

Foreword

In this issue of the *SAIS Review*, we address two topics of undeniable significance in foreign affairs today: demographic shifts and their consequences, and the impact of religion as a global actor in international affairs.

Demographic change might be likened to the progress of a glacier: slow moving, difficult to predict with much accuracy, but massive in its impact on its surroundings. From the standpoint of academics, policymakers, and practitioners in the international relations field, studying changes in population and designing appropriate policies are decidedly less glamorous than dealing with any number of burning, media-friendly crises. Yet as our authors' articles convincingly demonstrate, there are few social issues with more pressing relevance to both developing and industrialized countries, to relations between the two, and to the Earth in general. Pick a spot on the planet, and you are likely to find some population trend in progress, whether it is declining birthrates, skyrocketing young populations, or devastation from HIV/AIDS. The effects of such shifts can be felt locally, nationally, and even internationally.

Stephen Schwenke leads off our examination of demography with an essay that begins with observations on the growth of mega cities in the developing world and moves to examine some of the moral issues that confront policymakers and practitioners working in international development. Central to his questioning are numbers—the data on populations and population trends that we all use to make decisions—and their appropriateness at different times.

In terms of sheer immediacy, several countries are confronting population changes that may threaten their very foundations. Nicholas Eberstadt details the crisis facing Russia, which has been adversely affected by a collapsed birthrate and an abnormally high death rate. He shows how these demographic challenges could dramatically influence Russia's developmental pathway. Andrea den Boer and Valerie Hudson contribute to the emerging subfield of "security demographics" with their piece on gender ratios in Asia—particularly in China and India—and the impending security challenges posed by such imbalances. Sanam Vakil writes on demographic changes in Iran and explores in detail the pressures on the current regime brought on by a large surge in youth who are now coming of age with increasing social, economic and political demands. And addressing a subject that often comes to mind as one of the foremost demographic challenges today, Primit Mitra explores the looming HIV/AIDS crisis in India, the national government's response, and ways in which the international community can not only help but also learn some lessons from the Indian experience.

As populations grow older, governments on the other end of the development spectrum face increased fiscal strains arising from, among other

things, health care costs and pension payments. Frank Eich examines such fiscal challenges brought on by Europe's aging population, and finds that while these trends will indeed test the finances of many states, promising policies intended to address these concerns are already being implemented. Ken Henry's piece, which surveys population aging in Australia and examines government responses there, offers an interesting chance to compare policy options among wealthier nations.

Population growth and decline, and the challenges these changes can present, are evident not only in various cities and nations but also within the boundaries of individual religions. Indeed, the role of religion in international affairs has made a resurgence, and rather than dismissing it as an altogether negative force, we have several articles that examine the often overlooked laudatory effects of religion as an actor in the international and development arenas. Reminiscent of the once praised Protestant ethic, Marcus Noland and Howard Pack combine demography and religion in an insightful investigation of the challenges posed by the "youth bulge" in their article on economic performance, Islam, and the Middle East, a region whose population could increase by 60 percent by 2020. Scott Thomas's essay explores methods by which faith-based foreign aid can be made more effective—specifically, by incorporating a "virtue-ethics" approach.

Tim Shah contributes a nuanced piece on evangelical Christianity's spread in the developing world, arguing that the distinctive characteristics of this form of Christianity make it unlikely to bring about the cohesive, politically powerful "new Christendom" that some have envisaged. Moving towards the more institutionalized side of Christianity, Robert Shelledy analyzes the Vatican's unique role in foreign affairs and assesses some possible future directions—including as an interlocutor between the Christian West and Islam.

Our concluding article is by Daniel P. O'Neill, a master's degree candidate at SAIS whose submission won the *SAIS Review's* annual student essay contest. O'Neill examines a particularly vexing situation in international affairs: determining the appropriate international response to a domestic leadership crisis when that country's leader has been democratically elected. Recent examples are not hard to find—see Haiti and Georgia—and such cases are likely to occur again in the future.

This issue's book reviews take a broader view of the relationships of demography and religion to international relations. Daniele Anastasion reviews a collection of essays that argue the importance of health, including the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to national security. In his review of *Occidentalism*, Drew Helene finds that this brief book contains shrewd insights into the target of the anti-Western sentiment found in movements that range from religious to nationalist. John Boochever, the winner of the *SAIS Review's* book review contest, discovers inspiration as well as revelation and information in Robert Rubin's memoir (written with Jacob Weisberg). Finally a review of *The Size of Nations* by Jennifer Erickson returns to the question of numbers by taking a look at the arguments made by the book's authors regarding population size and economic and national

development. And our Recent Books section includes reviews of books written on such timely subjects as America's foreign policy, post-conflict reconstruction capabilities, and the coalescence of terrorist networks.

Finally, this issue features a stunning photo collection of women in India by Pamela Constable, *Washington Post* South Asia correspondent and author of the recently published book, *Fragments of Grace: My Search for Meaning in the Strife of South Asia*.

This issue brings another volume of *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* to a close, as well as our time as editors. We would like to thank our authors for their insightful submissions, our editorial staff for their hard work, and our advisory board members for their thoughtful suggestions. Finally, we wish the best of luck to next year's editorial team.

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