

## Communitarian Observations

*I often write about rather different matters, but in my mind they all deal with one core question: the guidance our shared values, especially the common good, provides to our public policies.*

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### Upcoming Events and Announcements

Amitai Etzioni will deliver a keynote address at the closing ceremonies of the Beijing Forum on the morning of November 9, 2014 in Beijing.

The Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies invites you to an event in which Isabel Sawhill (Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution) will chair, moderate, and participate in a panel alongside Richard Reeves (Brookings Fellow in Economic Studies and Policy Director for the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution) and Stuart Taylor (Nonresident Fellow at the Brookings Institution) to discuss a new book, *The New Normal: Finding a Balance Between Individual Rights and the Common Good*, by Amitai Etzioni. The panel, called “Author Meets His Critics,” will start with the panelists criticizing the author, who will then respond. This will be followed by a discussion with the audience. The event will be held November 12 from 12:00-2:00pm at 1958 E Street NW, Room 602; sandwiches will be served. The event is free and open to the public; to register, please fill out an RSVP form at <http://go.gwu.edu/newnormal>.

On November 19 from 5:00-6:30pm, a public debate on the balance between individual rights and homeland security between Susan Herman, President of the ACLU, and Amitai Etzioni will occur. Details to follow.

Our most popular video, “[You Don’t Need to Buy This](#),” recently gained 8,000 new views thanks to the work of Kevin Palermo.

### Shorter Pieces

#### *“We Need Empathy Too”*

“‘Character’ has been used in American political discourse as a code word for arguing that if people are suffering—are poor, unemployed, or hooked on drugs or alcohol—it is because they have not been brought up properly and thus have a poor character, especially one that is short on self-government and controlling impulses. [...] I suggest that character education requires the development of two specific personality capabilities rather than acquiring specific values or virtues. These capabilities are self-discipline and empathy.” (Read more of “We Need Empathy Too” at the [Brookings Institution](#) or at the [ICPS website](#).)

#### *“The U.S. Should Not Fear Competing with China”*

“On October 24, 21 Asian nations signed a memorandum to form a new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, to be drawn on considerable Chinese funds. Behind the scenes, Washington had been trying to discourage South Korea and Australia from accepting a Chinese invitation to be among the founders. The effort was successful. U.S. opposition to the new bank illuminates a much greater issue: Will the U.S. seek to contain every international initiative by China, or will it only counter aggression but

welcome China's non-coercive engagement in regional and world affairs?" (Read more of "The U.S. Should Not Fear Competing with China" at [The Diplomat](#) or at the [ICPS website](#).)

*"Midterm Elections: We Already Know What Will Happen"*

"In many ways, we already know the results of the midterm elections. The country continues to tilt toward right of center. This is evident because, even if the Democrats are somehow able to hold on to a thin majority in the Senate, they will do so only because of the election of red-state Democrats who support many of the same policies that Republicans do. Thus Michelle Nunn, a Georgia Democrat running for the Senate, [refused to support Obamacare](#). Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK) [opposes the meager gun control measures](#) advocated by President Obama following the 2013 Sandy Hook school shooting. Senator [Mary Landrieu \(D-LA\) favors the Keystone XL pipeline](#). They all are running away from Obama and most anything he stands for." (Read more of "Midterm Elections" at [The Huffington Post](#) or at the [ICPS website](#).)

### Longer Articles

["Mutually Assured Restraint: A New Approach for United States-China Relations."](#) *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 20(11). Spring/Summer 2014. *Abstract: Distrust between the United State and China has increased in recent years, despite a close connection between the two countries' economic welfares and an increase in trade between the two nations. To avoid the United States and China falling into the Thucydides Trap, in which a dominant power's fear of a rising power necessarily leads to war, both nations would be well-served by further embracing a strategy of Mutually Assured Restraint (MAR). MAR seeks to inject substance into the vague phrases mouthed by both powers: China ought to have a "new model of major-country relations" with the United States, and the United States seeks to build a "cooperative partnership" with China. MAR is a foreign policy based on mutual respect, a quest for confidence building, and a set of new institutionalized arrangements that would move both powers away from situations that could escalate into major conflicts.*

["Eight Nails into Katz's Coffin."](#) *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 65(2). Forthcoming. *Abstract: From a social science viewpoint, that the United States courts keep drawing on Katz v. United States in their rulings about whether or not privacy has been violated is difficult to comprehend. This legal case is clearly based on untenable sociological and psychological assumptions. Moreover, many fine legal scholars have laid out additional strong reasons that establish beyond a reasonable doubt that it is unreasonable to draw on 'the reasonable expectations of privacy' as a legal concept. Continuing to draw on this concept, especially in the cyber age, undermines the legitimacy of the courts and hence of the law. This article reviews these arguments in order to further nail down the lid on Katz's coffin so that this case—and the privacy doctrine that draws on it—will be allowed to rest in peace.*

["A Cyber Age Privacy Doctrine: More Coherent, Less Subjective, and Operational."](#) *Brooklyn Law Review* 80(4), Forthcoming. *Abstract: In a previous paper, I outlined a privacy doctrine—a cyber age privacy doctrine, or a CAPD—that seeks to account for important differences between the paper age and the digital one. This paper attempts to show that the CAPD provides a coherent normative doctrine that can be employed by the courts and legislatures and that is more systematic, less subjective, and at least as operational as the prevailing privacy doctrines. It deals with the right to privacy vis-à-vis the United States government rather than as a protection from intrusions by private actors such as corporations. Part I summarizes and develops the previously-published doctrine. Part II compares the coherence and objectivity of the CAPD to those of other doctrines and indicates the ways the CAPD can be operationalized.*

## A Confession

Prof. Benjamin M. Friedman of Harvard University wrote about my just-published book *The New Normal: Finding a Balancing Between Individual Rights and the Common Good*: “Nearly a half-century ago John Kenneth Galbraith famously argued that when changing economic conditions render the existing ‘conventional wisdom’ no longer applicable, either new thinking comes to the fore or unfortunate consequences ensue. Amitai Etzioni, surely one of America's broadest social thinkers today, now makes a parallel case that we need to adapt to new technological developments and new social forces. The range of concrete implications Etzioni draws out is astonishing: foreign policy, cyber-security, medical entitlements, and more. Even readers who reject his recommendations—and I suspect few will agree with all of them, in every area—will come away informed and stimulated, with their conventional wisdom usefully challenged.”

“Broad” is a critical term in academic discourse. Scholars are supposed to specialize and stick to their field. I confess: I did not. However, as I see it, I analyze a considerable number of different subjects mostly from one basic viewpoint, that of a liberal communitarian. I ask about the normative, social, political tools that are applied to form conclusions and policies. I see myself like a surgeon who deals with different patients and different malaise but always from a particular vantage point, his special way of cutting. (True, like surgeons, I do occasionally stray, and provide a diagnosis and prescription based on my general sociological training rather than any specialty.)

I should note that many of my articles (many of which have a second life as chapters of books) have been published in peer review academic journals. That means, of course, that they have been reviewed anonymously and accepted by specialized journals that are all far from broad. Others have been published in law reviews which are very competitive.

In an op-ed for *USA Today* on August 27, 2003, I wrote, "The American people will not accept ever-more casualties and an ever-steeper bill to pay for vain efforts to make Iraq into a Western democracy." Few made this prediction at that time. (I spelled out the reasons for this conclusion in a book, *Security First*.) I hold I should be judged on the validity of this prediction and its supporting analysis. And—that it should not matter that I also predicted in 1964 that focusing a large part of U.S. R&D resources on deep space (e.g., the moon) using manned missions was a mistake and that we could have gained much more, at much lower costs and fewer risks, if we invested more in near space (e.g., navigation and communication satellites) and unmanned missions, and above all in projects on Mother Earth (e.g., oceans exploration). It should matter if this analysis was a valid one. I hope readers will hence approach *The New Normal* not with seeking to measure its range, but whether my predictions will hold true and whether my prescriptions will improve our conditions.

The fact that in both cases I was concerned with the grounds on which we make policy further illustrates my earlier point that most times I merely apply one particular form of analysis to a variety of subjects.) I do confess though that I do not spend all my life as an academic. Occasionally I do write as a public intellectual, foreswearing footnotes and jargon, and engaging in advocacy. And—as an activist who demonstrated in the streets of New York City against the war in Vietnam and in Trafalgar Square against nuclear weapons.

I Read

Anand Gopal. *No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War Through Afghan Eyes*. New York: Metropolitan Books. \$27.00.

Jeff Madrick. *Seven Bad Ideas: How Mainstream Economists Have Damaged America and the World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2014. \$26.95.

Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2014. \$27.95.

Isabel Sawhill. *Generation Unbound: Drifting into Sex and Parenthood without Marriage*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. 2014. \$25.00. (A [review](#) in *The Economist* calls the book “clear, concise and admirably fair-minded.”)

“[Special Report: The World Economy.](#)” *The Economist*. October 4, 2014.

John Gray. “[The liberal delusion.](#)” *Prospect*. October 2014.

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Watch the latest videos from the Communitarian Network, including [remarks at Tel Aviv University School of Law](#), and “[The Poor Outlook on Work in the U.S.](#),” through our [YouTube Channel!](#)

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*For more about the communitarian project, please visit <http://icps.gwu.edu>. For more notes, please visit <http://blog.amitaiezioni.org>.*