism less of an issue for future Mormons running for the presidency. Romney's efforts, however, seemed more aimed at reconciling Mormonism with other religious groups in the GOP coalition than at removing his religion as a campaign issue.

Romney did not lose the election because of his Mormonism. Even so, he was not successful in convincing members of his party that it should not be a handicap, as evidenced by Mike Huckabee's ability to capitalize on discomfort with Romney's Mormonism. As a result, Mormons began to resent the Evangelical wing of the party, and many Republican members of the church in Utah threatened to vote for Obama if Huckabee won the nomination.

Though Utah Mormons voted heavily for presidential candidate U.S. Senator John McCain in 2008, Obama's campaign successfully blunted at least two major social issues that have traditionally kept Mormons in the GOP: same-sex marriage and abortion. During the campaign, Vice President Joe Biden clearly sought to bury one of these issues when he told debate moderator Gwen Ifill that neither "Barack Obama nor I support redefining from a civil side what constitutes marriage."

Obama confronted the other during the final presidential debate when he boasted of changing the Democratic platform to emphasize preventing "unintended pregnancies by providing appropriate education to our youth, communicating that sexuality is sacred and that they should not be engaged in cavalier activity, and providing options for adoption, and helping single mothers if they want to choose to keep the baby." These efforts to smooth divisive issues and reach out to religious groups in a way not recently mastered by other national Democrats have the potential to go a long way for Democrats in influencing Mormon voters, particularly in critical Western swing states.

STATES WITH FASTEST MORMON CHURCH GROWTH			STATES WITH MOST MORMON CHURCH MEMBERS		
State	% Change in Membership: 1998 - 2008	Presidential Election Result (2008)	State	Number (in thousands)	Presidential Election Result (2008)
DC	92.82%	Dem	Utah	1,789,000	Rep
Rhode Island	62.64%	Dem	California	750,024	Dem
Iowa	61.21%	Dem	Idaho	392,782	Rep
New Jersey	59.20%	Dem	Arizona	361,817	Rep
Tennessee	50.00%	Rep	Texas	260,076	Rep
West Virginia	48.44%	Rep	Washington	248,821	Dem
New York	48.25%	Dem	Nevada	169,714	Dem
Wisconsin	47.21%	Dem	Oregon	143,445	Dem
Massachusetts	47.20%	Dem	Colorado	131,241	Dem
Arkansas	46.66%	Rep	Florida	127,319	Dem

### COULD DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES LEAD TO POLITICAL CHANGES?

A recent study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life revealed that just 15 percent of Mormons identify as Democrats—the lowest of all religious groups. And when asked about political ideology, Mormons rank last with just 10 percent describing themselves as liberal. Yet isolating Mormon voting trends is difficult because at just 2 percent of the national population, Mormons are generally lumped into the “other religion” section of most polls. Demographic trends, although not a substitute for a lack of polling data, provide at least some indication of where the trends might be heading.

Today most members of the Mormon Church no longer live in Utah, and most were not even born into the church. Within this larger demographic transformation, one notable demographic shift in the church is among Hispanics. The number of Hispanic Mormons in the United States has increased

from 49,000 to 200,000 over the past twenty years. Nationwide, the number of Mormon Spanish-speaking congregations has nearly doubled in the course of a half decade: in 2000 there were 389 such congregations and by 2006 there were 639. Furthermore, the Hispanic population is booming in Utah. In a state that is otherwise overwhelmingly White, Hispanics now make up more than 11 percent of the population, having increased from approximately 205,000 in 2000 to 312,000 residents in 2007. With 67 percent of Latinos voting for Obama, this could very well inch the church further to the left as more Hispanics join—especially if the GOP maintains a hard line on immigration and conversions in Latin America continue.

A second key shift can be seen in the location of new church buildings. The Mormon Church is now increasingly locating new chapels in urban areas that had previously been unfruitful for conversions. On the island of Manhattan alone, the church has spent at least close to \$100 million to purchase property and construct church buildings in prime locations such as Lincoln Square, Union Square, and the

Upper East Side. Although many urban-dwelling Mormons are White transplants from Republican states such as Utah, a significant—if not majority—of Mormon Church members in these areas are non-White converts.

Regardless of race, this shift is significant because urban residents tend to vote Democratic at a higher rate than rural residents—63 percent of urban residents voted for Obama. If the Mormon Church follows traditional patterns, it will become bluer as it becomes more urban.

*The number of Hispanic Mormons in the United States has increased from 49,000 to 200,000 over the past twenty years.*

The next demographic shift of interest concerns the states in which Mormonism is growing. Seven of the ten states with the fastest growth rate voted for Obama in 2008 (see Table). Among the top ten states with the largest Mormon populations, six of them voted for Obama. While this does not mean that church members in these states will necessarily vote Democratic, it provides a different environment in which lifelong members and recent converts develop their political views. It also means that church members who wish to run for office in these states will have to give more serious consideration to the Democratic Party.

Many of the Western states where the Mormon population is highest voted for Obama in 2008 and have become important swing states. Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, and Oregon in particular have sizeable Mormon populations. Of these, Mormons may have the most potential as a swing vote in Nevada, where they comprise 11 percent of the population. As Western states become increasingly important, Mormon voters may also find themselves being more fervently courted.

## NO LONGER ANTIQUITIES: MORMON DEMOCRATS

Tom Udall's Senate victory in New Mexico this year and the repeated successes of Congressman Jim Matheson in Utah and Senator Harry Reid in Nevada further point to the possibility that Mormons might find more success on the other side of the aisle. All are members of the church, and all are Democrats.

The Udall family is the largest political dynasty in Mormon history. Tom's cousin Mark Udall, a Democrat, won Colorado's Senate seat, and another cousin, Republican Gordon Smith, lost his reelection for Oregon's Senate seat. The experience of this family is important because it represents a breed of non-Utah Mormons that may be a harbinger of things to come. Named "Lords of the West" by *The Economist*, this family has developed a reputation for nonideological pragmatism and an emphasis on environmental conservation. Interestingly, the Pew Forum has found that 55 percent of Mormons believe "stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost." By emphasizing "getting things done" rather than the wedge issues of abortion and same-sex marriage, these Democrats have been able to successfully steer clear of the moral issues that have ensnared national Democratic candidates in the past.

*The Udall family also shares an important strategy with Reid and Matheson: they rarely mention their religion.*

The Udall family also shares an important strategy with Reid and Matheson: they rarely mention their religion. Reid probably gets more heat from members of his own faith for his political views. After an address to students at Brigham Young University in 2007 in which he questioned a former church pres-

ident who said that it would be “very hard” for a Mormon “who is living the gospel” to be a Democrat, Utah newspapers received a flood of letters calling for Reid’s excommunication. Not all members share his optimism that “Democrats have not always been in the minority [in the Church] . . . and we won’t be for long.” The message these Democratic Mormons convey to other Mormons, which may not seem remarkable to outsiders, is that it’s possible to be both a Mormon and a Democrat.

But the Udalls, Mathesons, and Reids are exceptions. Most Mormons, it seems, are in a sort of Faustian bargain with the GOP. Since the civil rights era they have eagerly joined hands to block the Equal Rights Amendment, restrict abortion, and push against

same-sex marriage. But in exchange they’ve been considered theological heretics and have failed to pass the religious litmus test to receive the GOP’s nomination for president. If this isn’t enough to distance Mormons from the party that once considered their lifestyle one of the “twin pillars of barbarism,” a freshly pragmatic Democratic Party that is eager to secure votes in the West and demographic changes within the church just might.

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## THE CLIMATE CHANGE COMPLEX

*by Daniel Berwick*

*A Review of Hot, Flat, and Crowded by Thomas L. Friedman  
and Global Warming: Looking Beyond Kyoto by Ernesto Zedillo*

Representatives of most of the world’s governments met in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008 under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is the international body charged with beating climate change. It’s a good time to ask a simple question: why are we finding it so difficult to take action on global warming? The UNFCCC has been badly adrift since 2001, when then President George W. Bush declared the Kyoto Protocol dead in the United States. Negotiators are having trouble designing an effective international climate regime and getting everyone to sign it because there are real obstacles: huge financial interests, international and domestic politics, and differences in values and priorities. But there’s a deeper challenge: when people don’t understand a problem, it’s hard for a democracy to take action to solve it.

In his newest book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution—and How It Can Renew America*, Thomas Friedman quotes Stanford climatologist Stephen Schneider, who poses that challenge in a pithy way: “Can democracy survive complexity?” Friedman sets out to prove that it can, with the aid of writers like himself, who eat complexity for breakfast. With that as its mission, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* becomes an interesting case study in Schneider’s important question.

Anyone attempting to communicate clearly about climate change and the pantheon of energy-related issues that surrounds it has to make a decision about how to deal with the fact of enormous complexity. Friedman has always made his living simplifying the complex, which is why he is more widely read than perhaps any other public intellectual in the

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world—and often more annoying than perhaps any other public intellectual in the world. Among other things, in his other books he has sought to explain such topics as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and globalization. Though his arguments are painted with the broadest possible strokes, they highlight the fundamental pillars of both complex systems in clear and lucid prose. *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* does the same for the energy-climate problem.

*Friedman gets a lot right... he paints a striking picture, in a dozen memorable pages in the middle of the book, of a new system that addresses all of these problems at once.*

Friedman gets a lot right. He illustrates the interconnectedness, with energy as the glue, of five big problems: increasing demand for scarce resources, climate change, wealth transfer to bad guy regimes, poverty, and biodiversity loss. He explains how and why our current global energy regime—“Friedmanized” as the “Dirty Fuels System”—makes all these problems worse. And he paints a striking picture, in a dozen memorable pages in the middle of the book, of a new system that addresses all of these problems at once.

There's more that's good. In emphasizing the need for a systematic approach to solving the problem, and in putting a price signal for carbon at the center of that new system, he picks the right cornerstones. Though his insistence that American leadership and ingenuity is the only force powerful and purposeful enough to lead us into the “Energy-Climate Era” often rises to the level of jingoism, it's motivational. Friedman is always at his dot-connecting best when he draws insights from the conversations that the *New York Times* pays him to fly around the world and have—and which give his writing its unmistakable, if often obnoxiously self-referential, voyeuristic flair. *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* is illustrative and

vivid when it leans heavily on the expertise of others, as it constantly does.

On the other hand, he is often at his missing-the-trees-for-the-forest worst when he tries to draw too many of his insights into a quasi-scientific principle, and *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* is repeatedly guilty of that charge. He illustrates his “Second Law of Petropolitics” with a napkin-sketch of a graph. It shows two variables on the y-axis: the price of oil and an index for freedom in oil-rich countries. Time is on the x-axis. But Friedman, explaining his thought process, writes, “On one axis, I plotted the average global price of crude oil going back to 1979, and along the other axis I plotted the pace of expanding or contracting freedoms.”

This careless error doesn't undermine Friedman's purpose, because most readers don't notice it, and even if they do, they still get the point—with Friedman, no one ever misses the point. The problem is that if you write about complex topics in such a way that no one ever misses the point, you are going to end up with a book that is riddled with oversimplification. Some problems are complex enough that failure to admit their complexity shuts off the possibility of understanding them—and therefore, unfortunately, of solving them.

*You can't read Hot, Flat, and Crowded to figure out how to take global action on energy and climate. The problem is complex, and the book is too simple.*

Energy and climate, as *Global Warming: Looking Beyond Kyoto* makes clear, is such a problem. Thomas Friedman's purpose in life is to help casual but concerned readers understand some of our most complex challenges by extracting and unwinding strong, thin strands of their DNA, so that his books feel fundamental and complete. You can't read a long list of A's, G's, C's, and T's, though, to figure out

how to make a protein. And you can't read *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* to figure out how to take global action on energy and climate. The problem is complex, and the book is too simple.

*Global Warming*, published last year, is an editorial work, spearheaded by Ernesto Zedillo. It takes the opposite approach to the problem of complexity. Zedillo and his contributors are scientists, and *Global Warming* reads like the collection of journal articles that it is. No quarter is given in the name of readability. But by freeing itself from the shackles of simplicity and explanation that bind Friedman, *Global Warming* gets closer to the heart of the problem, in at least two ways.

*The best chapter in Global Warming... is a devastating critique of Hot, Flat, and Crowded, because it is as focused and careful as Friedman is expansive.*

First, the best chapter in *Global Warming* is Thomas Heller's "Climate Change: Designing an Effective Response." If juxtaposed, it is a devastating critique of *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, because it is as focused and careful as Friedman is expansive and, yes, careless. Heller's point is simple enough. So simple, in fact, that it would be mundane if international climate change negotiations showed any evidence of absorbing it. But they haven't, so Heller's argument is the most crucial one that Friedman is missing: international efforts so far to mitigate global warming aren't working because they don't accommodate the political and organizational factors that lead to decisions that, in turn, lead to greenhouse gas emissions.

"The problem," Tom, I could imagine Heller saying to Friedman, should the two ever talk directly, "is that politics, organizational conduct, and the barriers they constitute are not realistically erasable because they derive from perfectly expectable

behaviors, which result from interests and conflicts that have always and everywhere characterized social action. . . Instead, policy design must account for, and explicitly counter, the strategic and self-interested reactions that individuals, organizations, and nations in climate-central domains pursue. They will not be wished away."

Friedman nails the most important economic point when he makes the central argument of his book that we need a price signal for carbon. Credit given where it is due. Unfortunately, he devotes entire chapters to the ideas that we need "A million Noah's and a million arks"—in other words, that we need a million people to simply step up to the plate and make a small but significant difference—and that "it's much more important to change your leaders than your lightbulbs." Too often, Friedman fails to appeal to any theories of economics, political philosophy, or environmental science; these are all disciplines that *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* reaches for, but on which Heller's elemental argument is built. In Friedman's case, it's just wishing.

Second, in *Global Warming*, Schneider and others articulate an important distinction between kinds of consequences the climate change problem might present. Without this distinction between unpleasantness and catastrophe, it's difficult to make a responsible decision about how much effort to spend mitigating climate change and how much to spend to just adapt to it. If you want to avoid unpleasantness, your analytical weapon of choice is cost-benefit analysis: "Is the cost of doing what we have to do now to mitigate global warming greater or less than the cost of adapting to the consequences as they unfold?" The expert contributors to *Global Warming* differ on that question. R.K. Pachauri and Stefan Rahmstorf say that the consequences will be more expensive than the costs of mitigation. Richard Lindzen and Robert Mendelsohn argue the opposite—the medicine may be worse than the disease. Either way, it's an argument about relative costs and benefits.

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But catastrophe is a completely different animal. "Climate policy," writes Schneider in his *Global Warming* chapter, "is a risk management practice. Optimization is not a meaningful concept in setting targets for climate policy." What if greenhouse gas emissions trigger enough feedbacks—unlocking gobs of methane from permafrost, destroying carbon-eating boreal forests, melting all the glaciers in the Tibetan plateau and denying water to the billions of people clustered at its base, switching off the gulf stream so Europe freezes, triggering massively destabilizing resource wars—that the world is made uninhabitable for many and anarchic for the rest? That's a nightmare scenario that we would pay any price to avoid.

*If you think there is, say, at least a 50 percent chance of that catastrophe happening, cost-benefit analysis is useless; it's time to throw the kitchen sink at the problem....*

If you think there's no chance of that happening, then it's still a cost-benefit question. If you think there is, say, at least a 50 percent chance of that happening, cost-benefit analysis is useless; it's time to throw the kitchen sink at the problem and hope that's enough.

The real probability of catastrophe is probably somewhere between zero percent and fifty percent. Where exactly between—what constitutes genuine catastrophe, how likely is it to happen, and whether the risk demands costly action—is a difficult question to answer, involving not just science, but also values and judgment.

The science of global warming is settled in the same manner as the question of whether Tiger Woods is the world's best golfer: he is, but by how much, and for how long, and how did he get so good, and can others get that good—these are all subjects of

endless debate. Friedman, though, writes as if there is no more ambiguity. We will have to stop emitting greenhouse gases. We simply have no choice.

"It is not pay now or pay later," he writes. "It is pay now, or there will be no later." He confuses the debate over the existence of human-caused climate change, which is dead, with the debate over everything else about human-caused climate change, which is very much alive.

Pretending that there is only one clear, valid viewpoint when in fact there are many is what turns people off from Friedman. Schneider's question—"Can democracy survive complexity?"—asks if citizens in a democracy, in order to grapple with a problem this complex, must simplify it too much. "Democracy," Schneider explains, "thrives on credible information, particularly for complex topics like climate change science, impacts, and policy."

*Hot, Flat, and Crowded* has the potential to inform citizens about an essential challenge that our democracy must deal with, but by oversimplifying and hand-waving it highlights how difficult it is for people to inform themselves adequately about a complex issue. It's a good read and it's informative, but it trades best-seller appeal for credibility.

*Global Warming*, which instead of running from complexity embraces it completely in the name of scientific and academic discourse, highlights exactly the same problem; it engages the most difficult challenges in the energy-climate problem, but it is nearly impenetrable to the casually reading citizen. Credible information is hard to come by. "Can democracy survive complexity?" We'll find out.

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# LEADING THE CHARGE: *LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE*



Photo by Dori Glanz.

## SIX EFFORTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD MOVE PAST THE STALEMATES OF CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

- GOING GREEN IN THE SUNSHINE CITY (CHINA)
- TRADING UP: A REVIEW OF EMISSIONS CONTROL (EUROPE)
- STATES OF CHANGE : STATE LEVEL CLIMATE POLICY (U.S.)
  - AIR FORCE: WIND FARMS IN NORTH TEXAS (U.S.)
- OIL CHANGE: NEW ENERGY SECURITY STRATEGY (SAUDI ARABIA)
  - ON THE ROAD TO ENERGY SOLUTIONS (INDIA)

### LEADING THE CHARGE: LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

*by Melinda Kuritzky*

*The danger posed by war to all of humanity—and to our planet—is at least matched by the climate crisis and global warming. I believe that the world has reached a critical stage in its efforts to exercise responsible environmental stewardship.*

*— UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon*

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held its Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro to enact a treaty to combat climate change. The product was the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement that commits signatory nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with the goal of preventing serious damage to the global climate system. While the protocol and climate change initiatives have enjoyed widespread grassroots support, many national governments still hesitate to embrace a global solution, and too few have signed on to the Kyoto Protocol to produce substantial results. And even if they had, the treaty would not have gone far enough. In 2009, seventeen years after the failure of the protocol and in the absence of a genuine international agreement, we look to the local level, where local entrepreneurs and governments around the globe are finding innovative policy, research, and technological solutions to this and other complex energy problems. As we all think globally, we can be inspired by local action on energy issues, action that replaces political impasses and elusive consensus with ingenuity and impact.

### GOING GREEN IN THE SUNSHINE CITY: RIZHAO'S FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING

*by Jitao Niu*

**M**y hometown of Rizhao City, a coastal city in the Shandong Province of China, has nearly three million people and an annual per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of just \$2,000. Though poor by most standards, we have learned that tackling climate change is no longer an undertaking just for the rich countries of the world.

In 2007, the city joined the Climate Neutral Network championed by the United Nations Environment Programme, along with three other cities, four countries, and five corporations around the world. For Rizhao City, the goal is to reduce energy consumption by 21.6 percent from 2007

to 2010. While many Chinese cities seek GDP growth at all costs, the people and government of Rizhao have tried to protect this beautiful land of golden beaches and clear sky.

Rizhao, which means "sunshine" in Chinese, enjoys 270 days of sunshine a year and has recorded remarkable achievements in solar-power usage. Since 2001, city officials have been educating the public and initiating new building regulations to promote the use of solar panels. Traffic lights, street lamps, and more than 60,000 vegetable-growing greenhouses are solar powered.

Today, the city has more than one-half million square meters of solar water heating panels—a whopping 99 percent of households in the urban area use solar water heaters, and more than 33 percent do so in the rural villages.

The mayor of Rizhao, Li Zhaoqian, has focused the city's efforts in reducing greenhouse gas emissions on making solar technology cheaper and more efficient so that area residents can afford it. Rather than provide subsidies to solar panel users, the government has invested in industry research and development. As a result, solar water heaters now cost roughly the same as electric alternatives. For about 5 percent of their average annual income (10 percent in nearby rural areas), locals can purchase a solar water heater, the use of which can cut their electricity bill in half.

Rizhao City has been cleaning up industry too. Enterprises with high energy consumption such as steelworks, small power plants, and cement factories were shut down. Some remaining industries use wastewater to generate electricity. The government itself, eager to set an example, only

purchases environmentally friendly products, cutting down on the use of paper, electricity, and water.

And these policies are working: between 2000 and 2006, energy consumption decreased by 31 percent, surpassing the original goal. Through the use of solar energy, marsh gas, and other clean energy, Rizhao City has saved about 3.8 billion kilowatt hours of electricity each year, preventing 1.44 million tons of coal from being burned and reducing the emission of carbon dioxide by 3.25 million tons. Best of all, for the residents of Rizhao City, these smart energy policies bolster the economy and reward citizens with low costs, not to mention cleaner air and water. Scientists worldwide warn that human-induced climate change will have devastating consequences, such as rising seas and widespread drought. In Rizhao City, ordinary citizens and local government are taking this incredible challenge head on, doing their part to meet the defining challenge of our time.

*Jitao Niu worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and was a climate and energy campaigner for Greenpeace China.*

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## TRADING UP: A REVIEW OF EU EMISSIONS CONTROL

*by Mark Bell*

The transformative power of private markets seemed for a long time opposed to the goals of environmental protection. And yet, over the last twenty years, market mechanisms have entered the mainstream of environmental policy. "Cap and trade," "pay as you throw," and "tradable quotas" have all become buzzwords in environmental policy debates.

Theoretically, such mechanisms offer opportunities to achieve environmental policy goals in an economically efficient way while also stimulating innovation and behavioral change. In the Europe-

an Union, the Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is the most notable experiment in this field today. Emissions trading is one of the best known market mechanisms used in environmental policy.

*This complex and sophisticated system has created a genuine market for carbon emissions, and businesses are increasingly taking the price of carbon into account in their decision making.*

## LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

It has been used most successfully in the United States to control the emissions that cause acid rain. Now, it is the centerpiece of Europe's efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and fight climate change. The EU ETS has thus far been a qualified success. This complex and sophisticated system has created a genuine market for carbon emissions, and businesses are increasingly taking the price of carbon into account in their decision making. This is no small achievement; it makes the EU ETS the most sophisticated governmental response to climate change currently in existence.

But unsurprisingly, such intricate policy architecture was not perfectly designed from the outset. An excess of emissions allowances and massive price volatility hampered the first phase of the scheme. Problems in the scheme's administration—such as delays in issuing credits—also limited its environmental impact.

*How does the economic crisis affect emissions trading? Does it create new growth, or divert attention from more urgent matters?*

Reforms passed overwhelmingly by the European Parliament go some way toward remedying these problems. But one big problem remains.

Because the European Parliament can alter the scheme every few years, the ETS lacks long-term credibility. Potential investors in low-carbon technologies are not sure that the scheme will continue to provide a high carbon price into the future, or even whether the scheme will still exist in ten or twenty years' time.

This is hampering investment in emission-reduction technologies, critical in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The credibility of the ETS, though, could be strengthened by depoliticizing the ETS's administration, in much the same way that monetary policy has been depoliticized by the creation of central banks. With an independent institution in place, politicians would not have the opportunity to water down the scheme by tinkering with it for political advantage or to benefit narrow interests.

*The ETS has the potential not only to substantially reduce European emissions, but also to serve as a model for the kind of institutions that could run a global carbon market in the future.*

And just as central banks administer monetary policy to meet politically defined inflation targets, the new institution would determine the number of emissions credits necessary to meet politically defined, long-term carbon targets. This institution should auction all emissions allowances rather than allocating them to countries for free, which would create a more efficient market and raise valuable funds for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The ETS has the potential not only to substantially reduce European emissions, but also to serve as a model for the kind of institutions that could run a global carbon market in the future.

Given the relatively small size of EU emissions compared to those of China and the United States, this may be the best way for Europe to significantly impact global carbon emissions into the future.

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## STATES OF CHANGE: STATE LEVEL CLIMATE POLICY

*by Phillip Martin*

In the United States, national efforts to bring our emissions under control have failed. Though environmental policy makers are encouraged by the election of U.S. President Barack Obama, most understand that the immediate action on climate change is happening at the state and local levels. Recognizing the opportunities to fight climate change on a smaller scale, the Center for Climate Strategies (CCS) formed to help state legislatures understand and implement environmental policies.

CCS works with state-elected officials, local policy experts, business groups, and state agencies through a collaborative process that results in the creation of a State Climate Action Plan. Once the state has approved the initiation of CCS's process, the group visits the state and surveys existing environmental policies that have already been implemented or are being considered at the city, county, or state level. The CCS also brings with it a cache of 450 existing climate change policies already in effect in different areas of the country.

Armed with a range of policies, CCS and the statewide coalition of policy makers first select the policy options they are most interested in implementing. CCS then produces a cost-benefit analysis to assess the financial feasibility and projected emissions reductions for the proposals that receive the most support. This analysis allows the coalition of policy makers in each state to identify exactly which policies will save the state money, which will go the furthest to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and which will do both.

The results are quite remarkable: a CCS-developed State Climate Action Plan can allow a state to reduce its level of carbon emissions by as much as 25 percent through purely cost-saving measures.

To date, CCS has worked with more than twenty states and more than 1,000 stakeholders to develop State Climate Action Plans. CCS worked with the Arizona legislature to establish the Arizona Climate Change Advocacy Group. The Arizona legislature was then able to pass a state

### Sampling of State Climate Plan Results

State	Policy Options	Degree of Unanimity	Amount of GHG Reductions	Overall NPV Cost or Savings	Jobs Impact
AZ	49	92%	- 2000 level by 2020 - Half 2000 level by 2040	\$5.5 billion savings 2007 - 2020	285,000
CA	n/a	n/a	- AB-32: 1990 level by 2020	AB - 32 \$4 billion savings	AB-32: 83,000
CO	70	87%	- 37% below projected emissions by 2020	~\$3 billion savings 2007 - 2020	Not assessed
NC	56	85%	- 47% below projected emissions by 2020	\$7.5 billion savings 2007-2020	44,500
NM	69	97%	- 2000 level by 2012 -10% below 2000 level by 2020	\$2.2 billion savings 2007-2020	Not assessed

Source: Center for Climate Strategies Report, "Climate Mitigation Under the Clean Air Act." 12/5/08

## LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

action plan that will allow the state to reach its year 2000 level of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and half of the year 2000 emissions by the year 2040. The plan contained forty-nine different policy options, and 92 percent of the stakeholders approved of the final plan. The real prize: the plan is estimated to save the state \$5.5 billion between 2007 and 2020 through cost-saving measures like appliance efficiency standards and better electricity pricing and will generate approximately 250,000 jobs for Arizona.

*A CCS-developed State Climate Action Plan can allow a state to reduce its level of carbon emissions by as much as 25 percent through purely cost-saving measures.*

North Carolina shares a similar story. In 2006, a large task force developed a climate action plan for the state. The plan, containing fifty-six different policy options, would have reduced expected 2020 emissions by as much as 47 percent in the next ten years, generated a projected \$7.5 billion in savings between 2007 and 2020, and

created more than 44,500 jobs for North Carolina. However, the group was not able to muster the votes in the state legislature to pass the finalized plan; instead, the group was given an extension to rework different parts of the plan, which had received 85 percent unanimity from the stakeholders.

These two states, which are only two of more than twenty that the Center for Climate Strategies has pursued in recent years, provide an important lesson for those who are eager for climate change legislation here in the United States. Despite more than 450 policy options, states never choose more than one-sixth of the options that are available, and almost every state has only pursued those policies that will save the state money.

With a mandate for change, President Obama may be able to finally deliver a national solution to address the issue of climate change. But so far in the United States, even smaller and more cost-efficient measures still struggle to gain support.

*Phillip Martin is a native Texan and an MPP2 candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.*

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## AIR FORCE: WIND FARMS IN NORTH TEXAS

*by Dori Glanz*

Texas leads the nation in oil production, but big oil is no longer the only big energy industry in the state. More and more, as speculators and businesses look across the wide-open plains of the Texas Panhandle, its flatlands whipped by steady gusts, they see green in the wind farms where oil wells have begun to dry out.

"It's like an oil well in the sky," laughed Marjorie Bischel, who with her husband owns a 645-acre stretch near the isolated town of Pampa.

"This is dry country, you know. You don't have no rain, you do not raise a crop. But we have plenty of wind out here in the Texas Panhandle."

The wind towers are 197 feet high, looming almost nineteen stories above the Bischel's roof, and have a propeller span of 184 feet—more than nine pickup trucks lined up in a row. You can hardly hear them as they turn, with antelopes and jackrabbits running wild on the open land between the towering turbines.



**“It’s like an oil well in the sky.”**  
*Marjorie Bischel, Pampa, TX*

*Wind farms stretch across the wide open plains of North Texas. Photo by Dori Glanz.*

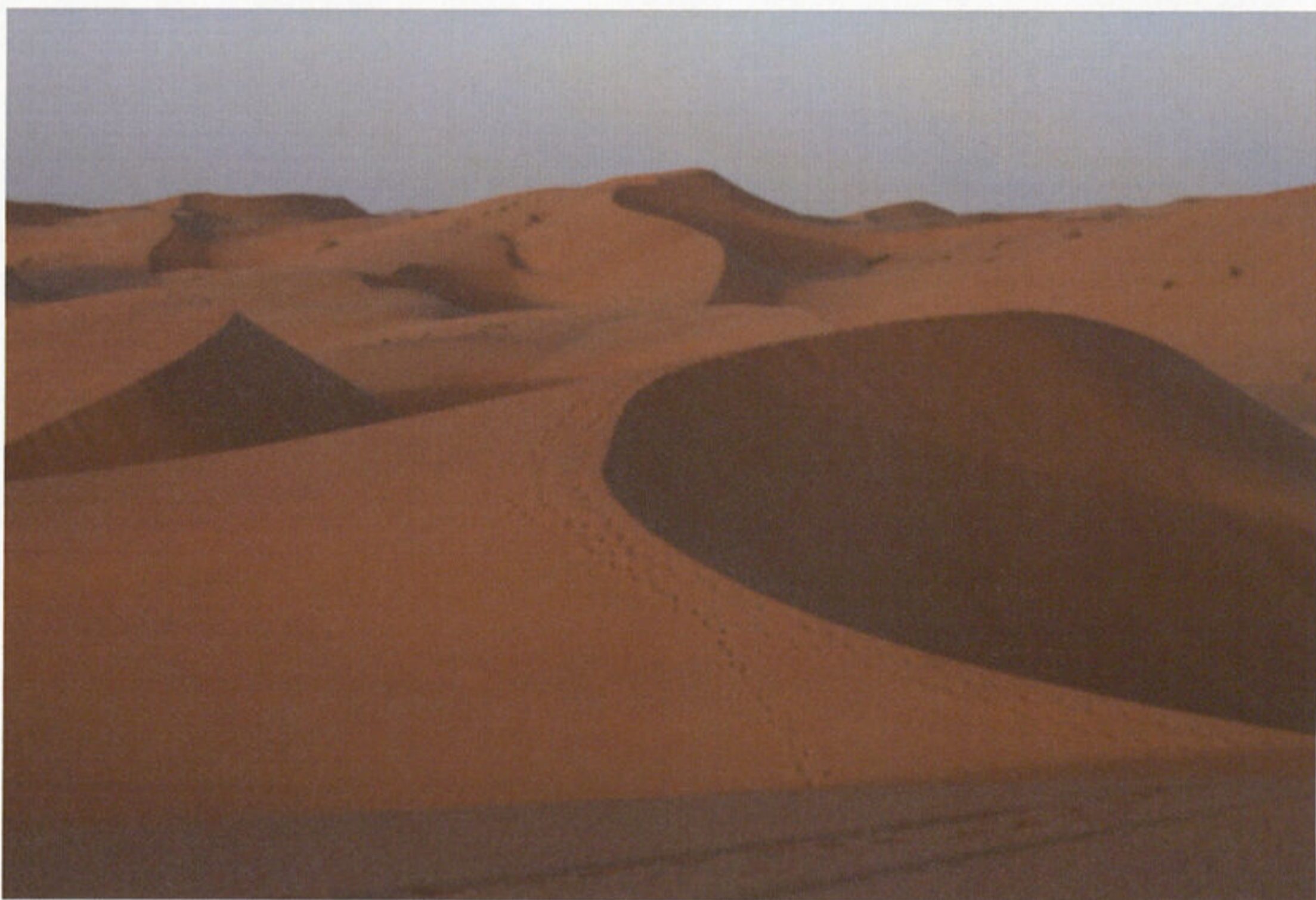
The owners of these plants, though, might come as a surprise. Shell Energy, a familiar player in Texas’s big oil scene, owns the turbines on the Bischel farm. And next door in Pampa, T. Boone Pickens, perhaps the quintessential Texas oil tycoon, is investing between \$10 billion and \$12 billion to build the world’s largest wind farm. Pickens, with his deep pockets and plenty of sway in the land of big everything—oil, money, estates, and wind—is leading a field of businessmen anxious to harness this power source and, in the process, redefine the state and possibly the nation’s energy equation.

The four-phase project, based out of Pampa, is expected to come online in 2014. If Pickens makes the deadline, the farm will produce enough energy to power 1.3 million homes and will be more than five times as big as the current largest wind farm

in the world, 250 miles south in Sweetwater, Texas. The project promises to provide an additional \$1.6 billion per year in economic gains to the Pampa area when the plants are operational, according to an Economic Impact Study by Resource Economics of Austin.

For a town devastated in the oil bust of the 1990s and still suffering from its dependence on the volatile oil market, this income provides much-needed respite. Here in Texas, wind energy proves sustainable both in terms of natural resources and in terms of economic stability.

*Dori Glanz is a native Texan and a second-year MPP student at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She worked as a political reporter last summer, covering energy policy and the 2008 election for News21.*



*The barren plains of the Saudi Arabian desert. Photo by Samantha Joseph.*

### **OIL CHANGE: NEW ENERGY SECURITY STRATEGY IN SAUDI ARABIA**

*by Anna Berkowitz*

“Energy security” usually refers to preventing the potentially catastrophic intersection of increasing global energy consumption and the inevitable decline in petroleum production. However, the energy sector faces another “natural resource” shortage that is rarely discussed but equally important: trained personnel. According to energy sector experts, the shortage of specially trained personnel severely threatens future innovation and growth in all areas of energy production.

A recent report by Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA) states that, compared with demand for engineers, there will be a 10 to 15 percent “people deficit” by 2010. Furthermore, CERA predicts that more than 50 percent of today’s engineers, with an average age of 50, will retire by 2015 and will not be replaced by an adequate number of new engineering professionals. Although the numbers are troubling, the bigger concern is the enormous loss of experience and knowledge.



## LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A potential solution to this pressing concern is currently under construction in the most unlikely of places: Saudi Arabia. Located on the Red Sea north of Jeddah, and boasting a multibillion-dollar endowment, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) boasts that it will be “an international, graduate-level research university dedicated to inspiring a new age of scientific achievement in the Kingdom that will also benefit the region and the world.”

*King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) boasts that it will be “an international, graduate-level research university dedicated to inspiring a new age of scientific achievement.”*

In January 2008, while traveling with then Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman and his delegation to Saudi Arabia, I listened to Saudi officials discuss their aspirations for KAUST. At the time, the university was nothing more than blueprints, barren desert, and a vision.

When KAUST opens its (sustainable) doors in September 2009, it will offer students four strategic research options: resources, energy and environment; biosciences and bioengineering; materials science and engineering; and applied mathematics and computational science. These concentrations allow for the necessary training of the next generation of energy industry personnel.

And contrary to Western views of strict Saudi customs, those partaking will not just be Muslim men. Breaking from traditional Saudi cultural and religious decree in an effort to attract international students, women will be admitted to the new university, classes will be coeducational, and all religious and ethnic groups will be accepted.

The country’s infamous religious police will not be allowed on campus. Interestingly, the state-owned oil giant, Saudi Aramco, is largely responsible for these nonconventional policies; it was commissioned to build the campus, create the curriculum, and recruit international professors and students.

*Breaking from traditional Saudi cultural and religious decree in an effort to attract international students, women will be admitted to the new university, classes will be coeducational, and all religious and ethnic groups will be accepted.*

KAUST President and Harvard Ph.D. Choon Fong Shih articulated his goals for KAUST in an address at Shanghai Jiao Tong University:

“Curiosity interplaying with reason gives us science; science interplaying with necessity gives us technology. The interaction of science and technology is what helps bring about understanding of the world, connecting with the world, thereby contributing to the transformation of the world.”

As we enter a time when, according to Nordic Energy Research, for every new power engineer that completes his or her education, three power engineers are retiring, we can look to what the current King of Saudi Arabia has called the “new House of Wisdom” for a possible solution.

*Anna Berkowitz is a first-year MPP student at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University concentrating in international and global affairs, specifically energy and environmental policy.*

## LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE



*Drive-2-Change and Solar Punch band on the road. Photo courtesy of Priya Parker.*

### ON THE ROAD TO ENERGY SOLUTIONS IN INDIA

*by Priya Parker*

**T**homas Friedman, on February 14, chose to use his Saturday column in the *New York Times* to highlight a bunch of young, idealistic Indians and Americans and their crazy, innovative, and effective India Climate Solutions Project to drive an electric car 3,500 kilometers across India.

My friend's brainchild, the Indian Youth Climate Network aims to spread awareness about climate change and renewable energy. But its big break

came long before Friedman's column. After only a few preliminary meetings, the new Indian Youth Climate Network organization had already convinced a CEO to donate three market-ready, solar-integrated Reva electric cars with extra-long battery lives, recruited the world's first solar-powered band (Solar Punch) to "tour" with it, and found multiple sponsors to support its idea.

In the longest electric car caravan ever attempted, these enthusiastic young people spent five weeks

## LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

driving across fifteen cities and villages from Chennai to Delhi from January to February 2009, documenting and spotlighting innovative solutions for renewable energy in India. This endeavor raised awareness nationwide about the need to scale up such projects.

At each stop, the organization reported on innovative solutions in each city it visited: in Chennai, a citywide policy mandating rainwater harvesting for all buildings, in Zahirabad, a jatropha tree oil plantation to make biofuel for local energy consumption, in Goa, green architecture, in Baroda, a solar school, and so on.

The reporting was meant to appeal to young advocates like the young people in the organization: they made dozens of short films and uploaded them on YouTube, using solar-powered equipment, of course.

Videos of local villagers demonstrating the use of biofuel to generate heat for their homes and performances of Solar Punch nationwide resulted in more than 400 news clips from newspapers and TV stations across the country. They conducted climate leadership training sessions at every major university they came across, engaging youth in brainstorming to create their own climate and energy solutions.

*In the longest electric car caravan ever attempted, these enthusiastic young people spent five weeks driving across fifteen cities and villages from Chennai to Delhi.*

Their message was simple: while the rest of the world is only talking about the threat of climate change, Indians have already been doing something about it locally, "not only to prevent global warming, but because it makes financial and

ecological sense." As co-organizer Alexis Ringwald explains, "We wanted to show the world that India is a solution (and is full of solutions) and should not be viewed as a roadblock to progress on the climate issue."

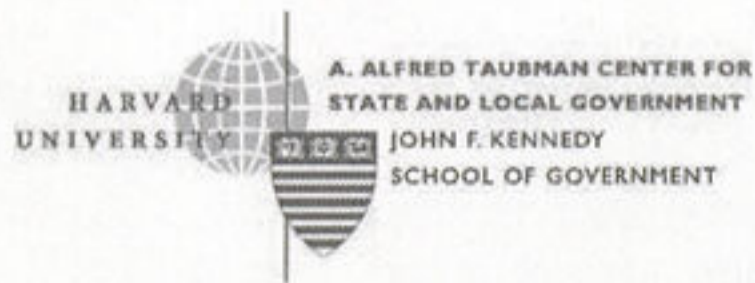
*Videos of local villagers demonstrating the use of biofuel to generate heat for their homes and performances of Solar Punch nationwide resulted in more than 400 news clips from newspapers and TV stations across the country.*

The journey ended on February 5 in India's capital, New Delhi. But the group didn't stop there. During the two weeks after the youths return, they set up personal meetings with Thomas Friedman, Bollywood actor Gaurav Kappor, Kapil Sibal, Minister of Science and Technology, R.K. Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Larry Brilliant, former CEO of Google.org, and Indian President Pratibha Patil.

And we are just starting to see the results of a movement that can only be described as viral. As stated on its Web site, "The greatest climate solution is you."

This is particularly true in India, where there are no fewer than 1.1 billion potential solutions.

*Priya Parker spent three years working in India before coming to the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Hailing from Virginia, Parker is an MPP1 candidate focused on political development, civil society, and social innovation.*



**The Taubman Center for State and Local Government** and its affiliated institutes and programs are the Kennedy School of Government's focal point for activities that address state and local governance and intergovernmental relations.

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The Center also disseminates this research via publications, instruction in the Kennedy School's graduate and executive education programs, sponsorship of conferences and workshops, and interactions with policymakers, public managers, and other scholars.

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# ON TRIAL: HUMAN RIGHTS IN KASHMIR

by Mallika Kaur Sarkaria

Kashmir has been a flashpoint for conflict ever since the British decolonization of India in 1947. Today, the sixty-two-year-old tension between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan has come to the front burner of international diplomacy. In the final weeks of his 2008 campaign, in a Time magazine interview, U.S. President Barack Obama identified finding a resolution as a "critical task for the next administration."

But as India, Pakistan, and the United States attempt to hammer out the solution to this dispute, the voice of Kashmiris, and their right to self-determination, could be lost in the cacophony of realpolitik. Civil society, both within and outside Kashmir, has a vital role to play in ensuring that these voices contribute to the dialogue in a diplomatic solution.

The work of the International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir illustrates this point. The tribunal is an initiative that responds to the need for justice and accountability for the past, while at the same time representing important voices for future solutions.

*The tribunal... responds to the need for justice and accountability for the past, while at the same time representing important voices for future solutions.*

In focusing on the territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, the international community has largely overlooked the history of human rights abuses plaguing ordinary Kashmiris in Indian-administered Kashmir. Irrespective of Indian and Pakistani territorial claims, human rights abuses must be addressed in order to set the stage for reconciliation in the region. Focusing on Indian-administered

Kashmir, rather than Pakistani-administered Kashmir, is not a partisan choice. There is no tribunal in Pakistan, and so the International People's Tribunal on the Indian side provides a unique opportunity to study human rights in the subcontinent.

*The Indian-administered portion [of Kashmir], home to a population of 11 million, is currently the site of live conflict, continued uprisings, and allegations of widespread and systematic human rights abuses.*

Furthermore, while the Pakistani-administered territory is by no means free of human rights issues, it is the Indian-administered portion, home to a population of 11 million, that is currently the site of live conflict, continued uprisings, and allegations of widespread and systematic human rights abuses.

The tribunal's choice to focus on the Indian-administered portion is also a practical one: convened by Indian nationals and Kashmiris on the Indian side, the tribunal's access to Pakistani Kashmir, across the heavily militarized border, is impossible. Finally, under the human rights framework, the Indian state is culpable for the abuses and impunity within its territory and thus remains responsible to Indian-administered Kashmir and Kashmiris.

## BACKGROUND OF THE KASHMIR CONFLICT

In 1947, when Great Britain relinquished its colonial rule over India, the territory was divided into two dominions: India and Pakistan. British administrators demanded that all princely states accede to either India or Pakistan. Kashmir, a large princely

## HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE SUBCONTINENT

state constituting the northernmost tip of colonial India, was geographically contiguous to both India and Pakistan.

The Hindu maharaja of Kashmir ruled a majority Muslim population. The maharaja remained independent of either country until a peasant revolt rocked his throne and armed groups began infiltrating Kashmir. When invasions intensified, the frightened maharaja asked India for assistance. On the condition that the will of the Kashmiris would be determined by a plebiscite on restoration of normalcy, Kashmir acceded to India on 27 October 1947. Soon after, Pakistan and India began their first war over Kashmir.

*In February 1990, 400,000 Kashmiris... marched to the office of the UN Military Observer Group to hand over petitions demanding independence.*

The Indian government has never agreed to the promised public referendum to settle Kashmir's right to self-determination, even though the United Nations (UN) has called for plebiscite several times. Pakistan blames India for deceitful conduct and for not allowing the plebiscite, while India decries Pakistan for not withdrawing from Indian-controlled areas and thus not meeting the UN prerequisites for a plebiscite. In January 1949, the two countries declared a cease-fire but have subsequently fought two other wars. In 1971, India made territorial advances and drew a new cease-fire line, the "Line of Control," which currently marks the border between the two countries.

In Indian-administered Kashmir, 1989 saw popular disenchantment with the Indian electoral system and the beginning of a groundswell movement for Kashmiri freedom from India. In one demonstration in February 1990, 400,000 Kashmiris—almost half the population of the capital city, Sri-

nagar—marched to the office of the UN Military Observer Group to hand over petitions demanding independence.

*By conservative estimates, the twenty years of armed struggle have seen more than 60,000 (majority Kashmiri Muslim) dead and at least 8,000 missing.*

Simultaneously, armed militant groups became the violent face of the self-determination movement. Increased repression by the Indian state and the armed uprising by militants made civil society activity impossible. Ninety percent of Kashmir's Hindu population, about 160,000, fled the region, never to return.

All aspects of civilian life for Kashmiri Muslims were forever altered. The Indian government passed legislation to suppress insurgency, suspended civil liberties, and restricted humanitarian assistance. Currently, an estimated 400,000 or more Indian troops remain in Kashmir, making this one of the most militarized regions of the world. Indian forces have been accused of human rights abuses against civilians, including raping women and torturing and murdering men. By conservative estimates, the twenty years of armed struggle have seen more than 60,000 (majority Kashmiri Muslim) dead and at least 8,000 missing.

### THE INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL FOR INDIAN- ADMINISTERED KASHMIR

Honest engagement with human rights issues paves the way for dialogue and rehabilitation. In Kashmir, hyper-militarization and continued violence have curtailed human rights investigations. South Asia lacks any formal regional mechanism to address human rights concerns (something akin to

the European Court of Human Rights or the Inter-American Court of Human Rights). Filling this vacuum, and in a region inaccessible to most groups, the People's Tribunal is engaged in investigating and documenting the human toll of the Kashmir conflict, particularly since 1990. It does not espouse any political "solutions" to the territorial dispute— independence, unification with Pakistan, or continued Indian rule—but is concerned with bringing attention to the human rights abuses and continued injustices in Indian Kashmir.

### Birth of the Tribunal

The tribunal was convened in April 2008 by Dr. Angana Chatterji, associate professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies and a non-resident Indian citizen; Parvez Imroz, human rights lawyer and resident Kashmiri; Gautam Navlakha, Indian human rights defender; and Zaheer-Ud-Din, chief editor of a Kashmiri daily.

The mandate of the tribunal, according to Chatterji, "was to create alliances between citizens of Indian-administered Kashmir, citizens of India, and internationally...to intervene on the prevalent isolation of Kashmir."

*She "witnessed the tremendous resilience and ethical resistance of the people and their repeated plea 'tell the world about our grief.'"*

According to Imroz, "We live in a time of not just economic globalization, but also globalized responsibility." He notes that the last twenty years in Kashmir have seen 10,000 disappeared, 200,000 tortured, and the failure of critical institutions of democracy. A long-standing advocate for civil society action, Imroz discussed the vision of a tribunal with various Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris.

"Keeping in view the magnitude of the violence, we decided there is need of holding an international tribunal, so that leaders of different countries could also know about the abuses in Kashmir," he explains.

In June 2006, Imroz invited Chatterji to Kashmir to envision the tribunal. Chatterji has spent much of her life working with social justice issues in India, from her childhood in conflict-ridden Calcutta, to volunteering at relief camps in Delhi after the anti-Sikh pogroms of 1984, to working on communal violence in Orissa. "An effort like this is usually undertaken after the conflict ends," Chatterji says.

From June 2006 to April 2008, she spent time studying present-day Kashmir and talking to scores of local people. She says she "witnessed the tremendous resilience and ethical resistance of the people and their repeated plea 'tell the world about our grief.'"

### Tribunal in Action

Many who have suffered the brunt of the conflict find refuge and healing in working with the tribunal. The tribunal liaison, thirty-two-year-old Khurram Parvez, is a native of Srinagar. He remembers clearly the uprisings of 1990. During a citizen protest against molestation of women by Indian forces, his maternal grandfather was shot dead by the police. He remembers:

There were three bullets in his head. The police didn't warn, no tear gas, they were ordered to fire to kill. The person who ordered the firing was my next-door neighbor. I was in sixth grade then. I had to then face this person every day...It was painful and frustrating. Even more painful because he received a police bravery medal after that. And promotions.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE SUBCONTINENT

Many of Parvez's cousins took to militancy in similar situations, but he channeled energy to civil society initiatives. Through his work with the tribunal, Parvez is targeting young people. "If we don't engage them, they will look for other alternatives," he says. "We want people to know they don't have to give lives. Saving lives is more important. We've already given enough lives."

Tribunal workers have collected information from hundreds of Kashmiris so far (exact figures and some tribunal workers' names are withheld in this article due to security concerns). The methodology varies from in-depth studies to individual interviews to large group discussions, according to the nature of the issue, the comfort level of the participants, and security considerations.

*"We want people to know they don't have to give lives. Saving lives is more important. We've already given enough lives."*

"We are trying to document the history of Kashmir's present," Chatterji says. "Militarization has produced spirals of violence, high rates of people with suicidal behaviors...People live in fear. The psychological devastation is incalculable...Impacted by their residency in institutional malfeasance, Indian soldiers have committed suicide," she explains. The information collected thus far includes disappearances, fake encounter killings, torture, mass graves, detention and torture centers, gender and sexual violence, prisoner rights, rights of former militants, juvenile justice, and access to justice systems.

The tribunal links how various exceptional laws—the Disturbed Areas Act, Armed Forces Special Powers Act, and the Public Safety Act—enable human rights violations by Indian forces in Kashmir. These laws grant special powers to the

armed forces to detain, arrest, search, shoot, and maintain a continuous presence in Kashmiri civilian life. "These laws give virtual immunity to the army. There is no accountability, and the voices of the victims are hardly heard," explains the tribunal's legal counsel, Mihir Desai.

*"These laws give virtual immunity to the army. There is no accountability, and the voices of the victims are hardly heard."*

But the tribunal's investigation is not limited to abuses by Indian security forces. "We are not saying the abuses are only perpetrated by state actors, but also non-state," Imroz says. Parvez says that the tribunal is recording the perspective of all stakeholders, including Pandits (the Hindu minority of Kashmir) because "we want uncensored opinions."

The quest for uncensored opinions has brought the tribunal under attack. In June and July 2008 tribunal staff faced escalated surveillance, harassment, and assault. On 30 June 2008, grenades were thrown in Imroz's house, an assassination attempt by the security forces. These threats stalled the tribunal's work, if only temporarily.

"In June, we decided that we had to suspend activities. I wasn't at home...had to go into hiding. And even now they are monitoring. Even this conversation," Imroz says. "They knew how to deal with militancy, but not people like us. We are transparent. No law can stop us...because it is not illegal activity," he adds.

A Kashmiri police report accused Chatterji of "enticing fear and alarm" to induce offenses against the state by writing and speaking of mass graves. She has been warned of bombs in her car, detained, threatened, and interrogated. Commenting on his colleagues' collective perse-



verance, Parvez remarks, "we will not change our commitment because we are being attacked... Our resolve remains strong."

### Perspectives on the Tribunal

The tribunal has received tremendous support from the local population. Parvez says that "local people are very happy it's being done, and that it also has an international focus. People otherwise feel dejected... This work tells them that people care about them." Chatterji recounts that, during the attacks on the tribunal last June, strangers called to offer support: "My drivers were threatened, and they would say, 'we'll keep working with you.' 'Why?' 'Because people usually don't care about the disarray of our lives.'"

*"The strength of India is moral. It is supposed to be committed to democracy and rule of law, and there is [a] need to expose their moral failings."*

Working with Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits, the tribunal witnesses the population's desire to engage productively, despite deep-seated frustrations. Chatterji says one understands:

...The desire of people to speak with those who are interested, not for political reasons, but in bearing witness. Once, Parvez and I went to Kupwara on a Friday, a day of special prayers for Muslims. Villagers welcomed us, saying, "today our prayer will be to work with you."

Internationally, the tribunal's most prominent support came in the form of an invitation to testify at a European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights hearing in Brussels in July 2008. Earlier that month, the European Parliament had issued an

urgent resolution on the escalating repression in Kashmir. Chatterji attended the hearing in person and Imroz via Web link, since he has been denied a passport by India. The subcommittee engaged with co-conveners about the tribunal's findings, noting the importance of its continued operation.

### Desired Outcomes

The tribunal hopes to release an interim report soon and conclude its work in 2010. Imroz fears that "people know very little about what's happening in Kashmir" because the Indian media has projected it solely as a territorial dispute and because civil society lacks the resources to convey information about the situation in Kashmir. "The state thinks it will get away with the abuses," Imroz says. "Punjab, Nagaland, Kashmir, it will keep happening till they are exposed." Imroz believes that the tribunal's moral indictment of the Indian state is essential. "The strength of India is moral. It is supposed to be committed to democracy and rule of law, and there is [a] need to expose their moral failings."

Chatterji can recall "countless stories of horrific violence." She speaks of "waterboarding; mutilation; rape; a man, hung upside down, had petrol injected through his anus." A graveyard caretaker testified to her that more than 235 bodies were buried by the Indian forces in unmarked graves in one village between 2002 and 2006. She says that "digging graves for those killed, including in brutal and fake encounters, many whose bodies remain unidentified, has left him scared, weak, that each night forces a revisitation of the terror." "A people's tribunal is constituted when the state fails to act or is complicit," Chatterji says. "Our burden is to evidence this reality with rigor and integrity. Then...it remains the burden of the international community and an ethical imperative on the part of the state."

## CONCLUSION

In August 2008, more than one million Kashmiris took to the roads in peaceful protests against the Indian government. Unaddressed human rights issues continue to fuel the fire, and Kashmiris continue to attempt to air their grievances. During his presidential campaign, U.S. President Barack Obama declared Kashmir a “potential tar pit diplomatically.” But he expressed commitment to devoting “serious diplomatic resources” in search of a “plausible approach.” With India a growing economic superpower and Pakistan facing larger threats along its Afghan border, Obama saw “a moment where potentially we could get their attention” to work toward a solution. “It won’t be easy,” Obama admitted, “but it’s important.” The geostrategic importance of Kashmir, the widespread human rights issues, and the mutual interest of India and Pakistan in border stability make the time ripe for U.S. intervention.

The Obama administration can aim for tangible goals, such as encouraging India to repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, one of the sources of impunity in Kashmir. The broader international community should look for other creative ways to support and bring to light the important work of this unique venue for bolstering human rights in South Asia. The tribunal challenges the international community to think beyond the sanitized image of “disputed territory” and to create holistic solutions to protracted human suffering.

*Mallika Kaur Sarkaria is a dual degree student at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law (J.D., 2010), and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (MPP, 2010). She focuses on South Asian human rights issues and the protection of religious and ethnic minorities. Her perspectives have been informed by growing up in Punjab (on the Indian side) and having worked in advocacy efforts in the U.S. since 2001.*

## PURPOSE STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE’S TRIBUNAL ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE IN INDIAN-ADMINISTERED KASHMIR

1. Building on its mandate from the submissions of civil society, this Tribunal calls on the international community to recognize the juncture at which functions and failures of governance intersect with the culture of grief in Indian-administered Kashmir. These realities, through neglect, indifference, or complicity, continue to reproduce cycles of violence that are gendered and classed, religious and ethnic in their effects, with ever increasing social, political, economic, environmental, and psychological consequences that affect private, public, and everyday life.
2. The Tribunal is assembled to address growing concerns with, and allegations of, breakdowns in social, political, cultural, religious, gendered, and economic life in Indian-administered Kashmir, that affect history and memory, spirit and future.
3. The Tribunal seeks to examine charges of, and expand awareness and understanding regarding, institutionalized violence, social trauma, and human rights abuses.
4. The Tribunal further seeks to develop recommendations for justice, reparations, and healing, in alliance with ethical, peaceable grassroots processes and civil society groups and individuals that dissent such conditions as named above.
5. The Tribunal seeks to increase concern, and ethical, constructive, and creative participation of the local and international community toward justice, peace, and security in the region.

Source:: <http://www.kashmirprocess.org/premise.html>

# COMING OUT IN FORCE: THE RISE OF THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN INDIA

by Sheila B. Lalwani

### "OPEN THE DOOR! DOWN WITH SECTION 377!"

Moments after the sunset in Delhi in July 2008, several hundred gay men and women rallied for the first time through the streets, shouting for the repeal of a century-old law that criminalizes homosexuality. "Long live the queer movement! Open the door! Down with Section 377!" Demonstrators, many of them hiding behind masks, protested in front of government buildings, calling for justice and social equity. But motorists, no strangers to political rallies and accustomed to honking as a show of support, remained silent.

*"Our parents are not supportive, so how can you expect the government to be supportive?"*

Similar protests took place in Bangalore and Kolkata, where scores of anxious police officers stood nearby in case violence broke out. Dozens of journalists and cameramen documented the city's first-ever gay rights parade, and the next day, every major Indian newspaper featured a story on the event. Days later, the Delhi High Court postponed making a decision on Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, a remnant of colonialism that outlaws homosexuality. Gay rights activists expected the delay and vowed to continue pressing for gay rights despite the setback. "Our parents are not supportive, so how can you expect the government to be supportive?" one protester questioned, hiding behind a mask. "We are here because we are strong, and there are many more like us."

The rise of the gay community in India reflects the conflicting terrain of an ancient society rising in world prominence and embracing a Western lifestyle, while also resisting influences that threaten deeply held values. Bolstered by the legalization of same-sex marriages in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa and Vermont, Indian activists believe the moment for them to remain closeted in conservative Indian society has passed.

"It will be repealed," said Aditya Bondyopadhyay, a prominent attorney in Delhi who has been part of the gay rights movement for nearly a decade. "I'm not going to give you a time frame, but I'm more than certain it's on its way out. Legally speaking, morally speaking, there is no way the court can justify the law."

### HISTORY OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN INDIA

The gay community largely lived in the shadows of Indian society until about a decade ago. The Naz Foundation, a Delhi-based sexual rights organization, filed a petition in the Delhi High Court in 2001 to overturn the part of the law that criminalizes homosexuality. Over the years, Section 377 has rarely been used to prosecute homosexuals, but it remains a tool to threaten, blackmail, and extort money from this community. Gay rights organizations also charge that the law has hindered HIV prevention efforts. Since the Naz Foundation filed its 2001 petition, other gay rights groups in India have joined the effort, marking the beginning of a new, confrontational period between gay rights groups and the government.

# HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE SUBCONTINENT

## CONFRONTING CULTURAL VALUES

In India, where marriage and traditional family life are social priorities, children who come out to their parents can be disowned or ostracized from the family.

*When he came out to his parents, they immediately began searching for a bride until he refused to get married.*

Rahul Singh, a coordinator with the Naz Foundation, understands the intense pressure associated with being gay. When he came out to his parents, they immediately began searching for a bride until he refused to get married. Though he has been in a steady relationship for the last three years, he said his parents struggle to accept his identity. "I have good relations with my sister, but not my parents," he said. "My parents and I rarely talk." Though some families accept their child's sexuality, stories like Singh's are common.

## THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION & GROWING MOMENTUM

No major political party in India has shown much willingness to embrace gay rights as part of its platform. The conservative Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fought hardest against Section 377's repeal, accusing gay rights groups of being part of a broader conspiracy from the West to undermine traditional Indian values. The BJP cited references from the Bible and Qu'ran to support its anti-gay rhetoric, despite the numerous references to homosexual love in Hinduism.

Despite the recalcitrance of Indian society, there is growing momentum among the elite to change Section 377—including a 2006 call from 100

literary figures, including Vikram Seth and Amartya Sen. These petitioners have stressed to the Delhi High Court that the homosexual community, on account of Section 377, is unable to approach the court directly for fear of being identified or harassed by the police. There is also a growing number of sexual rights organizations. The four largest cities in India—Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta, and Chennai—have roughly a dozen gay rights groups. But even within the gay rights community, activism still focuses on the male gay community. At an organization called Creative Resources Empowerment Action in Delhi, programs manager Sunita Kujar started working with lesbian women in 2000. Kujar believes that lesbians have largely been left out of gay rights conversations.

*The conservative Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fought hardest against...gay rights groups [for] being part of a broader conspiracy from the West to undermine traditional Indian values.*

Another activist organization, Sangini Trust in Delhi, was founded by a lesbian as a place of refuge for other lesbian women who have run away from their homes. The founder, Betu Singh, was inspired to set up Sangini Trust after the first time that she met another lesbian. Prior to that encounter, she had thought she was the only one in India.

Gay activists believe that the day will come when they will have rights, but it will take time. "Like any other right in the world, a right is never given," Bondyopadhyay, the attorney, explained. "It has to be claimed."

*Sheila Lalwani, a 2009 MPP candidate, researched Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code and other human rights-related issues in India during the summer of 2008 as part of the Traub-Dicker-KSG Summer Research Fellowship.*

## DUST STORMS AND DANCE PARTIES: A REPORT FROM A KENYAN REFUGEE CAMP

by Syon Bhanot

*The Kakuma Refugee Camp is situated in Northern Kenya, roughly 75 miles from the border with Sudan. In late September 2006, as a program associate with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), I spent a day at one of the camp's multipurpose centers—MPC1. These are scenes I witnessed that day.*

MPC1 is not visually impressive. It consists of a collection of mud huts, smeared with paint and cement, sitting in a large dirt field behind a rickety fence. A torn white IRC flag flies on a short flagpole in the center of the compound. Bicycles litter the place, a sign of the facility's popularity amongst the refugees. Most are coated in dust, and many are equipped with platforms behind the main bicycle seat to lug a second passenger, timber, a cooler, and whatever else the rider wishes to carry.

Peter Kur is the man in charge of this MPC, and he leads me around the facility. Peter is a Sudanese refugee in the camp, though he hopes his days in Kakuma are numbered. After introducing himself, he notes, "I have been accepted to resettle in Australia!" The look on his face as he says this is telling. He cannot wait to leave.

Our first stop on the tour is the Jean Kennedy Smith Therapy Center, a new IRC facility established to treat people with developmental disabilities. When we arrive, we find a healthy-looking man with a thin moustache napping under a collection of trees. This is Philemon Loping, the center's acting supervisor. Peter taps him on the shoulder, and he immediately snaps to attention and grabs my hand. Together, the two of them lead me through the facility, which is little more than two large huts. Inside the first hut we find a Sudanese infant boy and his mother. The young boy's head is far smaller than it ought to be; he is afflicted with a mental disability that limits his control over

his limbs and neck. His mother has come in the hopes that the professionals at the center can do something, anything, to help her son. Therapy equipment is strewn about this room haphazardly—faux stairs and walkers, standing poles, and posture aids, all designed to help children progress from immobile to upright to walking.

As Philemon shows me the different items, I sense he is tired. His eyes, which were full of life when we met, are suddenly downcast and hollow. After pointing to the various therapeutic instruments, his arm falls limp to his side and his shoulders sag.

The more I see of the center, the more I understand Philemon's dreary demeanor. For many of the kids here, time is running out. A glance at the log of patient visits paints a grim story. Each page lists the visitation schedules of around thirty children, but about three of each thirty fail to make their second appointment. The space for the second appointment has no day, month, or year. In its place are the block letters, "DIE."

Leaving the center, we hear the booming voice of an orator emanating from one of the compound's lecture halls. "Oh, we must hurry," Peter says with a smile.

Peter leads me to the source of the commotion—a classroom holding about forty teenagers and adults. On the blackboard is written "International Literacy Day 2006," and in the front of the room stands

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD



*Dancing at an International Day Celebration at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Photo by Syon Bhanot.*

a gaunt man, swimming in a grossly oversized button-down shirt and a large white baseball hat. He is speaking loudly, almost angrily, about the importance of education. "Literacy means . . . people who have the education. Being illiterate is like . . . being a sick person! You are a sick person! You don't know what is going on!" After a few minutes, he stops, takes a half bow, and sits to polite applause from the crowd.

The next event on the agenda is a dance performance by a group of young Sudanese Lotuho refugees. The young women are dressed in a combination of traditional and modern attire: floral or light-colored dresses, striped tank tops, and cheerfully colored wraps with short, dangling strings around their waists. The men are shirtless, wearing only jeans and a belt, and some carry long, whittled sticks. The men look, in many ways, a fierce counterpart to the more delicately adorned women.

The performance begins when one of the young men leans over and whacks his stick against a drum he holds between his feet. Then singing begins, in sync with the drum beat, and the dancers start to bob up and down. It is then that I notice that the women have bells wrapped around their ankles

as instruments. Quickly, the group creates a layered, complex rhythm from very little. The men and women then line up single file and dance in a circle around the front of the room, the men on the outside and the women in a concentric circle within. This separation continues throughout the dance.

After a few minutes, my worst fear is realized. A striking female dancer holds her hand out for me, beckoning me into the fray. I have no choice but to grab it, and to the delight of the audience, I join the celebration. Dancing in the brutal heat of Kakuma, with only a musty mud hut as shelter from the elements, is more exhausting and disorienting than being in the sweatiest city nightclub. But uproarious laughter from the audience shakes me out of my daze. A man is pointing at me and grabbing his gut in laughter. I look around and realize that somehow, I am standing in line with the girls as they stand face-to-face with the boys.

At day's end, I wait for the IRC vehicle at the front exit of the MPC. On the dirt road outside the MPC's gate I see two boys playing, neither one older than seven. One boy chases the other and tries to step on his bare feet, while the chased boy jostles about to avoid the indignity of being stomped on. Then the stomper pulls out a long metal wire, like a straightened coat hanger, and begins to tap his friend in the leg with the instrument. His friend takes a few steps away, then suddenly whips a small plastic water gun out of his pocket and leaps aggressively onto his counterpart. After wrestling him to the ground, he places the plastic gun squarely between the eyes of his friend and fires until he runs out of liquid ammo. Both boys get up, laughing, and run off down the road, leaving me wondering whether the scene was really child's play.

*Syon Bhanot is a second-year MPP student at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Before coming to the Kennedy School, he spent a year working for the International Rescue Committee in Kenya.*

## A DAY OF UNREST: A REPORT ON BOLIVIAN IDENTITY POLITICS

by David Bluestone

*Bolivia is the poorest country in South America and the most unequal in Latin America. To break the chains of poverty, Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president, and his Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Toward Socialism—MAS) political party have pushed redistributive policies to benefit Bolivia's poor and excluded Andean indigenous majority. These policies have been flatly rejected by political and economic elites in the wealthier and more conservative lowland regions who refuse to cede control of their economic and natural resources to the national government. The national political power struggle is tearing local neighborhoods apart. President Morales's partisans and Santa Cruz loyalists have adopted the "us versus them" mentality of their political leaders and clash violently. This article recounts twenty-four hours in Santa Cruz city's largest, most and impoverished slum: Plan 3000.*

**10:30 PM, 28 NOVEMBER 2008:**

**SANTA CRUZ CITY CENTER**

**“Y**ou better get down here quick: We're going to resist the paro!” Ramón, an impulsive and self-identified socialist, yells the news of tomorrow's department-wide work stoppage by the Pro-Santa Cruz Civic Committee (Comité Pro-Santa Cruz—CPSC) over the phone.

He wants me to watch his neighborhood defy the will of these conservative elites, who are striking against the Morales administration in an attempt to keep local resources in Santa Cruz (instead of seeing them spent on a national social security system). Plan 3000, referred to here as “the Plan,” ironically, hopes to form its own municipality to prevent local tax money collected here from being spent elsewhere in the city.

Ramón recently moved to the city of Santa Cruz from the small town of Vallegrande, famous for being the site of Ernesto “Che” Guevara's last stand. The historical legacy of his hometown is not lost on



*Plan 3000 has both rural and urban characteristics, with infrastructure and other basic services largely absent. Photo by David Bluestone.*

him; he has emblazoned the iconic image of Che's face on his handmade business card.

“Don't speak English on the bus,” Ramón tells me. “Don't use your cell phone. Walk straight to the local MAS headquarters and wait for me there.” I take Ramón's safety instructions for getting to the Plan seriously. Three weeks before, Ramón was assaulted and stabbed in the arm as he was walking in the Plan late at night.

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

### 11:30 PM: THE MAS HEADQUARTERS, PLAN 3000

The MAS headquarters is a converted warehouse with walls that don't reach its corrugated tin roof. Inside, a dozen people prepare for the rally, painting political banners and sharpening sticks as defensive weapons.

As I enter the building, the room falls silent. A large indigenous man, whose cheek is bulging with coca leaves, introduces himself as Jorge and skeptically asks me where I am from. I answer nervously.

"Estados Unidos," quickly adding, "Soy del Pueblo," loosely translated to mean I am "of the people." Jorge, a migrant from Bolivia's northern Amazonian Department of Beni, seems satisfied with this clarification. He begins to talk about his adopted community.

*"What if the Unionistas attack?  
The front door is wide open.  
They could toss a grenade  
right through the door!"*

Plan 3000 was founded in 1983 when a catastrophic overflow of the Piraí River flooded 3,000 families from their homes. Families were forced to relocate here, where they could work in a nearby sugarcane factory. Since then, the Plan has expanded exponentially to become a major destination for working-class and indigenous migrants. Approximately 150,000 residents live here now. Tomorrow's protest is the latest in their long history of political resistance against the conservative local government.

"All of us are fighters," Jorge tells me. "When there was no water, we fought with the mayor's office until we got water; when they wouldn't pick up the garbage, we fought until they did."

### 12:45 AM: THE MAS HEADQUARTERS

Tonight there may be an attack on MAS headquarters by the Santa Cruz Youth League, a conservative organization openly supported by the CPSC. During civic strikes against the national government, the league's members, referred to as Unionistas, act as enforcers. Armed, they roam the streets in jeeps and on motorbikes threatening to assault anyone not complying with the work stoppage. They are particularly aggressive toward highland indigenous migrants and MAS supporters.

The protest against the strike will be concentrated in the Plan's central Rotunda. As the MAS supporters discuss how they will protect the neighborhood's residents and street vendors who keep their stores open despite the strike, a rock crashes on the tin roof and everyone jumps. Jorge admonishes the group.

"What if the Unionistas attack? The front door is wide open. They could toss a grenade right through the door!"

### 7:30 AM, 29 NOVEMBER: THE ROTUNDA, PLAN 3000

The next morning, more than 100 protesters fill the Rotunda. Bolivian flags and political banners wave. People are relaxed; the protestors are welcoming and eager to share their story.

Ramón is restless with the tranquil scene and invites me for a drive in his van, the *Ambulancia de Servicios Sociales Solidarios* (Social Services Solidarity Ambulance). We pile into the ambulance with a fellow organizer nicknamed Pollo. Ramón flips on the ambulance's homemade siren—a car alarm attached to twin computer speakers. It is deafening. He pulls out of the Rotunda at breakneck speed, swerving wildly to avoid hitting a girl on her bike.





Political banners at the center of the Rotunda in Plan 3000 in Bolivia. Photo by David Bluestone.

### 12:30 PM: THE BORDER OF PLAN 3000

Ramón's mission becomes clear; he wants a fight with the CPSC supporters. We arrive at a large blockade of conservative supporters waving green and white Santa Cruz department flags. Ramón shouts over his siren, "Hey, we need to get through. There is a medical emergency on the other side we need to attend to!"

A light-skinned woman, face flushed deep red with anger, walks up to the passenger side of the van and peers in. She opens her mouth wide, revealing three missing front teeth, and screams, "You aren't doctors. You're Cubans!" The woman's disgust is common in President Morales's opposition; they accuse Morales of allowing himself to be

manipulated by Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

The woman then sees Pollo's highland-indigenous features. She screams, "Kolla de Mierda!"—a Bolivian racial slur. Her rage exposes the racism and xenophobia that is often directed at poorer indigenous migrants who have come to Santa Cruz for economic opportunities.

Back at the Rotunda, agitation has replaced the morning's good humor. A CPSC supporter drives around the Rotunda on a motorbike waving a Santa Cruz flag, and the crowd jeers back, shaking sticks and fists and shouting obscenities. A voice comes over the loudspeaker: "Unionistas are on their way to pick a fight." Ramón yells to other protestors to

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

get in the van to intercept these intruders. Pollo disapproves. Exasperated, he says, "I don't see what the point of that is."

Amidst yells and threats, I decide that being at the Rotunda is no longer safe for me, but transportation options are limited. No buses will be leaving the Plan until the strike is lifted at 7:00 p.m., and no taxi drivers are willing to risk driving toward the city center.

*Amidst yells and threats, I decide that being at the Rotunda is no longer safe for me, but transportation options are limited.*

Ramón returns. Angry at having failed to find a group worth fighting, he has no advice for how I might get out.

### 3:30 PM: PUEBLO NUEVO

I retreat by taxi away from the city, to Pueblo Nuevo, a Guaraní neighborhood in the city's sparsely populated rural periphery, where I wait for the first bus to make it through the protests. An indigenous minority native to Santa Cruz, the Guaraníes have natural allegiances with both political rivals but are too few in number to be of any importance to either. As a result, Pueblo Nuevo is tension-free.

The bus eventually arrives, and the driver reports that violence between Morales supporters and Unionistas was only recently broken up by the national police. We pass by an empty Rotunda, but a whiff of the air betrays the unmistakable tinge of teargas. As the bus returns me to my more familiar world, I scan the streets looking for Ramón's van and wonder whether he is happy that he finally got his fight.

## REFLECTIONS

On 25 January 2009, Bolivians approved President Morales's new constitution with 60 percent of the national vote. As Morales and his followers advance their political agenda, the country becomes increasingly polarized. Morales and the conservative opposition have exacerbated social cleavages, pitting their core supporters against their rivals by exploiting racial bigotry and regional prejudice.

Plan 3000 illustrates how this antagonism has turned Bolivia's incredible diversity of peoples and beliefs into the main source of local violent conflict. Ethnic, class, and ideological differences have transformed neighbors into enemies and communities into battlegrounds. Mimicking the worst behavior of their leaders, Ramón, Jorge, and the Unionistas see themselves as revolutionaries, fighters, and enforcers in defense of their group's vision of Bolivia's future.

Bolivia cannot move forward if half of the population sees its survival as dependant on the other half's demise. For Bolivia to reconcile its hyper-politicized racial and regional identities, change must be initiated at the top. The country's political leaders, beginning with Evo Morales, must adopt more inclusive political platforms that represent the interests of Bolivians beyond just their own ethnic and regional factions. Otherwise, partisans will further entrench themselves in the identity politics of difference, and Bolivia will continue to fragment.

*David Bluestone is an MPP candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In 2007 and 2008, he lived in Bolivia as a Fulbright Scholar where he conducted research on urban Guaraní populations and the lowlands indigenous movement.*

## PREPPING FOR PEACE:

### A REPORT FROM A PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP IN LEBANON

by Tamas Landesz

*In 2007, the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp was totally destroyed in fighting between the Lebanese Army and a group of terrorists (Fatah al-Islam) who took refuge at the camp. I came to the camp in mid-2008 to work on a project, supervised by the Office of the Prime Minister of Lebanon, to create an environment that would allow for the successful reconstruction of the camp.*

#### CAMP BLUES

**N**ahr el-Bared Camp (NBC) was established in December 1949 on a plot of only two square kilometers to accommodate Palestinian refugees. Located 16 kilometers from the city of Tripoli, the second-largest economic center in Lebanon, the camp was home to some 30,000 Palestine refugees. Historically, the economic relationship between the camp and its adjacent municipalities has been relatively strong. In spite of the exclusion of the Palestinians from much of the formal labor market, the informal sector was buoyant, and NBC offered an attractive market for the Akkar region's agricultural and small industries. The camp also provided cheap labor for surrounding Lebanese areas, mainly in construction and agriculture. Due to the camp's position on the main road to Syria and its proximity to the Syrian border, NBC grew to become a commercial hub for the Akkar region.

The three months of fighting in 2007 completely destroyed the old camp, and the adjacent area was severely damaged. The results of aerial and structural damage assessments, which started in October 2007, confirmed that NBC must be completely rebuilt. Damage estimates by the Lebanese government, presented at the Vienna Donor Conference in June 2008, suggested that it would cost more than \$200 million to do so. Our research project was meant to facilitate this reconstruction by analyz-



Center of the Nahr el-Bared camp. Photo by Nadia Naviwala.

ing the conflict dynamics within NBC and to help formulate appropriate policy recommendations for the peace building and conflict prevention necessary before the camp could be rebuilt.

#### BACKGROUND

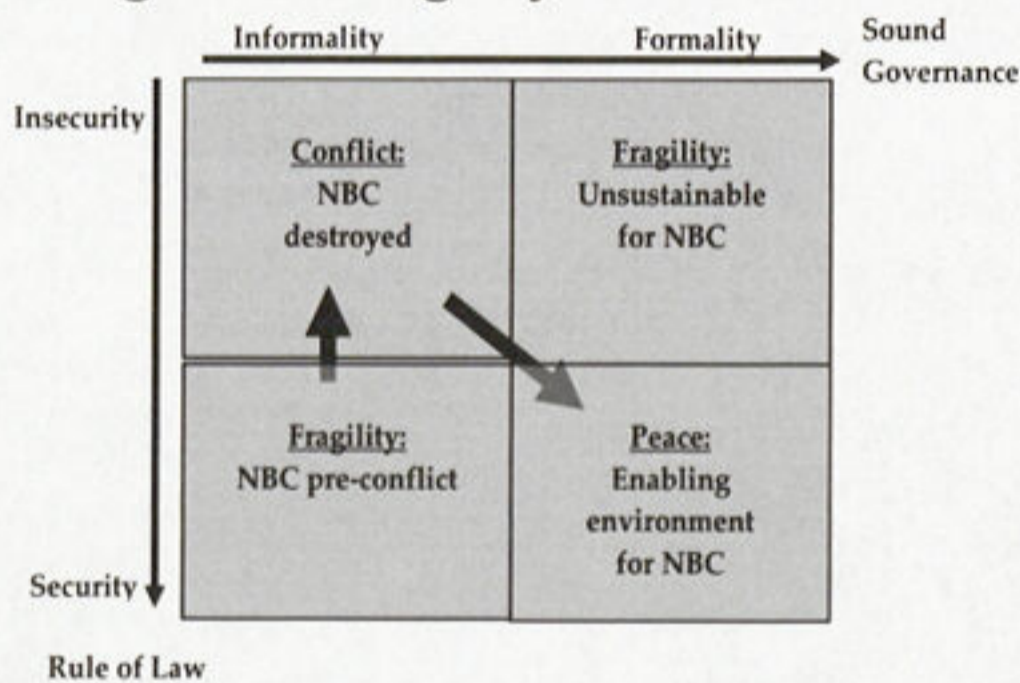
**L**ebanon is committed to the Arab Summit Declaration of 2002, reserving the right of return for these refugees to Palestine under international law. The Nahr el-Bared reconstruction project is a unique opportunity to improve the living standards of the residents of the camp and its surroundings and reflects the government's political commitment to the reconstruction of the camp. If the project is

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

successful, the government of Lebanon could gain the trust of Palestinians and possibly open the door for camp improvement initiatives in the country's other eleven Palestinian refugee camps.

The research team identified insecurity and informality as the primary concerns to be addressed as reconstruction begins (see Figure 1, below). Targeted central and local government interventions can produce favorable conditions in both areas.

Figure 1: Fragility to Peace Matrix



Although refugee camps have no special legal status, Lebanese rule of law does not always extend to these territories. Before the crisis, the NBC had a fragile environment characterized by informality and limited security; eventually, the security situation deteriorated to the point where conflict was unavoidable. Most other Palestinian refugee camps are at risk of falling into a similar crisis.

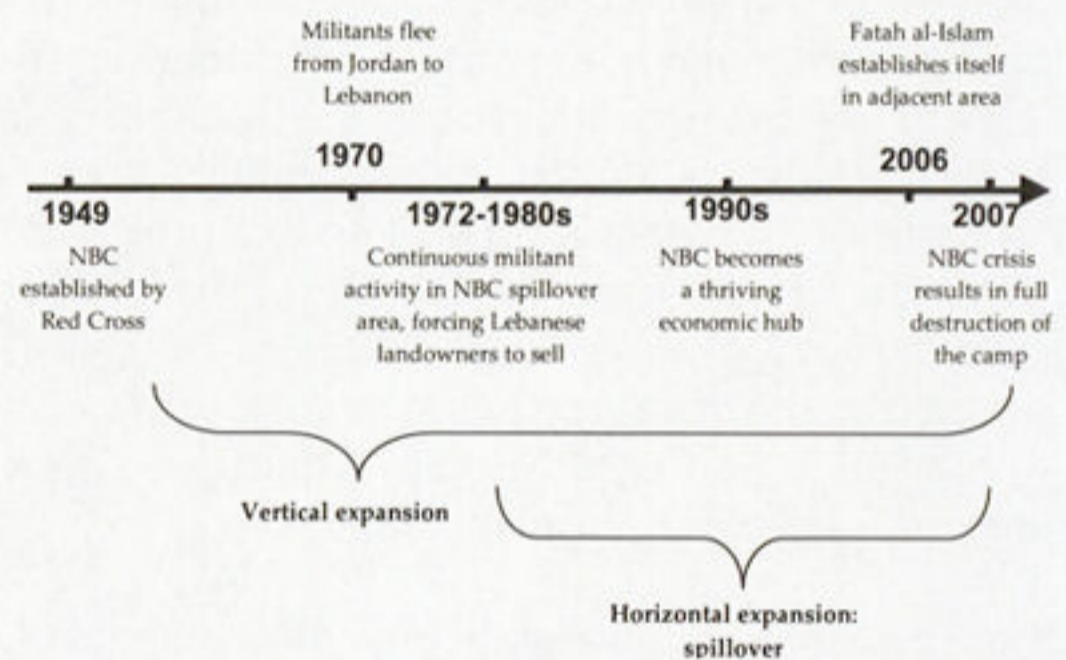
To avoid this, both the rule of law and camp governance must be significantly strengthened. In this way, NBC has the potential to emerge as a "model camp" with exemplary rule of law and a sound governance system. However, the reconstruction effort faces a lack of funding, especially risky in this politically charged environ-

ment, where Sunni-Shiite tensions are rising in northern Lebanon. Displaced refugees are increasingly vulnerable in the absence of secured funding for the camp reconstruction.

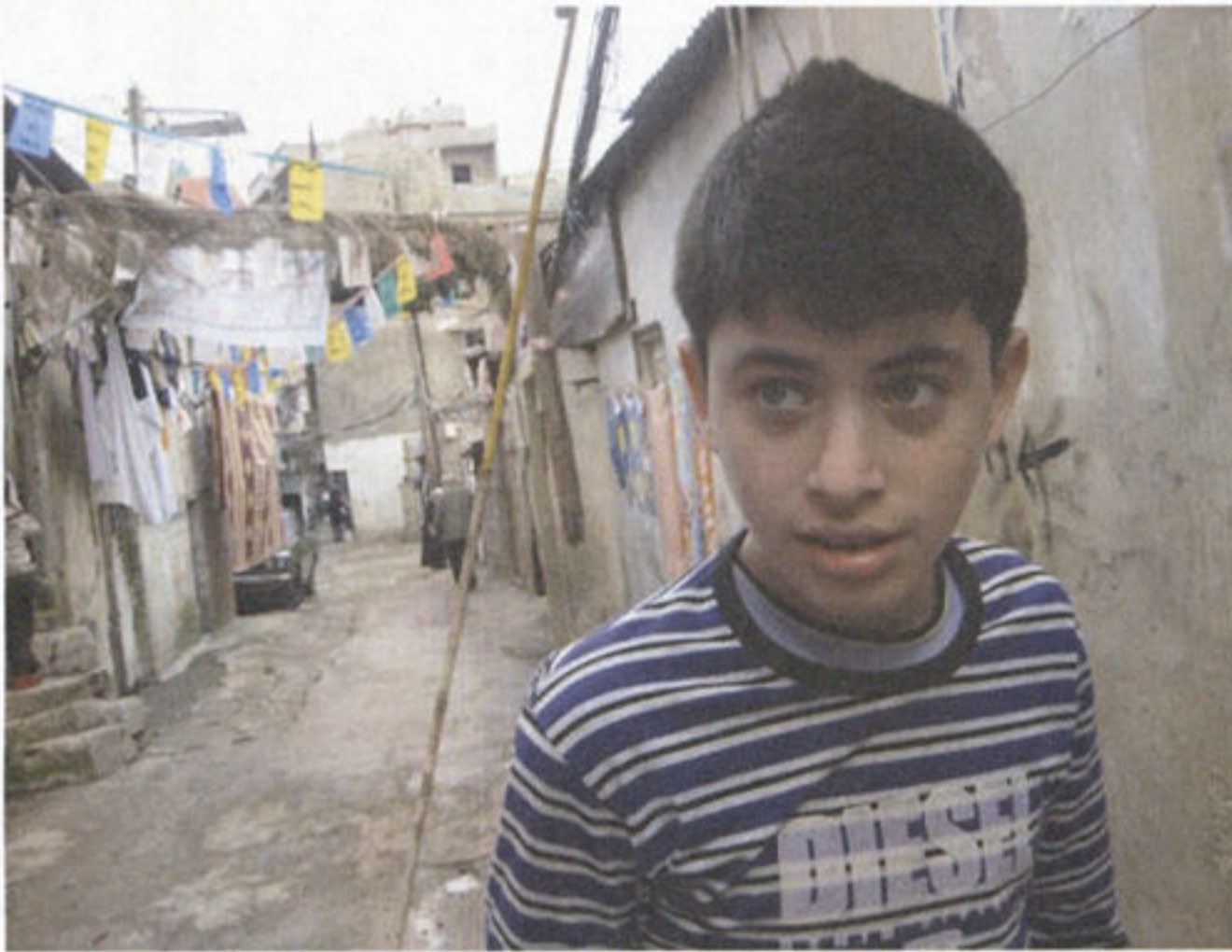
## TIME WARP

Ironically, the economic and social conditions of refugee camps at the time of their establishment were better than the conditions in their Lebanese surroundings. Refugee camps developed a symbiotic relationship with their environment. In the last sixty years the growth of camps resulted in irregular spatial expansions, first vertically and then spilling over to adjacent areas (see Figure 2, below). Palestinians who purchased land and built houses in adjacent areas were generally better off economically. However, with neither the right to register, nor to pass on their property to relatives, they faced great risk.

Figure 2: Sixty years of expansion



Local Palestinian businessmen claim that by the 1990s, NBC was considered one of the most successful camps due to its unique role as a thriving economic hub for cheap goods in North Lebanon. A plethora of shops along the two main commercial roads within the camp, a growing number of factories and warehouses established in the adjacent area, and shops established alongside the Syrian



*Areas of employment open to Palestinians without permits include the most manual sorts of jobs, for example, construction, sanitation, agriculture, textile and carpet manufacturing, and car washes.*

*A child walks through the streets of the el Baddawi camp.*

*Photo by Nadia Naviwala.*

highway housed vibrant economic activity. Remittances, mainly from the Gulf States, helped Palestinians expand their properties and assets until 1991, when Palestinians were no longer allowed to work in the Gulf States.

### **BARRIERS TO REBUILDING EFFORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Restrictions on Palestinians have gradually increased during the last sixty years. Palestinians in Lebanon are subject to legal restrictions on property rights, business, and employment. In 2001 it became unconstitutional for Lebanese citizens to sell property to Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, Palestinians in Lebanon are prohibited from participating in seventy-three types of white-collar professions. And since the Gulf States closed their doors for Palestinians living in Lebanon, their economic opportunities have further deteriorated.

As NBC is rebuilt, the trade hub is expected to gradually grow to its previous size and strength, given the proven resilience of NBC businesses,

which have been relocated to the highway running near the destroyed camp. To accelerate and support this process, the government should promote regional partnerships between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. For example, the establishment of a regional institute to link existing rebuilding initiatives, and to function as a clearinghouse for business opportunities, a catalyst for innovation, and a center for information sharing and networking, would help NBC and the surrounding area develop back into a self-sufficient competitive regional economy.

The project also concluded that central and local governments can help create an enabling environment for reconstruction by encouraging the formalization of business, properties, and assets. Formalization of businesses, for example, requires paying taxes and other fees.

The Palestinian community would welcome such regulation on the condition that they receive incentives in return, such as increased rights and services including business loans, recognition of land ownership, and the like. Conducting a regional information campaign to clarify the advantages of



*Children that live and play in the Shatila refugee camp maintain their high spirits. Photo by Nadia Naviwala.*

formality, and designing a road map for gradual formalization of larger businesses in the NBC, would help initiate the process.

The government can also establish business incubators for Palestinian and Lebanese entrepreneurs and grant government subsidies and other funding to municipalities hosting Palestinian refugee camps to promote joint economic revival and development. This would enhance municipal capacities, which would allow for greater responsibility and promote social and political reconciliation between Palestinians and Lebanese communities.

Linking Palestinian refugees to economic development plans in the Tripoli area would enhance the success of such plans by providing

cheap labor for the industrial clusters located in the Free Economic Zone of Tripoli. The NBC trade hub should be viewed as an independent cluster, where the government acts as a catalyst and challenger to encourage businesses to aspire and move to higher levels of performance. Currently, too many restrictions apply to Palestinian business owners.

The government of Lebanon must encourage businesses by focusing on the resources NBC has to offer, such as skilled Palestinian labor.

*Tamas Landes is a 2008 graduate of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and holds a Mid-Career/MPA degree. He is an international development and policy expert with a distinguished career across four continents. Currently he is based in Tajikistan as OSCE Special Adviser.*

## THE BRIDGE TO NOWHERE: A REPORT ON WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

*by Ami Novoryta*

Taslima recently finished tenth grade at the top of her class in rural Bangladesh. A natural leader with a flair for the dramatic, she writes poetry and choreographs dances, performing for anyone with a spare moment (or a half hour). She is outspoken, earnest, and a force to be reckoned with, especially in the place she most treasures—her classroom. For her, its grey walls and overcrowded benches are a welcome sanctuary from household chores. Here, she eagerly contemplates new ideas; unwarranted disruptions are most unwelcome.

*The headmaster, who came across this defiant young woman in the halls, took her seriously and joined Taslima in demanding that her teacher improve his instruction.*

Just ask her Bengali teacher, who learned this the hard way. Taslima, frustrated that the teacher spent precious class time chatting about the latest cricket match instead of teaching the fundamentals of her native language, launched a one-woman Bengali class strike. As her classmates filed into the room on an otherwise indistinguishably warm day, she announced that she would only enter if her teacher would focus on the lessons. The headmaster, who came across this defiant young woman in the halls of the school, took her seriously and joined Taslima in demanding that her teacher improve his instruction.

Lackluster teachers abound in Bangladesh, and their impact on young women like Taslima is disproportionately large. Inadequate teacher pay and preparation are further compounded by student-teacher

ratios that average 60:1, insufficient professional development, and outdated materials and supplies. These represent just a few of the challenges facing Bangladesh's overstretched and under-resourced education system.

I met Taslima and her classmates through BRAC, a sprawling nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in Dhaka. Among other initiatives, BRAC operates 37,000 one-room schools nationwide and thousands of adolescent girls' clubs, one of which Taslima leads.



*School children in the Rishi Valley dance at a village festival.  
Photo by Stephen Steacy.*

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD



A school child works in her one-room school in the Rishi Valley region of Andhra Pradesh, India. Photo by Stephen Steacy.

*Taslima, like other young Bangladeshi women, struggles, despite her achievements in school, to envision a future distinct from that of her mother, or of her grandmother.*

During the last four decades, NGOs like BRAC have helped to keep this waterlogged country afloat, while its fledgling democracy struggles against corruption and competing dynasties. Progress has been made on some key indicators, including the

Millennium Development Goal of gender equity in school enrollment. Yet increased enrollment teeters on the brink of irrelevance in a system where improving the quality of failing schools is just another deferred task on a growing to-do list.

Together, entrenched poverty and a broken school system continue to suppress the potential of even the most hardworking children and their families—particularly women.

Completing secondary school does not translate to a better future for most Bangladeshi women. In fact, their prospects actually suffer as education levels increase.



According to a 2005 report by the International Labour Organization, 27 percent of female high school graduates were unemployed in 1999-2000, as opposed to only 10 percent of uneducated women and 9 percent of men with a high school degree. For a poor girl in Bangladesh, the journey from her classroom to the workplace is likely to be interrupted by early marriage. She will go from her parents' hut to her husband's home, and while independence and a career may be her dream, marriage and motherhood are her reality.

The average marrying age for Bengali girls is fifteen years old, and in rural areas girls are typically younger. Many villagers see girls' education as a springboard to a good marriage, not to a good job. Yet Taslima and her peers are neither ready nor eager to become wives; this was immediately evident in our conversations, held in makeshift schools and clubs across the country. Unfortunately, the decision is not theirs to make.

Taslima, like other young Bangladeshi women, struggles, despite her achievements in school, to envision a future distinct from that of her mother, or of her grandmother. When we met in rural Bogra, I asked about her aspirations. With a shrug, she replied only that "I can afford little, so I dream little."

Disentangling the knot of economic, cultural, and political threads that leads impoverished Bengali girls to this certain fate was for me a fruitless endeavor. Still, with as much diplomacy as I could muster, I persisted, asking the questions that troubled me at the end of most days.

Why aren't Bengali women and girls further along on the continuum of human rights? How can a population so conscious of gender equity be so far behind? Why have Bangladesh's two female prime ministers not inspired an influx of female leadership, political and otherwise?

The women I spoke to could not detail specific roadblocks or opportunities to bettering the future of young women; the answers to my questions simply reflected the sheer enormity of the social and economic disparities that Bangladesh continues to face. One exasperated woman reminded me that "Our country is only thirty-seven years old. In the mid-1980s, we didn't even have bridges."

*When we met in rural Bogra, I asked about her aspirations. With a shrug, she replied only that "I can afford little, so I dream little."*

For the first decade after independence, Bangladesh's new government focused almost exclusively on reconstruction and rehabilitation. Reconstruction, that is, from the 1970 cyclone that killed an estimated 500,000; the 1971 Liberation War that ravaged the country, killing perhaps as many as three million Bangladeshis; and the 1973-1974 famine that many claim killed more than one million people (although the government figure is 26,000). Gender disparities in education or in the workplace were not high on the list of priorities in a time of national turmoil, nor are they now.

Today, Bangladeshis have mastered the art of building bridges from any raw materials they can procure. But bridges from poverty remain rare and are shaky if they exist at all. This is true in every rural village I visited, especially for the most impoverished, and especially for girls.

*Ami Novoryta interned for the BRAC Education Programme in summer 2008. She interviewed staff, teachers, parents, students, and nonprofit leaders in order to develop BRAC's strategy to advocate for improved public education in Bangladesh.*

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## SHARED SPACE:

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ARCHITECTURE IN JERUSALEM

by Yehuda Geenfield-Gilat & Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, with Aya Shapira

One evening in 1948, on the dusty floor of a deserted house in the Musrara neighborhood of Jerusalem, two colonels spread a city map to draw a new demarcation line following the recent war. The Israeli colonel, Moshe Dayan, and the Jordanian, Abdullah Al-Tel, used red and green pencils to mark the Israeli and Jordanian borders. Their crude, three-to-four millimeter-wide pencil marks created actual buffer zones some sixty to eighty meters wide. These vast buffer zones quickly became empty “no-man’s-lands” prohibited to both sides, scarring the heart of Jerusalem.

Since 1967, Jerusalem has officially been a united city. However, in reality it has remained divided for decades. A clear mental line still separates the East from the West and Arab settlements from Jewish segments. This division is present in the city’s physical layout, as well as in its daily routines. The “security fence,” or “separation wall,” recently erected in the city has failed to reconstruct a notion of unity within its controversial boundaries.

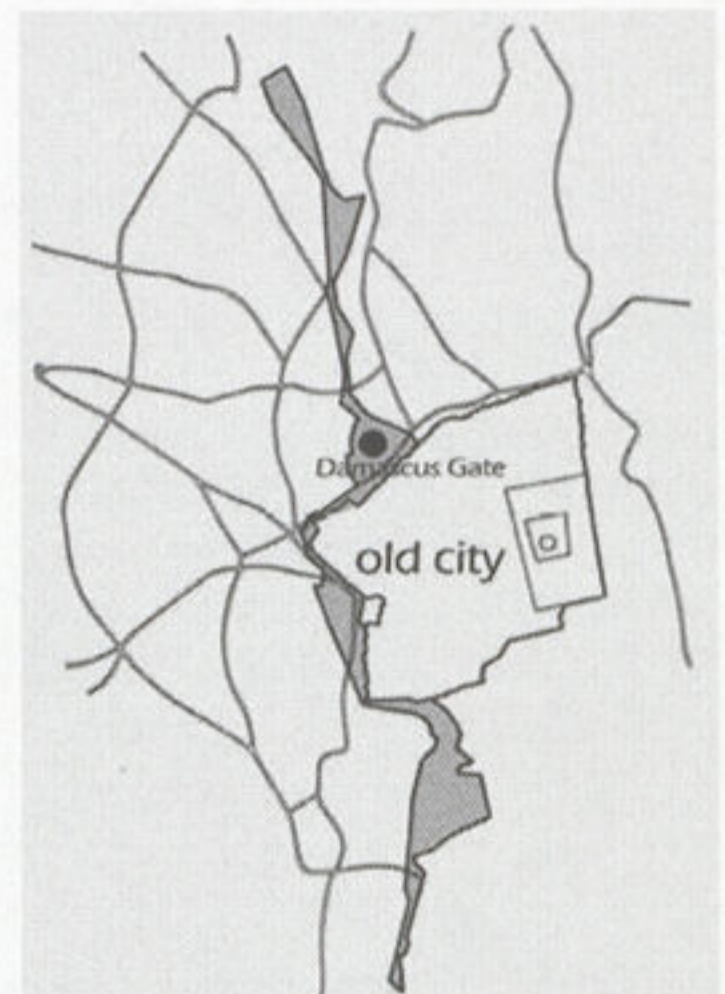
There have been numerous attempts to solve the issue of division in Jerusalem, mostly in the context of a two-state solution. Many of these attempts have proposed the placement of a clear border to demarcate a desperately needed boundary between Israeli and Palestinian sovereignties. These solutions are based on a vision of the city in which urban separation, when mutually agreed upon and when implemented correctly, could be a positive and liberating basis for the peaceful coexistence of two capitals, Yerushalayim and Al-Kuds.

But how does a border cross a city? Can it separate the city and still respect its integrity? What kind of urban space can develop around it? And how would it look?

A close examination of one area of the future border in Jerusalem reveals the implicit connections between architecture, planning, and policy. In order to approach a complex challenge like a final status agreement in Jerusalem, the architect must think as a policy maker, while the policy maker must use planning tools to achieve a sustainable solution.

*The “city line”  
(1949-1967)  
and the  
Damascus  
Gate area site  
in front of  
the Old City.*

*Image courtesy  
of Yehuda  
Greenfield-Gilat.*



For the sake of simplicity, we have chosen one central site to demonstrate potential policy solutions. This site faces the monumental Damascus Gate and is one of the last vacant lots abutting the Old City. Since 1967 it has been part of an invisible, yet highly present, boundary between the two sides of the united city. For more than four decades, and despite its enduring importance as a major entrance to the Old City, this site still protests with its vacancy, stubbornly remaining empty and devoid of function besides serving as a temporary parking lot. The site embodies Jerusalem’s border challenges and provides an opportunity to evaluate the potential effectiveness of various policies.

## APPROACHING THE PROBLEM: JERUSALEM, BORDERS, AND POLICY MAKING

After the 1967 Six-Day War, Jerusalem was conquered and united in a unilateral act of Israeli sovereignty, turning a significant number of Palestinians into Jerusalemites. Despite this redefinition of the municipal border, and the large-scale Israeli development of East Jerusalem, the city remains divided along the former 1967 "Green Line." The two culturally and linguistically disparate Arab and Jewish segments coexist only formally within the municipal border lines, under the same united urban entity. In 2002, as a reaction to terror attacks within the capital, Israel began unilateral construction of a security fence in eastern Jerusalem that further expanded the official municipal line toward the east. The facts on the ground were again ignored, and a physical barrier was now positioned squarely in the middle of Palestinian communities and families. The gap between the formal city barriers and the natural urban division was only exacerbated.

*Situating the border route in line with the city rather than against it, and marking where it is technically present yet officially absent, can provide the two sides much-needed autonomy and is a necessary step toward coexistence.*

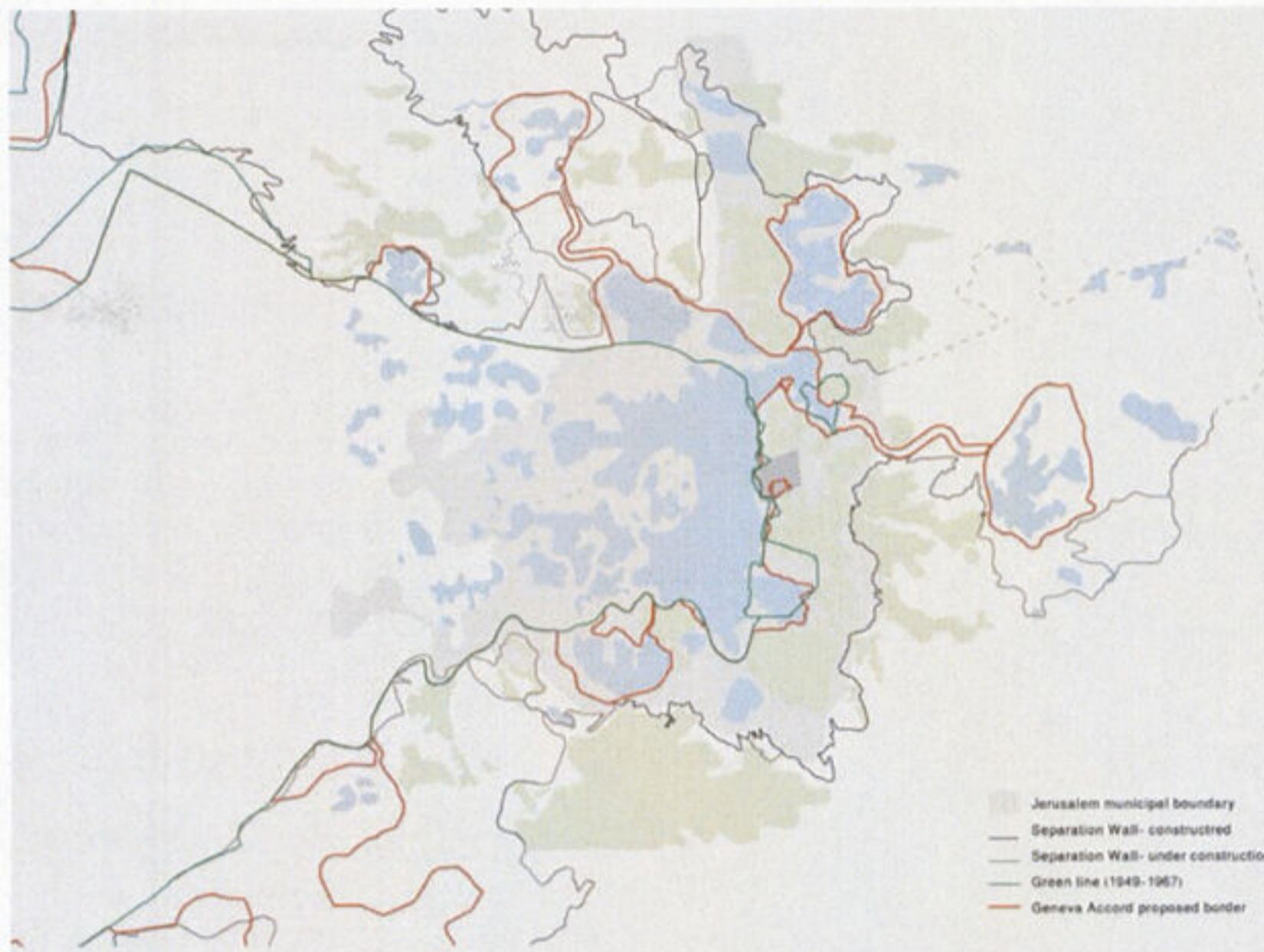
The building of the separation barrier underscores the importance of properly delineating where the city is split. In this spirit, various attempts to resolve the conflict in Jerusalem have been based on the 1967 lines or on a modified version of them. One such attempt yielded the Geneva Accord, a bilateral, nonofficial initiative from 2003 that spelled out guidelines for a two-state solution

based on the former Green Line. This proposed layout is the basis for our urban planning proposal. Situating the border route in line with the city rather than against it, and marking where it is technically present yet officially absent, can provide the two sides much-needed autonomy and is a necessary step toward coexistence. Promoting this goal is the equal responsibility of policy makers and architects working toward peace in the region. Although a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is being discussed in many different channels, and a border line is often proposed as a means of resolution, no attention has been paid to the actual form of such a border. Sadly, ongoing attempts to resolve the conflict, in the present culture of debate, neglect many issues that are crucial to achieving a realistic and sustainable territorial arrangement.

*A border that encourages the evolution of a new urban space with significance and function can connect as much as it separates.*

Transforming a border into a feasible, sustainable solution begins with thinking about how its physical structure will mesh with the urban fabric. The purpose is not to create an aestheticized barrier but rather to allow for the development of a mutual public space within and around the border area. A border that encourages the evolution of a new urban space with significance and function can connect as much as it separates and will have little in common with separation walls.

Returning to the parking lot facing the Damascus Gate, we see opportunity for this space to become a new urban asset. If it can be transformed into a dynamic and transitional space for the citizens of the future Israeli and Palestinian capitals, then planners and policy makers can create innovative methodologies and tools—indeed a new vocabulary—for urban planning in contested spaces.



## JERUSALEM BORDERS

The darker lines mark the existing city line and municipal border. The green line marks the lines that have existed since 1967, and the red line is the proposed Geneva Accord future border line. The shaded gray area represents the current municipal boundary of Jerusalem.

*Image courtesy of Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat.*

## BEYOND UTOPIA: A PLANNING-POLICY CONCEPT FOR A BORDER IN TRANSITION

The concept of a different kind of border should be defined by three main policy objectives, which together form the basis for site redevelopment: the urban context, the border site program, and the political flexibility of such a design.

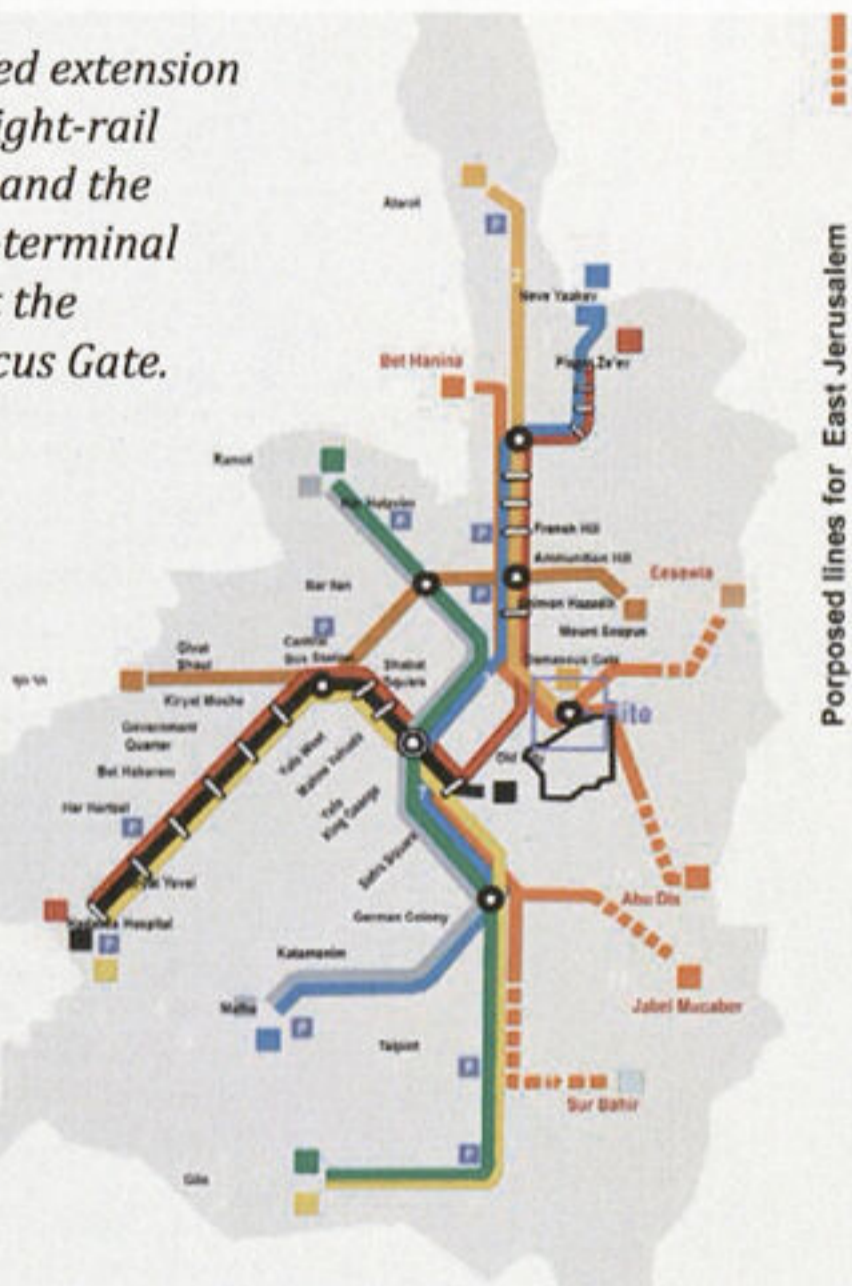
### 1. THE URBAN CONTEXT: *A combined system of border zones along a line.*

We suggest a different understanding of what a border represents; it is not just a mere line but a combined system, consisting of a formal border line as well as a series of border zones located along it, similar to a beaded necklace. These zones must be carefully defined and developed, since they are to serve as nodes of mutual or binational

infrastructures. They are expected to act as active "urban mediators" between the two sides, enabling the transmission of commercial activity and life while providing security for both sovereignties. These zones should be based on mutual interest, carry relevance to the site, and preferably enhance routine activities commenced prior to the intervention. They may also carry dynamic attributes, allowing them to redefine their content and activity according to the changing atmosphere.

A border zone containing an optional border line at the Damascus Gate site would potentially accommodate two seemingly contradictory border policy strategies. The site is therefore designed and perceived as one unit, with the proposed border line placed within it in as natural a manner as possible, to allow the terminal to function and be managed either as a whole or as two separate wings when required. This gives the border a self-defining quality allowing it to function as a sensitive urban object.

*Proposed extension to the light-rail system and the border-terminal node at the Damascus Gate.*



## 2. THE BORDER SITE PROGRAM: *Using transportation as infrastructure.*

There is clear value in moving beyond utopian visions of border projects in Jerusalem to develop sincere and feasible proposals for content along the future border. Transportation—a common urban need on both sides of the city—can serve as a shared activity between the two sides and at the Damascus Gate site in particular.

Throughout history, the Damascus Gate area has served as a major point of arrival for visitors and merchandise to the Old City. Today it is situated adjacent to East Jerusalem's major transportation center, and it is slated to house a light-rail station for the system currently under construction in the city. Unfortunately, the light-rail system targets the western city's needs only, providing links that are either irrelevant or inaccessible to most East Jerusalemites.

We propose a twofold alteration to the light rail's current layout: first, the extension of the system toward the eastern parts of the city through additional lines; and second, the use of the Damascus Gate station as a border and transport terminal on the proposed site. Not only will both sides benefit from these adjustments, but the site's border function will be nearly eclipsed by its secondary purpose as an intercity transport hub similar to many international train stations around the world. A transportation hub will also enhance the site's historical role as a major point of arrival to the Old City. Developing border-crossing areas as major points of interchange may, if applied throughout the future border area, promote additional nodes of east/west interchanges along the border and more fully utilize this ready infrastructure.

## 3. A FLEXIBLE BORDER SCHEME

It is likely that the volatile political climate in the area will persist even after a permanent status agreement is achieved, so border facilities should be designed to accommodate both short and long-term changes.

A built-in flexibility is required within the facilities themselves, which should be adjustable to different political scenarios. In the short term, there may be high- or low-risk periods requiring fairly simple and reversible adjustments. In the long term, changes in the regime or security arrangements may require adding or disabling parts of the facilities.

In light of long-term changes, the planning of border infrastructure should also be in line with the greater needs of the two future cities by incorporating public services, open areas, transportation stations, and other public infrastructure into the facilities. Thus, if the needs of the border regime change, the facility can be easily transformed to serve the local communities rather than becoming obsolete.

## LINKING POLICY AND DESIGN

The design of a single, yet dividable, light-rail station as a border terminal follows the same principle of a flexible border scheme. The border terminal can function as one joint facility with two platforms or be separated into two independent terminals, each containing a platform with an inspection counter that connects them. In this context, the two independent terminals mirror different patterns of travel themselves, as different rail lines heading in different directions are housed in separated terminals. The division here is based on destination rather than ethnicity. Instead of an intimidating concrete wall, the border becomes a natural and familiar urban object, forming part of the city's infrastructure, like a traffic island or a bridge. The border station both maintains flexibility for short- and long-term changes and creates a connecting space and an urban barrier with an everyday appearance and function.

Blending the facility into the local urban environment is as important as addressing its security and political requirements, as successful integration ensures that the border becomes part of the urban setting rather than an interruption to it. A major design objective is thus to create a generous public area that can accommodate major urban events, whether Israeli or Palestinian. To this end, the station's interior was designed as a continuation of its exterior space, forming one large open public space. This space extends the green open area (designated as a "green belt") surrounding the Old City and enhances it by adding a large urban plaza on-site. As the area is currently the home of various urban events held by both sides (holidays, demonstrations, weekend market fairs), and as its prominence, popularity, and attendance are expected to increase, it is important to provide a truly mutual public space considered legitimate by both sides. This design is in line with Stan Allen's concept of "infrastructural ur-

banism," presented in his book *Points + Lines*. Allen outlines an approach toward urban design that is "flexible and anticipatory...works with time and is open to change. By specifying what must be fixed and what is subject to change, it can be precise and indeterminate at the same time."

How should urban planning address an uncertain future? How can planners provide a sensitive solution that will ensure ongoing adaptation in support of peace in a separated city? Jerusalem's spatial and political future is usually approached as either a "one solution problem" or as a "nonsolution problem." We introduce this work as an initial "tool kit" designed to imagine and confront the future realities of the city.

Peace agreements may leave borders open to interpretation. Prior to that point, creative policy and planning should step in to reinforce the peace. Working jointly, policy makers, designers, and planners can offer innovative tools and feedback to the governments for achieving a feasible, sustainable realization of written peace agreements. Applying this approach in Jerusalem may help this city win back its vitality and peace and progress from a city bounded by unity to a city liberated by separation.

*Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat is a graduate candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.*

*Karen Lee Bar-Sinai holds an MSc in "cities, space, and society" from the London School of Economics, UK and has trained as an architect at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.*

*Yehuda and Karen are cofounders of SAYA, an architecture and consultancy firm that specializes in resolution planning, introducing architectural and urban design methods for the promotion of conflict-resolution concepts.*

### FIGHTING BACK WITH MICROFINANCE: LOANS AND GANGS IN EL SALVADOR

by Katie Kennedy

Driving along the winding mountain roads of rural El Salvador, it is not uncommon to see a bus stopped on the shoulder and disembarked passengers lining the road. Flat tire? Overheated engine? Brief stop to stretch legs? The passengers' expressions are calm and their movements lethargic after their long, cramped trips. But they are not relaxing. On these narrow rural roads, members of El Salvador's prominent maras (gangs) routinely stop buses looking for their scheduled monthly payoffs. The drivers pull over, allow the passengers off, and consider their options. Many pay the bribes. Others—underpaid and frustrated with this system—refuse to part with the money. Many of these drivers are shot dead in their seats, the passengers left stranded on dusty roadsides.



*A woman sells produce at the market. Photo by Katie Kennedy.*

Although most of El Salvador's local markets are not as isolated as the scenes of bus robberies, they are no more protected from gang activity. As the sun rises and the heat descends, informal market vendors begin displaying their goods in their rented stalls. Fresh meat hangs from hooks above stained wooden counters. Sturdy women in long skirts and too-small T-shirts display tomatoes, beans, and colorful peppers in flat woven baskets and old oil canisters. Shop owners sit on small wooden stools, waiting for daily sales to begin. Women sit their small children on the dusty market floors with toys—fly swatters, empty boxes, naked plastic dolls.

These small vendors are among El Salvador's poorest micro-entrepreneurs, but they, like the beleaguered bus drivers, pay a fee to gang members to ensure the survival of their businesses and the safety of their families. Some mornings a vendor cannot pay his or her dues when the maras arrive and a heavy silence consumes the market. His or her fellow vendors quietly abandon their stalls,

waiting to return until the ambulance claiming the body has navigated the market's cluttered depths and squeezed back out through the narrow roads.

Foreigners traveling on buses and through markets are occasionally pickpocketed or mugged, but the local population has the most to fear from systematic and carefully instrumented gang violence. Gangs don't shoot randomly into crowds, but instead target business owners where they work and live. These gangs, now veterans in their line of work, use premeditated violence in order to collect revenue and maintain fear. Gangs impact market activities and bus-driver salaries; they prevent small entrepreneurs in El Salvador from expanding their businesses. In these markets, and on these winding mountain roads, microfinance, meant to augment the productivity of small businesses, cannot overcome the strength of the gangs. Instead, microfinance loans provide clients with crucial safety nets to help them endure gang-imposed economic shocks.



## GANGS IN EL SALVADOR

El Salvador's high number of homicides—approximately 8.7 per day—gives it a ranking as one of the most dangerous countries in Latin America. Of these homicides, experts conservatively estimate that at least 40 percent involve a gang member as victim or perpetrator.

*One in every twenty Salvadorans is a gang member. In Los Angeles, a city long notorious for gang activity, one out of every ninety-nine residents is part of a gang.*

The most prominent gangs in El Salvador are the Mara Salvatrucha and Mara 18. They both originated in the United States in the 1980s, when nearly one million Salvadorans fled the civil war for the streets of U.S. cities like Los Angeles, where gang violence was endemic. After the bloody Salvadoran civil war ended in 1992, the United States deported many gang members back to El Salvador, where they formed local branches of Los Angeles-based gangs. Since then, gangs have proliferated across Mexico and Central America. Today, the Salvadorian Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Pública (CNSP) calculates more than 39,000 gang members in El Salvador alone, and many more in Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. With a population of seven million, this makes one in every twenty Salvadorans is a gang member. In Los Angeles, a city long notorious for gang activity, one out of every ninety-nine residents is part of a gang.

In a survey conducted by Instituto Universitario de Opinion Publica (IUDOP), 91 percent of Salvadorans interviewed said that maras were a major problem. But violence is not the only gang-related problem in El Salvador. The prevalence of gangs is stunting the country's economic development and small business growth.

## FIGHTING BACK WITH MICROFINANCE

The Foundation for International Community Assistance, or FINCA International, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives and businesses of small entrepreneurs through microfinance. FINCA has thousands of clients spread across all fourteen regions of El Salvador. Many of these clients are struggling to keep their businesses afloat in a low-growth economy. FINCA loan officers spend long days traveling by bus on dirt roads to visit even the most remote clients. These officers listen to the concerns of clients who cannot make their monthly payment and often diminish their own salaries to allow clients a longer payback period. Loan officers often understand their clients' dilemmas because many of them have also been personally affected by gang violence.



*Gang violence prevents local small businesses, like the one pictured above, from expanding. Photo by Katie Kennedy.*



Photo by Katie Kennedy

Marta, a loan officer in FINCA's San Salvador office, learned firsthand of the risk of gang violence through her own personal tragedy. After living in the United States for several years, her brother returned to El Salvador with enough money to buy his own passenger minibus. Marta warned him of the dangers of driving gang-controlled roads, but the family needed his income. Gang members stopped him one night and demanded his day's earnings. When he refused, they shot him in his minivan and left his body for the police to find. It was difficult, Marta said with a defeated tone, to get ahead in El Salvador.

When women in the market whisper about high food or gasoline prices, FINCA loan officers sometimes dismiss their complaints as trivial. But the whispers about gang violence are louder and harder to ignore. In June 2008, a few months into

the global food crisis, FINCA surveyed 400 client households in an attempt to better understand its clients' struggles, preferences, and needs. Patterns began to emerge from the surveys, administered by questionnaire in the privacy of women's homes or businesses. One message was clear: the fear of gang violence has impeded the ability of FINCA's clients to grow or even operate their microfinance endeavors.

*When women in the market whisper about high food or gasoline prices, FINCA loan officers sometimes dismiss their complaints as trivial. But the whispers about gang violence are louder and harder to ignore.*

Miguelina, a bright and talkative thirty-one-year-old FINCA client, lived with her children in a town just outside San Salvador. Miguelina had gone to college and become a baker. Two years before FINCA's survey, she owned a successful business with an industrial oven large enough to produce bread and pastries to supply many stores in the area. But gang members noticed her prosperity and began to follow her daughters to school. Terrified, Miguelina had no choice but to pay the monthly rent the mara demanded in exchange for not killing her or her children.

But the gang demanded too much. Miguelina sold her house and industrial oven to meet the payments and finally had to close her business. She now lives in a smaller house and operates a marginally profitable business, aided by FINCA's microfinance assistance to maintain her shelf stock. She is careful to make only enough to get by, but not enough to draw unwanted attention.

Miguelina's story is not unique. Every day, business owners in El Salvador close their businesses and make other desperate decisions to minimize profits and avoid dangerous gang interest. These threats of

violence have become a constraint on growth in El Salvador. In the absence of growth possibilities, microfinance loans are a lifeline to many of the women.

FINCA is one of seventeen organizations currently providing microfinance in El Salvador to low-income business owners. Because of a large and competitive microfinance market, many towns are saturated with microfinance institutions, and most small business owners have access to loans. More people have access to microfinance in El Salvador than any other country in Central America. Demand is so great that borrowers are prohibited from having more than one loan by a central credit bureau. Still, many avoid this restriction by taking more than one loan per institution. Even so, microfinance currently meets only 14 percent of estimated need.

### THE IMPACT OF A SAFETY NET

Juana, another FINCA client, lives in Olocuilta, a small Salvadoran town fifty miles from San Salvador. Her oldest son had started college (a privilege experienced by few children of FINCA clients), but was killed by a gang, ostensibly due to a dispute over a soccer game. Although her son had been dead for more than a year, Juana still could not speak of him without crying and admitted that she could not figure out how to put her life back together. After his death, her other son also received death threats from gangs and fled to the United States putting his family into debt to pay for his trip. In fear, Juana and her daughter moved across the country. Juana is grateful to the FINCA loans, which have helped her rebuild the butcher's shop she owns, as she continues to rebuild her life.

FINCA's \$6 million portfolio includes loans to 13,750 clients. Of these clients, roughly 60 percent are women, the majority of whom earn between \$4 and \$12 a day. The average client takes out \$402, and about 86 percent of clients return to FINCA for a second loan. While FINCA does no direct impact

analysis, the 2008 survey suggested that microfinance assistance in El Salvador, despite its magnitude, did not typically contribute to growing clients' businesses, nor did it help all clients graduate to larger loan capacity. But while FINCA's microfinance may not be contributing to El Salvador's economic progress, without this crucial access to microfinance, these clients would likely have resorted to borrowing from intermediaries and paying up to 250 percent in interest to avoid gang attention. This alternative would certainly not contribute to greater financial security.

A simple impact analysis cannot be the sole measure of the success of microfinance in El Salvador. When FINCA chooses to resurvey its baseline sample, it may indeed find only moderate improvements to its clients' standard of living, but it will also find substantially lighter debt burdens. Salvadoran businesses with access to formal credit are still better off, even if an impact analysis shows no growth, because microfinance clients avoid the indebtedness that comes with taking out loans from nonformal sources of credit in a time of crisis.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that microfinance is making a difference for women struggling to provide for their families in uncertain, and often dangerous, social conditions. But in order to measure their true impact in El Salvador, institutions must administer a more robust analysis that accounts for the impact of gangs on business development. In the meantime, the stories of struggling FINCA clients, grateful for their loans, speak for themselves.

*Katie Kennedy is a 2009 MPP candidate graduating from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University with a focus in political and economic development. Before attending the Kennedy School, she served as a community economic development volunteer in the U.S. Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic. Katie spent last summer working as a client assessment fellow for FINCA International in El Salvador and Honduras.*

## DEMOCRACY FROM A TO Z (AMERICA TO ZAMBIA, THAT IS)

*by Andrew Block*

In the fall of 2008, a nation gathered to elect a new president. It had been a turbulent few months in the run-up to the election, as citizens faced a great deal of uncertainty about the direction in which their country was headed. The campaign was hard fought, with each candidate trying to convince voters that he would be able to save them from dire economic straits and usher in a more prosperous future.

*When the ballots were finally tallied, a proud son of Africa emerged as the winner. But it wasn't Barack Obama; it was Rupiah Banda, now president of Zambia.*

Their task was not easy. This large and diverse nation harbors people of many different regions, ethnicities, and languages. Even so, candidates and citizens alike were proud of their democracy, and patriotism was resurgent. When the ballots were finally tallied, a proud son of Africa emerged as the winner. But it wasn't Barack Obama—it was Rupiah Banda, now president of Zambia.

The differences between Zambia and the United States are many and vast, but the two nations are united by their commitment to a democratic political system. Since one-party rule ended in 1991, Zambia has been a multiparty democracy, witnessing three peaceful transitions of power. It is a remarkable achievement, especially given Zambia's rough-and-tumble location in southern Africa. With neighbors like the Congo and Zimbabwe—both mired in seemingly unending violence and power struggles—Zambia's continued democracy is something to celebrate.

In spite of Zambia and America's shared political system, however, it is important to recognize the significant differences in their political cultures. The contrasts emerge in several areas: party structure and ideology; level of citizen engagement; and the impact of race and tribalism. Exploring these differences reveals that although the United States has long promoted democratic principles across the globe, nascent democracies often look very different from our own.

### PARTY STRUCTURE AND IDEOLOGY

At times, Americans are frustrated with our democracy. Lately, our chief complaint is that it's too partisan: Republican versus Democrat, red versus blue, conservatives versus liberals. We are upset when we perceive elected officials as too beholden to their party. Yet political parties, despite the fact that there is no mention of them in the U.S. Constitution, are one of our oldest institutions. Knowing a politician's party identification gives voters essential clues to their ideology, which in turn provides valuable information about what policies they will support or oppose.

Consider last year's U.S. Democratic primary. The contest between Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and Hillary Clinton (D-NY) was a battle in which each candidate strove to highlight his or her uniqueness. Yet the differences that stood out were more biographical than ideological. While the Obama administration no doubt varies from how a Clinton administration would have looked, the policy agendas of both candidates were rooted in the ideology of the Democratic platform. In

America, inasmuch as a politician is a representative of his or her people, he or she is also a representative of the party.

Zambian democracy inverts this equation: the political leader is not a product of his or her party, but rather the party is a product of its leader. Zambia has neither red nor blue states (or, given the colors of the Zambian flag, it might be more precise to say that it has neither green nor orange states). Voters don't identify with a party so much as they identify with the leader of that party.

*His tone and body language mirrored those of a fire-and-brimstone preacher; the intensity of his words would have seemed more appropriate at a mass rally than in a cramped office.*

A political environment emphasizing this type of leadership tends to produce larger-than-life personalities. While working in Zambia this summer, I had the opportunity to meet Michael Sata, the colorful leader of the Patriotic Front (PF), Zambia's main opposition party. Sata had founded the party after departing from the ruling Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) several years earlier, having been passed over for a promotion to the position of party leader. If the MMD wasn't going to let him move up the ranks, he decided, he would create his own ranks. Sata is now in his 70s, a familiar face to an electorate that has—on two occasions—narrowly denied him the presidency.

I climbed the stairs to his office, a nondescript high-rise off Cairo Road, the Zambian capital's main drag. Sidling into his compact office, I sat in a stiff chair facing the window, while he stared back at me across his desk. At Sata's invitation, Zambian press slowly trickled into the room. The leader began to speak, growing more animated as each new microphone or video camera pushed its

way into the office. For the next hour, I was treated to a crash course on Sata's views: on the woeful state of the economy, on the hated Constitutional Convention, on the threat that Chinese workers pose to Zambian society.

His rhetoric was sharp but lofty, with free-flowing appeals to patriotism and Christianity. His tone and body language mirrored those of a fire-and-brimstone preacher; the intensity of his words would have seemed more appropriate at a mass rally than in a cramped office.

Yet it was precisely this oversized personality that had allowed the PF to grow from a third-tier party into a major opposition force in only a few years. Voters didn't vote for the PF—they voted for Sata. His views became the party's views, and his ideas became the party's ideas. The party was born of Sata's grudge against the MMD, and it would continue to exist as a product of his personal ambition.

*Leaders need to worry only about their personal appeal to voters, freed from the concern that moving too far to the right or left will alienate their core supporters.*

Because Zambian parties lack an ideology independent of their leader, no party has an ideological "base" in the same way that Republicans and Democrats each have a base. Leaders need to worry only about their personal appeal to voters, freed from the concern that moving too far to the right or left will alienate their core supporters.

This is not to say that voters don't pay attention to a leader's policy positions—the pronounced urban/rural split in voting behavior suggests that they do—but the leader's fans are invested in him personally, lending him considerable leeway to shape his message without fear of violating party orthodoxy.

## CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

In some ways, the top-heavy nature of Zambian political parties replicates itself in their relationship with voters. The country's political culture continues to reflect the influence of the hierarchical remnants of Zambia's precolonial society. Though they are subordinate to elected officials, tribal chiefs retain a great deal of clout. A House of Chiefs is even empowered to review—in an advisory capacity—all parliamentary legislation. Many Zambians outside the major cities still look to their chiefs for both religious and political guidance, particularly given the fact that access to the media is limited in rural areas. Taking all this into account, it is not surprising that politicians trolling for votes would invest considerable capital in trying to woo voters by locking down the support of their tribal leaders.

Many tried-and-true tools of American campaign outreach are rare in Zambia. In part, this is due to the country's poverty. Low levels of literacy and an unreliable post system limit the amount of resources parties invest in mail-based messaging. The Internet, which proved to be President Obama's silver bullet, simply hasn't saturated Zambia sufficiently to be an effective organizing device. Outside the major cities, the country is sparsely populated, and formal canvassing is an alien and impractical tool. Some similarities to the American system are found in candidates' reliance on earned media, but radio, TV, and print coverage is useful only in reaching the wealthy, educated, and urban voters who can access these outlets.

The flip side of this situation is that retail campaigning is a vibrant part of the political culture. To reach poor and rural voters, candidates make personal visits and hold mass rallies, reminiscent of the type of glad-handing seen in Iowa and New Hampshire. Recalling the populist techniques of American big-city machines, aspiring officeholders

might bring along vats of cooking oil or pounds of sugar to sweeten the deal. In a country where the communications revolution has yet to take hold, personal outreach (and maybe a sack of flour) is a necessity.

## RACE AND TRIBALISM

Tribal allegiances continue to impact Zambian politics in the same way that race still matters in American politics. While there is disagreement about the degree to which tribal affinities impact voting decisions, they are doubtless a part of the political conversation. Zambians know their tribal affiliation and speak their tribe's native language (in addition to Nyanja, the lingua franca). Observers conclude that a candidate is more likely to receive support from fellow members of his own tribe or a closely related tribe, with members of other tribes feeling not hostility so much as indifference.

*The Internet, which proved to be President Obama's silver bullet, simply hasn't saturated Zambia sufficiently to be an effective organizing device.*

The outliers in this dynamic are the Tonga of the Southern province and the Lozi of the Western province, both of which see themselves—and are seen by others—as distinct from the rest of the Zambian population. Though candidates of all tribal backgrounds fight for Tonga and Lozi votes, their relatively marginal social position presents serious barriers to their holding national office themselves. Even greater obstacles lie in the path of Zambians of European, Indian, and Chinese descent who are widely viewed as having divided loyalties or as engaging in unethical business practices that exploit "real" Zambians. Several minority candidates have become ministers, members of parliament, or high-ranking party officials.

The relationship among most tribes appears more akin to regionalism than racism. In the United States, regionalism plays a prominent role when observers speculate on a vice presidential pick, under the assumption that voters feel closer to candidates from their own region. The situation in Zambia is similar. Tribes are each associated with a provincial homeland, and so it is difficult to disentangle a voter's feelings of regional affinity from tribal affinity.

Tribal affiliation has never entirely predicted voting behavior, but it seems likely that the tribe will continue to diminish in political importance. Urbanization has already brought a large chunk of Zambians out of their homelands and into the cities, loosening tribal ties. In the last election, highly industrialized or urban areas threw their support behind the populist Sata while rural areas favored other candidates, indicating that the

urban/rural split might be more pronounced than tribal cleavages. This trend toward post-tribal and post-racial politics in Zambia may accelerate.

While getting a haircut in a newly opened mall on the outskirts of the capital, I asked my barber if he had been paying attention to the U.S. election. "Of course," he said. "We love Obama!" I then asked if he thought a biracial candidate could ever be elected in Zambia. "I think so," he answered. "If you elect Obama, then it is more likely that Zambians will consider candidates that they hadn't paid much attention to in the past. What happens in America has a powerful impact on Zambia." In the long run, he may be proven right.

*Andrew Block is an MPP candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Views expressed in this article are his own.*

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## MAKING ENDS MEET IN MEXICO CITY

*by Megan Thibos*

Sitting on a gas station curb one sunny afternoon in Mexico City, I contemplated asking a clown for an interview. Avenida Insurgentes, or Insurgents Avenue, was, as usual, choked with cars and buses inching slowly across the seemingly endless city.

In the far lane, a man juggled tennis balls while his two young children somersaulted their way across the street. Dressed in tattered clown outfits and face paint, they soon began weaving through the stopped traffic, squeegeeing windshields and collecting tips.

In 2004, I worked in this sprawling city, trying to understand how everyday Mexicans made ends meet. With the 2004 per capita gross domestic product at \$7,235, Mexico was (and is) considered a middle-income country. Yet the "middle income" experience in Mexico, which has some of the high-

est income inequality in the world, can still vary greatly depending on where one falls along the income distribution.

*The "middle income" experience in Mexico...can still vary greatly depending on where one falls along the income distribution.*

This is not a simple story of haves and have-nots. Mexico is certainly home to severe poverty and extreme wealth, but in between are numerous and somewhat amorphous socioeconomic divisions, and living standards are not always tightly tied to income. It was my aim to understand the lifestyles of these lower-income families that brought me face to face with a family of clowns.



*The expansive sprawl of Mexico City captures a diversity of lifestyle choices across income levels. Photo by Megan Thibos.*

### THE LIFESTYLE OF A STREET CLOWN

Julio, the clown, was a bit bemused when I introduced myself, but was happy to join me for lunch. His two children were smart and impeccably well-behaved, politely excusing themselves to wash their hands when our sandwiches arrived. Julio smiled broadly as he bragged about his children's school successes and stared down at the tabletop when admitting that, with no formal education of his own, he would not be able to help them with their homework much longer.

Keeping them in school had been no small feat for Julio and his wife. Their children's school, like most

government schools in Mexico City, supplemented inadequate funding by charging parents a fee for each exam taken and worksheet distributed. If parents don't pay, the schools refuse to release the student's grades, and the student can't move up to the next level. For all of the lower-income families I spoke with, school costs constituted a significant expense in their budgets.

Julio and his family made a little less than 3,000 pesos per month working as street clowns, and their income was higher than about 20 percent of households. They lived in a cardboard shack in a squatter's settlement west of the city center. The children shared the only bed while the parents slept on a makeshift mattress of foam and blankets on the dirt floor.



The settlement was illegally connected to city utilities, enabling Julio to install a kitchen sink with running water and a toilet bowl with sewage plumbing. Their kitchen area had a small gas stove that ran off tall canisters, but there was no refrigerator or oven. The family took showers by filling old soda bottles with water from the sink, which they would warm in the sun before use.

Julio's meager lifestyle was the least comfortable of all the families I met in Mexico, but his income was not the lowest. Julio's poor economic circumstances were exacerbated, I found out, because of medical bills from a health emergency in the past and because his extended family was unable to help.

### A PLOT OF LAND

On the city's eastern fringes, I met a woman named Ariana who owned her humble home free and clear. Her single-minded determination and remarkable resilience had enabled her to achieve a standard of living somewhat superior to Julio's, despite an equally challenging set of circumstances and a lower income of only 2,000 pesos per month, which put her just above the tenth percentile nationwide.

Ariana was born in one of the few remaining indigenous communities north of Mexico City. She ran away to the city at the age of eight after being sexually assaulted and never returned home. Now she worked in an indigenous women's craft cooperative. More than a decade before I met her, Ariana had managed to buy a small plot of land in Chimalhuacán, a ramshackle fringe city in neighboring Estado de México where the unnumbered houses are made of bare gray cinder blocks and the dirt streets have no names.

Like Julio, she started out in a cardboard shack, but hers was built on land she owned. Over the course of thirteen years, Ariana had built a humble little

house, one wall at a time. Similar to Julio, she had a minimum of modern conveniences: electric lights, a small gas stove, and a television, but no refrigerator, oven, cable, or telephone.

*Even among Mexico's poorest residents, standards of living cannot be neatly mapped onto incomes.*

As the stories of Julio and Ariana show, even among Mexico's poorest residents, standards of living cannot be neatly mapped onto incomes. In a city where most home construction is done informally, scraping together the resources to buy a small plot of land can make a huge difference in the family's economic stability and living conditions for many years into the future.

### THE UNFILLED PROMISE OF THE FORMAL SECTOR

As Mexico shifts toward a modern economy, formal jobs with modern companies have started to become more prevalent. Unlike Julio and Ariana, formal employees pay income taxes and are entitled to certain government benefits, but they don't necessarily make more money. For formal and informal workers alike, the ability to share resources and/or living quarters with extended family can be just as important as take-home pay in determining the lifestyle that can be achieved.

I met Marisa at my local Sumesa, a Western-style supermarket chain. She worked in the bakery, deftly flipping frosted donuts into little waxed-paper bundles and tallying prices with a Sharpie marker. Marisa had a formal-sector job, but earned less than 2,000 pesos per month, about the same as Ariana. Marisa was able to afford a more modern lifestyle than Ariana by joining forces

with family, but in some ways that modernity came at the expense of stability.

Marisa lived in a rental apartment in a gritty working-class neighborhood near the airport. Unlike Chimalhuacán, where Ariana lived, the neighborhood was on the subway line, making her commute much easier. A fifty-one-year-old divorcée, Marisa supported herself and her thirteen-year-old son. They shared the two-bedroom apartment with Marisa's twenty-two-year-old daughter and son-in-law. Much like very low-income families in the United States, Marisa's half of the rent was more than half of her income. Ariana's home may have looked a bit rougher around the edges, but she paid only 600 pesos per year in property taxes, and unlike Marisa, her ability to stay in her home did not depend on the choices of extended family.

*In one corner of the yard sat a stack of cinder blocks Susana was stockpiling until she had enough to start building a permanent kitchen.*

For Marisa, having two households under one tiny roof wasn't exactly ideal, but it was necessary. Marisa wasn't sure what she would do if her daughter and son-in-law decided to move out—she certainly couldn't afford a decent apartment on her own. As it was, her income didn't quite meet expenses, and her boyfriend had to help her out with about 600 pesos per month.

### MULTIPLE EARNERS

Although Ariana, Marisa, and Julio all fell within the bottom 20 percent of Mexican household income, in Mexico, the term "lower-income" can reasonably be applied to the bottom 70 percent of households. Together, these households make less than a quarter of all earned income.

Income differences are still relatively small among these households, and because living standards depend on more than just wages, there are no clear class demarcations within this bottom 70 percent. Evolving family situations and living configurations can rocket a household two or three steps up the economic ladder, or just as quickly, render an accustomed lifestyle unsustainable.

Susana's family was upwardly mobile due to changing family composition. A house cleaner, Susana had worked a grueling seven days per week most of her life. A single mother, she had three daughters aged twelve to twenty-four. The oldest had recently completed her studies and found a job as a nurse. This welcome development had pushed their household income to 4,800 pesos per month, just above the fortieth percentile, while allowing Susana to cut back her work to only four days per week.

Susana had two main priorities for her newfound free time and extra income. The first was to spend as much time as possible with her youngest daughter, who had been growing up largely on her own. The second was to make some improvements to their house. The family lived in an unfinished, two-room, cinder-block house on a subdivided lot on the city's southern edge. The land had been a gift from the father of Susana's youngest daughter, as his contribution to her upbringing.

The inside of the house was painted a cheery pink, albeit with a cheap paint that rubbed off with your fingers. The kitchen and bathroom were housed outside in two separate lean-tos made of bits of cardboard and scrap metal nailed to flimsy wooden frames. In one corner of the yard sat a stack of cinder blocks Susana was stockpiling until she had enough to start building a permanent kitchen. Also on her to-do list was to install piping for running water. They had a large kitchen sink, a toilet, and a drain in the dirt bathroom floor, all of which had sewage but not clean water connections.

Their water sat in large, covered plastic drums in the yard, which were refilled as needed via a long garden hose from a communal spigot at the edge of the property.

*Together, Manolo and his wife brought in about 4,400 pesos per month, putting them just below the fortieth percentile. Materially, though, their lifestyle approached that of the Mexican middle class.*

Susana's story illustrates concretely the difference in standard of living that a change in family situation can make. The addition of her oldest daughter as a wage earner had brought substantial improvements to the family's lifestyle, but that income increase would last only as long as her daughter remained unmarried and living at home. Over the next couple of years, Susana hoped to use some of the additional income to make permanent improvements to her standard of living—a proper indoor kitchen and bathroom with running water—that would last long after her daughter moved out to start a family of her own.

### MAKING ENDS MEET

As we already saw, Marisa's formal-sector job did not automatically entitle her to an easy lifestyle; for Mexico's lower-income workers, the informal sector is often a better choice. Manolo gave up a formal-sector job in a dry goods store for an informal job as a "volunteer" street sweeper because the pay was roughly similar and the hours much better. He wore a bright orange uniform but drew no wage from the city. Instead, he swept the streets and collected trash from an established neighborhood clientele in exchange for tips (those that didn't pay a sweeper had to carry their own trash several blocks away).

In Manolo's case, the informal sector provided better perks as well as better hours. In the wealthy area where Manolo worked, the in-kind giveaways—expensive suits, VCRs—could be worth just as much as the tips. Whatever Manolo's family couldn't use, his wife sold at the local tianguis (street market), along with the usual wares she purchased wholesale.

Together, Manolo and his wife brought in about 4,400 pesos per month, putting them just below the fortieth percentile. Materially, though, their lifestyle approached that of the Mexican middle class. They lived rent-free with Manolo's mother in a nicely finished house in a quiet, working-class neighborhood in Chalco, one of the larger fringe cities in neighboring Estado de México. They had several televisions and a PlayStation (the latter a gift from a well-off godfather to one of their children).

Manolo's life was frugal, but secure and content. His children were doing very well in school and were on track to join the privileged class of university graduates. On Saturday nights the family was always invited to one of the simple but festive weddings, baptisms, and quinceañera parties that spilled out onto the streets of his neighborhood.

The contrasts presented in these stories illustrate just how difficult it is to neatly categorize living standards among Mexico's lower-income households. Informal workers are not necessarily worse off than formal workers, and within the large informal sector, wages and working conditions vary dramatically. Because of the flexibility of housing construction, home ownership among even the very poor is feasible, if a small investment in land can be achieved. Moreover, the ability to share living quarters with extended family can yield substantially superior living standards, even when nuclear families operate independently in a roommate-style relationship.

## A CHANGING MEXICO

Mexico is in the midst of a transition from the developing to the developed world, which is evident in both the disparities between socioeconomic classes and the similarities across them. The lifestyles of the top 10 percent of Mexican households—who together earn as much as the other 90 percent of households combined—have more in common with affluent Americans than with the rest of Mexico.

*Porfirio Díaz, the long-ruling president ousted by the Mexican Revolution, famously described Mexico as being “so far from God, and so close to the United States.”*

Mexico’s “middle” class is found in between the upper-income 10 percent and the lower-income 70 percent. Their lifestyles are headed in the direction of the standards we associate with the U.S. middle class but are not there yet. Their assortment of modern conveniences goes beyond the basic essentials, but not too far beyond. If they have a car, it likely doubles as a taxi. They have some access to consumer credit and a modest amount of discretionary income, and some families have been able to put their children through private school.

Overall, Mexico is moving toward an industrialized standard of living, but the benefits are accruing unevenly. Instead of inching forward as a unified whole, the upper class has shot forward while the rest of the population is still waiting to catch up. At the same time, there is evidence of economic mobility. The majority of the upper class consists of well-paid, college-educated professionals instead of old-money elites. The next generation is likely to see more of those professionals coming from humbler backgrounds, as parents like Julio and

Ariana are able to see their children graduate from high school and entertain university aspirations. Meanwhile, the large informal economy allows for significant mobility through entrepreneurship.

Porfirio Díaz, the long-ruling president ousted by the Mexican Revolution, famously described Mexico as being “so far from God, and so close to the United States.” Indeed, my research found an element of conspicuous consumption that crossed all classes—attributable, perhaps, to U.S. influence. Although Julio lived in a cardboard shack, he had a TV running on pirated electricity and was saving for a DVD player. In anticipation, he had already acquired a couple of pirated DVDs from the tianguis. Meanwhile, a middle-income taxi driver I met proudly displayed an unopened bottle of Moët & Chandon next to a dozen or so engraved champagne flutes left over from his daughter’s quinceañera party—a party so expensive that he defaulted on his taxi loan to pay for it.

Mexico’s foray into American-style consumerism may reflect hope and confidence in Mexico’s ability to eventually achieve an industrialized standard of living for all of its citizens. But it also comes with an intense cultural awareness that others, inside and outside of Mexico, are doing better. Nearly everyone I spoke with believed their family was far closer to the bottom of the income distribution than they really were. As Manolo put it:

“We are a third world country, we live from day to day. Our hope is grounded in tomorrow. You [Americans] already have tomorrow and are looking towards the future.”

*Megan Thibos was a Fulbright Scholar in Mexico City in 2003-2004. She later worked as a paralegal helping abused women get divorces and as a researcher studying distressed urban neighborhoods before joining the MPP class of 2010.*

## AVOIDING THE (MICRO)FINANCIAL CRISIS

*by Ben Reno-Weber*

During the past five years, international interest in microfinance has exploded. What began as a set of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focused on helping women lift their families out of poverty has become a multi-billion-dollar global industry boasting some of the best-known names in investment banking, venture capital, and international development.

In 2005, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Grameen Bank founder Muhammad Yunus, heightening the visibility of microfinance as a sustainable development tool. The vast profits investors earned in early microfinance initial public offerings, such as Banco Compartamos in Mexico, increased interest in microfinance among institutional investors. The Internet has further popularized microfinance by enabling organizations such as Kiva.org to link donors and individual investors directly with micro-entrepreneurs.

*The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP)...estimates that there were approximately 150 million active micro-loans in 2004.*

To date, these investments have been overwhelmingly successful, both from the perspective of investors and of loan recipients. However, in light of the recent financial crisis, such enthusiasm has raised the specter of a microfinance bubble. The sheer amount of money chasing microfinance investments has increased exponentially, but the number of good potential investments has increased at a much slower pace.

The global retraction of credit, while likely to restrict many institutions' access to credit and weaken their clients' capacity to repay, is also an

opportunity for the microfinance industry to take stock, shore up its weaknesses, and set itself up for sustained growth when the global markets recover.

### THE BASICS OF MICROFINANCE

Microfinance refers to the provision of small-scale financial products such as loans, savings, money-transfer services, and insurance primarily to people living in poverty in the developing world. There are a wide range of channels through which the financially poor gain access to these services, including NGOs, international and domestic commercial banks, credit unions, money lenders, government and postal banks, and informal savings groups. It is difficult to assess the size of the microfinance industry other than to acknowledge that it is massive.

Though the poor save, their level of savings is often difficult to assess because it is in the form of livestock or jewelry or housing. These savings are also vulnerable to theft, sickness, or destruction and cannot be used to access additional financing. Microfinance is appealing in part because it is both safer and can enable access to other products.

Just how big is the formal savings market? The World Savings Bank Institute estimates that there are 1.3 billion "accessible" savings accounts (those with low average balances and low costs). The number of savers at the top 100 microfinance institutions (MFIs) was approximately 58 million in 2006, up from 43.8 million in 2003.

On the credit side, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), a microfinance-focused policy and research center housed by the World Bank, estimates that there were approximately 150 million

active micro-loans in 2004, and that number has been growing rapidly. Many experts believe that the global market for microfinance could involve as many as 1.5 billion people.

To meet their demands, the World Bank estimates that almost \$8 billion in commercial money, domestic and foreign, was invested in microfinance by the end of 2007, along with another \$6 billion in donor money.

Despite this burgeoning market, a November 2007 World Bank study indicated that between 50 to 80 percent of adults in developing countries have inadequate access to financial services.

### EVOLUTION OF MICROFINANCE: SUSTAINABILITY AND INVESTMENT

One of the central questions of microfinance has always been its sustainability. The premise of microfinance is that access to better saving, borrowing, and risk-management services will allow many of the poor to pull themselves out of poverty. The concept appeals to people of all political persuasions. It offers a compelling case for those seeking a market-based solution to global poverty: money invested in the bottom of the economic pyramid makes workers more productive, which in turn generates commercial returns at the top. But there has understandably been a great deal of skepticism, including from Nobel laureate Yunus, about whether generating commercial returns from the poor is practical, sustainable, or ethical.

Research by Adrian Gonzales of the Microfinance Information Exchange (MIX), looking at 2,600 MFIs, indicates that the large majority of borrowers from private, as opposed to gov-

ernment, MFIs are served by financially sustainable institutions. Calculations done by Rich Rosenberg of CGAP, using data from MIX, show the median return on equity for all MFIs—weighted by number of clients—was 13 percent. In other words, \$1 invested in microfinance returned an average of \$1.13 to the investor every year. Even factoring in a significant margin for overreporting of financial returns, the data indicates that it is possible to pursue microfinance sustainably.

*In the past, the performance of microfinance institutions has been largely uncorrelated to macroeconomic trends.*

Furthermore, in the past, the performance of microfinance institutions has been largely uncorrelated to macroeconomic trends, both globally and domestically. In the Mexican, Asian, and Russian financial crises of the 1990s, the loan portfolios of microfinance institutions generally grew or shrank minimally, even as other bank portfolios collapsed. As Michael Chu, senior lecturer of business administration at Harvard Business School, explained in an interview, "Microfinance clients are nimble and less tied to huge supply chains. Also, the informal sector is somewhat isolated from the economy as a whole."

All of these considerations would seem to make microfinance a perfect candidate for international investors interested in diversifying their portfolios into asset classes uncorrelated with the broader market. Investors have entered through a number of vehicles, including collateralized debt obligations, direct equity investment, and partnerships with MFIs by major international players such as AIG, Morgan Stanley, J.P. Morgan, Sequoia Capital, ICICI, and others. So then what are the primary challenges for microfinance?

### SIGNS OF OVERHEATING: Too Much, Too Quickly

Despite the promise of microfinance, the industry faces substantial challenges. Between 2004 and 2006, foreign capital investment in microfinance tripled to \$4 billion, much of it led by newly created commercial investment vehicles specializing in microfinance. According to a 2008 study by the Center for the Study of Financial Innovation, the number of lenders is rising by 25 percent per year. There is little indication that the number of sustainable MFIs worthy of commercial investment is rising at a similar pace.

While there is likely still significant room for commercial investment in sustainable institutions, through 2007 it was already possible to see the demand for good investments beginning to overwhelm the supply. As the amount of money flowing into the microfinance industry continues to increase, the likelihood of high-profile failures among lending institutions increases. These failures then reduce investor confidence.

*Investors are bidding up the value beyond what future earnings sustain—the definition of a bubble.*

The Indian MFI market offers a particularly good case study. According to a soon-to-be released study by CGAP and J.P. Morgan, the median price for private MFI transactions worldwide is 1.9 times the book value. In India—home to the bulk of recent sales—the price for private MFI transactions is about six times the book value. While it is possible that these valuations reflect potential opportunities for growth in the Indian market, which are certainly substantial, it seems more likely that investors are bidding up the value beyond what future earnings can sustain—the definition of a bubble.

Similarly, the increasing ability of microfinance institutions to access commercial sources of finances, particularly from local banks, has generally been seen as positive. However, the recent collapse of many financial institutions in the United States and Western Europe has caused increased skepticism of any increases in leverage.

Many MFI business models have come to depend on their ability to regularly refinance their own debt, leaving them vulnerable to changes in the credit environment. Some MFIs have already seen banks reducing credit lines, raising rates, and withdrawing loan offers.

### THE DANGER AND OPPORTUNITY OF CRISIS

Another report by the Center for the Study of Financial Innovation that was recently published surveyed more than 300 microfinance practitioners, scholars, and donors from 74 countries. The survey asked respondents for their views on the biggest risks facing the microfinance industry. The results were striking. The majority of perceived risks related to institutional capacity, indicating a high level of self-awareness of vulnerability. For investors and analysts, management quality and corporate governance were the top issues.

For microfinance to continue to succeed as a sustainable commercial industry, it must address these concerns. Investors will need to have confidence in management and in the underlying governance structures that support the institutions. That could mean additional training for current and rising corporate officers or bringing in managers from the more formal financial sector who can provide more discipline to the field. Without question, it will also mean an increased investment in the information systems that underlie internal and external reporting.

In addition to the opportunity for individual players, the financial crisis also offers an inflection point for the industry as a whole. In many ways, the same lack of transparency and regulation that led to the global banking collapse can be seen in the microfinance market.

*The same lack of transparency and regulation that led to the global banking collapse can be seen in the microfinance market.*

To succeed in the long run, microfinance will need to conform to the same expectations of transparency of both strategy and operations as other industries. Investors will be able to see which institutions can handle increased capital, and valuations of MFIs will stay reasonably reflective of the underlying businesses. With any luck, transparency will encourage increased investment and increased competition, leading to improved access to services for the people who need them.

### THE FUTURE OF MICROFINANCE

The financial crisis, the credit crunch, and the increased skepticism arising from economic volatility could not have come at a better time for the microfinance industry. After a decade of breathtakingly fast growth and wide-ranging experimentation, the industry could use a few years to lock down gains, consolidate players, and institutionalize best practices. For donors, service providers, and international financial institutions, this might be the right time to undertake a comprehensive look at their roles moving forward. If the fundamental need in the market is for capacity building, then how should those players go about meeting that need? Microfinance has proven its potential to alleviate poverty for at least some of the world's poor.

With appropriate management skill, good systems, and fiscal discipline, it can also be implemented profitably. But the current players are only serving, at best, one-tenth of the potential beneficiaries. Hopefully, the current financial crisis will give the industry the time and motivation to make adjustments that will help it reach the remaining 90 percent.

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*In August 2008, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poo surveyed 45 leading microfinance institutions around the world to ask what role microfinance should play given the food crisis. They responded:*

- Microfinance should serve as an instrument to increase agricultural production (>75%)
- MFIs should adapt their policies to alleviate the consequences of the food crisis as long as doing so does not affect their financial sustainability (>75%)
- MFIs should focus on expanding access to finance and not on undertaking relief activities (>50%)
- MFIs should take up emergency measures to help people suffering from the crisis (>40%)
- MFIs should serve as a channel to distribute aid (food/money) (>30%)



## BUSH'S BIPOLAR FOREIGN POLICY IN NORTH KOREA

by Nate Adler

### EIGHT YEARS OF CONFUSION

It is quickly becoming passé to take shots at former U.S. President George W. Bush's administration. But as one reviews the past eight years of North Korea policy it's hard not to cringe a little (or a lot). Though often eclipsed by higher-profile foreign policy misadventures in the Middle East and South Asia, the Bush administration's mismanagement of North Korea is nonetheless a diplomatic failure to rival all others.

*The incredible hubris of the hawks in the first term eventually ceded to the over-conciliatory doves of the second.*

From initially vilifying North Korea as a member of the "axis of evil" and ceasing all meaningful diplomatic contact to more recently coddling leader Kim Jong-il's regime in desperate hopes of an 11th hour foreign policy success (a fruitless effort), the Bush administration demonstrated a truly bipolar North Korea policy. The incredible hubris of the hawks in the first term eventually ceded to the over-conciliatory doves of the second. Over the last eight years, Pyongyang (capital of North Korea) has seen, within a single administration, one of the most dramatic reversals of U.S. foreign policy in recent memory. The result has been a confusing amalgam of carrots and sticks, which, combined with North Korea's reliably bizarre behavior, has resulted in a nearly decade-long soap opera of diplomacy—diplomacy which has produced essentially nothing.

Along the way there have been shutdowns and start-ups of nuclear reactors, floods, famines, six-party talks, shipments of food aid, shipments of heavy fuel aid, sanctions, missile tests, press con-

ferences, nuclear tests, congressional hearings, a whole lot of saber rattling, a little détente, tons of photo ops, and even a nice visit from the New York Philharmonic. In the end, however, the Bush administration found itself right back where it started. Except that on its watch, Pyongyang developed, tested, and stockpiled nuclear weapons, ostensibly sold such technology to Syria, left the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and continued eight unfettered years of some of the world's most deplorable human rights violations.

This critique is not intended to be nostalgic, longing for a return to the glory days of former U.S. President Bill Clinton's North Korea policy. Those days were not all that glorious. Nor is it intended to belittle the very real and admirable efforts of American diplomats who for the past few years have negotiated tirelessly with their North Korean interlocutors. We are better off for their service. Rather, it is meant as a sound rebuke of the conservative ideologues in Washington who refused, especially during the first term, to let those diplomats do their jobs.

### STICK DIPLOMACY STRIKES BACK

For almost six years, hard-liners in the administration, perturbed by North Korea's inane behavior, responded with some inane behavior of their own by shutting off all meaningful communication with Pyongyang. However, instead of cowering in the chilly diplomatic silence of the collective cold shoulder of former Vice President Dick Cheney and former United Nations envoy John Bolton, the North Koreans made use of their newfound lack of supervision and got busy building nuclear weapons. As a result, U.S. allies and forces

in the region now enjoy all the security dilemmas that come with an ever-unpredictable and now nuclear-armed North Korea—a North Korea that is still holding at least thirty kilograms of plutonium, enough for five or more new weapons.

Even after several major concessions, including removing North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, the Bush administration was unable to garner any information about, let alone shut down, a suspected North Korean highly enriched uranium program. The administration was also unable to secure any declaration regarding the number of weapons that are currently in the North Korean arsenal. These central pieces of the puzzle are still missing, and American negotiators now seem to have hit an impasse with the North Koreans both in multilateral and bilateral frameworks. This is the deplorable state of affairs that U.S. President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton inherit.

### THE CHALLENGE OF TALKING

Given these tremendous challenges, what can really be hoped for, or expected of, the Obama administration's North Korea policy moving forward? Unfortunately, a daunting domestic and foreign policy portfolio will make it hard for the new administration to place North Korea as a top priority. Despite the unquestionable importance of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, it is clear that the immediate urgency of the global financial crisis, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Indian-Pakistan tensions, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iranian nuclear issues, and Russian posturing in Central Asia and the Caucasus all make it unrealistic to expect security briefings on North Korea to top President Obama's very long foreign policy to-do list.

Recent behavior in Pyongyang reflects North Korea's concern that it could be relegated to the sidelines of Obama's policy priorities. Like a

petulant child stomping his or her feet in demand of attention, North Korea has recently attempted to escalate regional tensions by nullifying long-standing nonaggression pacts with South Korea and declaring the peace process between North and South so untenable that "the clash of fire against fire, [and] steel against steel, has become inevitable." Recent satellite images appear to indicate that, to back up the tough talk, North Korea is moving components of a long-range missile to a launch facility in preparation for a test. Such an escalation, reminiscent of past brinkmanship games, is sure to further strain relations with regional neighbors and with the United States.

*While North Korea remains a pariah state in almost every measurable index, its nuclear program alone has bought it a chip in the biggest poker game around.*

With these challenges in mind, the new U.S. administration should take two immediate steps to put North Korea policy back on track. First, Secretary Clinton should reinstate the position of special envoy to North Korea. While North Korea remains a pariah state in almost every measurable index, its nuclear program alone has bought it a chip in the biggest poker game around. Wrestling that single semblance of import from Kim Jong-il's grasp will be a complicated and tremendously time-consuming venture for the Obama administration. Thus, naming a special envoy whose sole charge is North Korea will alleviate the burden of that portfolio on the assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific Affairs and will allow the kind of focus and unrelenting tenacity needed for successful nuclear negotiations with Pyongyang.

While President Obama, and even Secretary Clinton, may not have time to focus on the slow and arduous denuclearization process in North Korea, if given sufficient authority, flexibility, and capable staff,

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the special envoy will have the requisites necessary to diligently push forward with his or her North Korean counterparts.

Secondly, the Obama administration should employ, from the outset, a strategy of firm and consistent engagement. It should demonstrate in no uncertain terms that the United States will not tolerate a nuclear North Korea. But it should also show itself absolutely committed to working with the regime, especially within the six-party process, to ensure that denuclearization happens in a way that benefits the North Korean people. The U.S. delegation should be prepared to put a variety of attractive energy and food aid packages on the table in a continued attempt to induce complete and verifiable disarmament. Among these options, the United States should be prepared to discuss the light water reactors that the North Koreans covet, provided that there are sufficient security mechanisms in place to deter weaponization of the fissile material associated with such civilian energy programs.

### CAN OBAMA INCENTIVIZE GOOD BEHAVIOR BETTER THAN BUSH?

The Obama administration should also offer its genuine support in helping North Korea gain access to international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In exchange for this support, Pyongyang would need to provide an accurate weapons declaration or meet other significant benchmarks. The integration of North Korea into such institutions will itself be a long and difficult process, and the temperamental political environment in Pyongyang certainly will not make things easier. However, through loopholes like World Bank bilateral or multilateral trust funds, North Korea could develop the basic infrastructure needed to gain membership and ultimately to receive much larger traditional grants. In facilitating this process, the Obama

administration and its partners in the region would be able to slowly encourage a more prosperous and more liberal North Korea: a North Korea that sees that its best interest lies in a clear path toward responsible and peaceful participation in the international community.

*The Obama administration must frustrate North Korea with its patience.*

This approach is particularly attractive recalling that, despite the antiquated and decrepit economy that has come to be associated with North Korea, things have not always been this bad. From the end of the Korean War to the early 1970s, the North enjoyed double-digit growth rates that were consistently three times that of its South Korean neighbors, as well as an impressive education system. Obviously things have changed, but clearly the linkage between North Korea and destitute poverty is not an intrinsic one. In turn, there is tremendous potential for international financial institutions to contribute to real and meaningful economic reform in North Korea, and this potential should be duly considered as the new administration shapes its North Korea policy.

The approach of phased and incentivized denuclearization proposed here does resemble some of the strategies employed by the administration over the last two years. However, where the Bush administration swung dramatically from one policy of extreme isolation to another of hyper-engagement, the Obama administration must be both firm and consistent. Furthermore, where the Bush administration dug itself into a massive diplomatic hole in the first six years, and then panicked trying to dig itself out in the final two years, the Obama administration must frustrate North Korea with its patience. There is absolutely no quick fix to the issues posed by North Korea, and the new administration must recognize that

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last minute "hurry-up diplomacy," especially if it is driven by ambitions for legacy, will not be an effective way forward in Pyongyang.

*It hardly seems prudent to forfeit potential progress in Pyongyang in an attempt to preserve the long-lost ideological purity of U.S.-North Korea policy.*

Critics of engagement will respond with a familiar litany of concerns, the most prominent of which is that any acquiescence to North Korea will set the precedent that the United States can be blackmailed with the threat of nuclear development. Unfortunately, that proverbial cat has long been out of the bag. President Clinton dealt with the North Koreans while they were behaving badly, and President Bush dealt with them while they were behaving even worse.

Thus, although this precedent may not represent an ideal approach, in the context of North Korea it is the unfortunate reality. It hardly seems prudent to forfeit potential progress in Pyongyang in an attempt to preserve the long-lost ideological purity of U.S.-North Korea policy. Rather, an active and pragmatic participation in the six-party talks will help dilute the unwanted perception of distinct U.S. conciliation, while still allowing the Obama administration to push for North Korea's phased denuclearization through a multilateral framework.

### MOVING FORWARD

Ultimately, despite the tremendous challenges ahead, the Obama administration has also arrived on the scene at a time of unprecedented opportunity. Given the recent proliferation of rumors emanating from Pyongyang about Kim Jong-il's

failing health, and even more recent reports about the prospects for his replacement, it seems possible, if not likely, that the Obama administration will have the opportunity to work with North Korea during a major transition of power. The implications of this are enormous. They are enormous for all of North Korea's regional neighbors, and they are enormous for the millions of destitute North Koreans who suffer under Kim's brutal regime.

Given the tremendously complex road ahead with North Korea, there are no policy options that can guarantee success. But there is some hope. Indeed, as the Obama administration picks up the reins of North Korea policy, it will be imperative, perhaps more than ever, that we not remake past mistakes - and that the tone set now by the new administration be a departure from the disjointed policies of the last eight years.

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### EDITOR'S NOTE: STORY UPDATE

The author wrote this article prior to North Korea's launch of what is regarded as a long-range ballistic missile on April 5, 2009. The launch was deemed a technical failure, but prompted emergency United Nations Security Council review and was condemned by the United States. North Korea's act, and the immediate rebuke of much of the international community, only strengthen the author's argument for a phased, multilateral approach to North Korea's denuclearization and to a U.S. policy of firm, consistent engagement.

*Foreign Policy Section Editor, Claire Applegarth*

## A BAND-AID FOR AIDS? A LOOK AT BUSH'S PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF

*by Martin Gross and Allison Lombardo*

For many Americans, former U.S. President George W. Bush's foreign policy legacy will be defined by an unpopular war in Iraq, scandals in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, and irresponsible unilateral action and decision making.

But to 1.7 million people in the developing world, President Bush will be thanked for a major foreign policy achievement. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, has provided critical life-prolonging drugs to HIV/AIDS patients, instituted programs to keep the infected alive and working, and prevented others from contracting the killer disease. Under PEPFAR, Bush committed an initial \$15 billion, and requested an additional \$48 billion just before leaving office, to treat and prevent AIDS in fifteen of the countries hardest hit by the pandemic. PEPFAR is an unprecedented achievement and has accomplished what was previously thought impossible: extending AIDS treatment to more than a million people in some of the world's poorest countries.

Still, PEPFAR has failed to meet its full potential as a force for saving lives and reshaping America's role in the world. Criticism of PEPFAR has focused on its ideological approach to HIV prevention: its promotion of abstinence, its moratorium on serving sex workers and drug addicts, and its requirement to use branded U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved

(i.e., American) pharmaceuticals. But these issues are not the primary impediments to PEPFAR's success, and most have been resolved in the latest iteration of Congress's PEPFAR authorization bill or will soon be addressed by the new administration.

As it is currently designed, PEPFAR will not turn the tide of the global AIDS pandemic. It commits the United States to providing an "emergency relief" Band-Aid for AIDS in perpetuity. It does not strengthen the capacity of beneficiary states to provide the long-term health care that AIDS requires and does little to address the social, economic, and political inequities upon which the pandemic feeds. As such, it fails to reduce vulnerability to the disease for billions of the world's poor and has missed an opportunity to strengthen and demonstrate America's commitment to human rights.

U.S. President Barack Obama must reformulate PEPFAR if the program is to significantly slow the pandemic and effectively treat people living with HIV/AIDS. Obama should restructure PEPFAR to: (1) strengthen the capacity of recipient states to eventually assume control of their national AIDS programs; (2) leverage PEPFAR funds to explicitly address the root social, economic, and political drivers of the pandemic, in addition to supporting direct clinical care and education; and (3) extricate PEPFAR from a politically oriented State Department culture and funding mechanism.

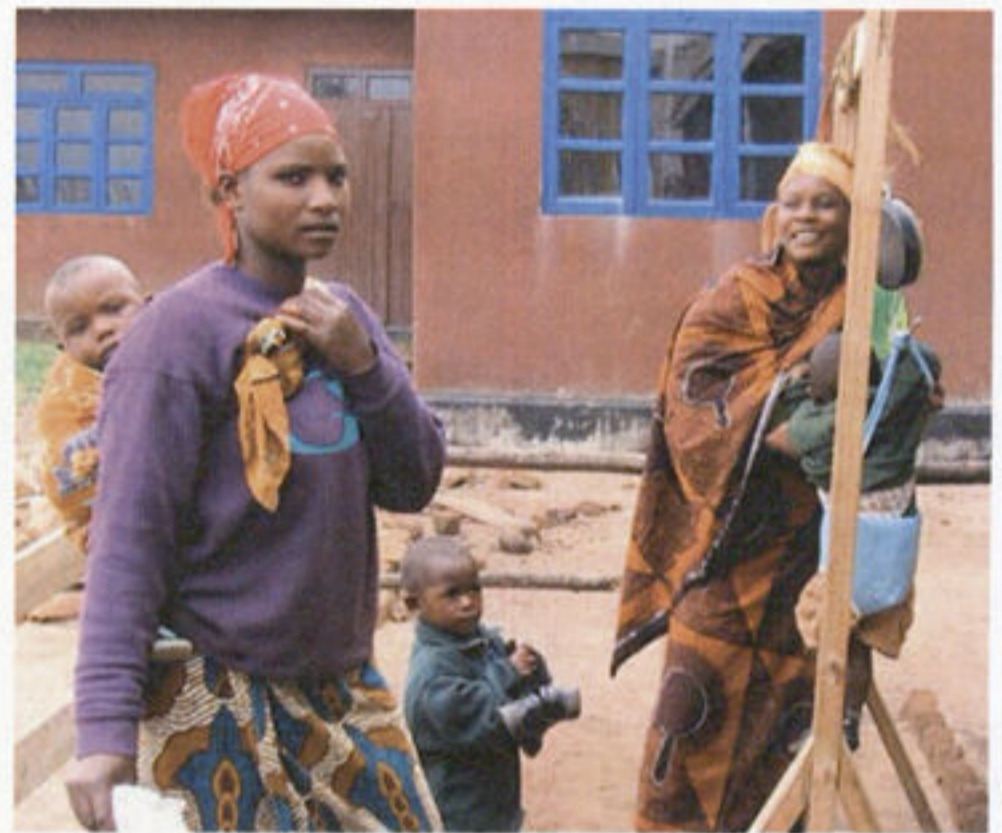
## OVERVIEW: HOW DOES IT WORK AND WHAT HAS IT ACCOMPLISHED?

Bush's initiation of PEPFAR in 2003 marked the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease. Coupled with the 2004 creation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Bush ushered in a new era of American commitment to global development and health.

PEPFAR provides major funding to support HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care activities in the developing world. The program aims to control the spread and impact of the AIDS pandemic through a three-part strategy: (1) treat infected people with antiretroviral therapy and other clinical services; (2) care for those affected by the pandemic, including orphans and vulnerable children; and (3) prevent new infections.

*In an era in which international public opinion on the United States has sharply declined, PEPFAR projects an image of U.S. generosity to the world.*

As of January 2008, PEPFAR had expanded access to treatment by a factor of ten in less than four years. PEPFAR distributes more than 400 million condoms a year, more than any other country, and more than twice as many as the Clinton administration gave out in 1999. In an era in which international public opinion on the United States has sharply declined, PEPFAR projects an image of U.S. generosity to the world. According to Irish pop superstar Bono, in a May 2007 statement, Bush's increase of PEPFAR funds was "a great advertisement for American leadership, innovation, and the kind of John Wayne "get it done" mentality that the greatest health crisis in 600 years demands."



*Women weigh their babies as part of a neonatal health checkup at a reproductive health clinic in rural Tanzania. Photo by Martin Gross.*

The most recent PEPFAR authorization bill, from July 2008, significantly increases the program's budget and softens several of its most criticized elements. It eases both the strict mandate on abstinence education and the approval process for AIDS drugs, paving the way for increased access to cheaper generic drugs. It also allows for increased spending on malaria, tuberculosis, and health care worker training.

The massive PEPFAR effort is coordinated by the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator with funds managed and disbursed by a variety of government agencies, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Funds, which are approved by Congress on a yearly basis, are often channeled through the U.S. embassy in the host country, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and universities are contracted to implement programs in the field.

Early PEPFAR grants were made to a small group of U.S.-based NGOs and universities; however, PEPFAR funds have been increasingly directed to local organizations in the target countries. PEPFAR's

fourth annual report shows that, in 2007, the program partnered with 2,217 local organizations. That said, in 2005, the Center for Global Development reported that only 30 percent of the total funds went to local grantees. According to the White House, Bush's PEPFAR has also relied on faith-based partners on the ground to provide about 25 percent of basic services and health education.

### WHAT DOESN'T WORK AND WHAT THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION SHOULD DO ABOUT IT

While PEPFAR has positively benefited millions, the program has serious structural deficiencies. It is still a Band-Aid that only slows the hemorrhaging caused by the AIDS pandemic. The controversies surrounding PEPFAR's requirements for American drugs, abstinence programming, and the moratorium on treating sex workers and drug addicts are not PEPFAR's fatal flaws. The program's principal weaknesses lie more in its short-term vision for combating a chronic disease and in the predominantly American financial and organizational structures it uses to support this role. PEPFAR focuses too much on providing emergency relief and relies too heavily on American institutions in parallel with local health systems. While AIDS is certainly an emergency, effectively fighting the disease requires the lifetime care and treatment characteristic of chronic diseases. AIDS should not be dealt with in an emergency relief framework, nor in isolation from other health conditions and social and economic needs.

PEPFAR needs to be fundamentally reframed as a tool to help beneficiary countries develop their own capacities to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS. Outlined below are the primary problems inherent in Bush's version of PEPFAR, along with strategies that the Obama administration should use to help PEPFAR reach its full potential.

PEPFAR has granted the bulk of AIDS treatment funding to American universities and nonprofits, rather than to host countries' local governments or civil society organizations. Many local governments and organizations have insufficient capacity to manage and implement these programs, and American institutions provided much-needed resources to initially bolster weak or nonexistent local capacities. But this strategy has effectively created parallel, U.S.-operated, single disease oriented health care systems in many countries. Indeed, PEPFAR has in many cases weakened existing local non-AIDS health care systems by drawing away scarce trained personnel and resources. While a patient may now receive excellent care for HIV/AIDS, he or she may find it increasingly difficult to access simple treatment for his or her other health concerns, including his or her child's chronic diarrhea (which causes more deaths than HIV/AIDS).

*PEPFAR's requirements for American drugs, abstinence programming, and the moratorium on treating sex workers and drug addicts are not PEPFAR's fatal flaws.*

Five years into PEPFAR, it is now time to plan for the program's sustainable integration into local health systems and to foster ownership and management by local governments that have the national reach to deliver universal care. Strengthening the management capacities of local health systems and civil society institutions will help them provide the long-term care that AIDS requires. PEPFAR should focus on providing long-term technical assistance to national and local governments as well, in order to build the capacity of the health system managers in each country. In doing so, PEPFAR resources can support shared infrastructure and national delivery systems that will improve health care across the board, not just for AIDS.

To boost local ownership and management, the U.S. Congress should approve PEPFAR funding on a multiyear basis, so that grantees and host countries can adequately plan for activities from one year to the next. While Congressional oversight is a useful and necessary process, it makes programmatic planning more difficult and threatens a longer-term planning process.

Totally revamping the U.S. budgeting process is neither feasible nor appropriate. But extending PEPFAR appropriations from a one-year to three-year time frame would smooth over some of the problems encountered when rolling out the PEPFAR mandate on the ground. The president could propose a three-year funding plan for PEPFAR and send this medium-term budget to Congress. Though no budget item is currently appropriated on a three-year basis, PEPFAR could be a unique test of this plan for small pieces of the budget. With this minor change in budgeting, PEPFAR recipients would be able to dream big and think long-term about how to best serve their communities. The time to change to medium-term budgeting, at least in foreign assistance that provides life-saving medicines, is long overdue.

*Building local capacity must be PEPFAR's long-range goal.*

Additionally, PEPFAR should reexamine its grant process. Funds are generally distributed directly from the U.S. government to prime grantees, which are usually U.S.-based NGOs and universities, and which then often subcontract to local organizations for pieces of program implementation. While PEPFAR has made progress in granting directly to local organizations, the total amount disbursed locally remains small, and very little funding is granted directly to beneficiary governments. There are valid concerns with corruption and with local government's capacity to manage funding directly.

But building local capacity must be PEPFAR's long-range goal. Rather than avoid funding governments altogether, PEPFAR should invest in technical consultants placed inside health ministries to help them develop financial accountability systems that will strengthen their ability to assume ownership of PEPFAR funds.

### **PEPFAR DOES NOT ADDRESS UNDERLYING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL DRIVERS OF THE AIDS PANDEMIC**

**W**weak economic, social, and political systems exacerbate the AIDS pandemic. The disease thrives where the nearest clinic is two days and a week's earnings away; where a woman's only tradable asset is her body and a man's only option is to leave home in search of work; where there's no school system to warn children; and where a sick person has no viable government from whom to demand treatment.

PEPFAR takes a myopic view of AIDS by focusing primarily on delivering clinical care and AIDS education. While these elements are essential foundations of any AIDS control program, the pandemic will not be slowed without addressing the structural determinants of disease, including poverty, gender inequality, and poor governance. While it would be naïve to think that solving these challenges is simple, or that AIDS funding alone can alter the course of development, if PEPFAR is to succeed, it must grapple seriously with these root causes of AIDS.

PEPFAR funds should be used creatively to address not only the immediate needs of prevention, care, and treatment, but the deeper determinants of the pandemic's spread. Such a strategy would include more explicit overlaps with other types of development assistance, with





*That AIDS has spread most rapidly in Africa is not surprising. Modern independent African countries, most born only forty years ago and immediately thrust into a globalizing economy, have been unable to provide for basic services, schooling, employment, clinics, roads, and political participation. These failings have laid bare enormous vulnerabilities.*

Photo by Martin Gross.

PEPFAR providing guidance for the use of funds to reduce AIDS-related vulnerabilities. PEPFAR should also fund initiatives that have positive development spillovers, such as job creation in the health sector, youth development, vocational training programs for AIDS patients (70 percent of whom are women), and public works projects in health care infrastructure development. If formulated correctly, programs can give AIDS orphans opportunities to go to school and work, provide alternatives to transactional sex for young women, and offer young men employment opportunities near their homes. Altering gender relationships is particularly important in addressing the spread of HIV.

Helping women gain economic independence through job training, employment, or entrepreneurship will increase their control over their sexual interactions and help to reverse the course of the AIDS pandemic.

Again, it is essential to channel funds and assistance to governments and local organizations to address these needs themselves and to encourage accountability to their citizens.

### **PEPFAR IS TOO INTEGRATED INTO A DIPLOMACY-ORIENTED STATE DEPARTMENT CULTURE**

Foreign aid is inherently political. The source of the money matters. PEPFAR is generally channeled through U.S. embassies in the host countries, placing it alongside other foreign aid that is implicitly used as a diplomatic carrot to encourage compliance with U.S. interests.

Channeling PEPFAR funds through embassies creates three inherent conflicts with its goals:

- (1) Using health care, particularly for chronic fatal conditions such as AIDS, as an incentive to comply with U.S. interests is unethical and counterproductive to the goal of containing the global AIDS pandemic;
- (2) The fact that PEPFAR funds are disbursed by these embassies fuels an inherent tension and distrust in the program; and
- (3) Embassies are ill-equipped to manage large ongoing programs with hundreds of grantees.

U.S. embassies in PEPFAR recipient countries are notoriously uninviting, a physical reminder of some of the United States's difficult diplomatic and political relationships worldwide.

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Surrounded by a cement wall and with few windows, the South African embassy was constructed to protect embassy staff in the case of apartheid riots in the 1980s. The Tanzanian embassy sits like a shiny new citadel, rebuilt after the 1997 bombing and vigilantly guarded by private security forces. These fortifications, while necessary, politicize PEPFAR. A local NGO worker must breach the fortress in order to pick up PEPFAR funds. Many call PEPFAR Bush's AIDS program, a sign of its clear political associations. But calling it Obama's AIDS program would be no better. PEPFAR needs to be separated from U.S. diplomacy as much as possible to shield it from political variability. So how can this inherent association between aid and politics be severed?

First, in the short term, PEPFAR should be moved out of the embassies and into agencies that are less politically motivated, such as the CDC. Shifting the balance of power from the embassy to a scientific organization, perceived as more technical and less political, would have a symbolic impact, allowing governments and NGOs to breathe a bit easier.

*A local NGO worker must breach the fortress in order to pick up PEPFAR funds.*

Yet there must also be a fundamental shift in how U.S. foreign aid is implemented. Rather than hand out grants from the American embassy and manage the projects with American institutions, PEPFAR should be building the capacity of national governments to manage the grants themselves. Both the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) and the MCC have adopted this approach, utilizing a country-led and country-implemented strategy to fight poverty and disease.

The MCC has identified countries that can meet accountability, governance, and effectiveness standards and rewards those countries with aid. GFATM uses a "country coordinating mechanism,"

constituted of local leaders to develop national plans and oversee implementation. While PEPFAR should not be withheld as a reward, country-based models can empower countries to roll out their own HIV programs. Given the urgency of HIV needs, PEPFAR cannot wait for countries to change, but it can help enable their transition, building country capacity to manage grants, preventing corruption and leakage, and focusing on performance and results.

### WHY THE UNITED STATES, WHY OBAMA, AND WHY NOW?

In a season of hope and of crisis, there is great potential for ambitious policy to combat AIDS. But with opportunity, there also comes great trepidation, for a cure to HIV is nowhere in sight. President Obama's new administration provides an ideal opportunity to reformulate America's approach to global health crises.

As the United States concentrates on restructuring its role in the world, so too should it restructure its approach to AIDS, with the knowledge that only by addressing fundamental drivers of the pandemic, and by strengthening the capacities of America's international partners to address their own country's needs, will U.S. efforts successfully defeat it. Thirty years into the global pandemic, with few signs of subsiding, there is no time to waste.

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*Allison Lombardo will complete her MPP from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in June 2009. She has worked in international human rights advocacy and interned on a PEPFAR-funded project in East Africa.*

## ENGAGING EXTREMISTS: DIPLOMACY THROUGH DERADICALIZATION

*by Kimberlyn Leary*

The early actions of U.S. President Barack Obama signal that he intends to challenge the traditional practice of statecraft in the Middle East. During the first two weeks of his administration, Obama signed an executive order to close the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay that contained mostly Middle Eastern terrorism suspects, dispatched former Senate Majority Leader George F. Mitchell as his special envoy on a listening tour of the region, and in an interview on Al Arabiya, an Arabic language news channel in the United Arab Emirates, reiterated his belief that "it is important for [the United States] to be willing to talk with Iran."

*The rules have always been simple:  
"Democracies must never give in  
to violence, and terrorists must  
never be rewarded for using it."  
But virtually all governments  
do engage in back-channel  
interchanges with terrorists.*

What else can we expect of Obama regarding diplomacy? Peter Neumann, writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 2007, argues that the rules have always been simple: "Democracies must never give in to violence, and terrorists must never be rewarded for using it." Governments traditionally use this rationale to explain their stance against negotiating with terrorist entities. But, as Neumann also observes, virtually all governments do engage in back-channel interchanges with terrorists. These unofficial conversations—referred to as "Track II diplomacy"—often function as pre-negotiations aimed at creating conditions that would make later negotiations feasible.

Taking place away from the table, pre-negotiations are, as negotiation specialist James Sebenius describes, aimed at ensuring that the right parties with the right interests are consulted and included in the right sequence. Former UN Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq Lakhdar Brahimi captures the challenge of Track II diplomacy in saying that it is important to be willing to meet "thugs" because they, oftentimes, are the ones who are waging war.

The work of the U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East and Obama's willingness to engage Iran are forms of pre-negotiation, aimed at developing a collaborative process that would make official diplomacy feasible. In pursuing initiatives of this kind, Obama's administration must walk a fine line. In his interview on Al Arabiya, for example, Obama made it clear that his offer of friendship to the Muslim world excludes "extremist organizations" committed to violence, but in the same interview also declared his intention to engage Iran in a discussion of differences. It will not be easy for Obama to meet these conflicting objectives. He must both develop an effective setup for official diplomatic intervention and also shun the terrorist entities widely acknowledged as propagating the violence.

A new deal with respect to Middle East diplomacy may be particularly well-timed. The Islamic world, newly sensitized to terrorist violence within its own borders, has been experimenting with deradicalization programs to combat the rising incidence of homegrown attacks by radical takfiki—ideologues who attack other Muslims they consider to be apostates. Such programs have increasingly focused on the rehabilitation of

apprehended terrorists. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt use Imams and the infrastructure of Islamic communities to persuade the jihadi fighter to reform, for example.

*Counterterrorism now targets the social milieu in which terrorist activity originates, rather than solely targeting terrorist actors.*

At first glance, rehabilitation efforts appear to be religious reeducation directed at individuals. However, as we see in Iraq, this is not always the case. The U.S. military aims to stem violence in Iraq by offering aid and other funding to local communities and collectives, encouraging them to engage in participatory processes and transition to the rule of law. As such, sponsoring governments typically rely on the community at large to facilitate the fighter's reintegration into Islamic communal life, often by channeling funds and other opportunities to the fighter's family. De-radicalization efforts of this kind are exercises in "soft power," designed to win over hearts and minds.

Since the attacks of September 11, according to terrorism expert Marc Sageman, the face of terrorism has changed. Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri continue to provide al Qaeda with its ideological center, but its operations have been largely decentralized. In response, counterterrorism now targets the social milieu in which terrorist activity originates, rather than solely targeting terrorist actors. In other words, community de-radicalization appears to be taking hold.

Rehabilitation programs that emphasize community responsibility for the jihadi fighter may be considered pre-negotiation experiments. The practical importance of the Saudi Arabian and Egyptian initiatives does not lie in modifying the behavior of individual fighters, no matter how

prominent they may be to the jihadi movement. Rather, each of these efforts serves as a vehicle to reach the social infrastructure in which terrorism takes shape. These programs, therefore, are a form of public diplomacy within the local context of each country. While promoting a reduction in violence and a greater participatory process, these programs may also be considered pre-negotiation in that they permit the articulation of interests within the society to be coordinated and aligned with those of the international community.

### DE-RADICALIZATION IN PRACTICE: SAUDI ARABIA

According to Christopher Boucek of the Carnegie Middle East Program, Saudi Arabia's prisoner reeducation program to combat the spread of takfiri beliefs was developed in secret after the al Qaeda-linked bombing of the Riyadh compound in May 2003. The program—al-Munnasah'ah, or counseling program—draws on traditional Saudi methods of conflict management by emphasizing dialogue and discussion. It also carries the full backing of the Saudi Kingdom's religious apparatus. The cornerstone of the program is religious reeducation and psychological therapy.

Al-Munnasah'ah is organized under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior and is itself administered by an advisory committee. It was originally designed to aid in repatriating detainees from Guantanamo Bay, though now is offered only to prisoners who have been convicted of being terrorist sympathizers—persons caught with jihadi materials in their possession or who had nominal roles in aiding known terrorists. Participating prisoners are eligible for sentence reductions if they complete the program successfully.

The counseling process itself is a hybrid of therapeutic and educational strategies as clerics engage prisoners individually and in small groups.

A premium is placed on active listening and an empathic, nonjudgmental appreciation of the prisoner's own understanding of the events that led to his incarceration. Clerics and psychologists subscribe to the clinical value of benevolence rather than vengeance or retribution. A core assumption of al-Munnasah'ah is that the prisoner's susceptibility to extremism was caused by a deficit of accurate religious training, which the state is prepared to rectify.

*A core assumption of al-Munnasah'ah is that the prisoner's susceptibility to extremism was caused by a deficit of accurate religious training, which the state is prepared to rectify.*

In the second phase of counseling, clerics and religious scholars actively debate conflicting ideologies with prisoners with the clear goal of trying to change the way the prisoner thinks about violence. Clerics convey to the prisoner that he was "tricked" into a maladaptive understanding of Islam, for which he will not be held spiritually accountable if he recants by accepting correct Islamic beliefs in place of false ones. From then on, the counseling process resembles an academic course of study: prisoners take classes with clerics and psychologists on topics ranging from doctrinal interpretation of Koranic precepts to self-esteem. Prisoners who pass exams are promoted to the next stage, and those who fail must repeat the course. When prisoners finally win release, they are provided with funding, apartments, education, and job assistance; they are also obliged to continue meetings with religious scholars.

The reach of al-Munnasah'ah also extends beyond the prisoner; the Saudi Kingdom provides stipends, medical care, and child care to the prisoner's family. This is intended to offset further radicalization and mitigate family resentment caused by the

government's detention of the prisoner. Saudi officials justify these efforts on the basis that extremist groups are only too ready to step into the void and provide similar support. But in exchange for this concierge-style care and community support and in keeping with traditional social expectations of Saudi kinship, the advisory committee requires the family to assume responsibility for their loved one's behavior upon the prisoner's release.

Beginning in 2004, a second campaign—Al-Sakin'ah, or tranquility—was introduced to combat terrorist activity on the Internet. Teams of Saudi volunteers visit jihadi Web sites, chat rooms, and forums to debate extremists in an effort to draw youth away from terrorists. Abdullah Ansary at George Washington University writes that one measure of their success is that al Qaeda has issued statements warning their followers not to engage in dialogue with Al-Sakin'ah members.

*In 2007, Saudi Arabia passed a law that criminalizes the use of technology to spread terrorist ideology.*

The Saudi Kingdom has also launched an official Web site for fatwas from authorized clerics, instituted antiterrorist television programming and a public awareness campaign, and begun electronic monitoring of mosques. A newly created center—the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue—convenes academic conferences on terrorism-related topics every six months. Finally, in 2007, Saudi Arabia passed a law that criminalizes the use of technology to spread terrorist ideology.

Saudi Arabia claims that these efforts are successful, but independent academic studies verifying de-radicalization's success currently do not exist. The outcome metric typically used is the incidence of terror attacks, but even when the

incidence decreases it is unclear to what extent de-radicalization programs are responsible; it is, after all, one tactic among many that Saudi Arabia uses to counter terrorism. What is clear is that the Saudi effort is aimed at every level of communal social life. Although the level of oversight required for the al-Munnasah'ah and Al-Sakin'ah programs exceeds what is tolerable for Western sensibilities, Ansary suggests that it is compatible with a society in which politics and government are part of a "single sphere of religion."

### DE-RADICALIZATION IN EGYPT

De-radicalization, or "counter-radicalization" as it is called in Egypt, also employs reeducation and public debate. Egyptian initiatives, however, as described in the newspaper *Guardian Unlimited*, have been focused on high-profile prisoners who recant the use of terrorism after dialogue and debate with clerics and other detainees. The program encourages the prisoners to write denunciations of violent tactics that the government then publicizes widely to influence public opinion.

The Egyptian government hails Sayyid Imam al-Sharif as an example of the success of its de-radicalization program. Known by his nom de guerre of "Dr. Fadl," al-Sharif served as the first emir of the Egypt Jihad Group and later was a deputy to Osama bin Laden before being apprehended in Yemen after September 11 and extradited to Egypt, where he is serving a life sentence. Al-Sharif's book *The Master in Making Preparations for Jihad* was widely considered a manifesto for jihad.

In 2007, al-Sharif released a 100-page manuscript he wrote in prison, entitled "Advice Regarding the Conduct of Jihadist Action in Egypt and the World." The new manuscript, published in a number of newspapers and released on the Internet, is a recantation of his earlier views. It directly undermines the theological basis for violent jihad.

Al-Sharif argues that jihad activities must strictly conform to sharia law. Among other things, he states that the "science of sharia" requires Muslims to preserve the life and property of other Muslims and to refrain from killing innocents, the leaders of Muslim countries, or on the basis of nationality and skin color.

*The "science of sharia" requires Muslims to preserve the life and property of other Muslims and to refrain from killing innocents.*

The importance of al-Sharif's document is perhaps best measured by the amount of invective with which it has been received. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, for example, replied with his 200-page "Treatise Exonerating the Nation of the Pen and the Sword from the Blemish of the Accusation of Weakness and Fatigue." Al-Zawahiri attacks al-Sharif on the basis of his own reading of Islamic law and the Koran, arguing that it "serves the Crusaders, Zionists and infidel Arab leaders by attempting to anesthetize the mujahideen."

Although Al-Zawahiri makes the claim that al-Sharif's changed views are the result of prison coercion or are a form of government propaganda, other commentators suggest that al-Sharif's reasoned argument and the sheer length of his manuscript indicate that it emerged out of a reflective process.

The Egyptian press and the international community have generally accepted the authenticity of the al-Sharif missive. Although few commentators expect that these treatises will serve as true deterrents to terrorism, government officials responded to the al-Sharif publication tactically, by releasing former insurgents who are described as having undergone successful transformations. The public relations message could not have been clearer: speaking against jihad brings new freedom.

## DE-RADICALIZATION AS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Terrorism experts generally agree that de-radicalization produces results that are difficult to interpret in the absence of information about the tactics used to change minds and hearts. Regardless, the practical impact of these programs, though directed at individual terrorists or groups of terrorists, is on community architecture.

*De-radicalization programs serve the interests of the Arab world and were developed to combat religious-based violence within their own communities.*

As demonstrated in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the import of de-radicalization lies in the way in which they explicitly and tacitly engage these communities in dialogue and debate.

We should consider these efforts types of public diplomacy. In each local context, de-radicalization is associated with some incremental increase in participatory process, if not democratic dialogue. The work of dealing with terrorism and ideologies that promote the use of violence to ameliorate grievance is distributed among the populace.

At the very least, many more voices are called to the conversation when families are obliged to assume oversight over former terrorists (Saudi Arabia) and when al Qaeda is engaged as only one opinion among others (Egypt). The essence of negotiation is the willingness to listen to interests other than one's own, which the West has found difficult when it comes to Arab sensibilities.

Marwan Kraidy, Associate Professor at the Annenberg School for Communication at the

University of Pennsylvania, notes that public diplomacy efforts toward the Arab world are constrained by approaches that focus on the United States's insistence on its own brand—the imposition of unilateral solutions rather than multilateral engagement—and its lack of awareness of the history and culture of the region.

## SHAKING THE UNCLENCHING FIST

In his inaugural address President Obama pledged to offer Islamic leaders the hand of diplomacy if they would just “unclench their fists.” The question is when, exactly, the United States may credibly extend an open hand. Must the fist be completely unclenched? If so, will it then be too late for negotiations?

*The question is when, exactly, the United States may credibly extend an open hand.*

De-radicalization programs serve the interests of the Arab world and were developed to combat religious-based violence within their own communities, but that is not the full extent of the impact they may have. The Obama administration would be wise to support such de-radicalization programs in its efforts to limit violence in the Middle East.

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## A FORMER COLD WARRIOR ON THE HOT SEAT: AN INTERVIEW WITH BRENT SCOWCROFT

by Kent Park

*AFTER DELIVERING A SPEECH AT THE FORUM OF THE HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT IN OCTOBER 2008, TWO-TIME U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR BRENT SCOWCROFT GENEROUSLY TOOK A FEW MOMENTS TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS OF KSR.*

**KSR:** *You mentioned the term "enlightened realism" during your speech when asked about certain skills or characteristics of a good national security practitioner. Can you elaborate?*

**SCOWCROFT:** Enlightened realism is a term I coined to describe a certain worldview. Realism in its strictest sense as described by Morgenthau and Hobbes isn't really accurate for the U.S. It's not just about power and self-interest. It's not a dog-eat-dog world. At the same time, our tendency to be too idealistic creates huge dangers. We take on grand projects that sound good, but we do not have the ability or the will to finish the job. Many times, we end up doing more damage than good.

**Can you give me an example of a president that practiced enlightened realism?**

Well, I'm obviously biased. I think President George H.W. Bush was probably one of the best qualified presidents we've had. He was sometimes idealistic in his view of the world, but he clearly understood our limitations. John F. Kennedy, in his famous speech, said, "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." Where did that take us? Straight to Vietnam. We pushed for free and open elections with the Palestinians. What did

we get? Hamas taking power. Enlightened realism is having our ideals out there but keeping our feet firmly planted on the ground.

**What would you recommend to young Kennedy School graduates who are hoping to become a future national security practitioner?**

You have to be lucky. I was very lucky. I was at the right places at the right times. But it's also about taking advantage of opportunities. You have to be able to recognize opportunities when they come up and then take advantage of them.

**Your new book [America and the World, coauthored with Zbigniew Brzezinski] and your speech present very challenging issues for the next president. It can be discouraging to see the dire straits we seem to be in right now. Is there anything encouraging about what is going on?**

Oh, it's not all doom and gloom. I'm very optimistic because all of these problems are solvable. It's not like the Cold War where we could only try to manage the problem. Back then we couldn't solve the problem. We had to manage it or the world would literally end.

The problems we have now are still serious, but we can work through them. We will continue to be the world's leader because at the fundamental level, our basic instincts are still good.

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## SÍ ÉL PUEDE: HOW OBAMA CAN CHANGE U.S. - LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS

by Samuel C. Downing

“Sometimes sovereignty is more precious than liberty,” the cover of *Time* magazine pronounced. Captured between its bright red borders, the big brown eyes and self-assured smile of the man known as “democracy’s bull” confronted the gaze of more than a million subscribers. Many of them shared the magazine’s skepticism about an aggressive new U.S. effort to spread democracy through a region of the world plagued by despotism and despair.

*Washington’s tacit support of military dictatorships in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua paved the way for instability and revolutions in those countries.*

But this cover portrait was not of Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, or L. Paul Bremer. In fact, when former U.S. President George W. Bush announced that the United States was going to war in Iraq to “free its people . . . defend our freedom . . . and bring freedom to others,” this American official known as “democracy’s bull” had already been dead for twenty-five years.

The *Time* cover story was dated November 5, 1945 and featured U.S. Ambassador Spruille Braden and his efforts to bolster democracy in Latin America, not the Middle East. And yet Braden’s plan faced much of the same criticism as Bush’s democracy promotion.

To detractors, the Braden-Bush worldview underestimates the appeal of national sovereignty, even for citizens living under authoritarian governments.

They see U.S. intervention to promote democracy as unwanted at best and counterproductive at worst, enabling authoritarian governments to paint the United States as the “enemy” and thus shore up domestic support. The United States would be better off reverting to a hands-off “Good Neighbor Policy,” these critics argue, rather than trying to actively influence the nature or viability of Latin American governments. Such an outlook is evident in some of the recent reports on American policy toward the region—reports that our new president may be reading.

The Obama administration could agree and bury the Bush legacies of democracy promotion and nation building in Latin America and around the globe. But it would be a mistake.

### THE STRATEGIC NECESSITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

History reveals the perils of a hands-off policy. When the United States acted with indifference toward Latin American dictatorships under the Roosevelt administration’s deceptively named Good Neighbor Policy, reactionary anti-American Communist leaders gained traction in the Caribbean and Central America. Washington’s tacit support of military dictatorships in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua paved the way for instability and revolutions in those countries that haunted later U.S. administrations.

And when the United States deviated again from its democratic ideals by cheering the demise of Latin America’s democracies in the 1970s and 1980s, at the hands of military despots who talked

## AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY PAST & FUTURE

an anti-Communist game, it lost any pretension of hemispheric leadership. More recently, the United States has ignored the regional consensus on the collective defense of democracy.

On September 11 2001, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell signed the Inter-American Democratic Charter in Lima, Peru. Shortly thereafter, in April 2002, Venezuela's democratically elected president, Hugo Chávez, was briefly removed from office in a coup. Most nations in the hemisphere quickly condemned the overthrow, but according to the U.S. State Department's own internal audit, the United States was hesitant, speaking out against this action only after the new Venezuelan government dissolved democratic institutions such as the assembly and the court.

The State Department later acknowledged that it had worked with the coup plotters, although it stressed that the coup government's decision to suspend the assembly was "contrary to U.S. advice." Advising an unconstitutional government to act more democratic is an odd way for the United States to support the region's democratization. The United States has yet to regain its legitimacy in Latin America.

*In Latin American countries such as Argentina... citizens say the United States is not a leader, but rather opportunistic and hypocritical.*

The cost is a radicalization of anti-Americanism. For example, after the United States gave tacit support to the coup attempt, Chávez sought out new alignments with U.S. antagonists, including Iran and Russia, and turned U.S. opposition to his government into an excuse to stock up on Russian fighter jets. Polling firm Latinobarómetro reports growing anti-Americanism in other Latin American countries such as Argentina, where

citizens say the United States is not a leader, but rather opportunistic and hypocritical. Just as the United States cannot afford to lose the fight for hearts and minds in the Middle East, it cannot afford to lose the same battle in its own neighborhood.

As the United States has turned its back on democratic reforms in Latin America, the evidence has been mounting that democratization in the region is a potent force for defusing international conflicts.

In 1982, Argentina's military junta went to war with the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands; festering border disputes and an arms race between Argentina and Chile led to a clash between their military regimes; and meanwhile, military governments in Brazil and Argentina directed vast sums of money into nuclear programs, raising international concerns about a nuclear arms race. Democracy played a key role in calming the region.

Wary that military officers would use the pretext of an external threat to intervene once again in domestic politics, the renascent democracies of Chile and Argentina proactively resolved the docket of border disputes that had long strained relations between those two regional powers. Concerns about the sustainability of these restored democracies also drove Argentina and Brazil to take the astonishing step of renouncing their mutual antagonisms to form a common nuclear policy, including a joint control and accounting system, in 1990.

The assumption of a democratic government allowed Argentina to shift its international ambitions away from power politics by slashing military spending and suspending its nuclear program, despite the objections of its military. According to Oxford political scientist Andrew Hurrell, the Southern Cone of South America, once

rife with hostility, now boasts a successful regional security community. The strategic benefits of democratization are not only political, but economic as well.

*Lamenting the weak response from Mexican civil society after the assassinations of six Mexican journalists, Mexican Congressman Gerardo Priego Tapia rightly concluded that "Indifference is our enemy."*

In Mexico, liberalization in the 1980s and the political opening in the 1990s directly benefited the United States, opening one of the world's most protected economies to international investment and trade. Mexico is today the United States's third-largest trading partner.

More democracy in Latin America clearly benefits the United States, but only when the expansion of liberal governments is accompanied by deeper state authority and the empowerment of Latin American civil society. The bureaucratic weaknesses of many Latin American governments have contributed to transnational problems that impact the United States, particularly drug trafficking, unauthorized immigration, and increasing gang violence along the Mexican border.

Lamenting the weak response from Mexican civil society after the assassinations of six Mexican journalists in the drug wars of 2008, Mexican Congressman Gerardo Priego Tapia rightly concluded that "Indifference is our enemy." Expanding the state's authority without bolstering civil society has been inadequate.

Mexican President Felipe Calderón's new government has put new emphasis on fighting drug traffickers and reducing corruption in government; however, doing so has destabilized

formerly well-established drug routes. As a result, wars between rival factions are now intensifying and spilling across the border.

Mexicans are becoming increasingly frustrated with the government's efforts to curb corruption and fight drug trafficking, and many believe that it is actually making the situation worse.

Electoral democracy alone has been insufficient to control drug trafficking, among other problems. Mexico still must develop a strong civil society, consistent rule of law, trust in the public provision of security, and independent, impartial courts to meet the needs of its citizens. A robust Mexican democracy will also require bolstering the constitutional authority of the state and improving the security services.

While these challenges are largely Mexico's to confront, the U.S. courts, police, and civil society organizations can redouble technical assistance and partnership efforts to help bolster the legitimacy and authority of Mexico's democracy.

*Electoral democracy alone has been insufficient to control drug trafficking, among other problems.*

Stemming the illegal flow of weapons from the United States into Mexico, as well as curbing the drug market in the United States with a more treatment-oriented drug war, would go a long way toward strengthening the rule of law in Mexico.

The United States benefits from increased democratization, with stronger civil society and rule of law, in Latin America. But how can the U.S. allay the critics of its policies in the region? How can democratization efforts solve the "liberty versus sovereignty" paradox emblazoned on the *Time* cover? There are ideas that can and should be pursued.

### THE END OF THE GREAT PARADOX

According to *Time*, Spruille Braden's efforts to make democracy a central goal of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America were haunted by one "great paradox confronting the U.S. in Latin America:" the adage that Latin Americans treasure their sovereignty. "The U.S., as the greatest of western nations, and Braden as its servant, must recognize that sovereignty—especially sovereignty below the Rio Grande—is sometimes more precious than liberty," lectured *Time*. While the dilemma sounds familiar, changes over the past two decades in the United States and Latin America have finally put this view to rest.

The end of the Cold War removed the U.S. incentive to prop up the region's anti-Communist despots in the name of (often dubious) assessments of U.S. national security. This freed the United States, according to Harvard political scientist Jorge Domínguez, from the "spell of ideological demons" that had haunted its Latin American policies in the postwar era.

*The end of the Cold War removed the U.S. incentive to prop up the region's anti-Communist despots in the name of (often dubious) assessments of U.S. national security.*

This radical change in the way the United States perceived the strategic dynamics of Latin American relations occurred as the "third wave" of democratization was already sweeping across the region, bringing democracies to thirty-four of the thirty-five countries in the hemisphere in the 1980s and 1990s. Nascent and re nascent democracies, determined to strengthen their institutions to avoid sliding back into dictatorship, faced the challenge of consolidating civilian rule in political

cultures in which the army was often the dominant institution. Latin American countries turned to each other to defend their legitimacy and to strengthen the shaky foundations on which their democracies had emerged (or reemerged).

*A united response under Resolution 1080 helped to restore democracy after crises in Peru, Guatemala, and Paraguay.*

Latin American countries, through the Organization of American States (OAS), passed a broad array of measures for the collective defense of democracy between 1990 and 2001. In 1990, the OAS launched the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy. OAS Resolution 1080, which further established the organization's role as a watchdog on democracy, followed soon afterward in 1991. Resolution 1080 has been invoked with regularity and success to prevent coups and auto-golpes (self-coups), such as the suspension of parliament by a democratically elected head of state. In fact, political scientist Carolyn Shaw, an expert on the OAS, notes that a united response under Resolution 1080 helped to restore democracy after crises in Peru (1992), Guatemala (1993), and Paraguay (1996).

In 1992, the Washington Protocol provided for the suspension of an OAS member state with a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly if its democratic government was forcibly overthrown. The Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted on September 11, 2001, reaffirmed the region's new prioritization of democracy over sovereignty, rounding out the list. These measures fundamentally changed Latin American foreign policy. They indicate agreement among the nations of the Americas that the defense of democracy is more essential than the defense of sovereignty. They also emphasized, however, that the defense of democracy must be collective and not unilateral.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

In the long term, democratic stability is vital to strengthening the rule of law in the Americas, promoting economic growth, and securing U.S. national security. Better governance and stronger democratic institutions and civil societies are necessary to fight the endemic corruption that facilitates the flow of illegal drugs and fuels violence and instability in the region, most notably in Mexico.

Strengthening democratic institutions can also potentially bolster U.S. economic growth by opening new markets to U.S. businesses and by providing greater stability, reduced immigration pressures on the United States, and even opportunities for collaboration on green energy projects with industry leaders such as Brazil.

After the "third wave" of democratization, the challenge is now to prevent the erosion of democracy, not install it. While the process of democratization can cause instability, in the cases of regional powers including Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, democratic consolidation has clearly enhanced regional peace. The historical record reflects the danger of inconsistency in U.S. support for democracy, which inadvertently strengthens despots by allowing them to condemn America as an imperialist aggressor.

*While the process of democratization can cause instability...[it] has clearly enhanced regional peace.*

In light of Latin American sensitivity regarding U.S. intervention, the Obama administration should use Resolution 1080 as an opportunity to pursue democracy promotion collaboratively, through

the Organization of American States. The administration should resist the temptation to prioritize its perceived short-term strategic interests (such as preventing a regional leftward swing) at the expense of its long-term interest to consolidate democratic stability in a context of growth and peace. Toward that end, the United States should launch new partnerships with Mexican authorities to foster cooperation and improve the capacity and transparency of Mexican institutions, including the police and the courts. Partnerships between Mexican and U.S. civil society organizations can also strengthen both countries' capacities to combat border violence while protecting civil liberties.

*The historical record reflects the danger of inconsistency in U.S. support for democracy, which inadvertently strengthens despots by allowing them to condemn America.*

The United States can take some unilateral steps to bolster the capacity of Latin America's democracies, for example, by reducing the flow of illegal weapons into Mexico and cutting down on American demand for illegal drugs by reorienting the drug war around treatment and diversion.

When it comes to bolstering the region's electoral democracies, however, renewing the U.S. commitment to multilateral engagement for the defense and deepening of democracy through the Organization of American States holds great promise as a new strategy for respectful and productive relations with Latin America.

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# WINNING GEORGIA: OBAMA'S BALANCING ACT

*by George Anjaparidze*

U.S. President Barack Obama's new administration promises to bring a more collaborative foreign policy approach to both friends and foes abroad. At the February 2009 Munich Security Conference, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden presented policies aimed at greater consensus building with European allies, diplomacy with Iran, and the deepening of the United States's relationship with Russia. While much of the world applauded the new administration's approach to Russia, the small Caucasus nation of Georgia, the gateway from Europe to Central Asia and a geographic link to the Middle East, is uneasy about the possibility of becoming a bargaining chip in American efforts to befriend Russia. But the United States does not have to sacrifice its interests in Georgia to build stronger relations with Russia.

While the United States may choose to postpone its support for Georgia's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to enable collaboration with Russia, it should continue to expand its economic ties with Georgia and promote Georgian democracy. In the long run, a stronger U.S.-Russian relationship will both increase U.S. leverage over Russia and help the United States facilitate Georgian integration into transatlantic institutions.

### THE U.S. STRATEGIC INTEREST IN GEORGIA

Georgia has received much support and encouragement from the United States in its struggle to gain acceptance into transatlantic institutions such as NATO. Under the Clinton administration, Georgia became the largest per-capita recipient of U.S. aid after Israel. The United States has also invested heavily in Georgia's energy infrastructure: U.S. companies have built

critical oil and gas pipelines in the country that serve as the only alternative to Russian routes for transporting the region's energy resources.

The final communiqué of NATO's April 2008 Bucharest Summit declared, "We agreed today that these countries [Ukraine and Georgia] will become members of NATO." In January 2009, Georgia and the United States signed the Strategic Partnership Charter, which supports Georgia's territorial integrity and aspirations toward NATO membership. In the region and beyond, Georgia is largely viewed as a U.S. ally.

*Georgian troops were, until recently, the third-largest foreign contingent in Iraq, after the United States and Britain.*

Georgia has consistently supported key U.S. interests as well. It has been one of the most supportive partners of the United States in the war on terror and has contributed troops to peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Although only a small part of the total coalition, Georgian troops were, until recently, the third-largest foreign contingent in Iraq after the United States and Britain.

But of greater importance is Georgia's location. The Georgia-Azerbaijan corridor serves as a critical link between U.S. forces in Central Asia, including in Afghanistan, and bases in Europe. As such, this corridor is essential to effective U.S. counter-terrorism efforts. Georgia's commitment to promoting border security in the South Caucasus has helped reduce dangerous cross-border transgressions that threaten U.S. interests around the world. This includes efforts to curb

drug and human trafficking, but perhaps more importantly to avert attempted smuggling of radioactive materials that could be used in the making of dirty bombs.

*The business regulatory framework in Georgia is the fifteenth friendliest in the world, ahead of countries such as South Korea, Germany, and Switzerland; the same study had ranked Georgia 112<sup>th</sup> in 2004.*

Georgia has also been a crucial U.S. ally on energy issues. The South Caucasus currently serves as the only route for natural gas and oil supplies from the Caspian region that does not pass through Russia. This corridor already has a developed network of oil and gas pipelines and rail networks for the transport of energy resources. The proposed Nabucco pipeline project, which envisions transporting natural gas from the Caspian region to Europe, will further strengthen this energy corridor. A Europe with greater access to alternative supply networks will be a more reliable political, economic, and strategic partner for the United States.

Lastly, Georgia remains a market-oriented democracy in an increasingly undemocratic region. According to the World Bank's "Doing Business 2009" ranking, the business regulatory framework in Georgia is the fifteenth friendliest in the world, ahead of countries such as South Korea, Germany, and Switzerland; the same study had ranked Georgia 112 in 2004.

Civil society and freedom of the press in Georgia have made great progress since the mid-1990s. Although ratings by Freedom House have shown a slide in Georgia's political rights and civil liberties under the current government, Georgia still rates higher than most other former Soviet countries.

Since independence in 1991, Georgia has worked to overcome the legacy of the Soviet Union and to reform and build capacity in its military, civic, and government institutions in order to enable integration into transatlantic organizations. Georgia, together with Ukraine, provides hope for a successful transition to economic openness and democracy for other countries in the region.

### WHAT PRICE HAS GEORGIA HAD TO PAY FOR ITS PRO-WESTERN ORIENTATION?

Georgia's close relationship with the West, in particular the West's push to make Georgia a NATO member, has been a source of tension in the Georgian-Russian relationship. This, in turn, has exerted pressure on Georgia in many policy areas.

*In April 2007, then Russian President Vladimir Putin adopted legislation that would strengthen economic, cultural, and political ties between Georgia's separatist regions and Russia.*

Russia's history of meddling in Georgia's internal politics continues in ways that threaten Georgia's sovereignty and security. Russia's involvement ranges from supporting separatist movements in the early 1990s to accepting asylum seekers accused by Georgian law enforcement of orchestrating an assassination attempt on a former Georgian president. In April 2007, then Russian President Vladimir Putin adopted legislation that would strengthen economic, cultural, and political ties between Georgia's separatist regions and Russia, a move described by the Georgian government as a Russian shift from passive to active annexation.

In the summer of 2008, Russia engaged in direct military confrontation with Georgia and occupied much of the country, bringing its forces to the outskirts of the Georgian capital. Russia has justified this intervention as a necessary peacekeeping operation in response to Georgian aggression against one of the breakaway regions. Russian forces have remained in the separatist regions, which the Russian government has recognized as independent states. Nicaragua is the only other state that has recognized the independence of these two regions.

*Georgia has repeatedly voiced its intention to veto Russian accession to the World Trade Organization and remains one of the key barriers in that process.*

In the economic sphere, Georgia has been under a de facto trade embargo from Russia since 2006. Major Georgian exports, including agricultural produce, mineral water, and wine, continue to be banned in Russia. Direct transport routes between the two countries have also been suspended as a result of the Russian embargo, shifting Russia from being the first to the fifth-largest trading partner of Georgia and accounting now for only 6 percent of Georgia's total trade turnover.

Despite some success in reorienting the economy to other markets, the de facto embargo on key products has had an adverse impact on the Georgian economy; Georgian products enjoyed a natural market in Russia, in part due to their reputation as "household brands" from the Soviet era. Both the Georgian and Russian economies are the victims of these tensions. Over the past decade, Georgia has repeatedly voiced its intention to veto Russian accession to the World Trade Organization and remains one of the key barriers in that process.

### THE U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR GEORGIA

As articulated in the "Russia Task Force 2006" report by the U.S.-based Council on Foreign Relations, U.S.-Russian cooperation is critical to U.S. efforts to counter threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, tight energy markets, climate change, drug trade, infectious diseases, and human trafficking. However, the United States and Russia have a number of strategic interests that both nations perceive to be in disagreement, the most visible of which is the U.S. and Russian relationship with states in the South Caucasus and of the former Soviet Union. Russia views U.S. energy and military collaboration with these states as a threat to its dominant position in the region.

During the administration of former U.S. President George W. Bush, relations between the United States and Russia deteriorated, eroding U.S. influence over Russia. Russia's accumulated wealth from oil revenue further undermined U.S. economic leverage in Russia. The critical blow, however, to the trust built between the two former Cold War rivals was the United States's advocacy for Kosovo's independence, despite Russia's unequivocal objection. As expected, the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008 revealed U.S. reluctance to use military power in dealing with Russia. Given both nations' maintenance of nuclear arsenals, this is no surprise.

The Obama administration's stated intention to work with Russia calls into question how the United States will deal with this legacy of mistrust between the two countries. And Russia's pressure to compromise U.S. strategic interests in Georgia makes the management of this tension critical. However, any sign of decreasing U.S.



*The United States should postpone active promotion of Georgian NATO membership only if Russia agrees to return to its pre-August 2008 troop presence.*

*Map courtesy of the Communications Office of the President of Georgia.*



support for Georgia in its time of need would call into question the ability of the United States to function as a reliable partner for its allies after changes in administration. Promoting U.S.-Russian cooperation at the expense of the U.S.-Georgian relationship will send a troubling message to current and potential allies around the world.

To elicit cooperation from Russia, the Obama administration needs to move forward on issues where there is more common ground; cooperation on missile defense, diplomacy with Iran, and nuclear nonproliferation are particularly promising. To prevent Russia from perceiving a security threat from the West, the United States may have to postpone its support for Georgian membership in NATO.

However, if it chooses to do so, the United States must expand its economic, political, and civic engagement with Georgia. Furthermore, to reassure Georgia of the commitment of a U.S. partnership, the United States should postpone active promotion of Georgian NATO membership only if Russia agrees to return to its pre-August 2008 troop presence in Georgia and end its program of annexation in the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

## MOVING TO COLLABORATION, NOT COMPROMISE

U.S. relationships with both Russia and Georgia will require a delicate balancing act by the Obama administration in the coming years.

The question should not be whether or not to compromise Georgia, but rather how to approach Russia. Greater interdependence between Russia and the United States should be based on mutual benefits, not on compromising key U.S. interests in the region. For Georgia, there are great opportunities in this growing U.S.-Russian collaboration over the longer term. By strengthening ties with Russia, the United States will regain its leverage on Russia, enhancing its soft power and positioning itself to better support the integration of Georgia into Western institutions.

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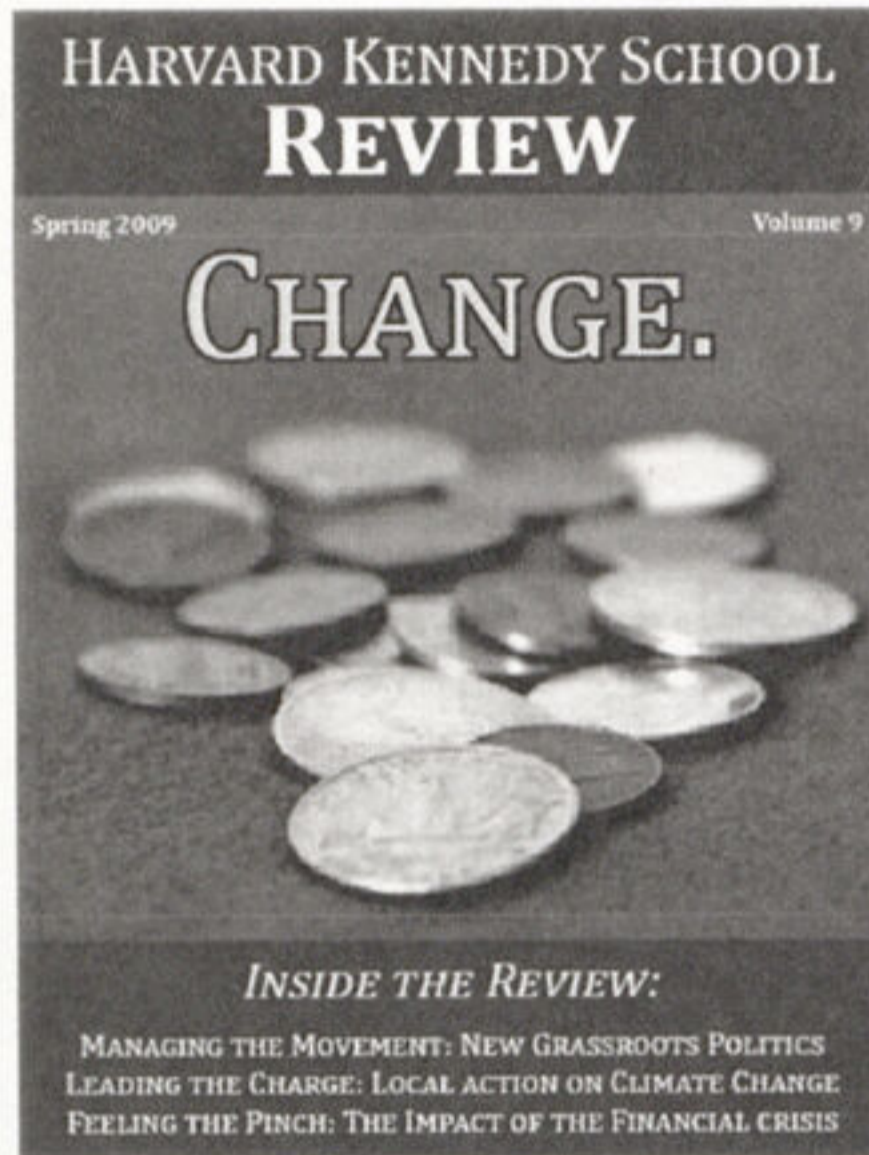


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