

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP VISIONS

Op-Ed Essays
McDonnell Academy Scholars
2009–2010



A COLLECTION OF OP-ED ESSAYS FROM McDONNELL ACADEMY SCHOLARS

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» A core mission of the McDonnell International Scholars Academy is to develop future global leaders. We pursue this by recruiting outstanding graduates of partner institutions from around the world for PhD or professional degree programs at Washington University. But it is more than academic talent that we seek. We also seek McDonnell Academy Scholars who have an interest in broader social issues, and once they are here, we provide them with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. These opportunities include experiencing the cultural and political life of America, learning about other societies and meeting major figures from business, government, academia and the nonprofit sector.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP VISIONS SERIES

In addition to fostering leaders at the individual level, the Academy seeks to create a leadership *network*. This requires bringing Academy Scholars together on a regular basis to participate in cultural and social events and to work in group settings. These activities lead to lifelong friendships, but they also produce deeper understanding of the perspectives of others, including those with whom one may disagree. Our hope is that Scholars' friendships and understandings will serve them well as they pursue their individual careers and participate in the Academy network in the decades ahead.

In an effort to create this network, as well as to develop leadership and communication skills, all McDonnell Scholars participate in special activities. These include the "Global Leadership Visions" series in their second year in the Academy. This involves Scholars' giving short public presentations on topics of their choosing. The topic might grow out of Scholars' own research, or it may have to do with an issue that concerns them more generally as global citizens. Each of their presentations is followed by questions from the audience made up of Scholars, Academy Ambassadors, members of the Advisory Committee and the Washington University and St. Louis communities. The Scholars then follow up by writing the op-ed pieces that appear in this booklet.

These oral and written presentations showcase the considerable talent of the Scholars and prove to be good settings for honing their communication skills. The presentations also provide a forum where some unexpected differences of opinion surface. As I listened to the presentations, I sometimes got the impression that members of the audience were surprised — if not shocked — by what the Scholars said, but that is precisely the point. It challenged us all to move, at least for a few minutes, beyond our accepted wisdom. I hope it proved to be as fascinating and as much of a learning experience for Scholars as it was for me and others.

We invite you to take a few minutes to read the following op-ed pieces that grew out of this process. You will find reflections on regional political issues, critiques of the United States, calls to action for dealing with environmental problems and a host of other fascinating thoughts. It will be interesting and inspiring for all of us to drop in again on these Scholars in a decade or two to see what they are saying and doing about the issues they raise here. Much of the world's future will depend on how they and their generation deal with them.

James V. Wertsch, Director
McDonnell International Scholars Academy

Traffic congestion and economic theory Shota Fujishima

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ECONOMICS



TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND ECONOMIC THEORY

Traffic congestion causes considerable loss to our economic and social life. The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that the annual congestion cost exceeds \$10 billion in Los Angeles and \$8 billion in New York. To resolve this problem, a wide range of transport policies have been tried out around the world.

Some policies try to reduce traffic by raising transport costs. The most popular way to do this is with a fuel tax, but other examples include tolls or road pricing, which have been implemented in cities such as London. Other policies focus on regulating traffic directly. For example, cities such as Shanghai put a cap on the total number of license plates available for drivers in the city.

There is no guarantee that these policies will improve our lives. In particular, the problem with a policy instrument such as a tax is that it has to be set at an optimal level, but we don't know what that is. For example, if a fuel tax is too high, it can worsen our general social welfare even if it helps relieve traffic congestion. This kind of inefficiency is actually quite likely, given that tax rates in the real world mostly depend on the discretion of policymakers rather than on empirically grounded evidence. But how do we know what the optimal tax rate is?

Economic theory is useful in setting an objective guideline to decide such issues. It is by no means perfect and leaves room for improvement, but it

can help reduce arbitrariness in policymaking by utilizing scientific insights.

A fundamental principle of economics is that people consume a good only if their willingness to pay (WTP) is higher than the price of the good. This is a principle that can be applied to traffic flow. But what is the price of traffic? If we consider automobile traffic, the price includes vehicle operating costs such as gas and parking. In addition, automobile traffic congestion causes associated costs of air pollution, noise and time delay. These should also be included in the price, but drivers generally pay only the vehicle operating costs; therefore when their WTP is lower than the price, they will drive.

The problem with a policy instrument such as a tax is that it has to be set at an optimal level, but we don't know what that is. For example, if a fuel tax is too high, it can worsen our general social welfare even if it helps relieve traffic congestion.

Economists argue that the traffic congestion problem could be resolved by allowing only drivers whose WTP is higher than the total price charged on roads. When planners set a tax rate, they can obtain the anticipated traffic level by counting the number of drivers whose WTP is higher than the price.

But how can planners know the WTPs of the potential drivers? WTP is private information. Indeed, who knows your WTP, say, for Coca-Cola? Traditional economic theory has assumed that preferences of agents are known to planners, but they are not, so recent research is trying to deal with cases where preferences are unknown. One goal of this research is to design a mechanism that makes agents reveal their preferences. A familiar example of this sort is an auction, where agents reveal their WTP for an object through submitting bids.

This mechanism of an auction can be harnessed for our traffic congestion problem as follows. The planner puts “rights of passage” up for bid. Only people who have the right of passage can drive. The planner sets a price of the right to drive at some low level and gradually raises it. If bidders remain in the auction until it ends, they are obligated to buy the right at the closing price. Hence, the bidders opt out when the price exceeds the level they will pay. By ending the auction when the price of the driving rights reaches the price of traffic, the planner can allow only people whose WTP is higher than the price of traffic to drive.

All of this is feasible only when the number of bidders is not terribly large, but in fact, the number of potential drivers is huge (for example, the number of commuters in Tokyo is more than 10 million!). From a practical point of view, then, it is nearly impossible that all potential drivers could

simultaneously participate in an auction. Therefore, a feasible mechanism is needed.

Although no perfect solution yet exists, economics furnishes a clear

guiding principle to planners: people whose WTP is higher than the price should be able to drive, but those whose WTP is lower than the price should not. If the tax rate is too high or too low, this will not work. Moreover, since planners generally do not know the WTPs of potential drivers, they need to design a feasible mechanism to gather the needed information. My hope is that in the future policymakers will be able to utilize insights from economic theory and reduce arbitrariness of their decision making, and my goal as an economist is to turn this hope into a reality.



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INNOVATIVE CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING

I have 155 Facebook friends. I know most of them in person, but some are connected through this new social networking system that is not yet a decade old. Moreover, an even newer system, Twitter, instantly lets these friends follow whatever I post through my cell phone. Not only individuals but many firms utilize these tools to put themselves in the matrix of a fast-changing global network. Have you seen or can you imagine a charity that actively connects interested people in Facebook and “twitters” its progress of ongoing projects? Interestingly, some charities have started to be actively engaged in these new web tools.

New market spaces where people and resources can be gathered and redistributed are increasingly being opened in this Web 2.0 world, and this means that social networking tools and marketing strategies based on Web 2.0 can be adopted in innovative fundraising efforts. Charities often have a difficult time finding the donors they need to reach fundraising goals. However, if they can manage to be successful in harnessing a new social networking system, they might save substantial time and money in finding potential donors.

On many occasions people wearing bright colored shirts with big printed letters on them have approached me on the street with open brochures. I am reluctant to talk with those people not only because they are strangers, but because it takes time to figure out whether the charity is legitimate. Moreover, these charities often pursue issues that are not high on my priority for donating. As a result, they are likely to be wasting their effort. These experiences have led

me to conclude that charities should strive to achieve efficiency in fundraising and transparency in spending.

Charities often have a difficult time finding the donors they need to reach fundraising goals. However, if they can manage to be successful in harnessing a new social networking system, they might save substantial time and money in finding potential donors.

New technologies can make it relatively easy to achieve these goals. DonorsChoose.org, a nonprofit organization, makes it possible to use new Web tools successfully. Facing a shortage of materials in public schools, the philanthropist Charles Best created a website where individuals can contribute resources to a specific classroom in need. Public school teachers post the projects they would like to do with their students. The estimated cost of doing the project (e.g., buying books or calculators) is also posted. Then individuals can browse through the projects and choose to make a donation starting at \$1. Efficiency is achieved since this system directly connects people who share a common interest in improving public education. Feedback is important for encouraging contributors to make another donation, and the system can provide for that as well. Individuals can see photos and even get thank-you letters from the children. And of particular note is the fact that actual costs are reported, allowing people to track how

money was spent. As a result, I can easily access how transparent the organization is. This organization funded over 132,900 projects, and most of them were in schools from high-poverty areas. And there are many more such projects I could list.

However, adopting new technologies in fundraising efforts by no means guarantees success. Simply making a charity an online organization does not attract people and resources, especially when today's web space is inundated with ads and information. Charities must target like-minded people and persuade them why they should be supported. Social networks like Facebook can go a long way to facilitate connections among people. In 1998, former Microsoft executive John Wood traveled to Nepal and saw children who were eager to learn, but had few books to read. He requested some used books by sending out e-mails to his friends, outlining his experience and explaining why he wanted the books. His friends knew John and hence they had a reason for believing that their contribution would reach the students in Nepal. This was the start of the inspiring effort of the philanthropic organization Room to Read, which has built 10,000 libraries and 1,000 schools. The organization has distributed over 7 million books to people in developing countries. Again in this case success comes from maintaining efficiency and transparency. Room to Read strives to keep administrative and fundraising costs below 15 percent of the total fund. It also sends out e-mail reports to donors, making it easy for individuals to look into the details of their operation on the Web. I

can set up my own personal fundraising bar on their website and invite friends via e-mail to help me fill up my bar or at least let them know of my interest.

There are many other dimensions to the evolving possibilities for online fundraising. For example, there are new opportunities for securing online payment and setting up interactive websites. There is even a way to review tips on how to proceed at a website run by the organization Network for Good. Once you realize the potentials of new technologies in this newly created market space, you can come up with your own innovative fundraising initiative. But remember, your charity will flourish only when efficiency is maintained through networking with like-minded people. And don't forget to twitter what you are doing so people can follow up and click to make their donation!



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Personalized medicine and gene patenting Qinghao Fu

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LAW



PERSONALIZED MEDICINE AND GENE PATENTING

Personalized medicine, an enhanced form of preventative and therapeutic care for the individual patient, is being promoted in the Obama health-care reform. It relies on analyzing genetic information to determine a person's susceptibility to diseases and responsiveness to drug treatments, and it allows early detection of a disease.

With the continuing advancement of technology, we should expect genetic tests to become a routine practice in personalized medicine. However, there is a potential obstacle on the road to personalized medicine, namely, the practice of gene patenting.

Genetic analyses such as the Plavix test for heart disease and BRCA test for breast cancer are no longer new. You can even get your genetic profile without a prescription. Walgreens is working on plans to sell genetic test kits whose results will be analyzed by Pathway Genomics to assess a person's risk of developing certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other ailments. Even though this product has not yet been approved by the FDA, there is little doubt that people will be able to benefit from understanding their risk and therefore switching to a healthier lifestyle.

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practice in personalized medicine. However, there is a potential obstacle on the road to personalized medicine, namely, the practice of gene patenting.

A gene patent applies to a specific gene and the process of obtaining or using it. The early 1990s saw a sudden rush to patent genes, as many of them were discovered through the Human Genome Project. At the time, no one knew how to turn those patents into commercial use. With the popularity of genetic testing today, we see potential problems. Namely, patents can slow the progress of scientific discovery and limit access to genetic tests by the general population. For example, the BRCA gene test is critical in the treatment of breast cancer. Before patents on BRCA genes were awarded to a company called Myriad, there were some institutions offering such a test for several hundred dollars. After Myriad got exclusive rights to those patents in the United States, the charge for these tests has risen to \$3,000 or more. In Europe the same test costs only half that amount because the patents are shared by Myriad and several other entities.

In March 2010 a New York court invalidated some of Myriad's patents on BRCA genes. This was not only a victory for patient advocacy groups and medical professionals, but also a landmark event in gene patenting. It calls into question existing patents on another 2,000 genes.

One argument that has been made for gene patenting is that it provides an incentive for scientists and the private sector and without it progress in science and

technology would slow down. But this argument is misleading. First, most discoveries are made in the academic world where scientists do not operate with the goal of making a fortune. The first discoverer of BRCA1 gene, Dr. Mary Claire King, did not conduct her research in response to financial incentives, but because of her interest and passion for science. We seldom see scientists driving expensive sports cars and living in luxury. A second argument for patenting is that in order to make genetic tests widely accessible, financial incentives are required to get more people involved in the research. In reality, the patents on BRCA are so broad that their existence has actually limited work on this gene.

Another problem with gene patents is that the advancement of technology has outpaced patent procedures, which are often at least decades old. Hundreds of years ago, if you discovered a land that nobody knew, you could claim it as your own, a practice that now sounds ridiculous. But when it comes to patents, we are stuck with the same procedures we used long ago. In an age when it is relatively easy and inexpensive to identify a new gene, this has major unanticipated implications. The human genome still contains a vast amount of information to be discovered such as gene mutation, modification and so forth, and we cannot afford to have an outdated system slow us down.

We all know of some absurd patents that have been approved, such as one for a spaceship that was never built. But when the patent in question can have a significant impact on the society, it needs to

be taken seriously and scrutinized to prevent a few people from gaming the system at the expense of many others. In his decision regarding the BRCA patents, U.S. District Court Judge Robert W.



Sweet condemned the application, arguing that it was “a lawyer’s trick that circumvents the prohibition on the direct patenting of the DNA in our bodies but which, in practice, reaches the same result.” Science has progressed very far, but regulatory institutions have not kept up.

The Myriad group has vowed to appeal Judge Sweet’s decision, and other industry groups may join in to defend their interest. We need to make sure that the regulation regarding gene patents is given special focus and kept up-to-date in order to guard the public interest. This would remove a major obstacle as we proceed down the road toward personalized medicine.

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CHINESE JUDGES ON THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Since its founding in 1945 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has been the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), and it has always included a Chinese judge. The Chinese judges on this court have a reputation for providing a conservative voice. Is this really the case, or are they just as much global citizens as judges from other countries? I will suggest that they are different, but in some unexpected ways.

The ICJ includes 15 judges selected by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. Given the composition of the latter, it is not hard to understand why membership of the Court always includes countries represented on the Security Council, especially the five permanent members, including China. Over the course of its history the ICJ has had four Chinese judges. The first two came from the Republic of China (Taiwan) and since 1985 two others have been nominated by the People's Republic of China.

To assess just how conservative these judges have been, I turn to the decisions they have made. In all, 69 cases have been decided when a Chinese judge was sitting in the chamber. Of these, on 50 occasions Chinese judges voted with the majority and issued no individual or joint separate opinion; on four occasions they voted against the majority and appended individual dissenting opinions; on another four occasions they voted against the majority and appended joint dissenting opinions; on two occasions they voted in favor of the judgments of the court and appended joint opinions or declarations with other judges; and on the remaining occasions they voted in favor of the judgments of the court and appended individual

separate opinions or declarations to the judgment. Although other judges have spoken up more than the Chinese judges, the differences are not large.

By itself, the evidence I have outlined so far does not tell us that Chinese judges are particularly conservative. But further analysis indicates that judges nominated by the PRC have been much more reluctant than those from the ROC to be in the minority. For example, of the 50 cases in which Chinese (i.e., either ROC or PRC) judges voted in favor of a decision with no separate opinion, 39 involved PRC judges. And in cases in which PRC judges appended separate opinions or dissenting opinions, they often did so because they adhered to some very traditional doctrine.

For example, Judge Shi Jiuyong appended a dissenting opinion in the case of *Georgia v. Russian Federation* (2008), but it reflects a conservative view about the threshold for international intervention and the extent to which the sovereignty principle trumps other concerns.

By contrast ROC judges were more willing to express unconventional opinions. Wellington Koo from the ROC has been described in a 2008 article by V.D. Degan in *Chinese Journal of International Law* as having “Legally the most persuasive individual and separate opinions.” In general, conservatism characterizes the voting pattern of PRC, but not ROC, judges.

Where does this difference come from? It is hard to attribute it to difference in background. All of the judges were born before the Kuomintang regime, were educated at top law schools in China or the United

States, and served in a high post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They also share a very important part of Chinese culture, namely the Confucian doctrine of the “golden mean,” which prefers “compromise” to “extremes.” As for political background, mainland China has gone through a period when democracy and freedom have been notable by their absence, but so did Taiwan, where the KMT government imposed strict martial law from 1948 to 1987.

It's time for China to represent itself as a rising, yet gentle major power. Hence China keeps emphasizing that it is interested in being only an economic superpower, not a political power. Above all else, what concerns China is keeping its society and diplomatic atmosphere in a harmonious state.

Perhaps the most useful way to account for the difference is the current political strategy of China, a country that has seen tremendous social and economic achievement over the past few decades and has returned to the center of the world after hundreds of years of being politically and economically oppressed. However, after this long troubled period, China is in pursuit of greatness, and among other things this has brought increased global attention, as well as criticism, often without factual basis, and a more complicated diplomatic atmosphere for the country. Indeed, some global powers are worried that

China may take over the world, which partly explains the recent biased and false reporting about China in the Western media.

Given all this, it's time for China to represent itself as a

rising, yet gentle major power. Hence China keeps emphasizing that it is interested in being only an economic superpower, not a political power. Above all else, what concerns China is keeping its society and diplomatic atmosphere in a harmonious state. Of course, for some observers this is not so obvious. They are entitled to think that China's expressed desires for harmony are only a cover for something else — just as I have the right to believe that's the real goal of my country. In my view it is these forces, together with other characteristics of Chinese people, that have contributed to the formation of the so-called “quiet” and conservative Chinese judges in the ICJ.



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THE UNITED STATES IS LOSING GROUND IN THE BATTLE FOR HIGHLY SKILLED FOREIGN TALENT

On April 23, 2010, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed a controversial immigration bill (SB 1070) into law, ignoring criticism from President Obama who described it as “misguided.” The legislation, which requires immigrants to carry their alien registration documents at all times and requires police to question people if there is reason to suspect that they’re in the United States illegally, sparked nationwide debates, protests and calls to boycott the state.

As globalization and increasing international demand for skilled professionals create incentives for [highly skilled immigrants] to migrate to other countries, the absence of a policy that allows easy employment-linked permanent residence status in the United States puts the country at a significant disadvantage in the battle for talent.

This law may be aimed at identifying, prosecuting and deporting illegal immigrants, but for legal residents who will be pulled over based on the color of their skin or their accent, it makes life in the “immigration melting pot” even more threatening and difficult.

Clearly, there are two categories of immigrant: legal and illegal. Legal immigrants are divided into eight different categories, including family-based, employment-based, diversity-based and refugee immigrants. While family-based immigrants comprise the majority of

cases every year, employment-based immigration is a crucial element of this system and for U.S. society more broadly. It has long been recognized that highly skilled immigrants make major contributions to the U.S. economy. But few may know how difficult it is for a foreign skilled worker to get legal employment-based permanent residency in this country.

Ample evidence suggests that foreign-born highly skilled professionals such as scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs are one of America’s greatest competitive advantages. According to data collected by the National Academy of Sciences, since 1990 more than half of the U.S. Nobel laureates in the sciences were foreign born and about 37 percent received their education abroad. In the last 15 years, foreign nationals have started 25 percent of U.S. venture capital-backed public companies, adding significant value to the American economy. However, the complexity and arbitrary caps prevent flexibility in the employment-based immigration system, and this creates disincentives for employers and workers, which undermine U.S. companies’ competitive advantages in the battle for global talent.

The current preference system establishes an annual cap of 140,000 employment-based visas in five categories. The 140,000 include not only the worker, but his or her foreign-born spouse and children. The first preference category consists of priority workers who have “extraordinary ability,” or who are “outstanding professors and researchers” or “certain multinational executives and managers”; the second consists of professionals holding advanced degrees and persons with exceptional ability; and the third preference

consists of professionals, skilled workers and other workers. The fourth category consists of special immigrants such as religious workers, and the fifth preference consists of the immigrant investor category. Highly skilled foreign applicants usually fall into the first- and second-preference categories.

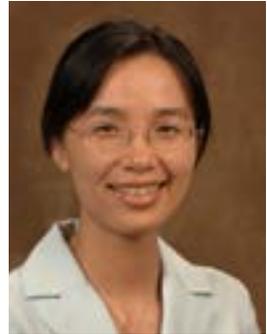
In addition, no country of origin can account for more than 7 percent of the annual cap in any of these categories. For example, every year there are only 2,802 slots available for nationals of a particular country under the second preference (advanced degree holder with exceptional ability). This puts a lot of pressure on applicants from countries with large populations and creates a huge waiting list in the tens of thousands, which could mean 5 to 10 years of delay in getting employment-based permanent residency. The enormous backlogs and wait times send a strong signal to many international students and other outstanding individuals that America may not be the place to build your career or raise your family.

As a foreign national and a recent immigrant to this country pursuing my master’s degree at Washington University, I have witnessed an increasing trend for foreign-born talent, fresh graduates and seasoned professionals to seek opportunities outside of the United States. The current employment-based immigration system has shut the door to many of them, turning the country into a hostile, rather than a promised land. As globalization and increasing international demand for skilled professionals create incentives for them to migrate to other countries, the absence of a policy that allows easy employment-linked

permanent residence status in the United States puts the country at a significant disadvantage in the battle for talent.

The federal government needs to act quickly to address

the illegal immigration issue as President Obama has suggested. The American public and Congressional leaders also need to pay more attention to the infamous employment-based immigration policies. The United States has long been a huge magnet to world-class talent, but the immigration system needs to be fixed to sustain this reputation. If the United States adopts a talent-oriented immigration system, it will encourage the flow of labor and knowledge, stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, and create jobs in the United States. Perhaps even more importantly, it will ultimately benefit the global society facing so many daunting challenges.



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Genetically engineered crops: The solution for the poorest Junchen Gu

China's auto industry: A plug-in future Yining Huang

From kitchen smoke to global warming Vidhi Singhal

China overtakes the United States in renewable energy Chengjie Wu

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT
& SUSTAINABILITY



3.1

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROPS: THE SOLUTION FOR THE POOREST

Genetically engineered crops are the best hope for feeding the billions of poor people around the world who suffer from inadequate nutrition. The biggest engines of this technology have been large private corporations. But big private corporations, with their exclusive patents on the technology, are also one of the biggest obstacles to realizing the hope of ending hunger.

You might disagree with growing genetically modified crops because they are said to be unsafe by some activists, although so far there is no definite proof of their toxicity. You might prefer the practice of growing crops organically. Unfortunately, given the harsh agricultural conditions in many places of the world and the dependence of organic farming on available natural resources, it's not practical or even possible to feed an increasing planetary population through exclusively organic means. The poorest people don't have the luxury to eat organically.

Thus the only solution has to rely on the adoption of genetically engineered crops. To meet the ever-increasing challenge of improving crop yield under harsh environmental conditions with limited soil and water resources, genetic engineering came into play and has helped to meet much of our demand for food in the past couple of decades. It's through genetically engineered crops that we can meet the need for enough food, and this is especially true for the poorest people in the world. The technology is mature. It has proven to be cost-effective and to increase crop yields while reducing the environmental impact.

For example, in China, India and the United States, insect-resistant cotton has improved cotton yields and reduced insecticide usage significantly.

While genetically engineered crops or genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are prevalent in the United States — more than 80 percent of the corn and soybeans planted in the United States is genetically engineered — they are still rare in many places in the world where they are needed most, places such as Africa, where drought, floods and insect infestations frequently wipe out crops and leave the population unable to sustain itself.

The importance of being able to produce enough food so that people don't suffer from hunger needs no more emphasis. Strikingly, many people in some of the poorest countries still can't enjoy a good meal each day while others enjoy an excessive and sometimes wasteful consumption of food.

There are several ways in which we can help solve the hunger problem for the poorest people. Among them, international aid through various programs has played an important role in alleviating the problem. However, relying on aid is not the ultimate solution. To eliminate the problem, those countries in need must establish their own sustainable agriculture, grow crops on their own land and become self-sufficient in food supply. Only by accomplishing these goals can these countries assure that their people won't suffer from hunger anymore.

So far, only a handful of projects are underway to help African countries to develop their own sustainable agriculture, clearly not enough to meet the need.

To fully realize the benefit of genetically engineered crops in these countries, large corporations who own almost all the relevant patents must make an effort to make this technology and related materials freely available to scientists who are trying so hard to solve the hunger problem and meet the most fundamental need of human beings.

One important obstacle comes from the patent issue on relevant genes and technologies.

It's through genetically engineered crops that we can meet the need for enough food, and this is especially true for the poorest people in the world. The technology is mature. It has proven to be cost-effective and to increase crop yields while reducing the environmental impact.

The issue of whether genes are patentable is still rather controversial and under intense debate. Nevertheless, scientists trying to develop GMOs for countries with the greatest need have to pay royalties for using these patented technologies and materials, and this puts them at a great disadvantage. Sometimes the lack of funding makes it impossible to do the work. Pursuing profit from these patents is surely the ultimate goal for biotech giants, but

when it comes to saving lives, the humanitarian need for freely distributed technology must outweigh unlimited profit. We must give the poorest people the opportunity to become self-sufficient in food



production. Some compromise can be reached through negotiations involving industry, government and nongovernmental organizations to not only advance the development of GMOs in those poorest countries, but also maintain a certain profit to industry to maintain their innovation.

In short, the fast-growing world population and the demand for more nutritious and high-yielding crops necessitate the development and adoption of GMOs, especially in the poorest countries. To eliminate the obstacle of combating hunger and saving lives, we must make the technology freely available.

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CHINA'S AUTO INDUSTRY: A PLUG-IN FUTURE

The year of 2009 was remarkable for China's auto industry. It produced 13.8 million vehicles, surpassing Japan as the world's largest automaker. Moreover, these vehicles were not just produced, but sold. Despite the global economic slowdown, the auto sales in China surged 46.2 percent to 13.6 million units, overtaking America as the world's number one auto market by a margin of more than 3 million cars. Given these strong and growing trends, China's ascendancy in auto production and sales is likely to be maintained for some time into the future.

All this is very impressive, but what really inspires confidence in the future of the Chinese auto industry is the fact that, along with working hard to out-produce and out-sell others, it is also striving to out-green them.

At the World Expo in Shanghai, a "vehicle-to-grid" (V2G) technology was demonstrated by the State Grid Corporation of China, the nation's biggest electricity distributor. This technology enables electricity exchange between an electric vehicle (EV) and a charging stand. What is particularly significant about this is that in the event of a major fluctuation in the system, such as a sharp drop in solar power, a switch between charging and discharging can be made to stabilize the electricity grid. In other words, millions of autos hooked up to such a system could switch nearly instantaneously from drawing on the grid to feeding into it. Obviously the full-fledged introduction of the "V2G" technology will depend on the widespread use of EVs.

This is only one of many innovations encouraged by the government to set up infrastructure, promote EVs

and finally bring them to the market. Suffering from a dearth of intellectual property, Beijing is determined to take advantage of this EV opportunity to become a real competitor in the world auto market. This means being competitive from sheet metal to core technologies rather than being little more than a brainless manufacturing giant. In this race to succeed, private automakers in China such as Geely and BYD have no less opportunity or support than state-owned companies, a rarity in the Chinese economy, especially in the crucial heavy industrial sector.

Facing today's bleak energy and environment realities, China's automotive industry is encountering a dilemma. China imports more than 50 percent of its crude oil and has limited political and military power, all of which means that energy supply is a strategic security issue that will only worsen if oil demand keeps surging. At the same time, however, putting a cap on the auto industry would be a tough option, given that it contributes one-fourth of total GDP growth in China.

Electric vehicles appear to be the only promising way out of this dilemma and they have the support of the government. In 2009, the Chinese government announced a \$2.3 billion increase in the fiscal support package for the auto industry. By pouring resources into research and infrastructure and heavily subsidizing cleaner vehicles, the government expects to produce 500,000 electric and hybrid cars annually by 2011. There is hope that bypassing endless debate and the entanglement of group interests, China will be able to replicate the success story in solar panel production,

where it saw its share of global market rise from 1 percent to 32 percent over the past decade.

China's automotive industry is encountering a dilemma. China imports more than 50 percent of its crude oil and has limited political and military power, all of which means that energy supply is a strategic security issue that will only worsen if oil demand keeps surging.

If the Chinese government wants to do something, it gets it done. Moreover, the automakers are thrilled and committed to the government's vision. China is operating in a context where the existing technology of internal combustion engines and transmissions is too mature for the country to have a short-term impact. In the case of electric vehicles, though, what determines how far one can go is the battery technology, an area in which China is not lagging at all. For instance, automaker BYD, which is also the largest rechargeable battery manufacturer in China, developed ferrous oxide batteries, which are more stable and durable than traditional lithium units. Several EVs based on this technology have been launched, including the world's first mass-produced plug-in hybrid F3DM introduced in December 2008.

Beginning at the same starting line to race on a new track can be painful for those who have dedicated generations to developing a considerable lead on another track, but

it is a wonderful opportunity for those who were not in the race before. In this new context, China's automakers are turbocharged in their expectation to leapfrog countries that led the field in earlier competitions.



An additional reason for the enthusiasm of Chinese automakers is the market conditions in China. The country has 131 motor vehicles per thousand people (compared to 765 in the United States), and many Chinese consumers are first-time buyers who are equally unfamiliar with traditional as electric cars. Moreover, consumers are not addicted to large SUVs, pick-up trucks and muscle cars; over 50 percent of auto sales in China in 2009 were small vehicles with engine displacement of 1.6 liters or less. All these factors point to a friendly market for EVs. In short, stay posted: China is poised to be the major EV producer and consumer in the future.

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FROM KITCHEN SMOKE TO GLOBAL WARMING

Every day Kamyani Devi cooks for her family on the chulha stove, and in the process inhales the equivalent in smoke of two packs of cigarettes. While she is coughing at the stove, her children are playing in the backyard and already suffer from tuberculosis and asthma, much to her dismay. The walls of her house have turned dark with black carbon over the years. Unfortunately, chulha stoves, unlike cigarettes, do not come with statutory warnings on them. Over the centuries, billions of women across the globe, like Kamyani Devi, have fallen victim to these poor cooking technologies.

Particles that are emitted from these cookstoves have created a death trap for over two million individuals annually. Apart from the health hazards, these cookstoves have adverse effects on the environment as well. In polar areas, these tiny heat-absorbing soot particles get deposited on the surface of glaciers, melting the snow and increasing the sea level, resulting in the frequency of floods. These particles have also been found to be responsible for the retreat of glaciers in the Himalayas, threatening the only major source of fresh water for the Indian subcontinent. Rural areas, especially in developing countries, are enveloped by black clouds from dawn to dusk due to the constant emissions of black soot from the traditional biomass cookstoves.

Wood, if harvested renewably, is assumed to be a greenhouse gas. It is viewed as neutral, releasing as much carbon dioxide as can be absorbed by the growing vegetation. However, this is usually not the

case due to inefficiencies in the combustion process. Due to incomplete combustion of the fuel, products of incomplete combustion (PICs) are released into the environment. In a recent publication in *Science*, it was found that the contribution of biofuels to total black carbon emissions may be as high as 44 percent in India and 30 percent across all of Asia.

Introducing improved cooking technologies will not only improve the health of women and children, but will also decrease the environmental effects due to emissions of black carbon. Kirk Smith, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, says that unless the production of PICs is lowered and fuel is harvested in a truly renewable way, we will keep emitting these tiny death particles into the environment in an unsustainable manner. Some climate experts claim that improved cooking technologies can be a cheap solution to all our global warming woes, at least in the short term.

One effective approach to solve this problem would be to replace the traditional stoves with new stoves. This would not only improve health conditions, but also help combat the problems of global warming to a certain extent. However, this is not an easy task to accomplish. Indeed, replacing hundreds of millions of stoves all over the world would be a mammoth feat. In addition, the new stoves would have to be designed with the local needs of the people in mind. In many communities, fire is considered as the center of the house and holds spiritual and religious significance. It would be essential that the stoves be

designed accordingly and be economical to buy and use. It would also be imperative to reach out to rural areas to make people aware of the benefits of better cookstoves.

For most communities, these improved stoves involve unfamiliar technology and require high maintenance. Moreover, the traditional stoves impart a particular traditional flavor to the regional food, which is lost with many of the improved stoves. The improved stoves that have been introduced in developing countries, especially India, have been an utter failure due to their inability to cook roti, dosa, and other traditional Indian dishes. It has been found that households that use traditional stoves along with the new improved ones do not show a significant reduction in the total emissions of black carbon, implying that the improved stoves are not a success in these areas.

Despite the current strides made in improving the performance of cookstoves, the problem of finding the optimal cookstove — one that is efficient, clean and cheap and meets local needs — still stands.

Despite the current strides made in improving the performance of cookstoves, the problem of finding the optimal cookstove — one that is efficient, clean and cheap and meets local needs — still

stands. A question that we need to ask ourselves is: Can we blame the developing countries for the increase in the global temperature from cooking their meals, when we sit in the comfort of our houses and SUVs, running on coal-fired power plants? Reducing emissions in the developed world is a grave problem that needs long-term efforts to solve. The cookstove problem, on the other hand, is a problem that can be solved in the short term, holding global warming at bay until we find long-term solutions to protect our environment.



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CHINA OVERTAKES THE UNITED STATES IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

President Obama's efforts to create a national initiative on renewable energy encountered a major obstacle when the U.S. Senate failed to consider a climate change bill in July 2010. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, said that instead of passing legislation aimed at reducing carbon emissions, the Senate would focus on a more specific goal of taking care of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

All of these recent developments raise an important question: How could China jump into the world's lead position on renewable energy when the United States has such great economic and technological advantages?

The oil spill was definitely an emergency in need of great attention at the time. But President Obama has suggested that it is part of a larger picture that is still not being addressed. In a White House press conference he said, "More than anything else, this economic and environmental tragedy [in the Gulf of Mexico] — and it's a tragedy — underscores the urgent need for this nation to develop clean, renewable sources of energy." In his view, addressing the oil spill is part of a long-term goal of developing renewable energy that will reduce environmental degradation and also create new businesses and jobs in the green energy sector.

Although renewable energy has been a topic of discussion for decades in the United States, Mr. Obama's first real attempt to engage the United States in a discussion about legislation that would address the issue failed. In particular,

his efforts to encourage investment in renewable energy failed. All this is happening — or not happening — at the same time that China is speeding up its efforts in renewable energy and moving into the position of being the world's leader in this vital area.

Today China is the largest maker of wind turbines in the world and the second largest producer of wind power after the United States. According to Harvard and Tsinghua University researchers, China could produce enough wind power to satisfy all of its electricity demand by 2030. According to a report in *China Daily*, the PRC has now become the world's largest consumer of solar energy and is the largest manufacturer of solar panels and solar water heaters in the world. And according to a report of the World Nuclear Association, China has 12 nuclear power reactors in operation as of 2010; 23 more are under construction and the construction of others is expected to start soon. Indeed, the PRC has the most aggressive nuclear power development plan in the world.

All of these recent developments raise an important question: How could China jump into the world's lead position on renewable energy when the United States has such great economic and technological advantages? The first point to take into consideration when considering this paradox is the rapidly growing demand for electric power in today's China. The country's domestic demand for electricity is rising 15 percent per year, which is nearly nine times the increase in demand for electricity in the United States. This booming market in China gives it a significant advantage when it comes to the development of renewable energy. With its huge potential market only now emerging, large investments will flow into renewable energy and boost

the industry; with their huge cash reserves, Chinese banks have a very strong appetite for investing in green energy.

In contrast, given the massive investment that U.S. power companies have already made over the past several decades in fuel-based systems, it will be difficult to invest in massive new renewable energy projects. Despite the fact that renewable energy has well-known advantages over fossil fuel-based production of electricity, especially when it comes to being environmentally friendly, there are major disincentives because it is so expensive to retire existing infrastructure and replace it. In China, power companies need to buy new equipment in any event for the rapidly growing demand for energy, so renewable energy is a good choice, given its environmental advantages and increasingly competitive price.

A second major advantage that China has in the race for green energy comes from the role of government in this technical revolution. With its very powerful and centralized government, China is quite different from the United States. People in the United States may prefer democracy to such a strong central government, but the Chinese system makes it pretty straightforward to legislate new regulations or laws. As noted in sources such as the *New York Times*, the Chinese government has had no problem in imposing a renewable energy fee on each user of electricity in the country. This fee increases residential electricity bills by 0.25 percent to 0.4 percent; for industrial users, the fee increase is around 0.8 percent. The revenue generated from this renewable energy fee can then be used to make up the price difference between renewable energy and fossil fuel-based energy. This makes renewable energy prices competitive and therefore provides a market-based mechanism for encouraging the growth of green technology. Such a system

is still needed because higher cost is the primary disadvantage of renewable energy. Compared to coal-fired production of electricity, wind energy is about 20 percent more expensive, and solar power is even more expensive than



that. For these very reasons President Obama encouraged the passage of a climate change bill to make up the difference. This solution has yet to be pursued seriously in the United States, but it is already on its way to full implementation in China.

It may be a long journey for the United States to arrive at a viable renewable energy policy, given the basic fact that it will involve higher costs. But according to Mr. Obama, the United States cannot and will not give up. As he has said, "It's time to accelerate the competition with countries like China, who have already realized the future lies in renewable energy. And it's time to seize that future ourselves."

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CULTURE &
SOCIETY



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT SUICIDE AS A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

A recent spate of suicides by some of South Korea's top actresses has stunned the Korean people. In November 2008, Jin-Shil Choi, who had appeared in numerous Korean movies as well as a popular soap opera and was known as "Korea's public actress," committed suicide. Even before her death, news about suicides by popular Korean entertainers and actresses had shocked and saddened Koreans as well as people in other Asian countries. Even worse in Jin-Shil Choi's case, about a year and a half after her suicide, her younger brother, Jin-Young Choi, followed her by killing himself.

According to a report from the Korean Institute for Health and Social Affairs, the South Korean suicide rate has increased dramatically over the past decade: from 50.8 per 10,000 citizens in 1998 to 112.9 in 2008. This is an increase of more than 122 percent over this 10-year period. Such increases have occurred in other Asian countries as well.

After arriving in 2008 to study psychology at Washington University, I have been struck by how even in America, with mental health policies that are well developed compared to Asian countries, suicide is a serious public health problem and affects people of all ages. In the United States, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for people between the ages of 18 and 65. Every 16 minutes a person commits suicide in the United States. What I didn't expect but have come to notice in the States is that there still is a "silent" stigma attached to mental health among the public. This has not disappeared with the relatively well-developed health policy in this country.

Why do an increasing number of people choose to end their lives? In most cases there is some untreated mental health issue behind the terrible decision. Research suggests that 90 percent of the people who commit suicide had a pre-existing mental illness or substance abuse problem at the time of their death. When untreated or inappropriately treated, depression in particular leads all too many people to make a terrible decision.

It would be desirable for the media not to limit their role to reporting the simple fact of suicides. Instead, they could also use the occasion to report on the major mental health issues behind suicides, including unrecognized and untreated depression.

Another important, but easily ignored issue associated with suicide, is how "survivors" who are left behind should grieve and deal with the tragic consequences of a loved one's death. Although it is a common belief that grief over a loved one's death heals naturally over time, suicide usually leads "survivors" to feel fathomless guilt and unexplained emotion. In the case of Jin-Young Choi, his mother and friends said he had a hard time struggling with his pain and grief over his sister's suicide. Although people around him urged him to get appropriate treatment for depression, he apparently rejected this. At that time, Jin-Young almost certainly suffered from depression, feeling responsible for his sister as well as the children she left behind. His close

friends reported his feeling of insufferable loss over his sister. The case of the late brother and sister of the Choi family reveal just one part of what is often ignored when it comes to mental health issues surrounding suicide.

Should we consider the late Jin-Shil's suicide death to be nothing more than a family tragedy? I think not. As a McDonnell Scholar and graduate student in the Department of Psychology at Washington University, I believe it is crucial to promote awareness about suicide and its prevention. It is never acceptable in any culture as a way to end one's life, but instead is a serious public health problem that must be addressed.

In Asian societies such as Japan and Korea, there is implicit social agreement that makes suicide somewhat acceptable as a way of proving one's innocence or acceptance of responsibility for some perceived misdeed. Given this, the media should pay particularly careful attention to how they cover the suicide of a well-known figure. Such news can have a huge impact. After news of the entertainer siblings' two suicides was reported, the number of people who committed suicide in South Korea doubled for a short period. It would be desirable for the media not to limit their role to reporting the simple fact of such suicides. Instead, they could also use the occasion to report on the major mental health issues behind suicides, including unrecognized and untreated depression. This could be the perfect opportunity to explain to the public the importance of mental health issues associated with suicide and its prevention.

It will be important to develop public policies and support for suicide prevention in Asian countries like Korea. It is only through such policies that the

society will be able to address suicide-related mental health problems in a systematic way. Although insurance coverage for mental health treatment is not a panacea, it would at least mean that help is accessible



to someone who needs professional services. In the reality that Korea presents today, even if an individual is ready to pay the price of being labeled as a "weird person" with mental illness, he or she faces another hurdle; namely how to pay for the expensive, private fees to get appropriate treatment.

Going back to the late Choi brother and sister, we should view this heartbreaking episode as more than a family tragedy. Recently, the dramatic increase in suicide has raised awareness of how crucial it is to address this often-ignored and untreated mental health issue. What if those people who committed suicide had received appropriate professional help? It is hard to imagine how many lives could have been saved and how much pain their survivors could have been spared.

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FEAR CRIPPLES BUT “TCKs” TAKE THE LEAD

What do Keanu Reeves, Pearl Buck, Madeline Albright, John Kerry, Christiane Amanpour and Barack Obama have in common? Yes, they are all famous people, leaders in their own field, but that is only the superficial answer.

What may not be so obvious is that they are all bonded by a unique developmental history; each of them lived a large part of their formative years outside of their parents’ culture. Keanu Reeves spent a significant amount of his early years in Lebanon; Pearl Buck in China; Madeline Albright in the Czech Republic, Yugoslavia and London; John Kerry in Germany; Christiane Amanpour in Iran; and the most famous of all, President Barack Obama spent his childhood years in Indonesia. They are known as Third Culture Kids, or “TCKs.”

Mr. John McDonnell, the retired chairman of the board of McDonnell Douglas Corporation, asked: “So then, is the world ready for TCKs to lead?”
The fact is that we cannot wait for the world to be ready.

Grace, a TCK I happen to know very well, has lived in three countries, speaks four languages, has travelled to more than 30 cities on three different continents, and has flown more than 80 trips on an airplane during her lifetime. She is not in her 50s. No, neither is she in her 40s. She is my daughter, and she is only 11. TCKs like my daughter are here

to stay, and they are becoming a significant force the world will come to recognize.

Ted Ward, professor emeritus at Michigan State University, called TCKs “the prototype citizens of the future.” Some estimate that the world today has 240 million international migrants and migrating people, which means a lot of TCKs. Today in the United States, there are 38 million migrants; in Qatar 86.5 percent of the population is made up of migrants; in Singapore the figure is 40.7 percent and — according to the United Nations — international migrants at the global level numbered 191 million in 2005. These statistics do not tell us the number of children involved, but one can safely say that Dr. Ward’s vision of people growing up in more than one culture is becoming a norm rather than the exception.

In the book *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up among Worlds*, David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken elegantly describe the challenges as well as the treasures of growing up as a TCK. Research on TCKs indicates that they are four times as likely as non-TCKs to earn a bachelor’s degree and eight times more likely to earn an advanced degree. Among a TCK’s challenges is the experience of loss in every move to a new place and the grief and sadness this brings. However, the strengths of TCKs include remarkable opportunities to develop exceptional cross-cultural intelligence. They are sort of cultural chameleons. Their instinctive ability to adapt, change and create new possibilities positions them favorably to make unique

contributions in any line of endeavor they choose, be it politics, education, science, technology, social work, culture, the arts or whatever.

The cultural acuity of TCKs, often with the multilingualism that goes with it, makes them highly valued and greatly sought after by MNCs (Multi-National Corporations). With globalization and the increasing dependence on international trade, top executives are required to expand their understanding of an increasingly diverse world. Businesses are no longer local. To survive, leaders need to look beyond their shores and venture into the unknown, including once-exotic and strange places, and this takes them into uncharted territories. For TCKs, though, unknown, exotic and strange places are part of their modus operandi, and walking into uncharted territory is what keeps their adrenaline pumping.

To be sure, this comes at a cost. TCKs' nontraditional approach to problem solving, their ability to see multiple perspectives as reflecting equally true and correct realities, sometimes make it difficult for them to connect with those who grew up in monocultural, monolingual communities. For example, their ability to see multiple realities is sometimes looked upon as confused loyalties, while their unconventional outlook to life and solutions may initially evoke mistrust, suspicion and misunderstanding. TCKs clearly stand on a unique platform that has potential for unparalleled contributions and challenges.

In a discussion of these issues Mr. John McDonnell, the retired chairman of the board of McDonnell Douglas Corporation, asked: "So then, is the world ready for TCKs to lead?" The fact is that we cannot wait for the world to be ready. Leadership is not about taking people where they are ready to go. True leadership is about leading people to where they dare not go. Only in hindsight will we know with 20/20 acuity whether these were the right places to go in the first place. But we can't find out if we do not step into the unknown. The developmental challenges facing TCKs can be daunting, but when fear cripples most of us, they may be the ones who will be able to take the lead.



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CAN A NUCLEAR IRAN BE MANAGED?

As if the United States did not have enough on its plate already — recovery from the worst recession since the Great Depression, fighting two wars, increasingly partisan politics and a great deal of internal discord — it is faced with the emergence of what may be the greatest threat to international peace in our times: the development of nuclear weapons by Iran.

While initially the world seemed fairly determined to prevent Iran from achieving nuclear military capacity, and indeed has imposed sanctions on Iran as recently as 2010, we hear increasingly more arguments against taking actions necessary to thwart the Iranian attempt to develop nuclear weapons, be it economic sanctions or military action. In light of America's bad experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is natural that some would seek to avoid conflict at all costs, even if this means a nuclear Iran. Natural, but not rational.

Now, it should be stated that the Obama administration was absolutely correct in its attempt to first engage Iran diplomatically before resorting to sanctions. One should always try to resolve conflicts peacefully. It should also be stated in no uncertain terms that military action should be an option of last resort. However, at the same time, it would be foolish to underestimate the danger posed by a nuclear Iran, and all options should be kept on the table.

The arguments for allowing Iran to achieve nuclear capacity simply do not hold water. These arguments are usually based on the assertion that a nuclear Iran is not the end of the world as it can be “contained.” I suspect that we will be hearing the

word “containment” more and more in the near future. Unfortunately the international community simply cannot afford to assume that a nuclear Iran can be “contained.”

First, this argument is premised on the assumption that the Iranian leadership is rational. However, the question of rationality is not that of black and white. There are levels of rationality. While I do not believe that Iranian leaders will wake up one day and decide to launch a nuclear attack out of the blue, I would not trust the Iranian leadership to refrain from using nuclear weapons if it were put in an extreme situation. Just imagine a Cuban missile crisis scenario, except this time with Ahmadinejad and the Ayatollahs on the other side instead of Khrushchev and the Politburo. One should keep in mind that we are dealing with a radical Islamist regime, deeply involved in terrorist activity for decades. A regime that has shown total disregard to human life and dignity, even when dealing with its own people, and that strictly adheres to extreme religious beliefs including belief that the messiah will only reappear after the apocalypse. Furthermore, in light of Iran's support of terrorist organizations, there will be the threat of Iran passing on certain nuclear technologies to these organizations. Surely we cannot trust these organizations to use nuclear technology responsibly.

Second, an escalation of tensions between Iran, its neighbors and the West, leading to a crisis situation in which the Iranian leadership may consider the use of nuclear weapons, is a very real possibility. Iran's involvement in global terrorism; Iranian support of Hezbollah, Hamas

and the Islamic Jihad; its rivalry with Sunni Muslim nations; its belligerence towards Israel and its hatred towards the United States, raise a considerable risk of eventual confrontation. In such a confrontation, due to its conventional military inferiority, Iran may consider the use of nuclear weapons.

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Third, a nuclear Iran would be emboldened by its newly achieved nuclear capacity. While the proponents of the “containment” policy claim that Iran’s desire to obtain an atomic bomb is defensive, they neglect to mention what it is that Iran seeks to “defend.” Iran would likely view nuclear capacity as an insurance policy for its terrorist activity and be encouraged to intensify its efforts in this regard. Nuclear weapons would shield Iran from any attempt by the West to curtail it from interfering with the internal affairs of countries such as Lebanon and Saudi Arabia or engaging in acts of terrorism. For example, one proponent of the “containment” policy claimed that Iran has proven to be “rational” in the past, when it

did not take any action against Israel during the 2006 war in Lebanon at a time when Israel confronted the Hezbollah. However, will this be the case after Iran becomes nuclear? Do we really want to find out?



So far, all sanctions and attempts of engagement have failed. Despite Iran’s clear legal obligations as a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty it remains intent on obtaining nuclear military capability. If the world has failed thus far in “containing” Iran, not only on the nuclear front, but also vis-à-vis Iran’s support and direction of terrorism, we have every reason to doubt the world’s ability to contain Iran once it has the bomb. A nuclear Iran is a reality which the world simply cannot live with.

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IMMIGRATION IN THE NETHERLANDS: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE UNITED STATES?

“This land is not good for you, it shows the worst of mankind,” said Mehmet on the phone to his family back in Morocco. As reported in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, Mehmet is one of the many Moroccan Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands who have a difficult time understanding the lifestyle and standards of the Dutch and is unwilling to adapt, and this is starting to bother more and more of the Dutch. Many of them see immigration as one of the most important topics in today’s elections; unfortunately, many also believe that radical discriminatory steps need to be taken to address immigration problems.

These problems are particularly pronounced in Holland in the case of the Moroccan Muslim immigrants. Consider a few statistics: 55 percent of the Moroccan male immigrants between 18 and 24 in larger cities have a criminal record; only 60 percent of Moroccan males between 25 and 45 are employed, compared to 86 percent of the Dutch natives.

These facts are shocking, but they don’t tell us much about underlying causes such as employment patterns. The fact is that many young Moroccan male immigrants are unemployed at an age when most people work (with a few justifiable exceptions, to be sure). So the question is: Why are these people not working?

The biggest reason is precisely the success of our welfare state. As in a typical welfare state, the Dutch government is present in many ways to

provide for the basic needs of its citizens. This includes basic health care and insurance, but also extends to income. In Holland if you can’t find work or are not able to work, you can apply for a state income. Of course this income is not very large, but it is enough to live on. This is indeed a beautiful feature of our welfare state and can be the ultimate safety net for people in need. But it can be misused as well. Some people can work but are simply not willing to do so, and this does not promote the perseverance and courage sometimes required to find work or foster entrepreneurship. These downsides to the system have become particularly pronounced among immigrants.

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Another problem is that like Mehmet, many Moroccan immigrants do not have any strong affection or loyalty for the Netherlands, probably because the cultural differences between them and the native Dutch population are very big. Most of these immigrants came from a region of Morocco that is very conservative. The Netherlands, on the other hand, is a very liberal society, indeed in many respects more so than the United States. What

is particularly troubling is that third-generation immigrants who are raised in the Netherlands and speak fluent Dutch are often as conservative, or even more so, than newer immigrants. The conflicting moral standards often give rise to heated discussion, or even worse, violence, between Dutch natives and Moroccan immigrants.

What can the Dutch learn in this regard from America, considered to be one of today's most successful immigration societies? The most important lesson concerns how the United States manages to promote entrepreneurship and other opportunities. According to *The Economist*, the United States created 60 million new jobs while losing 45 million old ones between 1987 and 2002. During the same period Europe created 15 million new jobs and lost 12 million. In short, America has a far more dynamic economy and provides opportunity for people. These opportunities are not equally available to all, but they are opportunities nonetheless. As an immigrant in the United States you have to work. Otherwise you won't have an income because there is not the kind of safety net found in Europe. To be sure, the American system has its downsides. I don't want to underestimate them, but the fact remains that America has attracted immigrants and has been successful in providing work for them.

I believe that work is one of the best ways to help people integrate into a society. If you don't speak the language or don't get used to the habits of a society, you cannot work. America is also successful

in promoting entrepreneurship. Legal and financial restrictions on establishing your own business are relatively minor when compared with Europe.



Another important lesson we can learn from Americans concerns their open-mindedness toward different cultures. In the Netherlands and Europe in general, people often say that Americans are individualistic and that their friendship is only superficial. I have found this to be untrue. Americans are individualistic (but then so are we Dutch), but Americans are also very open-minded when it comes to exploring and being interested in different cultures. They realize that they are in a melting pot and that everybody is working in their country to get the best out of its life. That's what unites.

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GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN CHINA'S JOB MARKET

Before graduating from Peking University, I attended a job-hunting workshop, and a piece of advice I heard from the organizer has stuck in my mind: "Finding a job in Beijing is most difficult for those graduate students who are female and who are not registered Beijing residents." This is hardly good news for an aspiring young woman like me who, unfortunately, fits all the "negative" categories. In fact I have been struck by the fact that China's economic miracle in recent years has generally not led to greater opportunity for women. Under the surface of an increasing female work force is a widening gender gap in income and discrimination.

For female college graduates in China, requests for information about age, residential registration and physical appearance hurt self-esteem and can have an impact on salary as well. For poorly educated, low-income women, the lack of regulation and protection in their work place can pose real dangers to their personal life. In one of the most shocking homicide cases in 2009, a 22-year-old hotel attendant killed a government official and wounded another as she defended herself against attempted rape. The two men had pressed her for sexual services despite her repeated explanation that she was not a sex worker.

A 2002 report by the World Bank on gender issues in China revealed that discrimination had become worse as China's economy had developed. And a recent survey by Peking University's Center for Women's Studies and Legal Aid reveals that the situation has not improved significantly after China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). According to this study, one in four

women in China has encountered discrimination in job hunting: four percent were forced to sign "no-marriage" contracts and three percent "no pregnancy" contracts. One in every five people surveyed reported that their employers refused to hire women who have reached childbearing age but have not given birth to children.

For people currently holding jobs, different sectors treat men and women differently. Women hold a large proportion of the positions in education, service industries, and labor-intensive manufacturing industries, but they are only a tiny fraction of the employees in government, law, accounting and other professions.

During pregnancy, childbirth and maternal leave, 21 percent of those surveyed report that women in their work place were forced to change positions or receive lower pay, and 11 percent said that women suffer job losses during these periods. In countries like the United States, some women may interrupt their career path by having babies and raising them to school age. In China this is almost impossible because it is very difficult for a woman over 30 or 35 to re-enter the job market and resume her previous career.

Over 25 percent of the respondents in the Peking University survey said that their work place had no regulations about sexual harassment, and over 50 percent of sexual harassment was reported as occurring in work-related situations, but not necessarily in the office.

In China the retirement ages for women and men are different. For women it is 55 (50 for female factory workers) and for men, 60. According to a regulation

in 2006, the longer you work, the more pension you receive. If a person is about to retire in five years, she will not be considered for promotion, and this means that women with the same education as men will receive fewer benefits and fewer opportunities for promotion in their lifetime. Despite all these forms of gender discrimination, only a small number of women choose to file lawsuits against employers.

While China has not had any massive self-organized women's rights movement in its history, social workers and NGOs should help raise women's consciousness to defend their rights and fight against discrimination. In reality, this is a global issue that requires support from the international community.

Does all this have serious consequences? Yes, of course. First, although it is true that more women now have the chance to receive a college education, the result is that colleges are turning out more female graduates than the unbalanced job market can absorb. The tremendous challenges of starting a career produce many disillusioned young women. Nowadays, being “second wife” or “mistress” to a wealthy man is becoming a “profession” for pretty girls with college diplomas. Chinese society's reaction is to criticize women for their moral degradation — a form of further condemnation that does not get to the root of the issue. This also

results in brain drain, as many talented Chinese women choose to go abroad, where they expect to find greater social tolerance for individual choices and better regulation of the job market.



How can these problems be addressed? The Chinese government needs to be more effective in its legislative efforts to protect women's rights, and it should invest more to subsidize the hiring of women. While China has not had any massive self-organized women's rights movement in its history, social workers and NGOs should help raise women's consciousness to defend their rights and fight against discrimination. In reality, this is a global issue that requires support from the international community. China's manufacturing sector, which absorbs the largest number of female workers in the country, supports the world with women's cheap labor. Looking at the clothes we wear and the goods we purchase, shouldn't we share some responsibilities of improving those women's conditions?

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THE CHINESE MENTALITY AND PRESERVING SOCIAL ORDER

An HBO documentary about the devastating 2008 earthquake in China features parents who lost their children in collapsed schools. In one scene, some of these parents hold pictures of their children as they kneel down crying and beg the government to investigate the problem of corruption in school construction. But instead of pursuing their grievances further through protest, most of these parents eventually silenced their voices. Shoddy construction is no secret among Chinese, but few stood up to protest.

Why the absence of massive social protest in China after so many school buildings collapsed? Were people not sympathetic toward the thousands of young lives buried in the debris? Hardly. When the earthquake hit China's Sichuan province on May 12, 2008, people all over the country burst into tears at the news of school collapses, and many volunteered for the rescue and relief effort.

Was the silence just a response to the Chinese government's tight control over public expression? People outside China might easily think this, but to attribute everything to top-down oppression is superficial and misses the real point. This is not to say the government did not make a strong attempt to shape public opinion about the school collapses in the Sichuan earthquake. In accordance with official ideology, "preserving social harmony" is sufficient reason to control criticism and suspicion; but in the end, top-down control in the name of preserving social harmony is only part of the picture. What's more important and interesting is the extent to which Chinese people themselves identified with the ideology of preserving social order.

Maintaining unity and preventing national fragmentation have always been of central concern. The philosophical perspective that corresponds with this political orientation is Confucianism, which prioritizes harmony and order in a hierarchical system. In contrast, individual rights are subordinated to national order.

In spite of their great suffering, the local people in Sichuan were able to show their appreciation to the party and government as well as to ordinary people for the support they received after the earthquake. Western observers wondered how these people could participate in the national celebration of the 2008 Olympics so quickly after the earthquake, but they heartily joined in while still in the midst of the debris of their hometown. Most notably, their appreciation and strong sense of national belonging were sincere and not faked.

And for people outside Sichuan, a common opinion was that compared to the great success of our government in its massive mobilization for disaster rescue and relief, the problem of corruption in school constructions was rather trivial, especially since corruption is quite common in China. The common perception was that China had achieved a great victory over this disaster, and the sense of national solidarity and identity was enhanced in the process.

How did such a collective mentality about “preserving social order” come into being in China? It has deep historical roots. In contrast to Western ways of viewing history as linear progress, a cyclic logic of oscillation between disorder and order is deeply rooted in the Chinese interpretation of history. In this context efforts toward unification extend back thousands of years and despotism has long been practiced in the service of this end. In this scheme of things, maintaining unity and preventing national fragmentation have always been of central concern. The philosophical perspective that corresponds with this political orientation is Confucianism, which prioritizes harmony and order in a hierarchical system. In contrast, individual rights are subordinated to national order. Many view this social system as being compatible with the ecological demands placed on the country with its huge population and with resource scarcity.

All of this plays out against a background of repeated episodes of massive suffering throughout history. In recent times alone, at least 20 million Chinese people were estimated to have died in the Taiping Rebellion of 1850-1864; the great famine (1959-1961), commemorated in China as the “Three-Year-Natural-Disaster,” killed 30 million; and the “Ten-Year-Catastrophe,” the official term for the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution, killed 3 million. Compared to those massive disasters, the number of school children killed in the 2008 earthquake is miniscule.

Thus, faced with this disaster, the public was more inclined to maintain social order and rebuild the affected area than to challenge the established

order. Life had to go on. Out of the collective mentality of preserving social order, people looked at the big picture and just moved on. This was the reason why people showed no enthusiasm for protesting against the corruption that led to the school collapses, and it provides insight into why eulogies for the Chinese government and nation dominated the memory of this earthquake while the individual tragedies faded away.



But still, I was shocked when a man living beside the debris of collapsed school buildings told me only two months after the earthquake, “This time I have seen so many dead bodies that I felt no fear. It’s just like pork.” Even if “collective amnesia” has been an adaptive response over thousands of years of social evolution in China, the scene of parents kneeling down and crying should not be erased from our memory. It is more than a minor protest that must be squelched in the name of preserving social order.

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McDonnell International Scholars Academy



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Campinas	State University of Campinas
Haifa	Technion-Israel Institute of Technology
Herzliya	Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya
Hong Kong	Chinese University of Hong Kong
	University of Hong Kong
Istanbul	Bogaziçi University
Jakarta	University of Indonesia
Melbourne	University of Melbourne
Mumbai	Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
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New Delhi	Jawaharlal Nehru University
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