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The New York Times

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A nice pope risks throne for renewal**Ross Douthat****OPINION**

The conversation has become predictable. A friendly acquaintance — a neighbor, a fellow parent, our real estate agent — asks about my work. I say I've been writing a book about the pope, and the acquaintance smiles and nods and says "Isn't he so wonderful?" or, "That must be an inspiring thing," or, "I have a friend who would love to read it." And then eventually I find myself saying, uncomfortably, "Well, they should know that it's not entirely favorable."

A pause, puzzled and slightly crestfallen. "But you're writing about the nice pope?"

Pope Francis is beloved. His papacy could end up a disaster.

The consistency of these exchanges is a testament to the great achievement of Pope Francis' five years on the papal throne. He leads a church that spent the prior decade embroiled in a grisly sex abuse scandal, occupies an office often regarded as a medieval relic, and operates in a media environment in which traditional religion generally, and Roman Catholicism especially, are often covered with a mix of cluelessness and malice.

And yet in a remarkably short amount of time — from the first days after his election, really — the former Jorge Bergoglio has made his pontificate a vessel for religious hopes that many of his admirers didn't realize or remember that they had.

Some of this admiration reflects the specific controversies he's stirred within the church, the theological risks he's taken in pushing for changes that liberal Westerners tend to assume Catholicism must eventually accept — shifts on sexual morality above all, plus a general liberalization in the hierarchy and the church.

But when people say, "He makes me want to believe again," as a lapsed-Catholic journalist said to me during one of these awkward "What do you have against Pope Francis?" conversations, they aren't usually paying close attention to the battles between cardinals and theologians over whether his agenda is farsighted or potentially heretical. Nor are they focused on his governance of the Vatican, where Francis is a reformer without major DOUTHAT, PAGE 10

The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM DEAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Fiction a fact of life for the president**WHITE HOUSE MEMO**
WASHINGTON

Latest false statement begs the question: Is he lying or just misinformed?

BY PETER BAKER

When President Trump told donors at a fund-raiser last week that he had invented a fact during a conversation with Canada's prime minister, the surprise was not that America's leader makes things up, but that he openly admitted it.

Or maybe admitted is the wrong word. He actually seemed to boast about it.

In the furor that followed the disclosure of his remarks, attention focused on the impact on relations with Canada and whether the president was right or wrong in his assertion about trade. But the episode goes to the heart of a more fundamental debate about Mr. Trump: When does he know the things he says are false, and when is he simply misinformed?

Mr. Trump, after all, has made so many claims that stretch the bounds of accuracy that full-time fact-checkers struggle to keep up. Most Americans long ago concluded that he is dishonest, according to polls. While most presidents lie at times, Mr. Trump's speeches and Twitter posts are embedded with so many false, distorted, misleading or unsubstantiated claims that he has tested even the normally low standards of American politics.

"His statement this week was another reminder of how cavalier he is with the truth," said Bill Adair, the founder of Politifact, the Pulitzer Prize-winning, nonpartisan fact-checking website owned by the Poynter Institute. "He seems so willing to say whatever suits him at that moment regardless of whether it's true. In all the time that I was editor of Politifact and in the time since when I've worked with fact-checkers all over the world, I've just never seen any political figure distort the truth so recklessly."

Mr. Trump's presidency has been marked from the start with false or misleading statements, such as his outlandish claims that more people came to his inauguration than any before and that at least three million unauthorized immigrants voted illegally against him, costing him the popular vote. He has gone on to assert that President Barack Obama wiretapped Trump Tower, a claim that his own Justice Department refuted, and that he would not benefit from his tax-cutting plan.

The lack of fidelity to facts has real-world consequences in both foreign affairs and domestic policymaking. FOR TRUMP, PAGE 4

USING PRIVATE DATA IN A 'CULTURE WAR'
Consultants for the Trump campaign breached the Facebook profiles of millions of Americans. PAGE 6

Cambodia's ruler digs in

STUNG TRANG, CAMBODIA**Hun Sen tightens his grip while embracing nation's relationship with Beijing**

BY HANNAH BEECH

As the sun rose over the murk of the Mekong River, the man who has ruled Cambodia for more than three decades, Prime Minister Hun Sen, clasped hands with the Chinese ambassador and closed dissenting news media outlets.

Cambodia has come to stand as the high-water mark for China's influence in Southeast Asia and as the stage for Mr. Hun Sen's evolution into one of Asia's most unshakable autocrats.

Mr. Hun Sen, 65, likes to be known as Lord Prime Minister and Supreme Military Commander and has said he plans to stay in power for another decade or two. He's making sure of it: In recent months, his government has dissolved Cambodia's main opposition party ahead of general elections set for July, jailed dozens of critics and closed dissenting news media outlets.

In Senate elections late last month, his Cambodian People's Party swept all the seats on offer.

Mr. Hun Sen's enduring grip on power has been supported by China's largess, which comes without the West's admonishments to protect human rights and democratic institutions.

"Having alienated Western partners, Hun Sen will rely on Beijing's political and financial support, drawing Cambodia closer to China as a result," concluded a worldwide threat assessment by the United States intelligence community.

Mr. Hun Sen's authoritarian descent reflects an overall retreat of democracy across Southeast Asia. There is also a perception across the region that the United States under President Trump has withdrawn its influence, leaving



China free to exercise its clout. While some countries, like Vietnam, nurse historic grievances with China and have tried to resist its economic magnetism, others, like Laos and Cambodia, seem on the path toward becoming client states of Beijing.

"Cambodia is in danger of returning to being a totalitarian state," said Mao Monyvann, a Cambodian former opposition lawmaker. "And the worst thing is that Hun Sen looked around and he saw that China supported him and that CAMBODIA, PAGE 2

Saudi research center uses nature's designs

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

BY JOSEPH GIOVANNINI

A decade and a king ago, Saudi Arabia started talking about, of all things, energy conservation, global warming and clean alternatives to oil.

Under King Abdullah, the state oil company, Saudi Aramco, began planning for the construction of the headquarters for a research center to devise a strategy for the country's oil future and economic diversification. In 2009, Aramco held a competition to design a campus in Riyadh — a state-of-the-industry architectural icon that would embody the research center's mission and double as a showcase where conferences by OPEC and others could be held while BBC cameras rolled.

The winner was the Iraqi-born Zaha Hadid, the sole female architect invited into the competition and an outspoken

progressive defining an image for a country that the king was cautiously changing. Her design for the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center, unveiled to the public last autumn, was geometrically ingenious, inspired by soap bubbles and honeycombs found in nature.

But its public opening, during the annual Saudi Design Week in October, proved to be posthumous for King Abdullah, as well as for Ms. Hadid. The king died in 2015, to be succeeded by his half brother, the 79-year-old King Salman. Ms. Hadid died a year later, at 65, of a heart attack. She never saw the completion of one of the most singular designs on her career, the first in her portfolio to be driven by the demands of climate and sustainability.

Many grandly conceived Saudi projects have never fully materialized, often because new rulers lacked interest in initiatives started by and named after SAUDI, PAGE 2



An exterior view of the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The center, designed by Zaha Hadid, has angular, tentlike pavilions.

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PAGE TWO

Cambodia's ruler digs in

CAMBODIA, FROM PAGE 1
America was not punishing other Asian countries for doing similar things, so he just went ahead with his crackdown."

BIG BUSINESS

China is Cambodia's largest benefactor, providing the country with nearly one-third of its foreign investment last year. Beijing has given Cambodia 100 tanks and armored personnel carriers.

"In terms of funding for infrastructure, we welcome any country that's willing," said Sun Chanthol, Cambodia's minister for public works and transport. "But so far, only the Chinese are responding so generously."

The United States and other Western countries, meanwhile, are retreating further. On Feb. 27, the Trump administration announced it was cutting aid to Cambodia because the country's Senate elections had "failed to represent the genuine will of the Cambodian people." And Germany placed visa restrictions last month on members of the Cambodian government, including on Mr. Hun Sen.

Mr. Hun Sen has long condemned Western powers for treating Cambodians as pawns in a geopolitical game. He has a point: The French colonized Cambodia and the Americans bombed the countryside. A state-building experiment by the United Nations spread graft. But his government's accusations have grown increasingly outlandish.

Dissenting voices have been branded as Western agents. Kem Sokha, the leader of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party, was detained in September and charged with treason, accused of plotting a United States-funded regime change. He denies the charges.

"The U.S. wants to break up Cambodia and destroy our country," said Phay Siphan, a government spokesman. "The U.S. is paranoid and wants the Cambodian government to be weak so it can come back to this region and chase China away."

DISTRUST OF THE UNITED STATES
During his 33 years leading Cambodia, Mr. Hun Sen has displayed a faultless sense of when to switch sides.

A son of farmers, he became a fighter for the Khmer Rouge, whose murderous rule from 1975 to 1979 resulted in the deaths of about a fifth of the national population.

"Yes, we were Khmer Rouge soldiers," said Dy Bit, Mr. Hun Sen's cousin. "There was nothing else to do."

Mr. Dy Bit's sister and neighbor were beaten to death by the radical communists.

"Some of us killed," he said, "and some of us were killed."



Tobacco fields near the village where Mr. Hun Sen grew up, in an eastern area of Cambodia that was heavily bombed by the United States during the Vietnam War.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM DEAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

But in 1977, Mr. Hun Sen defected to neighboring Vietnam. When Vietnamese troops ejected the Khmer Rouge from Phnom Penh two years later, Mr. Hun Sen, at 26, returned as the world's youngest foreign minister.

By the time the United Nations arrived in 1992 to administer a transitional authority, Mr. Hun Sen was firmly in control of Cambodia. He later sidelined his co-prime minister, whose party had won elections in 1993.

Throughout his political reinventions, perhaps only Mr. Hun Sen's antipathy toward the United States has remained unchanged.

He grew up in a wooden house near the Mekong, in a province that was heavily bombed by the Americans as the Vietnam War spilled across the border.

While he led the puppet administration installed by the Vietnamese, Mr. Hun Sen chafed at Washington's refusal to recognize his government. Instead, the United States, still smarting over its retreat from Vietnam, pushed for Cambodia to be represented at the United

Nations by the Khmer Rouge, which still held a corner of Cambodia.

Mr. Hun Sen has never been invited to the White House. But he has traveled to Beijing numerous times, and in 2016, President Xi Jinping of China visited Cambodia.

Shortly before Mr. Xi's trip, Mr. Hun Sen's government shielded Beijing from mild criticism by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations of China's expansive claims to the South China Sea.

During his visit, Mr. Xi described the two countries as "good neighbors, real friends who are loyal to each other."

Mr. Hun Sen's supporters suggest that Beijing is more sympathetic to his authoritarian impulses because that is the natural state of affairs in Asia.

"We only respect one ruler because in our history there was only one king," said Mr. Phay Siphan, the government spokesman. "The Chinese understand this, because they have closer blood to us."

Mr. Hun Sen, however, has also borrowed from Mr. Trump's playbook.

At the Mekong bridge ceremony, Mr.

Hun Sen pointed out New York Times journalists in the crowd and noted that the newspaper had been given "fake news" awards by Mr. Trump.

He then warned that if The Times' report was not suitably positive, "the Cambodian people will remember your faces."

Other times, he has been more direct. In a speech on March 3, Mr. Hun Sen called William Heidt, the United States ambassador to Cambodia, a "liar ambassador."

FACEBOOK AND CASH

Mr. Hun Sen has proved adept at using social media. The public relations firm Burson-Marsteller says that his interactions on Facebook make him the third-most engaged leader in the world, although the opposition accuses Mr. Hun Sen of buying his "likes" through click farms.

On a cool February morning, Mr. Hun Sen addressed 10,000 young garment workers on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. The speech was broadcast live on Facebook, and a stream of hearts and

thumbs up floated across Mr. Hun Sen's page.

After the hourlong talk, which strayed into the merits of drinking one's own urine and his recent struggle with diarrhea, Mr. Hun Sen posed for photos with members of the crowd. Every worker was given the equivalent of \$5 in cash in an envelope that specified the money was a gift from Mr. Hun Sen and his wife, Bun Rany.

Yet his Cambodian People's Party is not assured of the youth vote in the election scheduled for July 29. In the last election, in 2013, the opposition, buoyed by support from young Cambodians, threatened to unseat the ruling party.

Mr. Hun Sen's campaign strategy has been to position his government as the sole guarantor of peace in Cambodia.

"Without us, there would still be war, and you wouldn't have the choice to work in factories," he told the garment workers.

Yet nearly 70 percent of Cambodia's population is younger than 30. They have known no other leader but Mr. Hun Sen, and they appear eager for change.

Mr. Hun Sen, though, seems eager to keep politics a family concern. He has put his youngest son, Hun Manet, in charge of courting the nation's youth. Currently Cambodia's second-youngest lawmaker, Mr. Hun Manet has expressed interest in becoming prime minister.

Mr. Hun Sen's eldest son, Hun Manet, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, is widely considered to be angling for the job of commander in chief. The prime minister's second son, Hun Manith, is rising in the intelligence services.

"We have to remember that democracy is an important pillar, but it is not the only one," said Mr. Hun Manet, who was educated in the United States and Australia.

CHINA'S ECONOMIC LIFT
Mr. Hun Sen's Chinese backers echo the importance of stability.

"Under the leadership of Lord Prime Minister Hun Sen, Cambodia has maintained peaceful development and enjoyed lively economic growth," Xiong Bo, the Chinese ambassador, said at the Mekong ceremony.

Cambodia achieved 6.9 percent economic growth last year. In 2005, half of Cambodians lived below the poverty line. Less than a decade later, fewer than 14 percent did.

But even as millions of rural residents have graduated to factory work, expectations are rising along with income levels. Security officers have responded to workers' protests with bullets.

That puts all the more pressure on Mr. Hun Sen to attract Chinese money. Western investors have been put off by Cambodia's endemic corruption, not to mention the official anti-Western rhetoric.

In Sihanoukville, business is booming. In the coastal backwater once popular with Western backpackers, 20 new casinos have opened in the past two years. A dozen more are scheduled to begin operations this year.

The clientele is almost exclusively from China, and Chinese arrivals to Sihanoukville rose by nearly 200 percent last year.

In late January, Yun Min, the governor of Preah Sihanouk Province, wrote an internal report warning that so many Chinese workers had descended on Sihanoukville that the local economy was suffering. He denounced the influence of Chinese gangsters.

Mr. Hun Sen publicly dismissed Mr. Yun Min's criticism. Less than a week later, the governor seemed chastened.

"Like in any family, we might have disagreements with China," said Mr. Yun Min. "But our Lord Prime Minister Hun Sen is very clear that we still love our family."



From left: Chinese tourists at a casino's Lunar New Year banquet in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, where business is booming; students at a school in Phnom Penh named after Prime Minister Hun Sen; a couple's home in the capital, with Chinese decorations.

Saudi research center inspired by nature

SAUDI, FROM PAGE 1

their predecessors. But construction was substantially complete by the time of King Abdullah's death, and despite the throne's passing to a rival branch of the royal family, 135 full-time researchers and support staff members now occupy the offices of an operational building, with room for more experts as the institute develops over time. An independent endowment assures the research center full funding in perpetuity.

The mandate for the competition was to plan a building with a low carbon footprint for a scorching climate that necessitates air-conditioning much of the year. Summers that send temperatures above 110 degrees drove the design. Rather than just carpeting the roof with solar panels, plugging in sustainability as an afterthought, Ms. Hadid integrated energy-conserving forms into the design.

Working closely with DaeWha Kang, then the office's design director, Ms. Hadid turned to nature for lessons. "When you look deeply at nature, you find out why things look the way they look," Mr. Kang said. "You find systems that respond to environmental conditions that result in the forms you see."

Their research included sponges, leaves and the skins of reptiles. They found that the cellular geometry of soap bubbles and honeycombs reappeared throughout nature because they pack efficiently. "That's when the idea of cellular, hexagonal shell structures arranged

around courtyards came to us," Mr. Kang said.

Some environmental strategies were as simple and old as biology. "We found that so much of the genius of nature is passive design," he said. The architects also looked at the country's traditional earthen structures for passive solar techniques. They clad the shells of their honeycomb with heat-reflective glass-fiber concrete panels, with an airspace beneath to insulate the spaces inside. In the courtyards, they used stone paving and concrete panels to retain coolness.

In the 1980s, before three-dimensional software, Ms. Hadid sometimes swished drawings on the glass top of Xerox machines as the light tumbler rolled, to kill the stiffness in designs: She was interested in movement. For the research center, computers programmed for energy conservation did the same, distorting the hexagons, a rational process producing woozy but climate-efficient forms.

The architects configured hexagonal office labs around hexagonal courtyards, and as the building moved toward the desert, they graduated the size of the cells to house the library, auditorium, data farm and mosque.

Computers stretched and distorted each pavilion and courtyard to capture shade from the south and prevailing breezes from the north. The construction lines of the facade panels stretched over their steel frames. At the outskirts of the capital, pointed toward the desert

and Mecca — the building seemed ready to move.



The mosque at the center has a ceiling covered by a computer-generated pattern.

she entered the competition. In a culture where architectural traditions can separate the sexes, Ms. Hadid used her characteristically fluid spaces to break down barriers and encourage social mixing. During Design Week last fall, women and men, students and princes mingled freely, sharing food and conversation in common spaces. Veils were optional.

When the project started in 2009, King Abdullah was already 85 and ailing, and there was strong pressure to complete the project in his lifetime.

"Decisions were made very quickly," Mr. Kang said. "We'd generate a system and give the design to engineers to simulate wind flows and sun penetration in many feedback iterations. The design was shaped as much by the environment as by the basic will of the designer."

The King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center was conceived as a legacy project for the king, but, sadly, it proved to be a double legacy, the king's and Ms. Hadid's. If the building achieves the statue King Abdullah wanted, it was not just another trophy in Ms. Hadid's gallery of triumphs. Always open to change, she had moved on from her successes into new territories. In Riyadh, already in her 60s, she changed direction, becoming an architect she had never quite been, creating a design she had never quite done. Architectural beauty and sustainability were not mutually exclusive. Like her building, she adapted.

World

Star transgender athlete at Brazilian net

SÃO CAETANO DO SUL, BRAZIL

Tifanny Abreu is setting records and plans to play in the 2020 Tokyo Games

BY SHASTA DARLINGTON

When Tifanny Abreu slammed the volleyball over the net, her frizzy ponytail flying behind her, most spectators at a recent game moaned out loud: another point for the visitors.

But not everyone in the stands was rooting against her.

Even when Ms. Abreu travels with her team to away games, she often has a small, loyal group of fans cheering her on. This game in São Caetano do Sul, a satellite city of São Paulo, Brazil, played more than 200 miles away from her team's home base, was no exception.

Supporters wore pink and held colorful balloons to celebrate a woman who is now among Brazil's most talked about, and controversial, athletes.

One of the top-ranked players in Brazil's professional Superliga, the country's premier women's volleyball league, Ms. Abreu is transgender, which has made her a polarizing figure among those who follow the sport.

For her fans, she is an inspiration.

"If it weren't for Tifanny, I couldn't even be here," said Julia Bueno, a young transgender woman studying psychology, who was watching Ms. Abreu's team, Vôlei Bauru, compete this month against the hometown club in São Caetano do Sul.

"Sports games are not usually comfortable spaces for trans people," Ms. Bueno added. "She is doing so much for us, so we want to do something for her, too."

Volleyball is the second-most popular sport in Brazil, after soccer, and millions tune in for big games.

Ms. Abreu, 33, is the first transgender volleyball player to make it to Brazil's top ranks. If she qualifies for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo — which experts say is probable — she will be making history as one of the first openly transgender athletes to participate in the Games.

The 2020 Games are expected to be the first in which openly transgender athletes will compete, even though guidelines establishing eligibility based



Tifanny Abreu, center left, leaping to score a point for her team, Vôlei Bauru, during a game against the hometown club in São Caetano do Sul in São Paulo State, Brazil.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DADO GALDIERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

After joining the women's professional league last year, Ms. Abreu's performance on the court quickly caught the nation's attention. In less than a month, she was scoring the highest number of points a game on average. And in January, she beat the record set by one of Brazil's Olympic stars, Tandara Caixeta, for total points scored in a single game: 39 (a record Ms. Caixeta has since matched).

Ms. Caixeta has helped fuel the debate about any edge transgender athletes may have.

"I really respect her and her history," Ms. Caixeta said in an interview given to sports journalists after her record was broken. "But I don't agree with her participating in the feminine Superliga. It's a very delicate issue and it's not homophobic. It's physiological."

Ms. Abreu began playing volleyball at the age of 17 and eventually made it to the men's professional leagues in Europe. Toward the end of her time there, she adopted the name Tifanny.

In 2012 she decided to begin her transition to a woman, even if it meant giving up volleyball.

"I knew I was a girl since I was a child," she said. "I love volleyball, but it is just my job. The day I'm no longer working, I'll still be happy because I am me, Tifanny, the person I always imagined."

Before leaving Europe, she underwent sex reassignment surgery,

changed her name on all official documents and began hormone replacement treatment.

As her transition was starting, a long-running debate in the sports world about athletes like Ms. Abreu began to shift in her favor.

In January 2016, the International Olympic Committee decided to allow transgender men and women to compete without undergoing sex reassignment surgery. Athletes who have transitioned from female to male may boost their testosterone levels but must undergo tests and submit reports to avoid being accused of using a performance-enhancing drug.

Male-to-female transgender athletes are required to reduce the testosterone in their blood to below 10 nanomoles per liter. Typical values for women are 0.5 to 3 nanomoles per liter.

Ms. Abreu lowered her levels to 0.2 nanomoles. In 2017, the International Volleyball Federation and the Brazilian Volleyball Confederation authorized her to play on women's teams, and in December she started playing for her team in Bauru, a conservative agricultural hub.

Ms. Abreu, who at 6-foot 3-inches is tied for the tallest member of her team, has said herself that a transgender woman might have some advantages in volleyball, but she points out she is complying with all of the rules. Her teammates have spoken out in support.



Ms. Abreu, the first transgender player in Brazil's top volleyball ranks, with a fan. "Just like any other player, I'd like to go to the Olympics," she said.

"She's tall and strong, but nothing out of the ordinary for a spiker. She also makes mistakes," said Angélica Malinverno, Vôlei Bauru's captain.

"Most of us aren't from here," Ms. Malinverno added, referring to Bauru. "So we end up becoming one big family. Tifanny was accepted from the beginning. She's funny and likes to joke around."

The debate about advantages will

likely grow ahead of the 2020 Games amid anticipation that at least two openly transgender athletes could participate. The other probable athlete is Laurel Hubbard, a New Zealand weight lifter.

"It will be a historic moment," said Joanna Harper, a medical physicist and transgender athlete who advised the I.O.C. on the new guidelines. "This area is very controversial, and you will get a

number of opinions."

Ms. Harper, who published a study on transgender athletes, says transgender women who go through puberty as males do have advantages that cannot be eliminated completely through hormone therapy.

"It reduces muscle mass, but not to typical female averages," she said. "On average, transgender women are taller, bigger and stronger. For many sports, including volleyball, these are advantages."

But, she added, they also have disadvantages. The main one is they maintain their typically larger frames, but with reduced muscle mass and aerobic capacity.

For Hairton Cabral, the coach of the rival team from São Caetano do Sul, the solution is more studies on the performance of transgender athletes. "For coaches, it doesn't matter as long as it's legal — we just want the best performers. But the whole issue is very politicized, and the only way to stop that is with facts."

Ms. Abreu's team ended up losing the game. But she was the top scorer of the night, with 22 points, and the only player with fans from both teams waiting in long lines to snap a selfie with her.

"I am so proud to be able to be a model for them so they can grow up and play sports, too," she said. "The little girls who are inspired by me and also the young transsexuals."

"The day I'm no longer working, I'll still be happy because I am me, Tifanny, the person I always imagined."

on hormone levels have been in place since early 2016.

Brazil is a powerhouse in volleyball, and the women's national team has twice won Olympic gold, in 2008 and 2012.

"Just like any other player, I'd like to go to the Olympics," Ms. Abreu said in a postgame interview after greeting fans. "But I know it's not going to happen just because I'm getting all this attention. I've got to do my best as a player."

Ms. Abreu says she is trying to limit her media exposure after her success gave rise to widespread debate about whether male-to-female transitions give athletes an unfair advantage — an argument that has been going on at least since Renée Richards, a transgender woman professional tennis player, competed in the U.S. Open in 1977.

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In Israel's poor areas, legal woes don't dent Netanyahu's appeal

KIRYAT MALACHI, ISRAEL

BY ISABEL KERSHNER

In the more liberal bastions of Tel Aviv and its well-to-do suburbs, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's critics tut-tut with each new revelation in the intensifying bribery cases against him, condemning his attacks on the police and eagerly anticipating his political downfall with each former aide who turns state's witness.

But in the other Israel — poorer areas on the periphery, beyond the country's commercial center — Mr. Netanyahu is widely hailed as a great orator and a world-class statesman who has brought prosperity and safeguarded the country's security in a hostile neighborhood.

"The more they attack us, the stronger we get," said Yehuda Ayyash, 58, a greengrocer in the blue-collar town of Kiryat Malachi in southern Israel. It was a view shared by friends sitting around a table outside a kiosk selling lottery tickets in the shabby town center. "Gifts, no gifts. There is nobody in politics who is unblemished. It's give and take." Besides, Mr. Ayyash added, "there is nobody else."

The group of friends flaunted a newspaper sympathetic to Mr. Netanyahu, its front page blaring the results of its latest poll showing a spike in support for the prime minister even as he faced possible criminal charges.

The seeming dissonance between a rise in the polls and the prime minister's deepening legal troubles makes com-



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT, IMAGES OF FORMER ISRAELI PRIME MINISTERS, INCLUDING MENACHEM BEGIN, GOLDA MEIR, YITZHAK RABIN AND THE CURRENT ONE, BENJAMIN NETANYAHU.

plete sense to Mr. Netanyahu's defiant base in Kiryat Malachi and other strongholds of his conservative Likud party. In these parts, Bibi, as he is lovingly nicknamed, is extolled as a popular hero who is persecuted by a liberal news media; a leader without peer whose peccadilloes are easily forgiven.

Mr. Netanyahu, Israel's longest serving prime minister after the country's founder, David Ben-Gurion, has been mired for months in corruption investigations involving allegations of some \$300,000 worth of illicit gifts, including expensive cigars, jewelry and champagne, and back-room dealings to ensure more favorable media coverage.

Last month, the police recommended that he be charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust in two separate cases. He has since become a suspect in a third, weightier scandal involving an Israeli telecommunications and media tycoon.

Another former prime minister ac-

cused of graft did not fare as well. Ehud Olmert, who originally came from Mr. Netanyahu's Likud party, was forced out of office under public and political pressure in 2008. Conversely in Mr. Netanyahu's case, the more sensational the leaks from the investigations, the more popular he seems to grow.

Though a recent coalition crisis was

resolved and elections are not sched-

uled until late 2019, a steady stream of

newspaper and television polls have put Likud in front. Those polled consistently chose Mr. Netanyahu as the most suitable candidate, by far, for prime minister.

The country's Zionists pioneers of Eu-

ropean descent, socialists who domi-

nated the state after it was founded in

1948, were struggling to populate the

more remote corners of their young and

poor country. So they directed the new

immigrants to these once-desolate out-

posts while denigrating their culture.

The tents and shacks gave way to

rows of public housing that became

hubs for the have-nots on the margins of

Israeli society. The development towns

have since expanded to include neat

neighborhoods of single-family homes

and have absorbed immigrants from

Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union.

Former Prime Minister Menachem

Begin was the first leader to harness

the feelings of resentment among the Se-

phardic Jews, helping to sweep Likud to

its first victory in 1977. The power of the

conservative camp has only grown

since. But among Netanyahu supporters, the underdog sentiment and distrust of the old, liberal elite still run deep.

Israel has long been polarized be-

tween a hawkish right wing that has tak-

en a harder line toward the Palestinians

and a leftist camp more willing to com-

promise on territory to reach an accom-

modation.

"The Sephardim in Israel won't

change their skin, even if there's no food

in the house," said the greengrocer, Mr.

Ayyash, whose family came from Mo-

rocco. He described how his mother

would sit in their tin shack with six of her

11 children on her lap to keep them off

the wet floor in winter.

Mr. Ayyash said all five of his children,

now married, also supported Likud.

"It's genetics," he said. "I don't need to tell them anything."

Like Mr. Begin, Mr. Netanyahu is Ash-

kenazi, while the current leader of the

center-left Labor Party, Avi Gabay, is

the child of Moroccan immigrants. Ne-

anyahu supporters deride Mr. Gabay

WORLD

Smuggling of U.S. technology rises sharply

WASHINGTON

Officials thwart thousands of export attempts since 2013, including weapons

BY RON NIXON

Foreign smugglers are trying to ship advanced American technologies — which can be used for weapons and spy equipment — to China, Russia and other adversaries at rates that outpace shadowy and illegal exports during the Cold War, according to United States officials and experts.

In one recent case, a Texas businessman was paid \$1.5 million to buy special radiation-resistant circuits for space programs in Russia and China. The businessman, Peter A. Zuccarelli, was working with a smuggling ring run by a Pakistani-born American citizen. Court documents show that Mr. Zuccarelli created fake shipping documents and mislabeled the circuits as parts for touch-screen computers. He was sentenced in January to four years in prison.

In another case, the Chinese citizen Fuyi Sun sought to buy M60 carbon fiber, which is used in military drones, from undercover federal agents at Homeland Security Investigations. Using the word “banana” as code for “carbon fiber,” Mr. Sun took steps to conceal and export \$25,000 worth of the material that he bought shortly before he was arrested. He was sentenced in September to three years in prison.

“He openly claimed in an email that he was closely associated with the military,” said Pete Geras, a special agent with Homeland Security Investigations, a branch of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

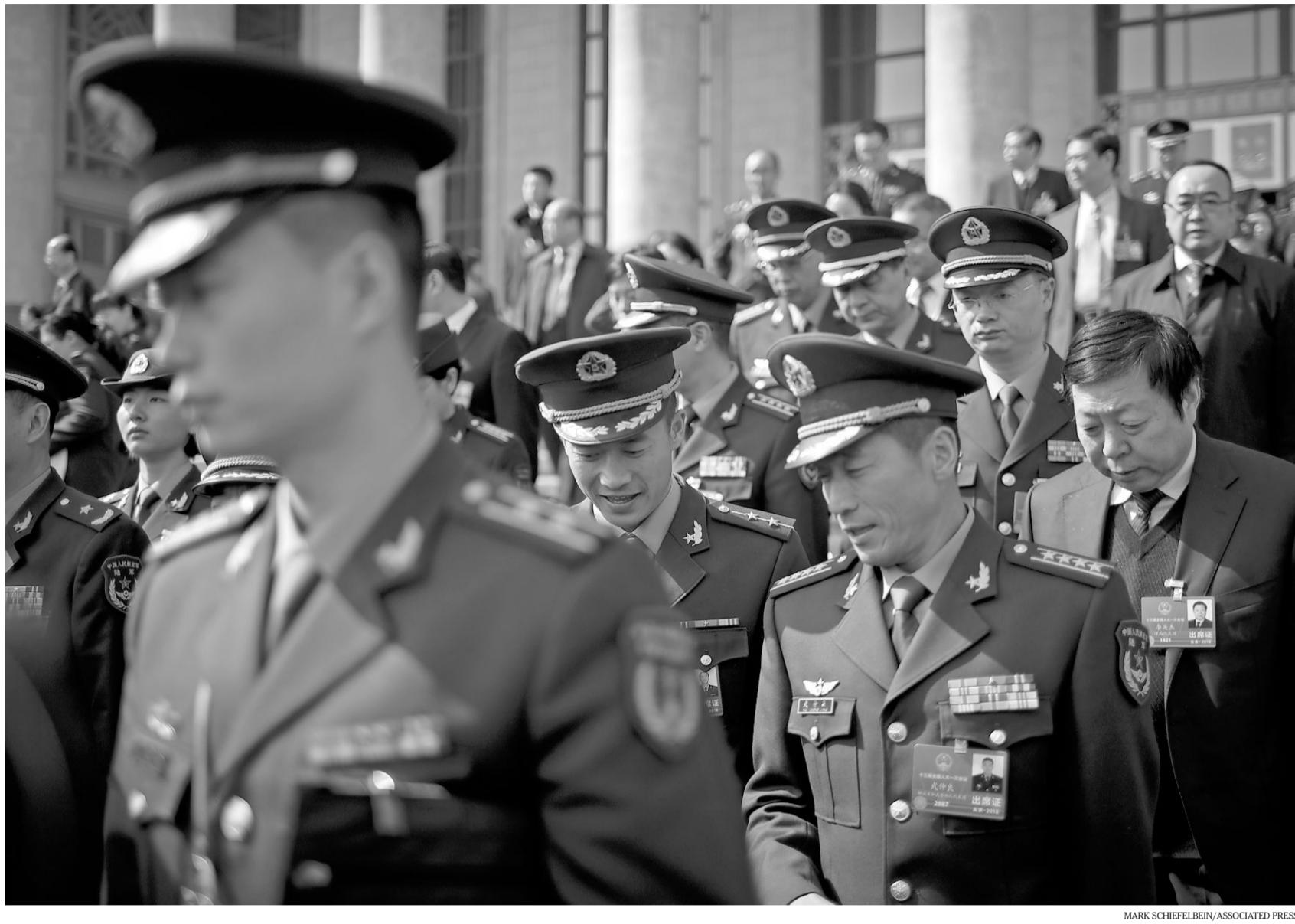
Since 2013, nearly 3,000 people have been swept up by Homeland Security Investigations alone for trying to smuggle weapons and sensitive technologies — including circuits or other products that can be used in ballistic missiles, drones or explosive devices. In that time, according to documents from the Department of Homeland Security, federal agents also seized more than 7,000 items, including microchips and jet engine parts, set to be smuggled out.

Exporting such items is tightly controlled by the American government to prevent hostile nations or terrorist organizations from turning them into weapons or devices that could harm the United States. In the past, such technology has turned up in improvised explosive devices in Iraq, Russian fighter jets and Chinese military satellites.

Russia, China, North Korea and Iran are some of the countries most active in trying to illegally acquire American military technology, officials said.

Adversaries have long deployed spies and black market dealers to obtain American technology. But the scale of current efforts is unusual — “worse than anything that occurred during the Cold War,” said Robert S. Litwak, the vice president for scholars and director of international security studies at the Wilson Center in Washington.

“During the Cold War, there was essentially one threat: the former Soviet Union,” said Mr. Litwak, who served on the National Security Council during the Clinton administration. “Now there are numerous threats.”



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Military delegates leaving the National People's Congress in Beijing. Officials say China is among the countries most actively trying to acquire American military technology.



KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Russia's Soyuz MS-07 spacecraft. Recently, a Texas businessman was caught trying to buy radiation-resistant circuits for space programs in Russia and China.



ALEXANDER KOTS/KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

A satellite-guided bomb on a Russian SU-34 jet fighter. Russia lacks the advanced circuitry needed to match American satellite and weapons systems, experts say.

The rise is connected to an increase in foreign hackers who are infiltrating the American defense industry and technology companies to steal blueprints for weapons and sensitive technology.

“So they can sit in Iran or North Korea, out of reach of U.S. authorities, and just take what they need without trying to smuggle the item out of the country or getting someone to steal it,” said Patrick McElwain, who runs a special export enforcement unit at Homeland Security Investigations.

China and Russia have poured billions of dollars into research and development as they challenge the United States for global superpower status. But experts said their military and space programs remain years behind, unable to engineer advanced circuitry needed to match American satellites and weapons systems.

China recently announced its largest increase in military spending since 2015, to pay for an ambitious modernization program that would include developing

stealth fighters, aircraft carriers and antisatellite missiles.

Officials at the Chinese Defense Ministry could not be reached for comment.

The Russian Defense Ministry also declined to comment. But Ruslan N. Pukhov, director of the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, Russia's leading research institution for the defense industry and arms trade, said claims of an increase in Russian attempts to steal American military technologies were overblown.

“It is my firm belief that such cases have not become more widespread,” Mr. Pukhov said. “The public just pays more attention to them now because of the strained relations between Russia and the United States.”

But some American experts, citing arrests and convictions of people who have been caught, said technology stolen from the United States had helped adversaries develop new weapons systems. Officials point to the sentencing last year of Alexander Posobilov of

Military contractors and technology companies have reported a tenfold increase in the number of suspicious inquiries they receive from individuals asking about weapons systems and technology, according to a person familiar with the queries who was not authorized to discuss current investigations.

Despite the dismantling of some smuggling rings, the federal authorities remain outgunned, said David Albright, the president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington. “The mechanisms to defeat export controls multiply faster than the efforts to stop them,” he said.

Ivan Nechepurenko contributed reporting from Moscow, and Steven Lee Myers from Beijing.

Fiction has become a fact of life for President Trump

TRUMP, FROM PAGE 1

Trump's supporters rarely defend him as a truth teller, but argue that all presidents lie and point to false statements made by his predecessors, like Bill Clinton (Monica Lewinsky), Mr. Bush (Iraq) and Mr. Obama (health care).

Advisers say privately that Mr. Trump may not always be precise but is speaking a larger truth that many Americans understand. Flyspecking, tut-tutting critics in the news media, they say, fail to grasp the connection he has with a section of the country that feels profoundly misled by a self-serving establishment. To them, the particular facts do not matter as much as this deeper truth.

“I think presidents, all of them, actually have a habit of thinking that they're right, whether they're right or not,” said Patrick H. Caddell, a political consultant who shared research with Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign. “He's more guilty of that than some sort of preplanned and mendacious statements.”

But Mr. Caddell, a strategist for Jimmy Carter when he was beaten up by the media as naive for promising never to tell a lie, said Americans see Mr. Trump in context. “In Washington, D.C., facts don't matter; people have narratives, including the media, and they just ignore anything that doesn't fit that,” he said. “Why should the American people punish him when they think the entire political culture” is that way?

Mr. Trump's reported conversation with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada occurred during a fund-raiser on Wednesday in St. Louis for Josh Hawley, a Republican Senate candidate in Missouri. Reporters were not permitted in the room, but an audio recording was later obtained by The Washington Post.

As Mr. Trump told the story, the Canadian leader assured him that the United States did not have a trade deficit with Canada.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment on Friday. Mr.



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

His statement was a “reminder of how cavalier he is with the truth. He seems so willing to say whatever suits him at that moment regardless of whether it's true.”

“I said, ‘Wrong, Justin, you do,’ ” Mr. Trump said, according to a transcript published by The Post. “I didn't even know, Josh, I had no idea. I just said, ‘You're wrong.’ You know why? Because we're so stupid. And I thought they were smart. I said, ‘You're wrong, Justin.’ He said, ‘Nope, we have no trade deficit.’ ”

The president also asserted that Japan bars American cars from its market through an odd test. “They take a bowling ball from 20 feet up in the air and

they drop it on the hood of the car,” he said. “And if the hood dents, then the car doesn't qualify.”

At a briefing the next day, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House press secretary, acknowledged that the bowling ball anecdote was false. “Obviously, he's joking about this particular test,” she said, “but it illustrates the creative ways some countries are able to keep American goods out of their markets.”

And even though the United States trade representative's office says the United States had a \$12.5 billion trade surplus with Canada in 2016, she asserted that Mr. Trump was actually right because he was including items not included by the government agency. “Once you include those, it shows that there actually is a deficit,” she said. She

later said on Twitter that the president was referring only to trade in goods, not trade in both goods and services, the common measurement.

But the point was that Mr. Trump acknowledged to the donors that he made the claim having no idea whether it was right or wrong. And it was not even the only time that day he made false statements.

In a public conversation at a Boeing factory in St. Louis, he lauded the number of jobs created on his watch and said “nobody would have believed that could have happened.”

But in fact, 2.5 million new jobs were created in his first 13 months as president, almost exactly the same as the 2.6 million created in the 13 months before he became president and Mr. Obama was in the White House.

As a businessman, Mr. Trump often fabricated or exaggerated to sell a narrative or advance his interests. In his memoir, “The Art of the Deal,” he called it “truthful hyperbole” or “innocent exaggeration.”

When trying to lure investors to a casino project, he had bulldozers dig on one side of the site and dump the dirt on the other to give the impression that the project was making progress. He would call reporters and pretend to be a publicity agent for himself named John Barron or John Miller. He claimed to earn \$1 million from a speech when it was \$400,000. He claimed to be worth \$3.5 billion when seeking a bank loan, four times what the bank eventually found.

“He's a salesman and that's not about telling the truth, that's not the DNA about being a salesman,” said Gwenda Blair, the author of “The Trumps: Three Generations of Builders and a President,” a biography of his family. “The DNA of being a salesman is telling people what they want to hear. And he's got it.”

Jack O'Donnell, who was president of the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, recalled Mr. Trump telling New Jersey officials that he had secured bank financing for a new casino and would not use junk bonds, only to turn around and then use junk bonds.

“In my experience with him, there are times when he just compulsively lies and there are times when he strategically lies,” said Mr. O'Donnell, who wrote a scathing book about Mr. Trump. “In both regards, after he says something, I do think he believes that whatever he says becomes his reality. That's my experience with him. It doesn't have to be anything big but it certainly can be.”

Mr. Trump continued his practice as president. The Washington Post's fact-checker documented 2,140 false or misleading claims in Mr. Trump's first year in office, a rate of nearly six a day, many of them repeated even after he was corrected.

A Quinnipiac University poll in January showed that only 35 percent of Americans consider him honest, while 60 percent do not. In their first terms, more than 50 percent considered Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama honest, although those numbers fell for both by their second terms.

Republicans as well as Democrats express concern. Amanda Carpenter, a former aide to Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and former Senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina, has a new book coming out in May called “Gaslighting America: Why We Love It When Trump Lies to Us.” On the cover is an illustration of Mr. Trump with a Pinocchio nose.

Her explanation is that Mr. Trump's supporters do not see deception, they see a commitment to winning. “Donald Trump's lies and fabrications don't horrify America,” says the publisher's summary of her book. “They enthrall us.”

When Xi speaks, Chinese officials scramble to please

BEIJING

BY CHRIS BUCKLEY
AND KEITH BRADSHER

After China's president, Xi Jinping, ordered the city of Beijing to cut its population, his protégé ordered the bulldozing of the homes of tens of thousands. After Mr. Xi told northern provinces to cut smog, cadres juked home heaters and stoves, leaving residents shivering.

These days when Mr. Xi speaks, officials from the top of the Communist Party to the lowest village committee snap to unflinching attention. The pressure on them may grow now that Mr. Xi has swept away the constitutional term limit on his presidency, strengthening his grip on the country.

But as recent cases suggest, Mr. Xi's daunting power may undercut effective policy or provoke public ire when lower officials scramble over each other to meet or exceed expectations, often leading to overreach and disarray.

"Whenever China has large-scale, top-down campaigns or initiatives, there are problems with overzealous officials and overcompliance," said Elizabeth Economy, an expert on Chinese domestic and foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, who has written a book on policy under Mr. Xi.

"China under Xi Jinping will be particularly prone to this challenge," she said. "He operates almost entirely in a top-down manner, and his emphasis on control means that feedback mechanisms — in terms of signals from both the market and civil society — don't function well."

Many Chinese people have welcomed Mr. Xi's brusque, commanding way after what they saw as the listless rule of his predecessor, Hu Jintao. "Orders don't make it out of Zhongnanhai" — the party headquarters in Beijing — became a common lament under Mr. Hu, who handed the reins to Mr. Xi in 2012.

Since then, Mr. Xi has cast himself as a decisive, unwavering leader with a long-term plan to make China a prosperous and respected great power. Last week, the legislature, the National People's Congress, passed a constitutional

amendment erasing a limit of two presidential terms and setting Mr. Xi on course to run China for at least another decade.

Mr. Xi began his second five-year term as president after a unanimous vote by legislators on Saturday. Officials have said that extending Mr. Xi's time in office beyond this term will ensure stable policies for decades. The swift, secretive way in which Mr. Xi secured his extended reign let officials know that he would bulldoze past any resistance to get his way.

"Xi effectively is signaling to opponents of his policy agenda that they cannot wait him out and that they need to get on board with his agenda," said Ryan Hass, a former director for China at the National Security Council who is now a fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Mr. Xi has already established sweeping authority, through his anticorruption drive, and by creating numerous new powers and leadership groups that channel decisions to him. His overhaul of the military also demonstrated a willingness to take on entrenched bureaucracies.

A reorganization of ministries and agencies revealed at the congress on Tuesday may let Mr. Xi and other leaders better steer bureaucracies. And a new government lineup, to be announced on Monday, is likely to put Mr. Xi's close allies atop his administration, making it easier to communicate and refine orders. One such ally, Wang Qishan, became vice president on Saturday.

But Mr. Xi's centralization of power over the sprawling bureaucracy can also create confusion and overshooting.

Officials are often reluctant to risk making decisions that draw suspicion of corruption or political disloyalty, a Beijing research organization said last year. But when ordered to act, cadres are often eager to avoid suspicion of sloth. The outcome, several experts said, can be a confounding mix of overreaction to orders and reluctance to act on one's own initiative.

"Things are shot out of the top of the party, and they're unworkable when they're implemented," said James McGregor, the chairman of greater China for APCO Worldwide, who advises companies dealing with Chinese officialdom. "It's very hard to get an official to make decisions these days, because they're all scared of doing the wrong thing."

In recent years, Mr. Xi has installed officials loyal to him across most provinces and ministries, and ardent supporters have sworn unquestioning obedience. Their awed obedience can encourage rigid enforcement of even vague or conflicting policies.

And Mr. Xi's crackdown on rights law-

yers, rights advocates, independent-minded journalists and online debate has silenced the voices of many people who could question misguided government decisions.

Nobody sees such overreach producing anything as calamitous as Mao's Great Leap Forward and subsequent famine. But Sun Liping, a well-known sociologist at Tsinghua University in Beijing, has warned against a mobilized

bureaucracy stoking excessive zeal among subordinates.

"This mobilizing form of government sometimes evolves into a race between officials. If you're tough, then I'll be even tougher. If you go to extremes, I'll go further," Professor Sun wrote about recent cases of official overreach in an essay that spread on China's internet last month before being censored.

Late last summer, to cut coal use in

northern China and replace it with cleaner natural gas, officials tore out coal stoves and suspended coal deliveries. But when the cold arrived, natural gas supplies fell short because planned pipelines had not all been finished.

Mr. Xi's plan to reduce Beijing's population had progressed fitfully until last year, when his protégé, Cai Qi, apparently eager to make his mark as the new party chief in Beijing, seized on a deadly

apartment building fire to push mass demolitions. Tens of thousands of migrant workers lost their homes.

Officials are also racing to turn Mr. Xi's biggest visions into reality, including Xiong'an New Area, a model city planned 80 miles south of Beijing.

Not all of Mr. Xi's policies appear prone to waves of excess zeal. Since destabilizing policy gyrations in 2015, financial policy has settled down, said

Barry Naughton, a professor at the University of California, San Diego, who studies Chinese economic policymaking. But if China's economy hits a rough patch, that stability may not last.

"It seems to me that bandwagoning, sycophancy, toadying are all becoming much more fundamental," Professor Naughton said. "That's got to change the way the system functions as a whole."



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

Business

Exploiting private data in 'culture war'

LONDON

Consultants for Trump breached Facebook profiles of millions in electorate

BY MATTHEW ROSENBERG,
NICHOLAS CONFESSORE
AND CAROLE CADWALLADR

As the upstart voter-profiling company Cambridge Analytica prepared to wade into the 2014 American midterm elections, it had a problem.

The company had secured a \$15 million investment from Robert Mercer, a wealthy Republican donor, and wooed his political adviser, Stephen K. Bannon, with the promise of tools that could identify the personalities of American voters and influence their behavior. But it did not have the data to make its new products work.

So the company harvested private information from the Facebook profiles of more than 50 million users without their permission, according to former Cambridge employees, associates and documents, making it one of the largest data leaks in the social network's history. The breach allowed Cambridge to exploit the private social media activity of a huge swath of the American electorate, developing techniques that underpinned its work on President Trump's campaign in 2016.

An examination by The New York Times and The Observer of London reveals how Cambridge Analytica's drive to bring to market a potentially powerful new weapon put the company — and wealthy conservative investors seeking to reshape politics — under scrutiny from investigators and lawmakers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Christopher Wylie, who helped found Cambridge and worked there until late 2014, said of its leaders: "Rules don't matter for them. For them, this is a war, and it's all fair."

"They want to fight a culture war in America," he added. "Cambridge Analytica was supposed to be the arsenal of weapons to fight that culture war."

Details of Cambridge's acquisition and use of Facebook data have surfaced in several accounts since the business began working on the 2016 campaign, setting off a furious debate about the merits of the company's so-called psychographic modeling techniques.

But the full scale of the data leak involving Americans has not been previously disclosed — and Facebook, until now, has not acknowledged it. Interviews with a half-dozen former employees and contractors, and a review of the company's emails and documents, have revealed that Cambridge not only relied on the private Facebook data but still possesses most or all of the trove.

Cambridge paid to acquire the personal information through an outside researcher who, Facebook says, claimed to be collecting it for academic purposes.

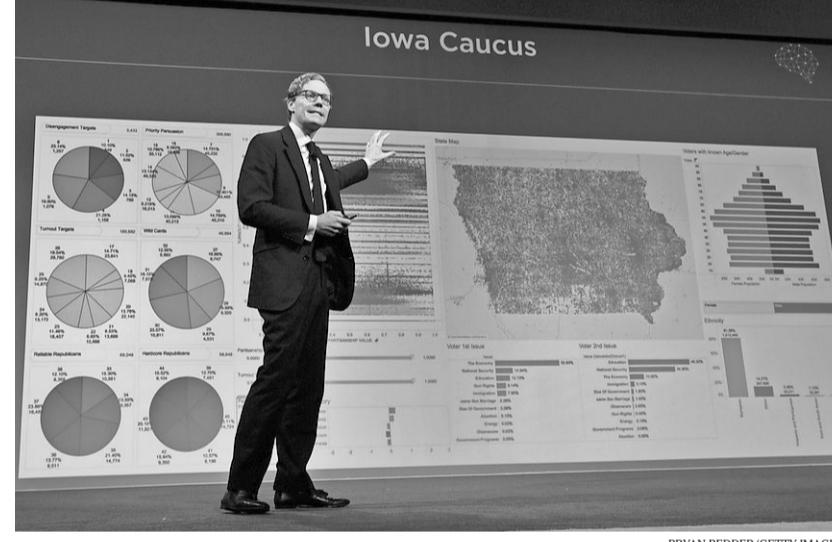
During a week of inquiries from The Times, Facebook downplayed the scope of the leak and questioned whether any of the data still remained out of its control. But on Friday, the company posted a statement expressing alarm and promising to take action.

"This was a scam — and a fraud," Paul Grewal, a vice president and deputy general counsel at the social network, said in a statement to The Times earlier on Friday.

He added that the company was suspending Cambridge Analytica, Mr. Wylie and the researcher, Aleksandr Kogan, a Russian-American academic, from Facebook. "We will take whatever steps are required to see that the data in question is deleted once and for all —



Christopher Wylie, who helped found Cambridge Analytica and worked there until 2014. He said of its leaders: "Rules don't matter for them. For them, this is a war, and it's all fair."



Alexander Nix, the chief executive of Cambridge Analytica. Congress and the British Parliament have questioned him about the company's political activities.

and take action against all offending parties," Mr. Grewal said.

Alexander Nix, the chief executive of Cambridge Analytica, and other officials had repeatedly denied obtaining or using Facebook data, most recently during a parliamentary hearing last month. But in a statement to The Times, the company acknowledged that it had acquired the data, though it blamed Dr. Kogan for violating Facebook's rules and said it had deleted the information as soon as it learned of the problem two years ago.

In Britain, Cambridge Analytica is facing intertwined investigations by Parliament and government regulators into allegations that it performed illegal work on the "Brexit" campaign. The country has strict privacy laws, and its information commissioner announced

on Saturday that she was looking into whether the Facebook data was "illegally acquired and used."

In the United States, Mr. Mercer's daughter, Rebekah, a board member, Mr. Bannon and Mr. Nix received warnings from their lawyer that it was illegal to employ foreigners in political campaigns, according to company documents and former employees.

Congressional investigators have questioned Mr. Nix about the company's role in the Trump campaign. And the Justice Department's special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, has demanded the emails of Cambridge Analytica employees who worked for the Trump team as part of his investigation into Russian interference in the election.

While the substance of Mr. Mueller's interest is a closely guarded secret, doc-

uments viewed by The Times indicate that the company's British affiliate claims to have worked in Russia and Ukraine. And the WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, disclosed in October that Mr. Nix had reached out to him during the campaign in hopes of obtaining private emails belonging to Mr. Trump's Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

The documents also raise new questions about Facebook, which is already grappling with intense criticism over the spread of Russian propaganda and fake news. The data Cambridge collected from profiles, a portion of which was viewed by The Times, included details on users' identities, friend networks and "likes." Only a tiny fraction of the users had agreed to release their information to a third party.

"Protecting people's information is at the heart of everything we do," Mr. Grewal said. "No systems were infiltrated, and no passwords or sensitive pieces of information were stolen or hacked."

Still, he added, "it's a serious abuse of our rules."

READING VOTERS' MINDS

The Bordeaux flowed freely as Mr. Nix and several colleagues sat down for dinner at the Palace Hotel in New York in 2013, Mr. Wylie recalled in an interview. They had much to celebrate.

Mr. Nix, a brash salesman, led the small elections division at SCL Group, a political and defense contractor. He had spent much of the year trying to break into the lucrative new world of political data, recruiting Mr. Wylie, then a 24-year-old political operative with ties to veterans of President Obama's campaigns. Mr. Wylie was interested in using inherent psychological traits to affect voters' behavior and had assembled a team of psychologists and data scientists, some of them affiliated with Cam-

bridge University. The group experimented in the Caribbean and Africa, where privacy rules were lax or nonexistent and politicians employing SCL were happy to provide government-held data, former employees said.

Then a chance meeting brought Mr. Nix into contact with Mr. Bannon, the Breitbart News firebrand who would later become a Trump campaign and White House adviser, and with Mr. Mercer, one of the richest men on earth.

Mr. Nix and his colleagues courted Mr. Mercer, who believed a sophisticated data company could make him a kingmaker in Republican politics, and

Information in Facebook profiles was thought to reveal more about people than their parents or romantic partners knew.

his daughter Rebekah, who shared his conservative views. Mr. Bannon was intrigued by the possibility of using personality profiling to shift America's culture and rewrite its politics, recalled Mr. Wylie and other former employees, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they had signed nondisclosure agreements. Mr. Bannon and the Mercers declined to comment.

Mr. Mercer agreed to help finance a \$1.5 million pilot project to poll voters and test psychographic messaging in Virginia's gubernatorial race in November 2013, where the Republican attorney general, Ken Cuccinelli, ran against Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic fundraiser. Though Mr. Cuccinelli lost, Mr. Mercer committed to moving forward.

The Mercers wanted results quickly, and more business beckoned. In early 2014, the investor Toby Neugebauer and other wealthy conservatives were pre-

paring to put tens of millions of dollars behind a presidential campaign for Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, work that Mr. Nix was eager to win.

When Mr. Wylie's colleagues failed to produce a memo explaining their work to Mr. Neugebauer, Mr. Nix castigated them over email.

"IT'S 2 PAGES!! 4 hours work max (or an hour each). What have you all been doing?" he wrote.

Mr. Wylie's team had a bigger problem. Building psychographic profiles on a national scale required data the company could not gather without huge expense. Traditional analytics companies used voting records and consumer purchase histories to try to predict political beliefs and voting behavior.

But those kinds of records were useless for figuring out whether a particular voter was, say, a neurotic introvert, a religious extrovert, a fair-minded liberal or a fan of the occult. Those were among the psychological traits the company claimed would provide a uniquely powerful means of designing political messages.

Mr. Wylie found a solution at Cambridge University's Psychometrics Centre. Researchers there had developed a technique to map personality traits based on what people had liked on Facebook. The researchers paid users small sums to take a personality quiz and download an app, which would scrape some private information from their profiles and those of their friends, activity that Facebook permitted at the time. The approach, the scientists said, could reveal more about a person than their parents or romantic partners knew — a claim that has been disputed.

When the Psychometrics Centre declined to work with the company, Mr. Wylie found someone who would: Dr. Kogan, who was then a psychology professor at the university and knew of the techniques. Dr. Kogan built his own app and in June 2014 began harvesting data for Cambridge Analytica. The business covered the costs — more than \$800,000 — and allowed him to keep a copy for his own research, according to company emails and financial records.

All he divulged to Facebook, and to users in fine print, was that he was collecting information for academic purposes, the social network said. It did not verify his claim. Dr. Kogan declined to provide details of what happened, citing nondisclosure agreements with Facebook and Cambridge Analytica, though he maintained that his program was "a very standard vanilla Facebook app."

He ultimately provided more than 50 million raw profiles to the company, Mr. Wylie said, a number confirmed by a company email and a former colleague. Of those, roughly 30 million — a number previously reported by The Intercept — contained enough information, including places of residence, that the company could match users to other records and build psychographic profiles. Only about 270,000 users — those who participated in the survey — had consented to having their data harvested.

Mr. Wylie said the Facebook data was "the saving grace" that let his team deliver the models it had promised the Mercers.

"We wanted as much as we could get," he acknowledged. "Where it came from, who said we could have it — we weren't really asking."

Mr. Nix tells a different story. Appearing before a parliamentary committee last month, he described Dr. Kogan's contributions as "fruitless."

AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT

Just as Dr. Kogan's efforts were getting underway, Mr. Mercer agreed to invest \$15 million in a joint venture with SCL's elections division. The partners devised a convoluted corporate structure, form-

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Sheikh detained by Saudis in unknown location

BY DANNY HAKIM
AND BEN HUBBARD

He supplies coffee to Starbucks. He owns much of Ethiopia. And he is known as "Sheikh Mo" in the Clintons' circle.

But the gilded life of Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Al Amoudi took a sharp turn in November. Sheikh Amoudi, the gregarious 71-year-old son of a Yemeni businessman and his Ethiopian wife, was swept up with hundreds of billionaires, princes and other well-connected figures in what the Saudi government says is an anti-corruption campaign that has seized more than \$100 billion in assets.

Many other detainees, who were initially kept at a Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh, have been released, including Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, the well-known international investor. Sheikh Amoudi's cousin Mohammed Aboud Al Amoudi, a property developer, was also let go.

But Sheikh Amoudi, once called the world's richest black person by Forbes, has not been freed, leaving a vast empire that employs more than 70,000 people in limbo. He controls businesses in Ethiopia, where he is the largest private employer and the most prominent backer of the authoritarian government, in Sweden, where he owns a large fuel

company, and in London, which he has used as a base to set up a number of companies.

"He was in the Ritz-Carlton, but we have been told by his family members that he was moved, along with others, to another hotel," Sheikh Amoudi's press office said in an email responding to questions. "Unfortunately we do not know where. He is in regular contact with his family and is being treated well."

While Sheikh Amoudi lacks a princely pedigree, he is in other ways an archetype of those entangled in the kingdom's power play: a billionaire with assets stretching across the world who had close ties to previous governments.

dragnet followed an extensive investigation by a newly formed anti-corruption committee headed by the country's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. The prince, who has fashioned himself as a reformer, is in the midst of a charm offensive to bolster diplomatic and financial ties to the West and is scheduled to visit Washington this month.

The detentions, however, have been almost entirely opaque. There have been no signs of collaboration with Western law enforcement and no charges made public, leading some critics to view it as a power and money grab, rather than a bona fide anti-corruption effort.

Saudi officials have denied that anyone has been mistreated, but people with knowledge of the detentions have said that as many as 17 of the detainees required medical attention because of abuse, and one later died in custody.

Saudi officials have declined to com-

ment on the charges against individual detainees or on their status, citing privacy laws.

The Saudi government has said its

Within Sheikh Amoudi's empire, there is much to sort through.

He moved to the kingdom as a teenager. Although there are few firm details about how a commoner came to vast wealth, he managed to forge influential connections. The most important was

Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, who served as defense minister and crown prince before his death in 2011. Sheikh Amoudi ran businesses that depended on the prince's money and position, associates said. Another of his allies was Khalid bin Mahfouz, a billionaire who

later became enmeshed in the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International in 1991, at the time one of the largest private banks in the world.

In the 1980s, Sheikh Amoudi set up Mohammed International Development Research and Organization Companies, a conglomerate known as Midroc. Early on, his biggest deal was a multibillion-dollar project to build the kingdom's underground oil storage capacity. Engineering and construction became core businesses for Midroc, but it operates factories producing products as varied as pharmaceuticals and furniture in the region, according to its website. Sheikh Amoudi also owns half of a steel company called Yanbu and a large chain of gas stations called Naft.

Like another detainee, Sheikh Alwaleed, Sheikh Amoudi extended his reach to the United States. He donated millions of dollars to the Clinton Foundation and offered his private plane to fly Bill Clinton to Ethiopia in 2011. That offer sparked debate within the foundation, leaked emails showed.

"Unless Sheikh Mo has sent us a \$6 million check, this sounds crazy to do," Amitabh Desai, the foreign policy director of the Clinton Foundation, wrote in one of the emails.

That was not the first time that Sheikh

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Billboards with the image of Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince. His crackdown on corruption scooped up a sheikh who owns much of Ethiopia.

CHRISS J RATCLIFFE/GETTY IMAGES

Consultants harvested profiles from Facebook

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ing a new American company, owned almost entirely by Mr. Mercer, with a license to the psychographics platform developed by Mr. Wylie's team, according to company documents. Mr. Bannon, who became a board member and investor, chose the name: Cambridge Analytica.

The company was effectively a shell. According to the documents and former employees, any contracts won by Cambridge, originally incorporated in Delaware, would be serviced by London-based SCL and overseen by Mr. Nix, a British citizen who held dual appointments at Cambridge Analytica and SCL. Most SCL employees and contractors were Canadian, like Mr. Wylie, or European.

But in July 2014, Laurence Levy, an American election lawyer advising the company, warned that the arrangement could violate laws limiting the involvement of foreign nationals in American elections.

In a memo to Mr. Bannon, Ms. Mercer and Mr. Nix, the lawyer, then at the firm Bracewell & Giuliani, warned that Mr. Nix would have to recuse himself "from substantive management" of any clients involved in United States elections. The data company would also have to find American citizens or green card holders, Mr. Levy wrote, "to manage the work and decision making functions, relative to campaign messaging and expenditures."

In summer and fall 2014, Cambridge Analytica dived into the American midterm elections, mobilizing SCL contractors and employees around the country. Few Americans were involved in the work, which included polling, focus groups and message development for the John Bolton Super PAC, conservative groups in Colorado and the campaign of Senator Thom Tillis, the North Carolina Republican.



Aleksandr Kogan built an app to help harvest data for Cambridge Analytica.

Cambridge Analytica, in its statement to The Times, said that all "personnel in strategic roles were U.S. nationals or green card holders." Mr. Nix "never had any strategic or operational role" in an American election campaign, the company said.

Whether the company's American ventures violated election laws would depend on foreign employees' roles in each campaign, and on whether their work counted as strategic advice under Federal Election Commission rules.

Cambridge Analytica appears to have exhibited a similar pattern in the 2016 election cycle, when the company worked for the campaigns of Mr. Cruz and then Mr. Trump. While Cambridge hired more Americans to work on the races that year, most of its data scientists were citizens of the United Kingdom or other European countries, according to two former employees.

Under the guidance of Brad Parscale, Mr. Trump's digital director in 2016 and now the campaign manager for his 2020 re-election effort, Cambridge performed a variety of services, former campaign officials said. That included designing target audiences for digital ads and fund-raising appeals, modeling voter turnout, buying \$5 million in television ads and determining where Mr. Trump

should travel to best drum up support. Cambridge executives have offered conflicting accounts about the use of psychographic data on the campaign. Mr. Nix has said that the company's profiles helped shape Mr. Trump's strategy — statements disputed by other campaign officials — but also that Cambridge did not have enough time to comprehensively model Trump voters.

In a BBC interview last December, Mr. Nix said that the Trump efforts drew on "legacy psychographics" built for the Cruz campaign.

AFTER THE LEAK

By early 2015, Mr. Wylie and more than half his original team of about a dozen people had left the company. Most were liberal-leaning, and had grown disenchanted with working on behalf of the hard-right candidates the Mercer family favored.

Cambridge Analytica, in its statement, said that Mr. Wylie had left to start a rival company, and that it later took legal action against him to enforce intellectual property claims. It characterized Mr. Wylie and other former "contractors" as engaging in "what is clearly a malicious attempt to hurt the company."

Near the end of 2015, a report in The Guardian revealed that Cambridge Analytica was using private Facebook data on the Cruz campaign, sending Facebook scrambling. In a statement at the time, Facebook promised that it was "carefully investigating this situation" and would require any company misusing its data to destroy it.

Facebook verified the leak and — without publicly acknowledging it — sought to secure the information, efforts that continued as recently as August 2016. That month, Facebook lawyers reached out to Cambridge Analytica contractors. "This data was obtained and used without permission," said a letter that was obtained by The Times. "It cannot be used legitimately in the future and must be deleted immediately."

Mr. Grewal, the Facebook deputy general counsel, said in a statement that both Dr. Kogan and "SCL Group and Cambridge Analytica certified to us that they destroyed the data in question."

But copies of the data still remain beyond Facebook's control. The Times viewed a set of raw data from the profiles Cambridge Analytica obtained.

While Mr. Nix has told lawmakers that the company does not have Facebook data, a former employee said he had recently seen hundreds of gigabytes on Cambridge servers, and that the files were not encrypted.

Today, as Cambridge Analytica seeks to expand its business, Mr. Nix has mentioned some questionable practices. In January, in undercover footage filmed by Channel 4 News in Britain and viewed by The Times, he boasted of employing front companies and former spies on behalf of political clients around the world, and even suggested ways to entrap politicians in compromising situations.

All the scrutiny appears to have damaged Cambridge Analytica's political business. No American campaigns or "super PACs" have yet reported paying the company for work in the 2018 midterms, and it is unclear whether Cambridge will be asked to join Mr. Trump's re-election campaign.

In the meantime, Mr. Nix is seeking to take psychographics to the commercial advertising market. He has repositioned himself as a guru for the digital ad age — a "Math Man," he puts it. In the United States last year, a former employee said, Cambridge pitched Mercedes-Benz, MetLife and the brewer AB InBev, but has not signed them on.

Matthew Rosenberg, Nicholas Confesore and Carole Cadwallader reported from London. Gabriel J.X. Dance contributed reporting from London, and Danny Hakim from New York.

Investing for the greater good

Wealth Matters

PAUL SULLIVAN

Jean Case, the chief executive of the Case Foundation, is a leader in impact investing, a movement that aims to force social change by minimizing or eliminating investors' exposure to companies that harm the world and achieve a solid return.

Yet Ms. Case, an early signer of the Giving Pledge, a commitment by high-net-worth individuals to give at least half of their net worth to charity, said she had struggled to fill just one of her portfolios with diversified impact investments.

"I haven't found across-the-board, great impact opportunities," said Ms. Case, who created the foundation with her husband, Steve Case, the co-founder of AOL, the digital media and technology company.

If Ms. Case, with her resources and deep network in the impact-investing world, labored to fully align one of her portfolios, what chance does an ordinary affluent investor have?

Although great progress has been made with mutual funds, exchange-traded funds and private investment opportunities, the short answer is, it can be hard for any investor.

But that challenge has seemingly increased interest in impact investing, which can be difficult to achieve if a solid return is the goal. It is also hard to measure, given the differing definitions of impact investing.

Gone are the simple days when investing with a conscience meant excluding alcohol, tobacco and firearms from a portfolio. Today's impact investors look for a more rigorous standard of good while achieving a maximum return.

Here are some tips that even the most committed impact investor should consider.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Ms. Case said she started trying to move one portfolio to full impact investments about two and a half years ago.

"I created a portfolio and let the wealth advisers run it while I was out talking about impact investing," Ms. Case said. After one of her quarterly meetings, she said, she realized she was invested in companies that did not match her criteria.

So she created a screening process to find only the impact investments she wanted, like companies with diverse boards solving 21st-century problems like alternative energy.

"It's taken longer, and it's been harder to do," she said.

This does not come as a complete surprise to Douglas M. Cohen, managing director at Athena Capital Advisors. Mr. Cohen said that not all the options for impact investing had good track records.

Kristin Hull, the founder, chief executive and chief investment officer of Nia Impact Capital, took a different approach to this challenge.

In 2007, when her family set up a foundation after the sale of her father's trading firm to Goldman Sachs, she decided to invest only in companies that were looking to have an impact on the world and had women in leadership roles.

She has continued this approach as she expanded her firm into advising other investors. She said one fund, which is small at \$20 million, was up more than 37 percent last year — or 17 percentage points higher than the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index in the same period.

"We're just focusing on those companies that are playing their part in an inclusive and sustainable economy," she said.



Jean Case, the chief executive of the Case Foundation, says she has had trouble identifying diversified impact investments.

DEFINE YOUR PRIORITIES

One of the challenges of measuring "impact investment" the way someone would measure automobile investments or oil and gas investments is the variety of ways to interpret the term.

"Everyone has a different definition of impact investments," Mr. Cohen said. "Some people say no fossil fuels, and that's their negative screen. Others say, 'I understand these companies are going to exist, but I want to find the one that is doing it the best.'"

Ms. Case said she needed three things to assess an impact investment: intention to have impact, measurement of results and transparency.

Erika Karp, founder and chief executive of Cornerstone Capital Group and a friend of Ms. Case's, said the two defined impact investing differently.

"All investments have impact," Ms. Karp said. "Jean has spent years as more of a purist than I am. She wants measurement that is more precise. I believe it's more diffuse."

A screening process that is too narrow can also increase the risk because clients may wind up investing in new companies or first-time funds without track records, Mr. Cohen said.

For instance, one of his clients wanted to invest only in hedge funds and private equity funds that were led by women, he said. What the firm came up with were funds that it would not approve for all clients because of their risk. But he suggested a slight change to the client: Loosen the criteria to focus on companies with one to two women on the senior investment team.

"That was the essence of what we were trying to get to," Mr. Cohen said.

FILL THE GAPS

Amit Bouri, chief executive of the Global Impact Investing Network, said the three most robust areas for impact investing were private debt, private equity and real assets, like land or rental properties. And those areas

work for the most affluent investors who can afford to have their money tied up in less-liquid investments.

But, Mr. Bouri said, "there are gaps in the market" when it comes to big, publicly traded companies. "If you're trying to have large-cap public equity exposure, it's hard to invest in Fortune 500 companies and identify them as impact."

Instead, he said, with big companies, investors may need to apply a "better than the rest" approach.

A screening process that is too narrow can also increase risk.

With this metric, for instance, the oil and gas giant Exxon Mobil fares well relative to its peers because it has a diverse board.

Andrew Lee, head of impact investing and private markets at UBS Wealth Management, said measuring impact returns could be complicated when judging new companies against existing companies that are trying to make track records.

"While there are sets of metrics by sector that are accepted, it is difficult to aggregate across the portfolio," he said. "You have to keep it by sector."

GRADE ON A CURVE

The individual trade-offs in impact investing make it difficult to create a general index like the S&P 500 to track, although several providers have tried.

R. Paul Herman, chief executive of Human Impact & Profit Investor, or HIP Investor, has developed a measurement framework for impact investments that is not unlike that of a college chemistry course. The HIP Investor Ratings provide what amounts to an actual grade and also a grade on a curve.

Mr. Herman said a good raw score for a fund was in the range of 55 to 60 in terms of its impact on society. And the relative score allows an investor to

see how that fund performs against similar funds.

Companies use the measurement to gauge their investments. STOK, an architecture and engineering firm, wanted its 401(k) offerings to align with its progressive values as a company, so it asked Mr. Herman to rate its fund with HIP Investor Ratings.

Ms. Karp said investors who focused on smaller-scale investments could be purer in their measurements, but her goal was to invest trillions of dollars to effect big change.

"One of the things Cornerstone believes is, to really have impact on the world, we need to move trillions of dollars," she said. "To do that, you need to evolve the standard of what is the discipline of impact investing."

One solution, Ms. Karp said, would be to consider impact measurements in all investments.

SET YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Setting expectations is crucial in the selection and measurement of impact investments because the manager will otherwise fail to deliver what the client wants.

"I think it's important to lay things out up front," Ms. Karp said. "There should be no excuses."

The HIP ratings include the fund's returns as another factor in actual and adjusted grades for companies.

Most of the fund returns in the STOK 401(k) plan, for example, are from the middle to upper end of the HIP range.

And Mr. Bouri said his network had developed themes that people could invest in, like clean energy and affordable housing.

Still, to increase the power of impact investments, all investors will need to consider investments in that light.

"It cannot be a do-gooder thing," Ms. Case said. "We don't want to have diversity because it's a box we check. We want to have diversity because we'll be a stronger economy in America and around the world."

Saudis hold billionaire in limbo



The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Al Amoudi was among a number of high-profile figures held there after a wave of arrests last year.

SHEIKH, FROM PAGE 6

Amoudi's name had surfaced in the United States. Three years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, a lawsuit by the owner of the World Trade Center described Sheikh Amoudi as a "material sponsor of international terrorism" because of his funding of controversial Islamic charities. Both sides agreed to a dismissal the next year, and a spokesman for Sheikh Amoudi attributed the suit to a case of mistaken identity.

In Ethiopia, Sheikh Amoudi's allies portray him as a philanthropist and a champion of African growth.

"I am a Saudi investor, born in Africa, with an Ethiopian mother, of which I am proud," he said in a speech in Washington in 2014. "I have a special relationship with my birth country by investing in all of Africa — north, south, east, west."

Sisay Assefa, a professor at Western Michigan University, has known Sheikh Amoudi for years and set up a foundation with his support.

"He should be released immediately," he said. Sheikh Amoudi, he added, "has transformed many lives."

But he has also been a polarizing figure. Sheikh Amoudi's reach in Ethiopia has been so pervasive that a 2008 State Department cable, made public by WikiLeaks, said that "nearly every enterprise of significant monetary or stra-

tegic value privatized since 1994 has passed from the ownership of the Government of Ethiopia" to "one of Al Amoudi's companies." That called into question the "true competitiveness of the process," the cable said.

Sheikh Amoudi has opened his deep

His loyalty to the party has even crossed borders. When a popular expatriate group in the United States called the Ethiopian Sports Federation in North America invited an opposition leader to speak in 2010, Sheikh Amoudi set up a rival group.

"When he was imprisoned, it divided public opinion," said Semahagn Gashu Abebe, an assistant professor of international studies at Endicott College. "The opposition is happy because they think it will greatly weaken the regime."

But for Ethiopia's governing party, he said, "it's a loss."

Many see Sheikh Amoudi less as a benevolent local son than a Saudi privateer. Some of his mining operations, particularly in a region of Ethiopia called Oromia, have caused resentment. "The government and people around the government would definitely miss him," said Henok Gabisa, a visiting academic fellow at Washington and Lee University School of Law. "I'm sure people from the Oromia region would never miss him, because they feel like they were robbed of their natural resources."

As Mr. Gabisa put it, "Literally his presence and his absence make a huge difference in Ethiopia."

David K. Kirkpatrick, Kate Kelly and Seiam Gebrekidan contributed reporting.

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Opinion

Missing in the fight against anti-Semitism

The leaders of major U.S. Jewish organizations have been focused on Israel, not the brewing storm in their own country.

Jonathan Weisman

Anti-Semitic hate crimes in America are on the rise, up 57 percent in 2017 from 2016, the largest single-year jump on record, according to the Anti-Defamation League. That increase came on top of the rise in incidents in 2016 that coincided with a brutal presidential campaign.

I have personally seen the anti-Semitism, in online insults, threatening voice mail messages and the occasional email that makes it through my spam filter.

If not quite a crisis, it feels like a proto-crisis, something to head off, especially when the rise of anti-Semitism is combined with hate crimes against Muslims, blacks, Hispanics and immigrants. Yet American Jewish leaders — the heads of influential, established organizations like the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Federations of North America — have been remarkably quiet, focused instead, as they have been for decades, on Israel, not the brewing storm in our own country.

But American Jews need to assert a voice in the public arena, to reshape our quiescent institutions and mold them in our image. And Jewish leadership must reflect its congregants, who are not sheep.

When the Anti-Defamation League, a century-old institution founded to combat anti-Semitism, released its guide to the “Alt Right and Alt Lite” last year, Ohio’s Republican state treasurer, Josh Mandel, who is Jewish, actually expressed support for two of the people on the list: Mike Cernovich and Jack Posobiec, conservative provocateurs who have found notoriety in the Trump era. “Sad to see @ADL_National become a partisan witch hunt group targeting people for political beliefs. I stand with @Cernovich & @JackPosobiec,” Mr. Mandel proclaimed on Twitter above a link to Mr. Cernovich’s screed charging that the league was trying to have him killed.

Mr. Cernovich advocates I.Q. tests for immigrants and “no white guilt,” and is an unapologetic misogynist. Last summer, he circulated a cartoon depicting H.R. McMaster, the White House national security adviser, as a dancing marionette with George Soros pulling his strings and a disembodied, wrinkled hand labeled “Rothschilds” controlling strings attached to Mr. Soros.

Mr. Posobiec has been one of the promulgators of fake news, including the “Pizzagate” story that claimed that Hillary Clinton helped run a child sex-trafficking ring out of a pizza parlor and the claim that a young Democratic National Committee staff member, Seth Rich, was murdered by the Clinton campaign.

For drawing attention to these men, the Anti-Defamation League was tarred as a partisan organization by an elected Jewish Republican. I did not see any organized effort to rally around the institution, one of the few major Jewish groups in the United



DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

States that is still not predominantly engaged in debate over Israel.

Institutions matter, but they do not survive on their own. At the moment, the Anti-Defamation League is an institution under concerted attack — and it is not being defended. And so far, nothing else has arisen to forcefully take a stand in the Jewish fight against bigotry.

Truth must also be defended, which is what groups like the league and the Southern Poverty Law Center try to do as they expose hate. To most of us, at least for now, the notion that Mr. Rich, who was fatally shot on a Washington street in 2016, was murdered by Democrats because he was leaking emails to WikiLeaks is absurd. Mr. Rich’s family, on Tuesday, filed a lawsuit against Fox News for promoting the conspiracy story.

But in the alternative universe of the alt-right, that theory was taken as truth, not because the ranks of the alt-right have found logic in such stories but because those stories feed the larger narrative of a debauched world of liberalism that needs cleansing by fire. The lies are too valuable to the larger movement.

For Jews, this is personal. Had ordinary Germans and Poles and Ukrainians and Austrians and Frenchmen not played along, had they continued to shop in Jewish establishments and visit Jewish doctors, the Final Solution may, just may, not have been quite so final. To stand up to creeping

totalitarianism, we needn’t throw ourselves under the tank treads. We just need to not play the game.

American Jews have not taken a strong stand. And refusal to play that game can be collective. If the vinyl banners proclaiming “Remember Darfur” that once graced the front of many American synagogues could give way in a wave to “We Stand With Israel,” why can’t they now give way en masse to “We Stand Against Hate”?

Why can’t the domestic apparatus of the American Jewish Committee reconstitute itself at the request of Jewish donors and members, and the

Anti-Defamation League assert itself, like the Southern Poverty Law Center, in the arena of bigotry without fear of being charged with partisanship?

In the early 1930s, as Hitler came to power, consolidated control and blamed the Communists for the Reichstag fire, the Brown Shirts of the Nazi movement clashed furiously with German Communists. The German people largely stayed silent, shunning both factions. That anarchic moment always comes to mind when I watch the black-clad, masked antifa protesters preparing for their showdowns with the khaki-wearing alt-right. Antifa cannot be allowed to represent the most vibrant form of resistance, not if the great mass of the American electorate is to join in.

When I was in high school in Georgia, I went to a small leadership retreat sponsored by Rotary International. Around a campfire, the other kids passed around a Bible and took turns reading — from the New Testament, of course. My dread grew as the Good Book drew nearer. Would I hide my Judaism, read a passage on the

teachings of Jesus and pretend, or do something, anything, else? When the book was passed to me, I acted impulsively, slammed it shut and said, “This is a service organization, not a religious organization” and fled — to an empty cabin where I slept apart and alone.

The next day, one of the Rotarians took me aside and told me what I had done was brave, but suggested that I should have turned to my own part of the Bible — Psalms, Proverbs, Exodus or Genesis — and read something of personal significance.

Looking back, I believe he was right. What he suggested would mean embracing Judaism as a vital part of America pluralism — and finding the spiritual meaning in the religion. It’s what I should have done then and what I hope American Jews do now.

JONATHAN WEISMAN is an editor in the Washington bureau of The New York Times and the author of *((Semitism)): Being Jewish in America in the Age of Trump*, from which this essay was adapted.

The audience at Park East Synagogue in New York for a discussion by Representative Carolyn Maloney last year about an increase in anti-Semitic hate crimes.

In praise of A.D.H.D.

The disorder can be an asset in our frenetic world.

Leonard Mlodinow

Ten years ago, when my son Nicolai was 11, his doctor wanted to put him on medication for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. “It would make him less wild,” I explained to my mother, who was then 85. “It would slow him down a bit.”

My mother grumbled. “Look around you,” she said in Yiddish. “Look how fast the world is changing. He doesn’t need to slow down. You need to speed up.”

It was a surprising recommendation from someone who had never learned to use a microwave. But recent research suggests she had a point: Some people with A.D.H.D. may be naturally suited to our turbocharged world.

Today the word “hyperactive” doesn’t just describe certain individuals; it also is a quality of our society. We are bombarded each day by four times the number of words we encountered daily when my mother was raising me. Even vacations are complicated — people today use, on average, 26 websites to plan one. Attitudes and habits are changing so fast that you can identify “generational” differences in people just a few years apart: Simply by analyzing daily cellphone communication patterns, researchers have been able to guess the age of someone under 60 to within about five years either way with 80 percent accuracy.

To thrive in this frenetic world, certain cognitive tendencies are useful: to embrace novelty, to absorb a

wide variety of information, to generate new ideas. The possibility that such characteristics might be associated with A.D.H.D. was first examined in the 1990s. The educational psychologist Bonnie Cramond, for example, tested a group of children in Louisiana who had been determined to have A.D.H.D. and found that an astonishingly high number — 32 percent — did well enough to qualify for an elite creative scholars program in the Louisiana schools.

It is now possible to explain Professor Cramond’s results at the neural level. While there is no single brain structure or system responsible for A.D.H.D. (and some believe the term encompasses more than a single syndrome), one cause seems to be a disruption of the brain’s dopamine system. One consequence of that disruption is a lessening of what is called “cognitive inhibition.” The human brain has a system of filters to sort through all the possible associations, notions and urges that the brain generates, allowing only the most promising ones to pass into conscious awareness. That’s why if you are planning a trip to Europe, you think about flying there, but not swimming.

But odd and unlikely associations can be valuable. When such associations survive filtering, they can result in constructive ideas that wouldn’t otherwise have been thought of. For example, when researchers apply a technique known as transcranial stimulation to interfere with key structures in the filtering system, people become

more imaginative and inventive, and more insightful as problem solvers.

Individuals with A.D.H.D. naturally have less stringent filters. This can make them more distractible but also more creative. Such individuals may also adapt well to frequent change and thus make for good explorers. Jews whose ancestors migrated north to Rome and Germany from what is now Israel and the Palestinian territories show a higher proportion of the A.D.H.D. gene variant than those Jews whose ancestors migrated a shorter distance south to Ethiopia and Yemen. In fact, scientists have found that the farther a group’s ancestors migrated, the higher the prevalence of the gene variant in that population.

Or consider the case of the Ariaal,

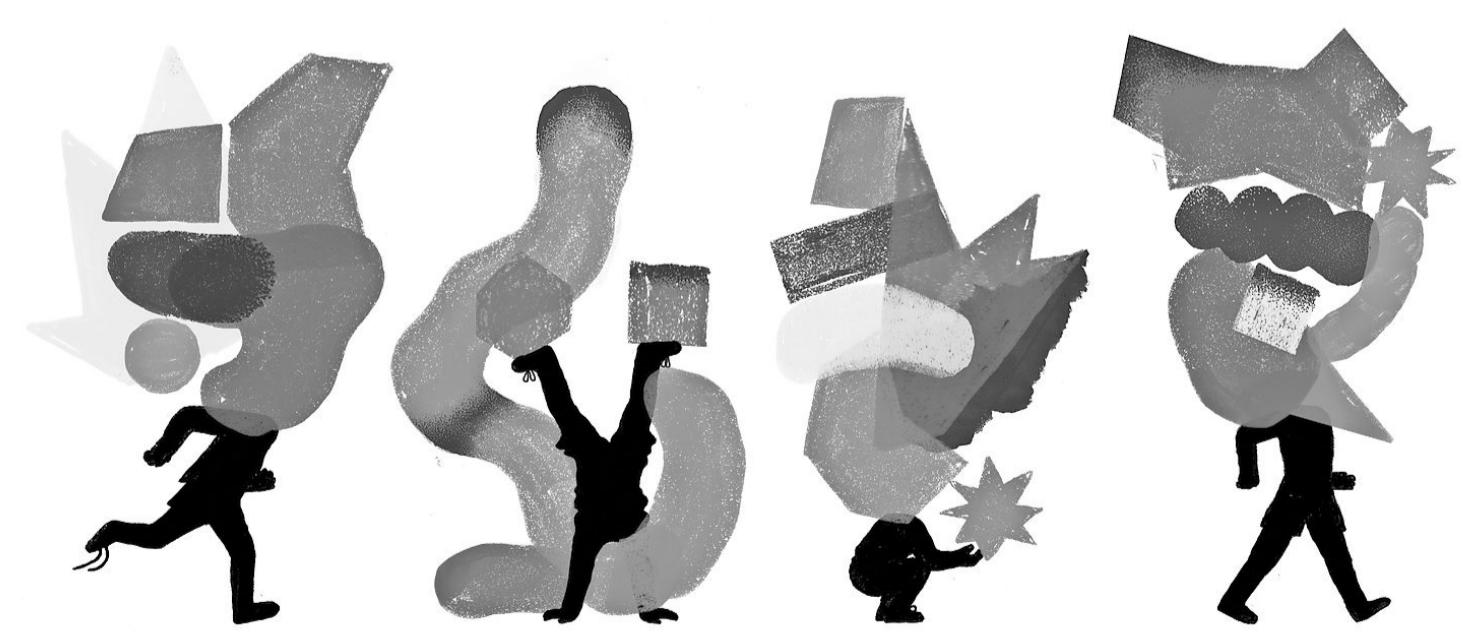
Kenyan tribe whose members throughout most of its history were wild-animal herders. A few decades ago, some of its members split off from the main group and became farmers.

Being a wild-animal herder is a good job if you are naturally restless; subsistence farming is a far tamer occupation. Recently, the anthropologist Dan Eisenberg and collaborators studied whether people with A.D.H.D. might thrive in the former lifestyle but suffer in the latter. They found that among the herders, those who possessed a gene that predisposed them to A.D.H.D. were, on average, better nourished. Among the farming Ariaal, the opposite was true: Those who lacked the genetic predisposition for A.D.H.D. were, on average, better

nourished. Restlessness seemed to better suit a restless existence.

A.D.H.D. is termed a disorder, and in severe forms it can certainly disrupt a person’s life. But you might view a more moderate degree of A.D.H.D. as an asset in today’s turbulent and fast-changing world. My mother, now 95, long ago realized that speed is the essence of our era. Her intuition about Nicolai proved correct, and she has lived to watch her grandson thrive without taking the A.D.H.D. medication she was dead set against.

LEONARD MLODINOW is a physicist and the author of the forthcoming book *Elastic: Flexible Thinking in a Time of Change*, from which this article is adapted.



SARAH MAZZETTI

The New York Times

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FRAUD TESTS LIMITS OF DISRUPTION TALE

Investors entranced by the Silicon Valley myth were no match for an American whiz-kid con artist.

Dozens of biotechnology start-ups across the United States are investing in the research and development that Big Pharma has stopped funding. Clementia, for instance, is zeroing in on rare bone diseases. Catabasis Pharmaceuticals is focused on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and other terrible neurological conditions. Quanterix and others are developing blood-based diagnostic tests to help doctors offer more targeted cancer treatments, for example.

The pipelines and progress of these companies are visible, and their clinical trial results knowable, since they conform to Food and Drug Administration protocols as well as Securities and Exchange Commission investor regulations, in the case of publicly held companies.

Theranos, a company that claimed to have re-invented blood testing, and thus a big swath of medicine itself, conformed to none of this. Its founder, the far-too-famous Elizabeth Holmes, controlled the voting stock, the board of directors and the corporate messaging to execute one of the most outrageous acts of corporate prestidigitation since Enron convinced us that it had reinvented energy. Enron was so good at it that even Newton might have been an investor.

Claiming it had come up with a portable analyzer that could perform a full range of tests with only a pinprick of blood, Theranos cast a medical spell over sophisticated investors, the public and the media. But on last week, the company settled fraud charges leveled by the S.E.C. against Ms. Holmes; the former Theranos president Ramesh Balwani has also been charged but will go to trial.

The agency accused Ms. Holmes and the company of raising \$700 million from investors by faking data, orchestrating tests and simply lying to investors and the media to cover up that they had no device that actually worked and were mainly using outside laboratories to assess blood samples.

Ms. Holmes, who did not admit or deny wrongdoing, will pay a \$500,000 fine, which seems trivial given that the company was once valued at \$9 billion, purportedly making her Silicon Valley's first self-made female billionaire. She's also barred from serving as an officer or director at any public company for 10 years, and she's returning 18.9 million shares. The penalties are small for such chicanery, but federal prosecutors are still conducting a criminal investigation.

We shouldn't be surprised by any biotech's failure. We should expect it. Biotechs by their nature offer the promise of disruptive breakthroughs and discoveries, but they're mostly all-or-nothing propositions, based on one molecule or one test. Fail in a Phase III clinical trial — and a majority do — and you're finished. It's a moonshot business; companies are going to blow up.

Start-ups blow up in Silicon Valley all the time, too, but what's surprising is how long Ms. Holmes could peddle her disruption tale before regulators stepped in. The story was just too good to resist — a brainy 19-year-old drops out of Stanford and creates a device that can make blood testing vastly easier and more accessible. Her investors included Valley powerhouses such as Draper Fisher Jurvetson, health care players such as Walgreens and BlueCross BlueShield Venture Partners, the media tycoon Rupert Murdoch and Tako Ventures, founded by Oracle's Larry Ellison. She also assembled a brand-name board that included at one time or another two former secretaries of state, George Shultz and Henry Kissinger; former Senator Bill Frist (a physician); and the superlawyer David Boies, whose firm was involved in efforts to quiet a company whistle-blower and who reportedly tried to get The Wall Street Journal to kill an article that uncovered the fraud.

In 2013, Ms. Holmes added another heavyweight to the board, Jim Mattis, the general in charge of the United States Central Command. While in that command, Mr. Mattis, too, caught the Theranos fever and pushed to have the company's tests used in the field. Ms. Holmes had pushed the military story line even harder, telling Walgreens, which thought it was using its tests, that its analyzer was already aboard military helicopters. That was false. The Department of Defense is a regular investor in tech start-ups and like any venture capitalist is willing to suffer investment losses. But Theranos got red-flagged at some point by the F.D.A. and defense officials. Mr. Mattis would get green-flagged to a better gig after his time on the Theranos board: secretary of defense.

Theranos's gullible investors acceded to Ms. Holmes's demand for supervoting stock and were willing to believe whatever she was selling, even as her story began to unwind.

"I think the board has complete confidence in Elizabeth Holmes as a founder of the company, as a scientist and as an administrator," Mr. Boies told The Times's Reed Abelson in April 2016, a few months after the Wall Street Journal article that Mr. Boies reportedly tried to have killed cast serious doubt on Theranos's technology and execution.

It's possible that the finger-prick blood analyzer Ms. Holmes envisioned will someday make it to market. But Theranos shows us once again that when a start-up promises disruption, you are just as likely to get stuck.

Stephen Hawking's most profound gift

Sean Carroll

Stephen Hawking is gone, but he has left behind something incredibly precious: a knotty, frustrating puzzle, one that scientists will be wrestling with for years to come. Dr. Hawking's puzzle is an important piece of perhaps the biggest question in physics today: How can we reconcile gravity with quantum mechanics?

The early years of the 20th century witnessed two incredible scientific revolutions. One was the theory of relativity. Led by Albert Einstein, physicists discarded the absolute space and time of Isaac Newton, and replaced it with a unified four-dimensional space-time continuum. It is the warps and wiggles of space-time, Einstein realized, that give rise to what you and I experience as the force of gravity.

The other revolution — even more profound than relativity — was quantum mechanics. When we examine the behavior of subatomic particles, we find they can't be described in the clockwork language of classical physics. Instead, they appear as waves of probability, and the best we can do is calculate the chance that any particular measurement will return this or that result.

Gradually, everything we know about the physical world has been put under the umbrella of quantum mechanics. The behavior of matter, electricity and magnetism, and the subatomic forces at work inside the nuclei of atoms — all fit elegantly into the quantum paradigm.

The one exception is gravity. For

both technical and conceptual reasons, Einstein's vision of curved space-time has stubbornly resisted reconciliation with the rules of quantum mechanics. The search for a theory that would unify the two paradigms — a theory of "quantum gravity" — is perhaps the single most ambitious project in modern theoretical physics.

"Theoretical" is an important word here, as it is nearly impossible to do experiments that would directly reveal anything important about quantum gravity. Quantum mechanics reveals itself at the subatomic scale, where we

are dealing with just a few elementary particles, while gravity becomes noticeable only when we collect astronomically large masses. There is no easily accessible situation in which both are important at the same time.

This is where Dr. Hawking comes in. When real experiments are elusive, one turns to thought experiments. And in the 1970s, Dr. Hawking described the mother of all thought experiments, one that still keeps physicists awake at night.

It starts with a black hole. According to Einstein's relativity, a black hole is a region of space-time where gravity has become so strong that nothing can escape. But Dr. Hawking asked himself how quantum particles behave in the vicinity of such an object. After all, quantum mechanics is a theory of probabilities; maybe what's impossible according to Einstein is possible in the quantum realm.

And indeed it is. Dr. Hawking's calculations revealed, as he put it in his

characteristically mischievous way, that "black holes ain't so black." They actually emit a steady, faint stream of particles, now known as Hawking radiation. These particles carry away bits of the mass of the hole, so that it will eventually disappear entirely, a phenomenon known as Hawking evaporation.

So here's the thought experiment: Throw a book into the black hole. The book carries information. Perhaps that information is about physics, perhaps that information is the plot of a romance novel — it could be any kind of information. But as far as anyone knows, the outgoing Hawking radiation is the same no matter what went into the black hole. The information is apparently lost — where did it go?

Thus we have the "black hole information loss puzzle," perhaps Dr. Hawking's most profound gift to physics. At issue is the fate of the principle of the conservation of information. Without general relativity, quantum mechanics predicts that information is conserved; likewise, without quantum mechanics, general relativity predicts that information is conserved, even if some of it is hidden inside a black hole. It is therefore bothersome that putting the two theories together seems to lead to information just disappearing.

For a long time Dr. Hawking argued, against the intuition of most other leading physicists, that information was simply erased from the universe, and we would have to learn to deal with it. But eventually he changed his mind (something he always was admirably willing to do), conceding in 2004 that information was probably somehow retained in the outgoing radiation. The matter, however, is very far from settled.

Dr. Hawking's information-loss

thought experiment is the single biggest clue we have to how quantum gravity might operate. Even if we don't have the full theory yet, we know a lot about quantum mechanics and a lot about gravity. Together those are enough to convince us that Hawking radiation is real, even if it has never been directly observed. This means that any eventual theory of quantum gravity will have to explain either how information somehow escapes from black holes or how it is destroyed.

Black-hole radiation and the information-loss puzzle were certainly not Dr. Hawking's only contributions to modern physics. Back on the firmer ground of classical relativity, he proved a number of fundamental theorems about the behavior of black holes and the expansion of the universe. On the more speculative side, Dr. Hawking and the physicist James Hartle proposed a candidate for the "wave function of the universe," the quantum state describing all of reality. In between, Dr. Hawking found time to make contributions to deep questions like the origin of structure in the universe and whether it is possible to build a time machine. (It's not, he argued.)

He did all of this, of course, in addition to reaching a broad popular audience and sharing with it his passion for physics and the mysteries of the universe. Dr. Hawking was an extraordinarily influential scientist, as well as a courageous and determined human being. He has left us a lot to think about.

SEAN CARROLL is a theoretical physicist at the California Institute of Technology and the author of *"The Big Picture: On the Origins of Life, Meaning, and the Universe Itself."*



Stephen Hawking delivering a lecture on the origin of the universe in 2007.

Israel's self-inflicted wounds

Ronald S. Lauder

As the state of Israel approaches its 70th anniversary, I am filled with pride as I watch the vulnerable Jewish state of my childhood evolve into the strong and prosperous nation it is today.

As president of the World Jewish Congress, I believe that Israel is central to every Jew's identity, and I feel it is my second home. Yet today I fear for the future of the nation I love.

True, the Israeli Army is stronger than any other army in the Middle East. And yes, Israel's economic prowess is world renowned: In China, India and Silicon Valley, Israel's technology, innovation and entrepreneurship are venerated.

But the Jewish democratic state faces two grave threats that I believe could endanger its very existence.

The first threat is the possible demise of the two-state solution. I am conservative and a Republican, and I have supported the Likud party since the 1980s. But the reality is that 13 million people live between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. And almost half of them are Palestinian.

If current trends continue, Israel will face a stark choice: Grant Palestinians full rights and cease being a Jewish state or rescind their rights and cease being a democracy.

To avoid these unacceptable outcomes, the only path forward is the two-state solution.

President Trump and his team are wholly committed to Middle East peace. Arab states such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are now closer to Israel than they have ever been, and contrary to news media reports, senior Palestinian leaders are, they have personally told me, ready to begin direct negotiations immediately.

But some Israelis and Palestinians are pushing initiatives that threaten to derail this opportunity.

Palestinian incitement and intransigence are destructive. But so, too, are annexation plans, pushed by those on the right, and extensive Jewish settlement-building beyond the separation line. Over the last few years, settlements in the West Bank on land that in any deal is likely to become part of a Palestinian state, have continued to grow and expand. Such blinkered Israeli policies are creating an irreversible one-state reality.

The second, two-prong threat is Israel's capitulation to religious extremists and the growing disaffection of the Jewish diaspora. Most Jews outside of Israel are not accepted in the eyes of the Israeli ultra-Orthodox, who control ritual life and holy places in the state. Seven million of the eight million Jews living in America, Europe, South America, Africa and Australia are Modern Orthodox, Conservative, Re-

form or secular. Many of them have come to feel, particularly over the last few years, that the nation that they have supported politically, financially and spiritually is turning its back on them.

By submitting to the pressures exerted by a minority in Israel, the Jewish state is alienating a large segment of the Jewish people. The crisis is especially pronounced among the younger generation, which is predominantly secular. An increasing number of Jewish millennials — particularly in the United States — are distancing themselves from

Israel because its policies contradict their values. The results are unsurprising: assimilation, alienation and a severe erosion of the global Jewish community's affinity for the Jewish homeland.

Over the last decade I have visited Jewish communities in over 40 countries. Members in every one of them expressed to me their concern and anxiety about Israel's future and its relationship to diaspora Jewry.

Many non-Orthodox Jews, myself included, feel that the spread of state-enforced religiosity in Israel is turning a modern, liberal nation into a semi-theocratic one. A vast majority of Jews around the world do not accept the exclusion of women in certain religious

practices, strict conversion laws or the ban of egalitarian prayer at the Western Wall. They are bewildered by the impression that Israel is abandoning the humanistic vision of Theodor Herzl and taking on a character that does not suit its own core values or the spirit of the 21st century.

The leadership of the Jewish world always honors the choices made by the Israeli voter and acts in concert with Israel's democratically elected government. I'm also keenly aware that Israelis are on the front lines, making sacrifices and risking their own lives every day so that Jews worldwide will survive and thrive. I count myself forever in their debt.

But sometimes loyalty requires a friend to speak out and express an inconvenient truth. And the truth is that the specter of a one-state solution and the growing rift between Israel and the diaspora are endangering the future of the country I love so dearly.

We are at a crossroads. The choices that Israel makes in the coming years will determine the destiny of our one and only Jewish state — and the continued unity of our cherished people.

We must change course. We must push for a two-state solution and find common ground among ourselves so that we can ensure the success of our beloved nation.

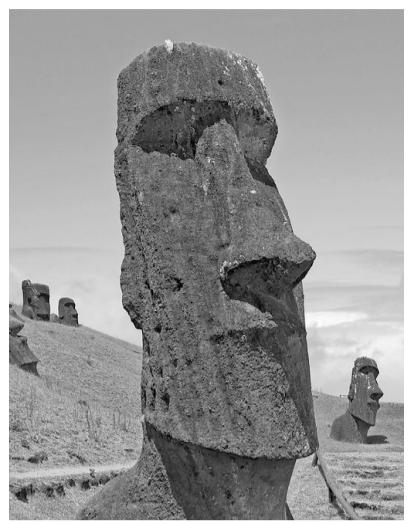
RONALD S. LAUDER is the president of the World Jewish Congress.

OPINION

A parable of self-destruction



Nicholas Kristof



The immense statues of Easter Island were once credited to space aliens.

EASTER ISLAND This remote speck in the South Pacific is famous for its colossal stone statues, nearly 1,000 of them towering over the landscape like guardians.

Who built them? How did they get there? And who fitted some of them with giant red stone hats weighing up to 12 tons each?

When I was a kid, a huge nonfiction best seller by Erich von Däniken called “Chariots of the Gods” argued that they were evidence that U.F.O.s had visited Earth. Von Däniken, whose nonfiction and fiction books have sold a staggering 63 million copies worldwide, argued that only space aliens could have carved, transported and erected these monuments.

The puzzle arises because when Jacob Roggeveen discovered the island (on Easter Day, 1722, hence the name), it was a wasteland with no trees and a small, starving population. The Polynesian inhabitants had only small and leaky canoes, so it was unclear how they had ever reached the island, let alone built such colossal figures.

“The stone images at first caused us to be struck with astonishment,” Roggeveen wrote, because the land was of such “singular poverty and barrenness.”

Scientists and historians have since solved the mystery. The statues, or moai, were built over hundreds of years by Easter Islanders themselves — a formerly advanced Polynesian society that was prosperous enough to make ever bigger and more ornate statues. One, still being carved in the quarry when it was abandoned in the 1600s, is 70 feet tall and weighs 270 tons.

What destroyed this civilization was apparently deforestation in the 1500s and 1600s. The islanders cut down trees for cremation, for firewood, for canoes, for homes and perhaps for devices to move the statues. Rats and beetles may also have contributed to the deforestation.

Once the trees were gone, there

were no more fruit and nuts, and it became impossible to build large canoes to hunt porpoises and to fish for tuna. Hungry villagers also ate up the land birds, such as herons, parrots and owls, until they were gone, too.

Deforestation caused erosion that led crops to fail, and this advanced society disintegrated into civil war. Without ocean-going canoes, it was impossible for inhabitants to flee to other islands, the way their ancestors had arrived centuries before. Groups began attacking one another and destroying one another’s statues, with oral histories even recounting cannibalism.

“The flesh of your mother sticks between my teeth,” is one insult dating from this time, transmitted through the generations.

European explorers compounded the suffering in the 18th and 19th centuries by bringing disease and by brutally enslaving many inhabitants, but Easter Island society had already collapsed and the statue-building had already ceased long before the first Europeans showed up. It’s not that Easter Islanders were suicidal or stupid, but that the environment was fragile and they kept up old ways that were unsustainable, triggering a chain of events that could not be reversed.

I hope that some day far in the future, tourists don’t swim through Midtown Manhattan and similarly reflect on the hubris and recklessness of early-21st-century Americans.

“Those are the reasons why we see the collapse of Easter Island society as a metaphor, a worst-case scenario, for what may lie ahead of us in our own future.”

Easter Islanders themselves aren’t thrilled about being reduced to a metaphor. They rightly feel great pride in their earlier history and see the collapse as more complex and uncertain. “This island is full of mystery,” says Sergio Rapu, an archaeologist and former governor who argues that the deforestation was caused not just by humans but also by other factors, such as beetles arriving on driftwood.

Yet Rapu agrees that there are larger lessons about the consequences of deforestation. “The history of Easter Island is the history of our planet,” he says.

I came to Easter Island while leading a tour for The New York Times Company, and those of us in the group were staggered by the statues — but also by the reminder of the risks when a people damages the environment that sustains it.

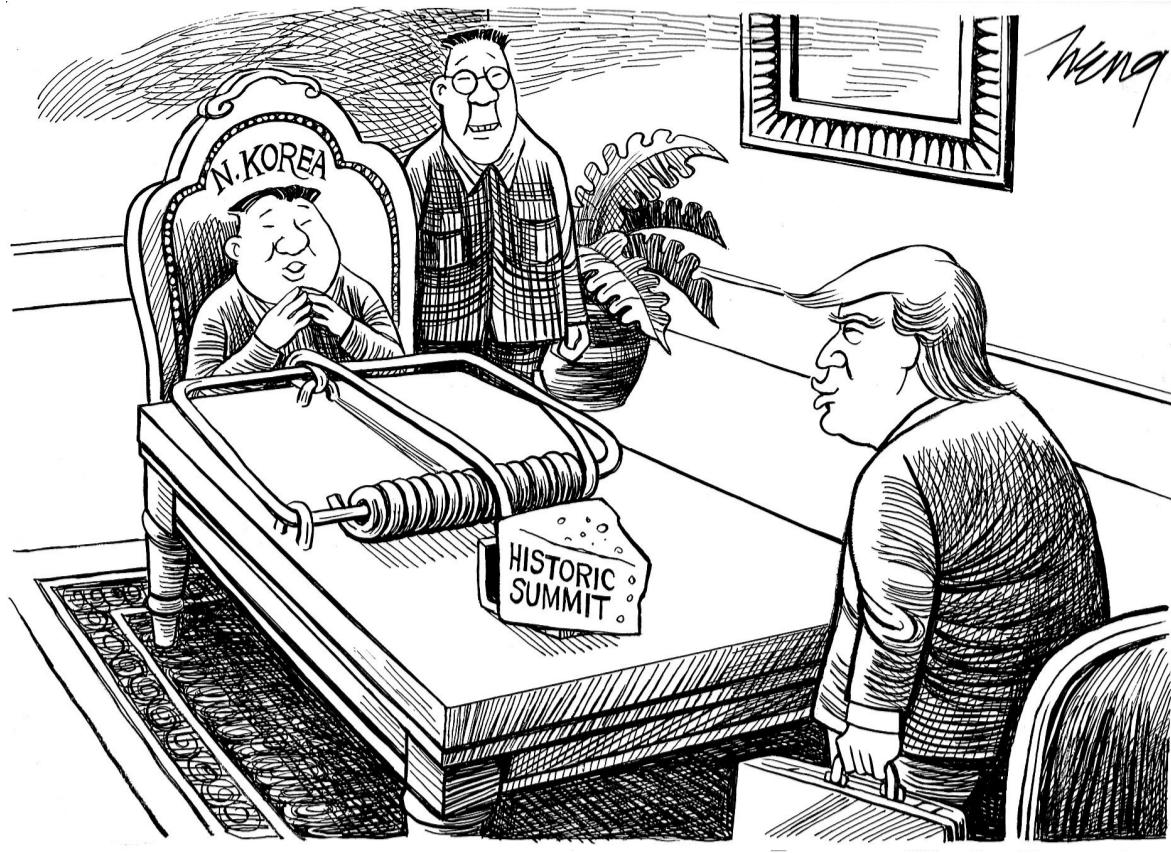
That brings us to climate change, to the chemical processes we are now triggering whose outcomes we can’t fully predict. The consequences may be a transformed planet with rising waters and hotter weather, dying coral reefs and more acidic oceans. We fear for the ocean food chain and worry about feedback loops that will irreversibly accelerate this process, yet still we act like Easter Islanders hacking down their trees.

Collectively, our generation on Earth may now be reshaping the geography of our planet for thousands of years to come.

Of course, maybe it’ll be fine. Perhaps the perils of climate change will turn out to be overblown, or perhaps we’ll develop geoengineering solutions to reflect sunlight and cool the planet.

But I can’t help imagining the farmer here on Easter Island who cut down the last palm tree. “More will grow,” he may have said. “It’ll be fine.” But when the last tree toppled, his people were doomed.

I hope that some day far in the future, tourists don’t swim through Midtown Manhattan and similarly reflect on the hubris and recklessness of early-21st-century Americans.



A nice pope risks throne for renewal

DOUTHAT, FROM PAGE 1

reforms, and the promised cleanup may never actually materialize.

What my friends and acquaintances respond to from this pope, rather, is the iconography of his papacy — the vivid images of humility and Christian love he has created, from the foot-washing of prisoners to the embrace of the disfigured to the children toddling up to him in public events. Like his namesake of Assisi, the present pope has a great gift for gestures that offer a public *imitatio Christi*, an imitation of Christ. And the response from so many otherwise jaded observers is a sign of how much appeal there might yet be in Catholic Christianity, if it found a way to slip the knots that the modern world has tied around its message.

To be a critic of such a pope, then, is to occupy something like the position of George Orwell, who opened an essay on Mohandas Gandhi with the aphorism, “Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent.” Except that the pope’s most serious critics are not skeptics like Orwell who don’t actually believe in saints: They are faithful Catholics, for whom criticism of a pontiff is somewhat like the criticism of a father by his son. Which means they — we — are always at risk of finding in the mirror the self-righteous elder brother in Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son, who resents his father’s liberality, the welcome given to the younger brother coming home at last.

But it’s still a risk that needs to be taken — because to avoid criticizing Francis is to slight this pope’s importance, to fail to do justice to the breadth of his ambitions and purposes, his real historical significance, his clear position as the most important religious figure of our age.

Those ambitions and purposes are not the ones for which he was elected. The cardinals who chose Jorge Bergoglio envisioned him as the austere outsider.

But that kind of revolution hasn’t really happened. Vatican life is more unsettled than under Benedict XVI, the threat of firings or purges ever present, the power of certain offices reduced, the likelihood of a papal tongue-lashing increased. But the blueprints for reorganization have been put off; many ecclesial princes have found more power under Francis; and even the pope’s admirers joke about the “next year, next year . . .” attitude that informs discussions of reform.

Meanwhile, the pope’s response to the sex abuse scandal, initially energetic, now seems compromised by his own partiality and by corruption among his intimates. The last few months have been particularly ugly: Francis just spent a recent visit to Chile vehemently defending a bishop accused of turning a blind eye to sex abuse, while one of his chief advisers, the Honduran Cardinal Óscar Maradiaga, is accused of protecting a bishop charged with abusing seminarians even as the cardinal himself faces accusations of financial chicanery.

So the idea of this pope as a “great reformer,” to borrow the title of the English journalist Austen Ivereigh’s fine 2014 biography, can’t really be justified by any kind of Roman housekeeping. Instead Francis’ reforming energies have been directed elsewhere, toward two dramatic truces that would radically reshape the church’s relationship with the great powers of the modern world.

The first truce this pope seeks is in the culture war that everyone in Western society knows well — the conflict between the church’s moral teachings and the way that we live now, the struggle over whether the sexual ethics of the New Testament need to be revised or abandoned in the face of post-sexual revolution realities.

The papal plan for a truce is either ingenious or deceptive, depending on your point of view. Instead of formally changing the church’s teaching on divorce and remarriage, same-sex marriage, euthanasia — changes that are officially impossible, beyond the powers of his office — the Vatican under Francis is making a twofold move. First, a distinction is being drawn between doctrine and pastoral practice that claims that merely pastoral change can leave doctrinal truth untouched. So a remarried Catholic

might take communion without having his first union declared null, a Catholic planning assisted suicide might still receive last rites beforehand, and perhaps eventually a gay Catholic can have her same-sex union blessed — and yet supposedly none of this changes the church’s teaching that marriage is indissoluble and suicide a mortal sin and same-sex wedlock an impossibility, so long as it’s always treated as an exception rather than a rule.

At the same time, Francis has allowed a tacit decentralization of doctrinal authority, in which different countries and dioceses can take different approaches to controversial questions. So in Germany, where the church is rich and sterile and half-secularized, the Francis era has offered a permission slip to proceed with various liberalizing moves, from communion for the remarried to intercommunion with Protestants — while across the Oder in Poland the bishops are proceeding as if John Paul II still sits upon the papal throne and his teaching is still fully in effect. The church’s approach to assisted suicide is traditional if you listen to the bishops of Western Canada, flexible and accommodating if you heed the bishops in Canada’s Maritime Provinces. In the United States, Francis’ appointees in Chicago and San Diego are taking the lead in promoting a “new paradigm” on sex and marriage, while more conservative archbishops from Philadelphia to Portland, Ore., are sticking with the old one. And so on.

These geographical divisions predate Francis, but unlike his predecessors he has blessed them, encouraged them and enabled would-be liberalizers to develop their ambitions further. In effect he is experimenting with a much more Anglican model for how the Catholic Church might operate — in which the church’s traditional teachings are available for use but not required, and different dioceses and different countries

If Pope Francis’s bets go badly, his legacy will be judged harshly.

This experiment is the most important effort of his pontificate, but in the last year he has added a second one, seeking a truce not with a culture but with a regime: the Communist government in China. Francis wants a compromise with Beijing that would reconcile China’s underground Catholic Church, loyal to Rome, with the Communist-dominated “patriotic” Catholic Church.

Such a reconciliation, if accomplished, would require the church to explicitly cede a share of its authority to appoint bishops to the Politburo — a concession familiar from medieval church-state tangles, but something the modern church has tried to leave behind.

A truce with Beijing would differ from the truce with the sexual revolution in that no specific doctrinal issue is at stake, and no one doubts that the pope has authority to conclude a concordat with a heretofore hostile and persecuting regime. Indeed, he is building on diplomatic efforts by his predecessors, though both of them declined to take the fraught step to a formal deal.

But the two truces are similar in that both would accelerate Catholicism’s transformation into a confederation of national churches — liberal and semi-Protestantized in northern Europe, conservative in sub-Saharan Africa, Communist-supervised in China. They are similar in that both treat the concerns of many faithful Catholics — conservative believers in the West, underground churchgoers in China — as roadblocks to the pope’s grand strategy. They are similar in that both have raised the specter of schism by pitting cardinals against cardinals and sometimes against the pope himself.

Above all, the two truces are similar in that they both risk a great deal — in one case, the consistency of Catholic doctrine and its fidelity to Jesus; in another, the clarity of Catholic witness for human dignity — for the sake of reconciling the church with earthly powers. And they take this risk at a time when neither Chinese Communism nor Western liberalism seem

exactly like confident, resilient models for the human future — the former sliding back toward totalitarianism, the latter anxious and decadent and beset by populist revolts.

Which means that if these two bets go badly the Francis legacy will be judged harshly — in spite of his charisma, his effect on secular observers, and all the other elements of the “Francis effect.”

The risks of the Chinese gamble are already apparent in the weirdly sycophantic language that Francis’ allies have used toward the Communist regime, and their eagerness to reassure Beijing that unlike, say, American evangelicals, Rome would never take the threatening step of mixing religion and politics.

If current trends continue, China could have one of the world’s largest Christian populations by this century’s end, and this population is already heavily evangelical; indeed, the Vatican’s desire for a deal with Beijing is influenced by the fact that a divided Chinese Catholicism is being outcompeted for converts.

But if that deal permanently links the Roman church with a corrupt and fated regime, Francis will have ceded the moral authority earned by persecuted generations, and ceded the Chinese future to those Christian churches, evangelical especially, that are less eager to flatter and cajole their persecutors.

The gamble on an Anglican approach to faith and morals is even more high-risk — as Anglicanism’s own schisms well attest. The pope’s “new paradigm” has defused the immediate threat of schism by maintaining a studious ambiguity whenever challenged. But it will ensure that the church’s factions, already polarized and feuding, grow ever more apart. And it implies a rupture (or, if you favor it, a breakthrough) in the church’s understanding of how its teachings can and cannot change — one less dramatic in immediate effect than the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, but ultimately more far-reaching in its implications for Catholicism.

Francis’ inner circle is convinced that such a revolution is what the Holy Spirit wants — that the attempts by John Paul II and Benedict to maintain continuity between the church before and after Vatican II ended up choking off renewal.

They are right that the John Paul II paradigm was fraught with flaws and tensions; the ease with which Francis has reopened debates that conservatives considered closed has testified to that. But this pope has not just exposed tensions; he has heightened them, encouraging sweeping ambitions among his allies and pushing disillusioned conservatives toward traditionalism. Like certain imprudent medieval popes, Francis has pressed papal authority to its limits — theological in time, not temporal, but no less dangerous for that.

All of this makes for interesting copy for those of us who write about the church. Truces are unsatisfying and instability is exciting and theological civil wars can be worth waging. But there is no sign as yet that Francis’s liberalization is bringing his lapsed-Catholic admirers back to the pews; from Germany to Australia to his native Latin America, the church’s institutional decline continues. And sustaining a for-the-time-being Catholicism, as his immediate predecessors did, is not an achievement to be lightly dismissed.

Whereas accelerating division when your office is charged with maintaining unity and continuity is a serious business — especially when the eventual resolution is so bafflingly difficult to envision or predict.

It is wise for Francis’ Catholic critics to temper our presumption, always, by acknowledging the possibility that we are misled or missing something, and that this story could end with this popular pope proven to be visionary and heroic.

But to choose a path that might have only two destinations — hero or heretic — is also an act of presumption, even for a pope. Especially for a pope.

Adapted from “To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism,” forthcoming on March 27 from Simon and Schuster.

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Sports

The Paralympics go pro

PYEONGCHANG, SOUTH KOREA

Do-it-yourself days are fading, thanks to new training and technology

BY BEN SHPIGEL

The delegations ruling the medal standings at the Paralympics share a common trait: During the past decade they decided to invest the resources necessary to afford their athletes the same respect, coaching, equipment and opportunities that able-bodied athletes receive.

From the Wasatch Range in Utah to the Canadian Rockies and the Korean Peninsula, they have transformed what had recently been a modest endeavor into a professional pursuit.

"It's not just five months on the snow and then you go home and kick back and drink mai tais on the beach," the American snowboarder Jimmy Sides said. "We're in the gym every day Monday through Friday in the summer getting strong, eating right, getting enough sleep, staying healthy, staying active to perform."

In other words, living how Olympians are supposed to live.

Nowhere is this attitude more apparent than in skiing, in both Nordic and Alpine disciplines, where the United States, Canada and South Korea have revolutionized their approaches.

To emphasize more equal treatment, Alpine Canada rebranded two years ago as the Canada Ski Team, a move that facilitated promotion of both the Alpine and para-Alpine teams while also redirecting sponsorship money toward the para program. Along with Japan and the United States, Canada is at the vanguard of innovative sit-ski design.

The American team augmented its technical staff by adding renowned coaches like Ben Black, who worked with the two-time Olympic gold medalist Ted Ligety, and Gary Colliander, an expert in physiology who assisted with the biathlon team at the Vancouver Olympics in 2010. On Tuesday, Colliander watched Dan Clossen (silver) and Andy Soule (bronze) become the first two Americans to reach the podium in a single biathlon event — at the Paralympics or Olympics.

South Korea's athletes live at a performance center dedicated to Paralympians, receiving about \$60 per day to train. The country's fledgling para-Nordic team spent several months traveling around the world to practice with and learn from established programs.

Kaspar Wirz, a Canadian who coaches South Korea's para-Nordic team, has been involved in para sports since 1992. As recently as a decade or so ago, he said, coaches received part-time honorariums instead of full-time compensation. Events were held on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings so everyone could return home for work.

"It's not a weekend operation anymore," said Wirz, one of several Canadians recruited to coach South Korea's Olympians and Paralympians as they prepared for this year's Games. "The countries that have wax teams, they go and do the same things that the able-bodied teams do. They go to the companies in Europe and find the best grinders in the world. If you're not there, you aren't even near the top."

That pack, Wirz said, includes the United States, Canada and Russia, represented here by the Neutral Paralympic Athletes. The three accrued the most medals at the Games, which ended Sunday. In para-Nordic alone, the Americans won 16 medals, by far their most at a single Paralympics. That number seemed unreachable in 2011, when John Farra left his post at the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association to become the high-performance director for the para-Nordic team.



Kaspar Wirz, a Canadian who coaches South Korea's para-Nordic team, worked with Won Yoo-min at biathlon practice during the 2017 World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup.

CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES



Oksana Masters of the United States working with Gary Colliander, a biathlon coach.

Knowing nothing about para sports, Farra was reluctant to apply. But a friend persisted, selling him on the notion that Paralympians deserve the same attention and strategies for success that Olympians receive.

A former member of the United States ski team, Farra was accustomed to Olympians having access to the fastest skis — they know what they want, and they get what they want. Six months into the job, he walked up to Soule at a World Cup event in Norway and, noticing scratches on his skis' bases, asked where he got them. At a ski shop out West, Soule told him.

"They may have been sitting on a shelf for years," said Farra, who would have a similar conversation with another athlete. "Nobody goes to the ski store and buys a pair of skis. Just doesn't happen."

At that same event, when Farra was learning how his athletes moved and skied, he photographed other nations' sit-skis and how they attached to the frames. He felt like a spy, he said. In those early stages, the American team experimented with various aluminum frames, pitched at different angles and made by different welders. Farra has kept them all in a storage unit in Utah

that he calls his sit-ski museum.

As the team's head coach, Eileen Carey, focused on training and the physiological component, Farra spent about three and a half years searching for the right engineers to build carbon-fiber frames for the program's five best sit-skiers. Clossen estimated that his sled is probably three or four pounds lighter than the one he used four years ago at the Paralympics in Sochi, Russia, noting that expending the same amount of energy while pushing less weight allows him to move faster.

"Maybe we can even get it lighter," he said.

When Farra examined the skis themselves, he was dumbfounded to learn that athletes stuck with skis out of comfort, without having determined whether they were the best for them, or for a set of conditions. That was mostly because each skier had his or her own way of connecting the ski to the sled: they could not share skis to know whether they even liked another set. Now, they can.

An individual-centered approach implemented by Carey empowered athletes to experiment with different kinds of skis in different situations. The Americans brought a fleet of 42 premium

Andy Soule of the United States used to buy off-the-rack skis. Not anymore.

CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Davis Cup and World Team Cup add up to tennis excess

On Tennis

BY CHRISTOPHER CLAREY

INDIAN WELLS, CALIF. With an over-stuffed calendar and heavyweight competition from other global sports, the last thing professional tennis needs is two similar men's team events within a few weeks of each other.

"Agreed," said David Haggerty, the president of the International Tennis Federation.

Yet there have been indications here in Indian Wells and elsewhere that this is exactly where this great but too-often divided game is heading.

Surely not even tennis can be this clueless.

But big money and the survival instinct are powerful forces. Both are in play when it comes to the Davis Cup and the would-be World Team Cup.

The Davis Cup, the premier men's team competition since it was founded in 1900, is owned and operated by the International Tennis Federation, which

depends on the event for much of its annual income.

Under pressure from sponsors and disgruntled top players, the I.T.F. has proposed a drastically new and reduced format in a 25-year, purportedly \$3 billion partnership with the investment group Kosmos. The plan is to create a one-week event involving 18 teams at the end of the season, in late November or early December.

If approved by the I.T.F. member nations later this year, the new version of the Davis Cup would begin in 2019.

The World Team Cup was routinely staged in Düsseldorf, Germany, in May before being discontinued in 2012. It was diverting but never considered the premier team test. Now the leadership of the men's tour, the ATP, is looking to revive it on a grander and more lucrative scale in cooperation with Tennis Australia. It would place this one- or two-week event at the start of the season in early January as part of the lead-up to the Australian Open.

If approved by the ATP leadership, the new-age World Team Cup could begin in 2020.

The Davis Cup has over a hundred years of history, and the I.T.F. are

clearly looking to evolve the competition in an attempt to maximize its potential," the ATP executive chairman, Chris Kermode, said in an email. "The results of those efforts remain to be seen. Our focus remains on bringing the ATP World Team Cup back into the calendar."

Something clearly has to give, and though Haggerty and Kermode met at Indian Wells last week and agreed to keep each other informed, nothing has given yet.

"They will compete, but one's going to end up swallowing the other eventually," Milos Raonic, the Canadian star, said of the two events. "Because I don't think in any sport, two team competitions, other than something as big as soccer, really survive."

Particularly when they could be just five weeks apart, and particularly when there is also a third men's team competition happening nearly every September: the new Laver Cup, created by Roger Federer and his management company, Team8. The event matches a European all-star squad against an international squad; it was a hit in its debut in 2017 in Prague and is set to head to Chicago this year.

The fans aren't going to understand," said Jeremy Chardy, a veteran French player. "It would seem bizarre to have essentially the same thing twice in a row."

"We take three days out of the year, so don't worry about us," Federer said on Wednesday after advancing to the quarterfinals in Indian Wells. "I think it's a great event. I think the players really enjoyed themselves. I hope it's going to be forever successful. We have no guarantee, like no tournament really has, except maybe Wimbledon, to be honest."

To be just as honest, who knows where sports or grass-court tennis will

find themselves on the popularity charts in 100 years? But what is clear is that in the much shorter term, it is pure folly to create a glut of men's team tennis events that will only end up diluting the interest in all of them.

"The fans aren't going to understand," said Jeremy Chardy, a veteran French player. "It would seem bizarre to have essentially the same thing twice in a row."

This would-be turf war is nothing new: In the 1990s, the I.T.F. backed the

creation of an end-of-the-year individual tournament called the Grand Slam Cup, which came after the ATP World Tour Finals. The Grand Slam Cup, open to the most successful players in the year's four major tournaments, offered huge money for the time — \$2 million to the winner — but no ranking points without ATP support. It lasted until 1999 before reason (and economics) prevailed, and the two events essentially merged.

Why go through it all again? The current conflict also seems like a late-in-the-game scramble to capitalize on the golden era of Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic before it starts to fade to sepia, which could be very soon.

What the sport really needs for the long term is one, just one, clearly defined and fully supported team event, preferably not an annual one. In an ideal world, it would include the women. Combined events, including the Grand Slams, are among tennis's greatest strengths going forward, with women's sports set to take on greater importance and market share.

A combined team event of true import — not the low-key Hopman Cup in

Perth, Australia — would set tennis apart from all the other sports that stage their World Cups for men and women separately.

If the World Team Cup comes into existence, and provides nearly the same prize money as a revamped Davis Cup along with the ranking points that the Davis Cup cannot provide, it is a potential existential threat.

That would be true whether or not the Davis Cup adopted a new format. Even if the Davis Cup stays put with four weeks of world group competition spread throughout each season, top players, presented with a less-demanding option to represent their nations annually, would be more likely to choose the path of least resistance.

"I don't know if it would be great to play both competitions in the same year," said Feliciano López, the 36-year-old Spanish veteran, conceding that "two in five weeks would be too much."

Hear, hear. Clearly, the time for compromise and vision is now. Unfortunately, pro tennis's numerous governing bodies are better at defending their territory than doing what is best for the sport.

Culture

When the Bolshoi had an Egyptian accent



VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, Magda Saleh recently. Top right, from left, Maya Selim, Ms. Saleh, Diana Hakak, Aleya Abdel Razek and Wadoud Faizy in Egypt. Bottom right, from left, Ms. Hakak, Ms. Saleh, Ms. Razek and Ms. Selim, with Ms. Faizy hidden behind Ms. Razek, in 1965.



VIA MAGDA SALEH



VIA MAGDA SALEH

Magda Saleh did 'Giselle' in Moscow and in Cairo, where 'dancer' was a gibe

BY BRIAN SEIBERT

Think of Egyptian dancers and the first image to come to mind is not likely to be a ballerina.

Yet once upon a time, the Egyptian ballerina Magda Saleh danced the dream role of Giselle in Moscow as a guest star with the mighty Bolshoi Ballet. Even more improbably, she danced it in the opera house in her hometown, Cairo — where to call a woman a “dancer” was an insult — with a full troupe of Egyptians trained by Russians in an academy established by the Egyptian state.

This flowering of ballet in Egypt, an East-meets-West tale of Cold War cultural politics, happened long ago, in the 1960s and early '70s. But it's receiving new attention in a documentary, archly called “A Footnote in Ballet History,” and was the focus of the latest installment of the performance series “From the Horse's Mouth” in New York.

The “Horse’s Mouth” show, which ended a four-performance run on Sunday, combined personal anecdotes with structured improvisations and addressed many aspects of Egyptian dance: stick-fighting, whirling dervishes and, the form that probably does come to mind first, belly dance. “Ballet is such a tiny part,” said Tina Croll, one of the organizers. Even so, Ms. Saleh was the central hub of the program, as is she is of the documentary.

Recently, in the elegant New York apartment that she shares with her husband, the American Egyptologist Jack Josephson, Ms. Saleh, 73, recounted how her life had been “punctuated” by shifts in Egyptian political history. Some of what she meant was evident in how she said the word. She speaks English fluently, with more than a little Scottish brogue.

In the era just before she was born, Egypt was no longer a protectorate of Britain, but British influence was still high. Her father, who would become a prominent academic, studied agriculture in Scotland and brought home a Scottish bride, Ms. Saleh’s mother. Their children spoke English and Arabic at home, French at school.

Ballet was an elite, foreign art, something to teach little girls deportment and carriage,” Ms. Saleh said, her impeccable poise and posture proving that goal was achieved. Her first ballet teachers were British, and she traveled to Britain to study ballet. By then, though, Egypt had undergone a revolution, and soon it was at war with Britain. Young Ms. Saleh was called home, where she discovered that her British instructors had left.

But the Egyptian government was now friendly with the Soviet Union, and new teachers arrived. In 1959, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture created an Academy of Arts, with a Higher Institute of Ballet, and imported teachers

from the Bolshoi to run it. “This was unprecedented in Egyptian history,” Ms. Saleh said. “We have this very ambiguous attitude toward dance and especially women dancers, because they’re public women and women are not supposed to be seen in public.”

“None of this would have been possible,” she continued, “but for a confluence of time and circumstance and one man, the first minister of culture” — Tharwat Okasha, an army officer with vision and tenacity. “For my generation,” Ms. Saleh said, “there’s God and Tharwat Okasha.”

Ballet education came filtered through translation, with old Russians who had fled to Egypt during the Russian Revolution converting the instructions of the newly arrived Soviet dancers into broken Arabic.

Yet the school developed rapidly, and in 1963, Ms. Saleh and four other female students were offered scholarships to study at the Bolshoi in Moscow. She was 19 — or “19 going on 11,” she said, “because we were so sheltered.” Now they were on their own in the bitter cold of the grim Soviet capital, sitting on radiators before class to thaw.

VIA MAGDA SALEH
Ms. Saleh in “Giselle,” which she performed at the Bolshoi Ballet in 1972.

princess abducted by a Tatar Khan. The Egyptian public loved it. The president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, awarded the dancers the Order of Merit.

Even more meaningful to Ms. Saleh was the praise of a poor old man after a performance in the southern backwater of Aswan. “People had insisted that Egyptians wouldn’t accept Egyptian ballet,” she recalled misty-eyed. “But we were right!”

More ballets followed, and then the ultimate triumph as Ms. Saleh toured the Soviet Union. When she danced as Giselle at the Bolshoi in 1972, it was her best performance as a ballerina, she said. It was also her last.

For a while already, she had been plagued by muscle problems. Dancing Giselle in Moscow, she said, was “beyond pain.” And there were other reasons outside to stop. Just before the tour, the Khedivial Royal Opera House, built in Cairo in 1869, had burned down. “It was the end not only of dance in Cairo but of cultural life,” Ms. Saleh recalled. The building was replaced by a parking garage. (It was 16 years before a new opera house was built.)

Many of her colleagues went to study in the Soviet Union. One of her dance partners, Reda Sheta, began a successful career in Europe and Israel. But Ms. Saleh turned to the United States, getting a master’s degree in modern dance at the University of California, Los Angeles, and then a doctorate at New York University. (She made “Egypt Dances,” a fascinating ethnographic documentation of folk dance filmed throughout the country, in 1979.)

This time, Ms. Saleh was ahead of her country. In the 1970s, President Anwar Sadat switched Egypt’s allegiance from the Soviet Union to the United States. After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Sadat ordered Soviet advisers out of the country, which meant that the ballet institute lost most of its faculty.

By the time Ms. Saleh returned to Egypt, in the early 1980s, everything had changed. The physical deterioration of the ballet institute seemed to her a symbol of the decay of the country, which appeared to her to have lost its identity. “I was really angry,” she said, strong emotion pulling her polite smile tight. “I still am.”

Twice, she said, she fought against the decay, the rampant bureaucracy, the corruption: first as the dean of the ballet institute and then briefly as the first director of the new opera house. But she was forced out — in her view, for serving culture rather than power.

Since 1992, she has lived in New York, regretful that she hasn’t had the opportunity to serve her country as she would have wished. “But Egypt is with me,” she said, noting her work in presenting Egyptian artists in the United States.

These artists have been mostly musicians, not dancers. For Ms. Saleh, ballet in Egypt is not what it once was.

But the ballet institute still exists. Recalling how her Russian teachers had preserved ballet through war and hardship, she said, “Because it’s there, there’s hope.”

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CULTURE

Answering her need for reinvention

LONDON

Billie Piper, who started as a pop star, now has the lead in a Lorca play

BY HOLLY WILLIAMS

Each night, after performing "Yerma," Billie Piper would face the emotional wreckage she'd caused, playing a woman driven insane by her inability to conceive a child.

"People would come over, in various states of trauma, depending on how it had affected them personally," she said, recalling the two sold-out London runs of the play, a modern version of Federico García Lorca's 1934 tragedy adapted by Simon Stone. "Some people didn't even really say anything, they just wanted to be close to us — they wanted to somehow physically connect."

I certainly had a hard time leaving the Young Vic the night I saw the play, my way blocked by women in tears. And if all this sounds melodramatic, it was echoed in the visceral language British critics used to discuss Ms. Piper's performance: "shatteringly powerful," "earth-quaking," "heart-rending."

It's fair to say, then, that "Yerma" tapped into contemporary anxieties about the impossibility of having it all. "This is a conversation everybody seems to be having at the moment," Ms. Piper, 35, said over coffee in East London, as she prepared to revive the role this month in her New York theater debut. "It feels very, very topical."

Mr. Stone, the writer-director, brought the action bang up-to-date: Ms. Piper plays a successful, stylish, somewhat selfish journalist and lifestyle blogger who didn't even want kids until, one day, she did. And she's used to getting what she wants: the dream career, the businessman husband, the house with the garden in the up-and-coming London suburb. When she fails to get pregnant, it spirals into an unhealthy obsession, propelled by biological compulsion, but also by a fierce refusal to accept this lack of control.

Speaking over the phone from his native Australia, Mr. Stone explained why he thought "Yerma" was ripe for updating.

"I've had a relationship where we were struggling to get pregnant. I witnessed an incredibly confident, strong, brilliant woman feel crippled in a way that felt really deeply unfair," he said. "This is the world that we're living in. We need to talk about how we make it impossible for women to have it all."

For some, a play with such themes could seem retrograde, unfeminist even. Ms. Piper says it "is enough to send anyone mad. The biological clock is a thing! To say that there aren't periods in my life where I'm governed by my hormones would be a lie, and if that makes me 'antifeminist' then I guess I am. Because that's my experience of my body."

For Ms. Piper, the play also resonates because it isn't just about the particular hell of in vitro fertilization. "It's also about a relationship burning out, the pressure of the modern world on a relationship," she said.

Currently, Ms. Piper is seeing Johnny Lloyd, the former frontman of Tribes. But when the show opened in 2016, she had just gotten divorced from the actor Laurence Fox, the father of her sons,



TOM JAMIESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ADRIAN ROGERS/BBC, VIA SCI FI CHANNEL

Winston, 9, and Eugene, 5. Was that something she was drawing on?

"There will be things that happen in your life that inform the decisions you make as an actor," she said. "Something will connect. But once you put an audience in front of it, you hand it over."

In Britain, however, Ms. Piper's private life has often been the story. She grew up in Swindon, in the south of England, and moved to London when she was only 12, to go to stage school. By 15, she was a pop star, and in 1998 became the youngest artist ever to debut at No. 1 on the British charts, with the bratty single "Because We Want To."

"I'm not a real musician," she now concludes, frankly. "It's a hard industry, and in the '90s, you worked inappropriately hours. I was so young, I just burnt

In 2004, Ms. Piper's career regenerated when she was cast as the companion Rose in the BBC's rebooted "Doctor Who."

out really quickly."

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the #MeToo campaign has rung bells. "There were definitely areas I found challenging — nothing criminal, just an overall energy. We were winning awards for being sexy teenagers. I became quite cynical about it quite quickly."

Her first marriage, at 18, to the radio DJ Chris Evans, also made headlines, thanks to a 16-year age gap. But around the time of their separation in 2004, Ms. Piper's career regenerated: She was

cast as the companion Rose in the BBC's rebooted "Doctor Who."

"It came out of the blue, that opportunity, and it was an amazing one," Ms. Piper said. It's a role she'll never quite shake. Today, she meets teenagers named after Rose, though unthinkingly adding a rose emoji to an Instagram post recently sent the internet into a tizzy, with fans predicting a "Doctor Who" comeback — a rumor she's quick to scotch.

More recently, Ms. Piper has made a reputation for herself as one of Britain's finest stage actors, in Lucy Prebble's "The Effect" and Richard Bean's phone hacking scandal satire, "Great Britain."

"People look at someone who's willing to be naked in their soul," Mr. Stone said of watching her perform. "Yerma" is set

in a glass box, which helps. "But I use glass walls a lot, and I've never had an actor that was so willing to go so warts and all — that's her great beauty."

Ms. Piper is also in David Hare's crime thriller "Collateral," now on Netflix. "That was a great female part, because she's wild," Ms. Piper said of her role as a spiky young mother with a drug habit. But she points out that, too often, film and television roles for women are just boring.

This frustration led to Ms. Piper's latest reinvention: as a writer. She's written her own film, due to shoot this year, as well as having a TV series in the pipeline. Both are dark comedies, both about women in their 30s; both will star Ms. Piper.

The movie, "Rare Beasts," is about

Clockwise from above: Billie Piper, who is preparing to perform in "Yerma" in New York; in "Doctor Who"; and in "Yerma" at the Young Vic in London in 2016.

"what it really feels like to be a modern woman moving through female emancipation, and how that affects our relationships with men," she said. "What happens if this movement divides men and women?"

The TV series will center on a woman who's been hacked and has her private life exposed, but it also looks more broadly at the pressures of being a woman her age. Ms. Piper had noticed friends questioning their lives, asking "what have I not achieved and where's my family and will I ever own a home and what's my mental health like?"

It is written with Ms. Prebble, who became a close friend after they met working on the TV series "Secret Diary of a Call Girl" in 2007. "We're like sisters," Ms. Piper said, cracking her wide, irre sistible smile.

Ms. Prebble was equally effusive. "I love her," she said emphatically. "When my life fell apart a couple of years ago, she took me into her home. In your 30s as a woman, it feels like everything has to break or survive. And the people who are there, the people who show up, are the women."

Their shared creative preoccupations — the fragility of relationships, the gap between men and women, the failure of life's promises as we age — all chime with those Mr. Stone found within "Yerma."

And that may be another reason Ms. Piper is so keen to return to this exceptional role, readily admitting, "I'm still not over it."

Women's health and the tyranny of bias

BOOK REVIEW

Doing Harm: The Truth About How Bad Medicine and Lazy Science Leave Women Dismissed, Misdiagnosed, and Sick By Maya Dusenberry. 390 pp. HarperOne/HarperCollins Publishers. \$27.99.

Ask Me About My Uterus: A Quest to Make Doctors Believe in Women's Pain By Abby Norman. 272 pp. Nation Books. \$27.

Invisible: How Young Women With Serious Health Issues Navigate Work, Relationships, and the Pressure to Seem Just Fine By Michele Lent Hirsch. 230 pp. Beacon Press. \$26.95.

BY PARUL SEHGAL

A woman receives a breast cancer diagnosis and opts for a mastectomy — only for her doctor to object: "But you aren't married."

A young girl suffering from endometriosis, a condition in which uterine cells migrate to other areas of the body, is informed by her doctor that childbirth will ease the pain. "I'm only 11," she later tells her support group, baffled.

A woman complains of vomiting uncontrollably, up to 100 times a night. She is offered antidepressants. When it finally occurs to a doctor to examine her further, to discover and perform surgery on her barely functioning gallbladder, she is on the verge of death.

These aren't tales from the dark ages of medicine. They are ordinary

modern realities documented in Maya Dusenberry's well-researched, wonderfully truculent new book, "Doing Harm," one of a cluster of new investigations into gender bias in medical treatment that also includes "Ask Me About My Uterus," by Abby Norman, and "Invisible," by Michele Lent Hirsch.

To put it kindly: These books are a mixed bag. Dusenberry, the editor of the website Feministing, is the most capable writer of the bunch, and "Doing Harm" is an orderly blizzard of studies and statistics examining sexism at every level in medicine, from medical school admissions on up. The journalists Norman and Hirsch, on the other hand, offer up more personal takes — valuable if ungainly melds of memoir and reportage marked by excellent intentions and awkward prose.

In "Ask Me About My Uterus," Norman recounts years of unexplained pain later discovered (by her) to be endometriosis. In "Invisible," Hirsch looks at how chronic sickness reshapes the personal and professional lives of young women — while invoking the Job-like torments of her own 20s, when she endured thyroid cancer, hip surgery, Lyme disease and a rare condition called mast-cell activation syndrome, which could cause her to go into anaphylactic shock at any time.

Taken together, these three books tell an alarming story about how difficult it is for women to obtain quality care; particularly those women suffering from poorly understood autoimmune disorders.

This is hardly breaking news. One member of the feminist collective that produced the 1971 women's health

manual "Our Bodies, Ourselves" said that "everyone had a 'doctor story' — that is, a tale about male physicians who were sexist, paternalistic, judgmental or simply unable to provide the information women needed."

These new "doctor stories" cut deep, especially in a moment when "believe women" has become a rallying cry. They feel linked to other instances of women's voices being suppressed and belittled — in the accounts of assault and harassment emerging in the #MeToo moment, for example, or in the recent studies showing how frequently men interrupt women in meetings and how rarely women are quoted as experts. This is a crisis of authority, Dusenberry argues. Women are regarded as unreliable narrators who can't even be trusted to speak for

themselves or to testify to their own pain.

In "Doing Harm," this cultural distrust of women — ancient and ingrained — is shown to govern quality of care at every stage of treatment. Women with abdominal pain wait in emergency rooms for 65 minutes compared with 49 minutes for men, and young women are seven times more likely to be sent home from a hospital while in the middle of a heart attack. Doctors rarely communicate (or understand) how drugs from aspirin to antidepressants affect women and men differently. Autoimmune disorders have been understudied because, as Hirsch points out, three-fourths of the patients are women and it is considered a woman's ailment, never mind that 37 million people are afflicted, as

estimated by the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association. (In comparison, 15 million Americans have cancer.)

Women are consistently under-treated for pain, as one influential paper showed: Male patients are given pain relief while women, who are more likely to have their pain rated as "emotional," are given sedatives. This extends to children; a study of postoperative pain management found that boys were more likely to receive codeine and girls the gentler acetaminophen.

For women of color, especially black women, the situation is even more parlous. Black patients are 22 times less likely to get any kind of pain relief in emergency rooms. And Dusenberry reports on a disturbing 2016 study of more than 200 medical students who

were presented absurd, made-up statements on race and medicine. Half gave credence to statements like: Black people have less sensitive nerve endings than white people.

Addressing such entrenched inequities requires more than bringing more women doctors into the fold. As Norman learns the hard way in "Ask Me About My Uterus," women doctors are not immune from implicit bias. Nor will a greater number of women doctors make up for the fact that, to this day, men are the default objects of study for research. A 2005 study found that almost 80 percent of animal pain studies used only males. A 1986 study on the influence of obesity on breast and uterine cancer infamously failed to enroll any women in the study.

According to Virginia Woolf, writing about the sick body ("this monster," "this miracle") requires the courage of a lion tamer and the spirit of a philosopher.

Not all these books meet that elevated standard. But all three, despite their grim stories and projections, leave the reader galvanized, not despairing. Each of them ends on a similar note — calling for women to keep sharing their "doctor stories," keep putting pressure on medical professionals to study women's health and, in the meantime, for women themselves to learn how to advocate for their own care. Even as they recognize the burden that sick women must carry (Dusenberry: "Women should not be required to be more knowledgeable about women's health than their doctors are"), they are each, in their own flawed, complicated way, the very intervention they seek.



From left, the writers Michele Lent Hirsch, Abby Norman and Maya Dusenberry.

WILLY SOMMA, TIM SULLIVAN, CAITLIN NIGHTINGALE

TRAVEL

City with a painful past makes progress

THE 52 PLACES TRAVELER

Montgomery, Ala., visitors find a complicated history filled with racial tensions

BY JADA YUAN

Driving by the Alabama State Capitol building in Montgomery, Michelle Browder, an African-American activist and founder of the I Am More Than... youth mentorship nonprofit organization, pointed out a looming bronze statue of Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy during the American Civil War. It has a position of prominence right out front, as does a commemorative plaque on the marble steps marking the exact spot where he stood taking his oath of office in 1861. A state holiday recognizes his birthday. Farther down the Capitol lawn, Ms. Browder said, was a similar statue heralding Dr. J. Marion Sims, but I didn't recognize the name, and she wouldn't elaborate. "You're going to have to do your homework on that one," she said, "because my blood pressure goes up when I talk about him."

Ms. Browder wore red cat-eye glasses, an Army-green jacket, and a T-shirt bearing the words "Dream Destroyed" and the face of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who began leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 from the basement of a Baptist church just 440 feet from those Capitol steps. The vehicle she was careening through downtown, often parking akimbo on sidewalks or in the middle of the street, was a six-seat electric cart, from which she leads More Than Tours — explorations of a city that has been both the site of systemic oppression of her fellow African-Americans and the birthplace of the civil rights movement.

Within about 10 seconds, she'd risked that blood pressure spike to tell me about Sims. "He's known as the father of modern gynecology," she said. "He enslaved black women and he used them as experiments." Specifically, he visited unimaginable tortures on 12 slave women, without anesthesia, under the belief that black people felt less than whites. "We are starting an initiative," she said, "because we would like to see the mothers of gynecology erected beside him to give more to the story." The "we" she refers to is a group she's organized called Friends of Anarcha, after a woman who endured 30 of Sims's vaginal surgeries before he declared her a success.

Montgomery was my third stop on an insane yearlong mission I've undertaken to visit every spot on The Times' 52 Places to Go in 2018 list, and I was eager to find out why the city had snagged the No. 49 slot. By the end of four days, I'd come to believe it should have ranked higher. As a tourist destination, Montgomery is — how shall I put this — heavy. In the same afternoon, visitors can see the Rosa Parks Museum, built at the site of her 1955 arrest after refusing to give up her seat to a white person, and the first White House of the Confederacy, a National Historic Landmark. (Ms. Browder is a descendant of Aurelia Browder, a woman who faced a similar arrest eight months before Parks, and who was the lead plaintiff in the 1956 lawsuit, Browder v. Gayle, that ended the bus boycott.)

The city is also undeniably relevant right now, with a deep commitment to confronting its past (and often present) of racism, at a time when white supremacism has re-entered the national conversation in the United States in a major way. Daily, I found myself moved to tears by any number of tales of brutality or hardship, and the strength it took to tell them.

I'd arrived in MGM, as residents call it, less than two months after national news outlets had swarmed its streets to document the contentious Senate race in which Doug Jones, a Democrat, defeated Roy S. Moore, the Republican who had been accused of harassing and assaulting teenage girls. "His office is right there!" Ms. Browder said, pointing to the windows of Mr. Moore's Foundation for Moral Law, in a building that once housed the bank that funded the Confederacy.

What really ought to bump Montgomery up the 52 Places list is the National Memorial to Peace and Justice that the Equal Justice Initiative, a human rights legal nonprofit, is scheduled to open on April 26. Inspired by the memorials that Germany, Rwanda and South Africa have built to the atrocities of their own pasts, it pays tribute to the approximately 4,400 black victims of lynching by white mobs in the United States from 1877 to 1950 and is America's first comprehensive memorial to the victims of racial terrorism.

The six-acre site and an accompanying museum that aims to link slavery to mass incarceration were under construction when I visited, but plans show it will consist of 800 rectangular, oxidized steel columns, each representing a particular county in the Deep South and Midwest, and bear the names of the men, women and children killed there. While the columns will appear at first glance to touch the ground, the floor of the memorial will actually slope downward as visitors walk through it, allowing for the columns to hang over them, like bodies.

The Initiative's project is in many



In Montgomery, Ala., clockwise from top left: the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., preached.; students at the Southern Poverty Law Center's Civil Rights Memorial; a Nat King Cole mural on Maxwell Boulevard; and culinary students hanging out at Aviator Bar.

ways a companion piece to the work that the Southern Poverty Law Center, the nation's top legal advocate for victims of hate crimes, began in Montgomery with the Civil Rights Memorial in 1989. The memorial, designed by Maya Lin, consists of a stone table overflowing with water, bearing the names of 40 people who were murdered while doing things as simple as registering black people to vote. (A Civil Rights Memorial Center was added in 2005.)

Upon first impression, even with a county population of 230,000, Montgomery seems far too quaint and conservative to be home to two of the country's most influential nonprofit organizations fighting racial bias.

Its airport has a single baggage claim, and the rental car area is dotted with wooden rocking chairs, for an extra dose of Southern charm. I spent 20 minutes answering emails before walking outside and found myself the only person left on the premises, other than three bored-seeming policemen trading stories on the sidewalk.

"You need a taxi, ma'am?" one of them asked. "He just left, so it's going to be 15 or 20 minutes." "Now, where's my

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taxi driver?" the officer mumbled to himself, then got on the radio: "Nick, there's a lady waiting for you." It took me a minute to absorb what I was hearing, but yes, apparently there was only one taxi driver working in Montgomery on Super Bowl Sunday.

I'd encountered a similar peculiarity earlier that morning, when I'd made a last-minute online reservation at a lovely bed-and-breakfast, Red Bluff Cottage, only to receive a distressed call from the owner, Bonnie Ponstein, wondering what time, exactly, I was planning to arrive. She, her husband and their usual housekeeper would all be at church.

That evening, I went to the city's historic downtown for an informal tour with an enterprising Lyft driver, Marcus McNeal. We stood talking in the middle of those cobblestone streets for what must have been 30 minutes before another car, or even another person, came by. "You could shoot a cannon down Dexter Avenue" — downtown's main drag — "and not hit a person on a Sunday," Barry Ponstein, Bonnie's husband told me later. "Everyone's at church."

The one person we did meet out and about, actually, was Brother Ricky Segers, whom we found deep into aightly ritual he's kept up for three years, of kneeling in front of a tiny souvenir American flag he's planted on the Capitol grounds to ask Jesus for more "godly" leaders in this country. He feels as though Roy Moore was "mistrated" and Robert E. Lee was a hero. Still, he

and Mr. McNeal, the Lyft driver, who is black and at least half his age, have known each other for a while now and seem to get along great.

"It's interesting to me, too," said Mr. McNeal of their friendliness. He's 24, hopes to open a chain of 24-hour coffee shops for workaholics, and comes from what he described as abject poverty. The car he drove me in belongs to his mother, who has been pulling double shifts as a nurse's assistant to pay their heating bill.

"My mom is 62 years old and she makes \$8 an hour, and that's the most she's ever made," he said. Their all-wood house has too much dry rot for them to install insulation, and they haven't been able to afford replacing the bathroom sink that fell out of their wall. "It's O.K.," he said. "Poverty is a mind-set. If you change your mind-set, you're going to come out of it eventually." Later, he declared, "Come back and see me when I have my Bentley."

The ad hoc tour Mr. McNeal took me on had been refreshingly frank. He drove straight to a historical placard describing the bustling slave markets that had been held at Court Square, the city's central roundabout. I asked Mr. McNeal why it didn't have more central placement in the square and he just laughed: "What else are they going to do? It's not like they can build an auction platform here."

When I mentioned to him that multiple people had suggested I eat at Central, an upscale Southern food restaurant in downtown's tiny revitalized commercial district, he joked, "Central is so expensive, you'd be better off buying a restaurant and opening and stocking the kitchen yourself." We went to Applebee's instead, and gorged on spinach and artichoke dip.

I did end up at Central on another night, and it was indeed quite good — part of a growing culinary scene that will include gourmet offerings at the renovated Kress on Dexter building downtown, which opens in April. The former block-wide department store, built in 1929, will host rotating pop-up markets devoted to local artists — and has been engaged in incredibly responsible historical preservation, as well as keep its old "Whites Only" and "Colored Only" signs on display for posterity. I'm also a fan of the coffee shops Prevail Union and Cafe Louisa, as well as bar standouts like Leroy Lounge, a dive with a terrific selection of wines and craft beers, and Aviator Bar, covered in airplane-themed kitsch — inspired by the Wright Brothers, who started the country's first civilian flight school outside Montgomery.

I met a group of black culinary students there one night who not only knew the city's history but said it fueled their ambitions. "We're in a bar on the road that was used to bring people to be auctioned off," said Steven McIntyre, who interns as a line cook at the highly regarded restaurant Vintage Year, "and the fact that we are here today, just hanging out, enjoying life, it's incredible. Not super long ago, we would not be

chilling here. This would not be chill."

My best culinary experiences, though, came by way of cabdrivers I'd met. Nick Alloway, that lone Sunday driver, sent me to Mrs. B's Home Cooking, a yellow-painted soul food restaurant a few minutes west of downtown that serves up a different featured meat every day. Blocks north of the Capitol building is Davis Cafe, an even older family-run soul food joint that's the haunt of Hillard Wright, a King's Airport shuttle driver with a salt-and-pepper mustache, a gruff baritone voice and a leather rancher's hat that never left his head. He spent a whole afternoon showing me his version of the city he's lived in all of his 66 years. My plate overflowing with collard greens, creamed corn, peas and okra, turkey dressing, yams and cornbread cost around \$6.

Following the spirit of the locals I had met, I tried to absorb as much history as I could in four days: The Dexter Parsonage Museum, where Dr. King lived in the 1950s; the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum in the home where their marriage dissolved; Hank Williams's grave in the Oakwood Annex Cemetery. What stuck with me more than any of those, though, were the three hours I spent with Mr. Wright, driving around and looking at old houses. He'd introduce each neighborhood with factoids about its legal, and later, de facto, segregation status. Entering the "old money" neighborhood of Old Cloverdale, for example, he pointed out, "if you'll notice, you don't see any black folks living in there." I did notice.

Mr. Wright, though, is not bitter. He has built for himself a quiet life of hunting and fishing, driving around for money and minding his own business. "Even through the segregation and hatred," he said, "Montgomery, I wouldn't trade it. I've been here my whole life and I've enjoyed every day."

This year, the city will erect its first statue to Dr. King, in front of the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church where he used to preach near the Capitol. The statues of J. Marion Sims and Jefferson Davis, erected in 1939 and 1940, will be in view, too. Alabama will remain one of two states that celebrate the King and Lee birthdays in a combined holiday. This is how change seems to come in Montgomery: messy and long overdue. Still, how wonderful to see progress in action.

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