

5-2015

Lecture Series, 2009-2015

William E. Brown

Brookings Mountain West, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, william.brown@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/brookings_pubs

 Part of the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Brown, W. E. (2015). Lecture Series, 2009-2015. 1-24.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/brookings_pubs/36

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Publications (BMW) at Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Brookings Mountain West Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

BROOKINGS | UNLV

BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST

BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)

LECTURE SERIES, 2009-2015

William E. Brown Jr.

Assistant Director

May 2015

BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST

LECTURE SERIES, 2009-2015

The Brookings Mountain West Lecture Series provides a forum for scholars from the Brookings Institution to offer information and perspectives on important public policy issues to Southern Nevada. Brookings scholars offer their lectures during visits to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and Southern Nevada in concert with Brookings Mountain West, a partnership between the Brookings Institution and UNLV. Held in the Greenspun Hall Auditorium on the UNLV Campus, the lecture series is free and open to the public. Brookings Mountain West welcomes Southern Nevadans to campus to hear presentations from Brookings scholars on domestic political and economic issues as well as foreign policy and global development topics. Scholars from each of Brookings five programs: Economics, Foreign Policy, Global Economics and Development, Governance, and Metropolitan Policy are represented in this lecture series. Individual lectures may focus on a global issue, a national challenge, a regional topic, a state-level priority or some combination of these perspectives.

Brookings Mountain West is pleased to provide this summary list of more than seventy-five public lectures offered by some forty-six visiting Brookings scholars from Fall 2009 – to Spring 2015. The electronic version of this list includes embedded links to both the video lectures and biographical profiles of the speakers (when available). [Powerpoint presentations](#) that accompany selected lectures are also available at the Brookings Mountain West website.

The lectures are recorded and edited by faculty, staff, and students of the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs, a co-sponsor of this lecture series, and are available at the [Brookings Mountain West website](#).

We also wish to acknowledge Vegas PBS and general manager Tom Axtell. Vegas PBS, the local public television station in Southern Nevada, broadcasts the Brookings Lecture Series throughout the year.

The opinions of Brookings scholars are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Brookings Institution, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, or Brookings Mountain West.

ECONOMICS

Gary Burtless, Senior Fellow | The John C. and Nancy D. Whitehead Chair

“Where Are the Jobs? Employment Stagnation after Great Recession,” March 6, 2012

The Great Recession of 2008-2009 was the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Unlike most other recessions in the post-war era, however, the recovery has brought back only a small fraction of the almost 9 million jobs lost in the downturn. The speaker explains the puzzling absence of an employment rebound in his talk. Why has the rebound been so slow? What can we do to speed it up?

Tracy Gordon, Former Fellow

“Putting Nevada in Perspective: State and Local Government Budgets in Recession and Recovery,” September 19, 2012

Nevada, the state most affected by the Great Recession of 2008, faced one of the nation’s worst state budget shortfalls in 2011. This presentation examines state budget drivers, including constitutional requirements, tax and spending limitations, federal statutes, demographics, and the resulting policy choices to evaluate how state-level decisions affect local jurisdictions that continue to cope with lower property values, foreclosures, and high unemployment. It also explores longer term challenges including rising health care costs and retiree pensions as well as issues surrounding implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

“By Choice or by Chance: Why is Nevada Last in Federal Funding and What Can Be Done About It?” September 11, 2013

The federal government spends more than \$600 billion or 17 percent of its budget each year on grants to states and localities. Nevada consistently ranks at the bottom among states in its allocation of federal dollars per capita. This presentation examines the reasons for Nevada’s “donor state” status including state demographics, federal funding formulas, and state policy decisions. It focuses especially on Medicaid, the largest federal grant program, and Governor Brian Sandoval’s recent decision to participate in the program expansion scheduled for 2014 under the Affordable Care Act. The presentation also discusses reasons for intergovernmental grants and potential threats to this source of funding in light of the federal government’s difficult fiscal position.

Ross Hammond, Director, Center on Social Dynamics and Policy | Senior Fellow

“Community-Level Action and Interventions to Improve Public Health — Tobacco Control, Obesity, and Community Dynamics,” March 25, 2015

There is growing recognition bottom-up, community-level action may be one of the most effective ways to address complex problems (especially in public health). “Whole of community” interventions offer the potential to break through gridlock that can derail attempts at higher levels of policy scale to coordinate action across multiple areas and sectors. In this lecture, I present new research on the track record and potential of community-level changes to prevent obesity and tobacco use, covering both the promise and the potential challenges.

**“New Approaches to Understanding and Managing Social Dynamics and Public Policy,”
November 27, 2012**

Complex social dynamics drive our economic, political, and public health systems, and understanding these dynamics can be critical for designing effective public policies. Advanced computational modeling is increasingly used at the national level to craft responses to complex public health challenges facing our society, including obesity, infectious disease pandemics, and widening health disparities. This presentation includes an introduction to these novel computational methods and an overview of several recent research studies from the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) and Models of Infectious Disease Agent Study (MIDAS) networks, which have both been cited by the Department of Health and Human Services for their innovation and contributions to the nation’s health. Applications to other policy questions will also be discussed.

“The Challenge of Obesity, and a Systems Approach to Solutions,” October 22, 2013

Obesity has grown into a major global epidemic. Rates in the U.S. have doubled since the 1980s, with more than two-thirds of adults now overweight (including more than one third who are obese). These trends are paralleled by rapid growth in childhood obesity, suggesting adult rates may continue to climb for some time even if we take action soon. Health care costs are also affected--costs related to obesity already account for fully 21% of all US medical expenditures, and the overall economic impact of the US obesity epidemic may top \$215 billion annually. Unfortunately, obesity is a complex problem involving multiple inter-related contributing factors spanning a wide range of levels of scale (from the social, built, natural and economic environments to behavior, physiology, and epigenetics) and crossing the entire lifecourse. This complexity poses a challenge for traditional methods of study, and for the design of effective interventions. This talk reviews the data and trends on obesity in U.S. (and globally), and discusses promising approaches for prevention science and policy. It draws on the presenter’s own research as well as his participation in several Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Sciences studies and in the National Institutes of Health Envision project.

Ron Haskins, Co-Director, Center on Children and Families, Budgeting for National Priorities | Senior Fellow | The Cabot Family Chair

“Creating an Opportunity Society,” April 6, 2010

America presents citizens and immigrants with great opportunity to get ahead. Even so, there is less mobility in America than in other industrialized nations and perhaps less than in the past. Individuals, parents, communities, and governments at all levels can do a lot to promote mobility and opportunity. Specific proposals for increasing opportunity, many supported by good evidence, are presented.

“Deficits and Disaster,” September 14, 2010

The nation’s deficit path is unsustainable. The public debt is likely to increase by \$1 trillion per year until 2020, and then increase at an ever increasing rate after that. Far from helping the nation address its exploding deficit, the last two administrations and every congress since 2000 have taken actions that have intensified the problem. It is time for Americans to face the high probability that due most fundamentally to their continuing demand for high spending and low taxes, sometime in the next decade or so one or more catastrophes will strike America. This presentation outlines the deficit problem, examines the possible consequences of failing to stem the red ink, and explores why the nation’s government seems incapable of taking serious action.

“The Federal Deficit Battle of 2011,” October 19, 2011

After failing to reach agreement on revenue increases and health care reforms, the two major issues underlying the unsustainable federal deficit, Congress punted by assigning the next step in deficit reduction to a Super Committee composed of twelve members of Congress (6 Republican, 6 Democrats; 6 Representatives, 6 Senators). By November 23, at least 7 members of the Super Committee must agree on a proposal to reduce the deficit by at least \$1.2 trillion over ten years (in addition to the \$.9 trillion already achieved by Congressional action) and Congress must vote on the proposal by December 23. The Super Committee’s solution, if they find one, must be voted on by Congress without amendment and without interference from a filibuster. But will the Super Committee be able to do what the full Congress has not been able to do and reach agreement on a fairly big (but still inadequate) deficit reduction package? In this presentation and discussion with the audience, Haskins examines why Congress has failed to take effective action against the growing federal deficit, the reasons Congress punted to the Super Committee, what the Committee is supposed to do, how the Committee is operating, the consequences of not reaching a deal, the next steps in solving the deficit even if the Committee is successful, the politics of the ongoing deficit struggle, and several other related topics. He also examines the effect of the federal deficit crisis on the states in general and Nevada in particular.

“Can America Govern Itself?: Deficits, Debt, and Delay,” October 30, 2013

America has now been in the throes of a deficit and debt crisis for nearly a decade. Over the last three years, the federal government has tied itself in knots trying to reach a long-term solution. Any effective solution will involve tax increases and entitlement cuts. But both parties have been unwilling to openly bargain about either the tax increases or spending cuts they are willing to consider as part of a grand bargain. Why are both parties being so intransigent? What are the prospects for a grand bargain and what might it look like? What are the consequences if Congress and the president fail to significantly reduce the deficit and contain the growth of the federal debt?

Adele Morris, Senior Fellow | Policy Director, Climate and Energy Economics Project

“Climate Change Economics 101,” November 17, 2009

Climate change, in economic terms, can be viewed as an external cost of greenhouse gas emitting activities. This presentation explores policy outcomes that consider the economic and social value of mitigation efforts and considers potential legislative actions action by the U.S. Congress.

“Climate Change and Real Estate: How Environmental Risks and Policies Impact Market,” February 25, 2010

The economic relationship between climate and property, with a focus on the Southwest, is considered in light of national and global energy and environmental trends.

“The U.S. Tax System: Where Do We Go From Here?” March 27, 2012

This talk will explore how the U.S. tax system really works, where revenue comes from, where pending goes, what a tax expenditure is, and discuss deficit prognoses and how the recent political debates could affect our economy. The speaker will highlight some advantages and disadvantages of different budget balancing options

“Clean Energy: The Economics of Why and How,” October 23, 2012

One rationale for large public investments in clean energy technology points to concerns that have not been addressed by other policies, most notably greenhouse gas emissions and energy security. Another inspiration for clean energy policy suggests that strategic government investments would increase domestic firms’ market share of a growing industry and thus help domestic firms and workers. This lecture examines the economic case for clean energy policy in the United States and addresses the issues state and local governments confront in building a clean energy industry.

“Could a State-Level Carbon tax Work in the Intermountain West?” October 8, 2013

With the U.S. federal government stuck in partisan gridlock, attention increasingly turns to states and localities for innovative climate solutions. This talk will explore the option for Intermountain West states to tax carbon, including how they could establish a tax base, set price signals, and manage revenue. The presentation will pay special attention to the option of “swapping” a carbon tax for revenue sources that more negatively impact economic growth, such as taxes on business activity. This research will explore the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches and consider the issue of the burdens on lower income households and certain industries. In addition, the speaker discusses how a carbon tax at the state level could impact the case for other state-level policies to promote clean energy and reduce emissions. The research presented is a collaboration with Brookings scholar Tracy Gordon and UNLV graduate student in economics, Matt Kinzer.

“The U.S. Oil and Gas Boom: Implications for the Intermountain West,” October 15, 2014

This lecture explores the implications of the dramatic increase in oil and gas production in the United States with an emphasis on the economic and environmental outcomes in the Intermountain West. The lecture discusses the revenues states and households receive from oil and gas production, the effect on labor markets, and the broader macroeconomic outcomes. It also reviews concerns about greenhouse gas emissions and the local environmental implications of hydraulic fracturing and other production activities with an eye to assessing the tradeoffs that arise in the recent expansion of the domestic energy sector.

Richard Reeves, Senior Fellow | Policy Director, Center on Children and Families

“Grit and Dreams: Character Strengths, Social Mobility, and the American Dream,” September 23, 2014

The issue of social mobility is at the forefront of current political debate. President Obama has described it as ‘the defining challenge of our times.’ Paul Ryan says that the ‘engines of upward mobility have stalled.’ Most approaches to restoring the American dream focus on institutions: schools, companies, and colleges. There is growing evidence that individual character strengths -- especially grit (the capacity to stick with a task or a journey), and prudence (valuing future outcomes) - matter just as much as more tangible factors. Blending history, philosophy, and economics, this public lecture argues that restoring the American dream requires us to recapture - and cultivate through policy - the ideal of American character.

Clifford Winston, Senior Fellow | Searle Freedom Trust Fellow

“Should the Economic Crisis Change Our Assessment of Markets and Government?” October 7, 2009

The speaker is an applied micro-economist who specializes in the analysis of industrial organization, regulation, and transportation. Prior to his fellowship at Brookings, he was an associate professor in the Transportation Systems Division of MIT’s Department of Civil Engineering.

“The First Thing We Do, Let’s Deregulate All the Lawyers,” April 22, 2010

This presentation argues that licensing restrictions for the legal profession cannot be justified on cost-benefit grounds. We would be better off deregulating entry into the legal profession, thereby forcing lawyers to compete more intensely both with other lawyers and other providers of legal services. In the marketplace we envision, lawyers would still be welcome to attend traditional three-year law schools and to acquire other credentials that signal their competence and quality. At the same time, though, individuals ought to be able to learn what they need to practice law from less expensive and less time-consuming sources. Allowing the lawyers’ trade association to enjoy a monopoly on law school accreditation and forcing lawyers to pass licensing exams generates huge costs, direct and indirect, yet adds little protection against unscrupulous and incompetent providers of legal services.

FOREIGN POLICY

John Banks, Nonresident Senior Fellow

“U.S. Energy Policy: The Burdens of the Past and Moving Forward,” September 25, 2012

Since the oil embargo of 1973, the United States has struggled to implement a sustainable and comprehensive national energy policy. Forging a consistent policy approach has been complicated by more recent emerging trends: how to combat global climate change, the continued emergence of viable alternative energy options, and the hydrocarbon renaissance. This presentation discusses several major themes that have impacted energy policy-making since the 1970s and how they are reflected in key issues debated in the current election year. It then poses some thoughts on how to move away from the burdens of the past and move forward.

Charles Ebinger, Senior Fellow

“Geopolitics of Global Change: The Melting of the Arctic,” October 14 2009

Global climate change has catapulted the Arctic into the centre of geopolitics, as melting Arctic ice transforms the region from one of primarily scientific interest into a maelstrom of competing commercial, national security and environmental concerns, with profound implications for the international legal and political system. The significance of an Arctic rendered increasingly accessible by the melting of ice as a result of rising global temperatures should not be underestimated. As the region opens to increased human activity such as traffic from commercial shipping, tourism, and oil and gas exploration, soot emitted by maritime vessels and operations will land on the ice. Greying of the icecap, as black carbon from incomplete hydrocarbon combustion lodges itself in snow and ice, causes what was once a reflective surface to absorb more sunlight, melt, and warm the water. The resulting dangerous feedback loop is part of an alarming phenomenon that is pushing the current drive for policies to slow down climate change.

“Nuclear Renaissance, How Real Is It?” February 4, 2010

There are several technical, institutional and geopolitical challenges facing an expanded nuclear industry in the twenty-first century. This article addresses some of the security concerns that are linked to the expansion of nuclear power in the world. Given that more and more states are going to have access to sensitive nuclear technology and material, the security concerns surrounding nuclear energy are bound to increase. However, in the absence of a satisfactory nuclear waste management solution and adequate regulatory protocols, a large-scale expansion of the civil nuclear sector will present significant security challenges. The adaptation of the fuel cycle to incorporate reprocessed spent nuclear fuel presents perhaps the most serious concern owing to the inherent relationship between reprocessing and nuclear proliferation. Of equal concern is the fact that existing international regimes are inadequate to deal with civilian nuclear-related issues in the twenty-first century.

Vanda Felbab-Brown, Senior Fellow

“Afghanistan’s Future and the Legacies of U.S. Counterinsurgency Efforts,” January 29, 2014

The United States and its allies have spent more than a decade of great effort and sacrifice to fight the Taliban and stabilize the government in Afghanistan. Yet the insurgents have not been defeated, and many Afghans believe that a civil war is coming after 2014 when the United States winds down its military presence in the country. Dr. Felbab-Brown will analyze the U.S. and international counterinsurgency and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. She will outline scenarios of Afghanistan’s future after 2014 and discuss U.S. policy options for maximizing its important interests in Afghanistan and South Asia. She will analyze how the Western tendency to ally with bullies, warlords, and smugglers in pursuit of short-term military advantage actually empowers the forces working against good governance and long-term political stability. The lecture is interspersed with vivid personal accounts of Dr. Felbab-Brown’s time spent in the war-torn nation, where she has been traveling and doing research during the past decade. Dr. Felbab-Brown also draws implications for the international intervention to depose the terrorists in Mali.

“Water Crimes: A Global Crisis on the Rise,” February 11, 2015

Increasing urbanization, climate-change, deforestation, and poor agricultural, energy, and water-use policies are producing a severe scarcity of water in many parts of the world – a resource without substitutes. While the Middle East, South Asia, China, Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa have long been known to be the loci of intense tensions over water, some potentially escalating to violent conflict and war, insufficient policy and scholarly attention has been paid to the proliferating smuggling of water within communities and potentially across international boundaries. It should be no surprise, therefore, to find that the smuggling of water and its illegal distribution are emerging as a new domain of organized crime. Going beyond the use of water in excess of allocations, tampering with meters, or drilling of illegal taps, the organized smuggling of water will increasingly present a highly challenging problem from a regulatory and enforcement perspective as well as from a moral perspective (as when slum communities depend on organized crime groups for access to potable water obtained in violation of existing regulations and with negative environmental effects). Additional political, regulatory, and moral problems arise where state authorities manipulate access to water as a mechanism of political control over communities. Meanwhile, increasing industrial-scale privatization of water by companies and questionable “water grabs” will not only further complicate regulatory and enforcement policies toward water use, but also increasingly intersect with organized crime and water smuggling.

Elizabeth Ferris, Senior Fellow | Co-Director, Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement

“Climate Change, Natural Disasters, and Human Rights,” February 25, 2015

This lecture examines trends in natural disasters, the effects of climate change, and their impact on human rights, including economic costs, the displacement/migration of people, and the likelihood that the poor and marginalized are most likely to be affected by natural disasters and climate change.

Clifford Gaddy, Senior Fellow

“Booms and Busts: Russia and It’s Oil, 1970 to 2011 and Beyond,” April 19, 2011

For 40 years Russia’s domestic economic and political development and its foreign policy ambitions have been driven by the varying fortunes of its oil and gas wealth. The story continues to play out today, with crucial global consequences. Russia remains the world’s largest producer of oil and gas. It holds the third

largest foreign exchange reserves in the world. Understanding the role of Russia's energy wealth is key to understanding what role the country may play in world energy security and geopolitics in the years ahead.

“The Middle Class vs. the Creative Class: The Fight for Russia's Future,” April 9, 2013

Russia needs to modernize, and to do that it needs a large number of people who in terms of education, motivation, and outlook are the equals of the middle class populations of Western Europe and the rest of the advanced world. There is now a struggle in Russia between two different notions of the middle class. Vladimir Putin wants a middle class with certain virtues such as a willingness to work hard and a desire for stability and predictability. He does not, however, want one that looks to the West as its model or that insists too strongly on the value of individual freedom and dignity. Putin is placing his bets on "his" middle class. Geographically, it will be based outside Moscow, in the cities with large manufacturing plants inherited from the Soviet Union. The social base will be skilled workers, scientists, doctors, and teachers - what in the old Soviet Union was called the "intelligentsia." His target and opponent is the layer of the population that loosely resembles what Richard Florida has termed the "creative class." Putin's dilemma is that success in creating a competitive economy requires a strong and vibrant creative class. The system must respond to the needs and desires of this creative class in order to fully realize its economic potential. But this would threaten Putin's regime.

Bruce Jones, Senior Fellow | Acting Vice President and Director, Foreign Policy

“America's Role in a Changing World,” March 5, 2014

For over sixty years the United States has led an international order that provided the underpinnings of peace, security, and economic prosperity. Today, that order is under strain from a variety of sources: the rise of new powers, an economic crisis, resource scarcity, technological innovations, rising nationalism, territorial disputes, and transnational challenges. This lecture examines these pressures and asks how the United States can reform the international order so it plays as constructive a role in the 21st century as it did in the 20th.

Michael O'Hanlon, Senior Fellow | Co-Director, Century for 21st Century Security and Intelligence | Director of Research, Foreign Policy | The Sydney Stein, Jr. Chair

“Toughing It Out in Afghanistan,” November 10, 2010

Michael O'Hanlon specializes in the study of U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force, homeland security, and American foreign policy. He explores U.S. policy in Afghanistan and discusses this topic from his perspective as a visiting lecturer at Princeton University and adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University, and a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Council on Foreign Relations. He was a member of the Secretary of State's International Security Advisory Board in 2009 and was an informal advisor to General David Petraeus during his 2008-2009 CENTCOM review of Mideast security strategy.

“Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century,” March 26, 2014

After forty years of largely cooperative Sino-U.S. relations, policymakers, politicians, and pundits on both sides of the Pacific see growing tensions between the United States and China. Some go so far as to predict a future of conflict, driven by the inevitable rivalry between an established and a rising power, and

urge their leaders to prepare now for a future showdown. Others argue that the deep economic interdependence between the two countries and the many areas of shared interests will lead to more collaborative relations in the coming decades. Michael O'Hanlon stakes out a third, less deterministic position. He argues that there are powerful domestic and international factors, especially in the military and security realms, that could well push the bilateral relationship toward an arms race and confrontation, even though both sides will be far worse off if such a future comes to pass. He contends that this pessimistic scenario can be confidently avoided only if China and the United States adopt deliberate policies designed to address the security dilemma that besets the relationship between a rising and an established power. The speaker proposes a set of policy proposals to achieve a sustainable, relatively cooperative relationship between the two nations, based on the concept of providing mutual strategic reassurance in such key areas as nuclear weapons and missile defense, space and cyber operations, and military basing and deployments, while also demonstrating strategic resolve to protect vital national interests, including, in the case of the United States, its commitments to regional allies.

Steven Pifer, Senior Fellow | Director, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative

“Nuclear Arms Control: Challenges and Opportunities in 2013,” October 10, 2012

U.S. nuclear arms control policy must address numerous factors, including our strategic relationships with Russia and China, the potential for future nuclear weapons reductions--including non-strategic nuclear weapons, and the offense-defense relationship, given concerns that missile defense developments could in the future affect the nuclear balance. Washington DC must also consider its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, how to dissuade new countries from joining the nuclear weapons ranks, and what to do about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which the United States has signed but not ratified. This presentation explores challenges and opportunities facing Washington DC in the aftermath of the Cold War and following the 2012 presidential elections in Russia and the United States.

Jeremy Shapiro, Fellow

“U.S. Military Intervention and the American Presidency,” April 8, 2015

U.S. military intervention has long been among the most visible and dramatic manifestations of American leadership in global affairs. Even in a time of relative decline, U.S. military supremacy, and the willingness to use it, remains one of the most important pillars of U.S. power. And the Obama administration has not shied away from using military force. It launched a full-scale intervention in the civil war in Libya and has used drones and special forces in Pakistan and elsewhere with unprecedented vigor. President Obama has also shied away from using forces in some circumstances where his predecessors might have used that tool. It seems clear that as with other aspects of U.S. leadership, when and how the U.S. intervenes militarily must and is changing in response to a new global environment.

This lecture describes the new U.S. approach to intervention by looking at military interventions in the Obama administration, particularly in Libya, the Drone Campaign, and Afghanistan, as well as “non-interventions” such as Syria and Iran. It describes how the Obama administration has approached the use of force and explore whether this approach will persist in future presidencies or whether it is a result of Obama’s policy choices.

Peter Singer, Former Fellow

“Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century,” March 22, 2011

A look at the political, military, ethical and legal questions that surround the growing use of unmanned systems in war, including those found at military bases in Nevada.

“What is Changing in War and National Security?” March 20, 2012

Singer has served as a consultant on changes in warfare to groups that range from the U.S. military and FBI to the Call of Duty video game series. In his talk at UNLV, he explores some of the key forces reshaping warfare and national security, from the emergence of new technologies to the changing locales of war.

Thomas Wright, Fellow | Director, Project on International Order and Strategy

“The Changing Global Order: The United States, Rising Powers, and the Scramble for the 21st Century,” October 3, 2012

The United States and the West remain central to managing the new global order, though there are now more players on the global stage. Despite the rising influence of old powers, the United States alone retains the diplomatic reach to forge the alliances and catalyze the collective action necessary to navigate today’s globalized world. Brazil, Turkey, and India can drive initiatives in niche roles, but have only regional, not truly global clout. China has global economic reach, but its diplomatic strategy teeters between defensive and alienating, and China is not expected to assume the lead in addressing global problems. Will the democratic West and the new actors work together to forge an effective new order? Or will the forces of entropy and collective action problems undermine our ability to manage great power tensions and solve global problems? What role will international and regional institutions play? This lecture illustrates the new dimensions of order by examining three defining issues: competition over energy; maritime security; and the fraught question of humanitarian intervention,(or the so-called ‘responsibility to protect’).

“The Return of Geopolitical Competition and the Future of American Grand Strategy,” February 19, 2014

One of the defining features of world politics since the financial crisis is the return of geopolitical competition. In North East Asia, China and Japan are locked in a struggle for control of the Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands while relations between South Korea and Japan have deteriorated over history issues. In the Middle East, a proxy war is being fought over Syria and the region seems headed to a Cold War between Sunnis and Shia. In Eastern Europe, Russia successfully thwarted EU efforts to engage Armenia and Ukraine. In this lecture, Thomas Wright describes the return of geopolitics and argues that it will present new challenges for the global order and the United States. To address these challenges, the United States needs to adjust its grand strategy and engage deeply in East Asia and the Middle East.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT

Mauricio Cardenas, Former Fellow

“The Emergence of Latin America: A Break with History?” March 1, 2011

The idea is to discuss recent economic and social trends in Latin America, many of which defy the conventional wisdom in the U.S. about the region. At the same time, the region is divided between two ideological camps, so progress will not be uniform between countries. Understanding the origins and implications of the ideological divide is crucial.

Carol Graham, Leo Pasvolsky Senior Fellow

**“Happiness Around the World: The Paradox of Happy Peasants and Miserable Millionaires,”
November 15, 2011**

For centuries the pursuit of happiness was the preserve of philosophers. More recently there is a burgeoning interest in the study of happiness in the social sciences. Can we really answer the question what makes people happy? Is it grounded in credible methods and data? Is there consistency in the determinants of happiness across countries and cultures? Are happiness levels innate to individuals or can policy and the environment make a difference? How is happiness affected by poverty and by progress? This presentation introduces a line of research which is both an attempt to understand the determinants of happiness and a tool for understanding the effects of a host of phenomena on human wellbeing, ranging from macroeconomic and political trends to inequality, disease, and crime. The author discusses the potential of happiness surveys to contribute to better public policy, as well as the potential pitfalls.

**“Applying Well-Being Metrics to Public Policy: Lessons from Experiments Around the World,”
February 21, 2013**

The ongoing research activity of economists who study what constitutes happiness and make recommendations to governments about how best to increase it continues to receive global attention. The recent publication of the first World Happiness Report, commissioned for the United Nations General Assembly, argues that happiness can be measured objectively; that it differs systematically across societies and over time; that happiness has predictable causes and is correlated to specific things (such as wealth, income distribution, health, and political institutions); and government has the ability to create the right conditions for happiness to flourish. The U.S. National Academy of Sciences, meanwhile, has tasked a panel of experts (of which the author is a member) to explore which well-being metrics are most relevant for our own statistics. This presentation highlights the metrics used to evaluate well-being or happiness and explore implications for public policy.

“Does Access to Information Technology Make People Happier? Insights from Well-being Surveys from Around the World,” February 13, 2014

This lecture summarizes new research on the relationship between access to cell phones, TV, and the internet and subjective well-being worldwide. Technology access is positive for well-being in general, but with diminishing marginal returns for those who already have much access. It is also associated with increased stress and anger among cohorts for whom access to the technologies is new. The increased financial inclusion in very poor countries that comes with cell phones and mobile banking also has effects

on well-being. Well-being levels are higher in the countries with higher levels of access to mobile banking, but so are stress and anger.

“The Unequal Pursuit of Happiness in the U.S.: Inequality in Agency, Optimism, and Access to the American Dream,” November 20, 2014

The Declaration of Independence promises the opportunity to seek life fulfillment and happiness – in its fullest sense- for all U.S. citizens. Is happiness for all an increasingly elusive dream? There is increasing debate – both academic and political – about the extent to which the American Dream is equally available to all citizens today. U.S. trends in opportunity and in distributional outcomes are becoming more unequal by any number of measures. Is happiness as unequally shared as income in the U.S.? While U.S. attitudes about inequality and opportunity have historically been exceptional, are they still? Our well-being metrics depict “two” Americas: a wealthy group with high levels of life satisfaction and corresponding ability to plan for and invest in the future, and a poor group with lower life satisfaction, higher levels of stress, and much less optimism about the future. The gap between the poor and the rich is greatest in terms of mobility attitudes, e.g. beliefs that hard work can get people ahead. Current patterns in well-being and attitudes about the future thus suggest that the gaps between the lives of the rich and poor will only grow larger. A potentially more positive result from our research is that belief in hard work mediates the unhappiness of the least happy Americans. Thus continuing to believe in the American Dream provides some solace for those respondents who do.

Jeffrey Gutman, Senior Fellow

“Public Procurement: The Achilles Heel of Good Governance,” April 15, 2015

Development aid is defined as the financial aid given by governments and agencies to support the economic, environmental, social, and political needs of developing countries. With the government acquisition of goods, civil works, and services representing between 15-20 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for most countries, the value of procurement policy and its application are very high. Recent high profile cases in the news, ranging from the military purchase of clothing from foreign sources that raise human rights issues, to the criticism of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act website, to a range of corruption cases around the world, are bringing policymakers’ attention to a field traditionally treated as equivalent in notoriety to the plumbing and wiring of government facilities. These cases, however, illustrate the range of objectives that public policy now places on the public procurement of goods and services, and the need for a broader dialogue. Reforms worldwide are being discussed through the World Trade Organization (WTO) Government Procurement Agreement and the European Union as well as by the multilateral development institutions. Underlying these reforms is a tension between a rules-based system with limited, if any, discretion to avoid fraud and corruption versus an outcome based focus that requires greater use of discretion and judgment to ensure better adaptation to circumstances. The lecture focuses primarily on the public procurement debate for development aid; but the issues have a resonance well beyond developing countries.

Domenico Lombardi, Former Fellow

“The Euro Area Crisis: Origins, Prospects and Implication for the World Economy and Global Governance,” April 3, 2013.

European nations have adopted a common currency and created regional institutions but they are also undergoing the greatest crisis in the integration since the end of World War II. This presentation explores Europe’s regional integration, assess this process in light of the current crisis, and consider lessons to be learned for other regions, notably Asia.

Joshua Meltzer, Fellow

“Climate Change and International Trade: Conflict or Opportunity?” November 14, 2012

How can international trade negotiations provide incentives or limit progress on domestic and international climate change policy? This presentation will explore how trade negotiations can reduce trade barriers to low carbon produced goods, the implications of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and free trade agreements, and how pricing carbon to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can lead to international competitiveness and carbon leakage concerns. This presentation considers the implications of the November 6th election on short and long-term climate policy initiatives.

“International Trade, the Internet and Cross-Border Data Flows,” March 12, 2014.

The Internet is an important driver economic growth, underpinning the development of innovative companies such as Google, Facebook and eBay and increasingly affecting the ways in which everyone does business. Accompanying the growth of the Internet has been the ability for people, businesses and governments to change the way data is collected, shared and used. The Internet and the ability to move data freely across borders is also increasingly becoming an important driver of international trade, enabling businesses to reach consumers globally and helping entrepreneurs in developing countries overcome barriers to trade and reach global markets online. At the same time, governments are increasingly restricting the ability to transfer data across-border, diminishing the potential of the Internet and cross-border data flows to drive economic growth and affecting international trade. This lecture discusses how international trade policy and law can be used to support an open and interoperable Internet and the cross-border flow of data while recognizing a role for government in addressing harms from online activity.

“Mega-regional Free Trade Agreements – is the U.S. gambling with the Global Trading System,” March 11, 2015

This lecture discusses the impact of the Trans Pacific Partnership negotiations and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations on U.S. economic competitiveness and leadership in Asia and Europe. This will lead into a discussion of large Free Trade Areas (FTA), or groups of countries that have few or no price controls in the form of tariffs or quotas between each other. FTAs allow the agreeing nations to focus on their comparative advantages and to produce the goods they are comparatively more efficient at making, thus increasing the efficiency and profitability of each country. We explore the impact of FTAs on the World Trade Organization – whether they create a pathway towards a new global consensus on trade or will lead to the creation of competing trade blocs.

John Page, Senior Fellow

“Three African Futures,” April 7, 2014

Africa has experienced a remarkable turn-around in economic performance since 1995. It grew at around 4.6 percent per year during the first decade of the 21st century, and the region boasts three of the world’s 10 fastest-growing countries. Cheerleaders as diverse as the Economist and the World Bank have branded Africa the developing world’s next “frontier market.” But beneath the headlines lie some disturbing realities. Africa is not creating enough good jobs – those capable of paying decent wages and providing opportunities to develop skills – and it is not reducing poverty at the same rate as other parts of the developing world. The sources of growth remain heavily concentrated in rising commodity prices and new discoveries of natural resources. This lecture looks at the economic prospects for Africa through the

lens of three stylized African futures – business as usual, a dominant role for natural resources, and a new strategy for growth –to provide a deeper understanding of the possibilities and constraints African governments face as they try to secure shared prosperity for the continent.

Katherine Sierra, Nonresident Senior Fellow

“Climate Change and Development,” February 15, 2011

The least developed countries are not responsible for global climate change, yet will suffer most from its impact. And the poorest people in these countries are the most vulnerable. The presentation outlines the challenges they face as they confront a changing climate. It will also outline opportunities for building climate resilience into country growth and poverty alleviation strategies. Case studies draw from examples in the water, energy, agriculture, and urban sectors.

Rebecca Winthrop, Senior Fellow | Director, Center for Universal Education

“Education in the Developing World: Helping to Solve the World’s Big Problems?” February 10, 2011

This lecture provides a broad overview of the state of education in the developing world and the major challenges it faces in over the next decade. It also discusses the role of education in broader global issues and explores ways in which education can and cannot help to address things such as climate change, global security, and global health.

GOVERNANCE STUDIES

Beth Akers, Fellow

“Is College a Good Investment?: An Economic and Political Analysis,” November 6, 2013

This lecture provides a theoretical framework for thinking about the financial returns in the investment in higher education degrees and will present the latest empirical finding on this question. The discussion touches on the topics of rapid tuition inflation, for-profit colleges, student loan debt, and the potential for a fiscal crisis in the market for student loans.

David Damore, Nonresident Senior Fellow

“The Next Swing Region: Reappointment and Redistricting in the Intermountain West,” September 27, 2011

During the first decade of the 21st century no region in the nation experienced the political and demographic changes that occurred in the Intermountain West region, including the states of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. These states grew at unprecedented levels and are now demographically more diverse and increasingly urbanized. This presentation explores the status of redistricting and reapportionment efforts, and the implications for state and national politics.

Allan Friedman, Former Fellow

“The Economics of Cybersecurity: A National Dilemma,” January 31, 2012

Cybersecurity has dominated recent headlines, but policy makers and pundits alike still combine different risks, threats, and solutions. Crime, espionage, and international conflict represent different dangers to our society at the local and national level, and each has a set of bad actors with different incentives. Conflating these areas can lead to poorly framed solutions. Exploring the economics of cybersecurity offers a set of tools to understand these incentives, and the sometimes complex policy challenges that arise in dealing with digital risk.

“Technocracy vs. Democracy: Understanding Technology Policy Decision-making,” January 29, 2013

The role and impact of technology on democracy and public policy continues to affect our lives on a daily basis. Technology is a monumental factor in our economy, our national defense, and in our political system. Technology, seemingly, offers a solution to every problem it creates. What roles does technology play in the "high-tech" culture of the 21st century, and how do policy makers determine technology policy? Can our understanding of technology and the relationship between technology and democracy keep pace with the rapid changes affecting our privacy, domestic and national security?

John Hudak, Fellow | Managing Editor, FixGov Blog

“Capitalizing in the Nation’s Capital: Matching State and Regional Resources to Administration Funding Priorities,” March 12, 2013

This presentation explores the relationship between the funding and policy priorities established by presidential administrations and the financial resources provided to individual states and regions. Information gathered from a newly compiled database of all federal project grants from 1996-2008 helps illuminate the distribution of money across the 50 states. These data are complemented by field research in federal and state bureaucracies. Would you be surprised to learn that the executive branch delivers more money and grants to swing states than all other states? Furthermore, the proximity of a presidential election further enhances this preference to deliver funds to swing states. In addition, presidents target funds to specific issues and project ideas/themes in ways that have clear geographic distributional effects. The paper concludes that presidential electoral interest drives the distribution of federal funds and that states—and particularly states in the Intermountain West region—can capitalize on these policy forces in ways that assist state and local economies.

“Fixing the U.S. Congress by Embracing Earmarks,” October 1, 2014

Too often, earmarks, pork barrel politics, and other types of federal spending are seen as a problem in American politics. Nothing could be further from the truth. Congress’ abandonment of earmarks, the deconstruction of the appropriations process, and the breakdown in regular order in the House and Senate has coincided with a period of intense gridlock. For decades, pork greased the wheels of the legislative process, ensuring legislators could fund local needs in exchange for support on key legislation. Returning to the politics of pork offers a possible pathway to fixing a broken legislative process and meeting mounting public needs at the state and local levels. In an era where Congress has record low approval ratings—due in large part to its inability to address the nation’s problems—we should seek solutions (however unorthodox) to rehabilitating our institutions of government. Embracing earmarks is a controversial recommendation and one of the most commonsense solutions to a major source of legislative dysfunction.

Molly Jackman, Former Fellow

“Overcoming Legislative Gridlock in the U.S. Congress: How Procedural Rules Affect Legislative Obstructionism,” October 2, 2013

More than 90% of bills introduced in the U.S. House never make it to a floor vote, and far fewer are enacted into law. Since legislative gridlock is much more common than legislative action, in order to understand policy outcomes, it is critical to know why bills are obstructed. Gridlock occurs when a legislator (or group of legislators) wants to block a bill, and has the procedural right to do so. Using new data on the procedural rules in the U.S. states, this presentation identifies the chambers in which legislators can block bills from the legislative agenda and demonstrates that there is an explicit link between the presence of legislative rules that allow for obstructionism and the policies that the states ultimately enact. In drawing this connection between procedural rules and policy outcomes, the speaker focuses on two policy domains: state spending and gun regulation.

Tom Loveless, Nonresident Senior Fellow

“Do Students Have Too Much Homework,” November 18, 2010

The popular press and best-selling books frequently decry the heavy homework burden of American students. But do students really have too much homework? Has the homework load changed much over the past two decades? Data from several sources are examined to explore the amount of homework assigned to American students and to place that burden in an historical context.

“U.S. Student Achievement From A Global Perspective,” January 17, 2012

Tom Loveless, a former sixth-grade teacher and Harvard public policy professor, is an expert on student achievement, education policy, and reform in K-12 schools. He also is a member of the National Math Advisory Panel. What do we know about U.S. students' academic achievement compared to students in other countries? The talk presents the latest evidence on U.S. performance on international tests and examines long term trends. In addition, the performance of Nevada and Las Vegas students are reviewed in the context of national and international assessments.

Pietro S. Nivola, Senior Fellow Emeritus

“Urban Form in Europe and America,” January 23, 2010

Urban settlements grow in three directions: up into high-rise buildings, in by crowding, or out into the suburbs. Although cities everywhere have developed in each of these ways at various times, nowhere in Europe has the outward dispersal of people and jobs matched the scope of suburbanization in the metropolitan areas of the United States. Here, less than a quarter of the nation's population lived in suburbia in 1950 . Now more than 60 per cent does. Why have most European cities remained compact compared with the sprawling American metropolis?

Walter Valdivia, Fellow

“Innovation, Inequality, and the Commercialization of Academic Research,” September 25, 2013

Patent policy is rarely debated in relation to its distributive consequences. In particular, the Bayh-Dole Act has been discussed in terms of its effects on the pace of innovation or the organization of science. However, this lecture re-assesses this policy from the perspective of a fair distribution of resources, both those committed to and those created by research-based innovation. Specifically, examining the management of university's intellectual property, the speaker identifies the institutional arrangements that reinforce a very asymmetric distribution of political and economic resources among universities and then characterize subtle but important links between these inequalities and the social distribution of the benefits of innovation.

Philip Wallach, Fellow

“Changing Policy Without Changing Law: Addressing Climate Change under the Clean Water Act,” March 20, 2013

The evolution of our national climate change policy at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from the 1990s-2000s, is marked by a backdrop of congressional inaction. In 2007, litigation (*Massachusetts v. EPA*) required the EPA to re-interpret the Clean Air Act to also apply to greenhouse gases. This presentation will include a summary of the legal arguments in that case, and the narrow Supreme Court decision that supported the petitioners; a review of the legal and practical challenges emanating from this ruling; and consideration of the EPA's impact on continuing legislative debates. The speaker explores the impact of this decision on policy making institutions and the role of a grid-locked legislature, the executive branch, and the courts, with a consideration of the meaning for American democracy.

Darrell West, Vice President and Director, Governance Studies | Founding Director, Center for Technology Innovation | The Douglas Dillon Chair

“The Future of the Internet in an Era of Spam, Cyber-Bullying, and Wikileaks,” April 7, 2011

This lecture examines ways to use technology to improve public sector accountability, participation, collaboration, and efficiency. The presenter discussed case studies of successful innovation and how agencies are using social media, cloud computing, blogs, digital data bases, and Internet websites to improve public sector performance.

Niam Yaraghi, Fellow

“Health Information Exchange: Growth and Patient Privacy,” November 5, 2014

Health Information Exchanges (HIE) provide the electronic movement of health-related information among organizations according to nationally recognized standards. The goal of health information exchange is to facilitate access to and retrieval of clinical data to provide safer, timelier, efficient, effective, equitable patient-centered care. HIEs are becoming integral parts of the national healthcare reform efforts, chiefly owing to their potential impact on cost reduction and quality enhancement in healthcare services. However, the potential of a HIE platform can only be realized when its multiple constituent users actively participate in using its variety of services. In this research, the speaker models HIE systems as multisided platforms that incorporate self-service technologies whose value to the users depends on both user-specific and network-specific factors. The talk also discusses patient privacy on HIE systems and show the effect of the emotional and environmental factors on the patients' decision to disclose their medical information on HIE systems.

METROPOLITAN POLICY

William H. Frey, Senior Fellow

“The Recent Migration Slowdown and America’s Changing Regional Demographics,” April 8, 2010

Changes in the population demographics for the United States vary across regions, due to factors including international migration patterns, domestic migration shifts, and population growth differences. This presentation explores population shifts within the United States, including information on Las Vegas and the State of Nevada.

“America’s New Demography: Rising Minorities, Aging Boomers, and Emerging Cultural Gaps,” April 23, 2013

There are major demographic changes occurring in the United States right now. As the number of whites is declining among children and in many communities, we are seeing growth in other racial groups, particularly the Hispanic population. In fact, estimates are that by 2043 the United States will be “majority-minority.” The Brookings Institution’s William Frey will discuss how these population shifts will impact different parts of the country, their politics, and related policies. The speaker explores how changes will continue to affect Americans for decades to come.

Bruce Katz, Vice President and Director, Metropolitan Policy Program | The Adeline M. and Alfred I. Johnson Chair in Urban and Metropolitan Policy

“Reclaiming Prosperity: Repositioning Southern Nevada for the Next Economy,” April 5, 2010

The outlines of the next American economy are coming into focus, yet the future remains uncertain in Southern Nevada as America’s newest metropolis labors through a major recession. It is time therefore to get back on track and begin laying the foundation for a new and more durable kind of growth in metropolitan Las Vegas and across the Intermountain West. To help with that, urban visionary Bruce Katz advanced a powerful depiction of the next American economy in a major UNLV lecture and articulated a bold agenda for helping Las Vegas reclaim prosperity in the new era.

Alan Mallach, Former Fellow

“The Housing Market ‘Reset’ and the Future of American Housing Policy,” October 26, 2010

The foreclosure crisis and the collapse in housing prices that have engulfed much of the United States are fundamentally changing the ways in which the American housing market works, challenging many of the assumptions about the role of housing and the housing market that we have held for the past decades. He presenter discusses how and why those changes are taking place – and how they vary across the United States – and explore what they mean for American housing policy in the future, and how they are making us reconsider how we think about home ownership, rental housing, mortgage finance and low income or subsidized housing.

Mark Muro, Senior Fellow and Policy Director, Metro Policy Program

“Power America’s – and Nevada’s – Advanced Industries: State by State, Region by Region,”
October 22, 2014

With the U.S. economy still flat, economic experts and leaders continue to search for the next source of U.S. and regional growth. One key component of the next era of prosperity can be projected: It is what the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program and its associates at McKinsey & Co. call the advanced industry (AI) sector. The nation’s most strategic R&D- and STEM worker intensive industries, AIs like aerospace and IT are prime movers of regional and national prosperity, because they are key sources of technology innovation and generate domestic and international exports. Accordingly, the AI swatch of 23 discrete industries has emerged as an important new topic in economic discussions. In keeping with that, this lecture introduces and describes the AI sector, review its strategic importance for states and regions, and consider the kinds of public strategies that can expand it. Along with national data, the talk describes the AI sector in Southern Nevada and consider potential development strategies for the region.

Jonathan Rothwell, Fellow

“The Hidden STEM Economy: The Surprising Diversity of Jobs Requiring Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Knowledge,” September 18, 2013

Policy and businesses leaders have argued that there is a shortage of highly educated workers in professional occupations related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Critics have countered that PhD scientists often face a difficult academic labor market and do not necessarily earn higher wages than other professionals. Yet, both sides of the STEM debate have been relying on an ill-defined definition of STEM work. Using a detailed survey of worker knowledge requirements, this research project redefines STEM jobs based on the level of knowledge required in STEM fields to perform occupations. The results uncover two facts previously unrecognized in the STEM literature: A surprisingly high number of jobs require high-level STEM knowledge in at least one field, and roughly half of these jobs do not require a bachelor’s degree. The presentation highlights these and other results from this work and discuss the policy implications for STEM education and workforce development nationally and at the regional level.

“The Shortage of Skilled Workers: Quality Jobs for a Trained Workforce,” September 10, 2014

The Great Recession of 2008 temporarily solved employer workforce needs by lowering demand and increasing the number of unemployed skilled workers. After a few years of modest but sustained economic growth, the labor market for skilled workers has once again tightened and positions are going unfilled. This research helps national and regional leaders understand which skills are in short supply and offers policy advice on how to redress the imbalance between supply and demand. In addition to offering a national perspective on this topic, the lecture examines the situation in Nevada.

Neil Ruiz, Senior Policy Analyst and Associate Fellow

“International Migration and Economic Development of Global Metropolitan Areas,” February 5, 2014.

International migration is a global and local development issue. Migrants across international borders are transformative agents with economic, social, and political ties to origins and destinations. Migrants are the agents that link local economies through global flows of knowledge, trade, capital and production. Through their networks, international migrants serve as valuable bridges between U.S. metropolitan areas and regional economies in other countries, and can facilitate trade networks through exports, imports, or the circulation of knowledge and the production process.

Audrey Singer, Senior Fellow

“The New Geography of Immigration and Local Policy Responses,” March 9, 2010

Recent years have seen a shift in the settlement patterns of U.S. immigrants, away from well-established metro areas and into new destinations, including suburban areas. Audrey Singer discusses major trends in immigration, variation in local policy responses, and the prospects for federal immigration reform.

“Immigrants, Education, and U.S. Economic Competitiveness,” October 26, 2011

In the ongoing, highly-charged debate over U.S. immigration, a key policy consideration is the economic impact of immigrants and role they play in the U.S. workforce at various skill levels. While border enforcement and illegal immigration are a focal point, longer-term U.S. global competitiveness rests on the ability of immigrants and their children to thrive economically and to contribute to the nation’s productivity. This presentation focuses on the distinctive trends in the educational attainment of immigrants living in the 100 largest metropolitan areas, including Las Vegas.

“Immigrant Workers, Human Capital Investment and the Shape of Immigration Reform,” February 27, 2013

President Obama's speech in Las Vegas last month kicked off Congressional debates on immigration policy. While border security and illegal immigration are still high profile and thorny issues, slow economic growth following the Great Recession has helped to shift the focus to how the United States can change policy to better suit economic needs. Where do immigrants fit into the labor force, how can they fit better, and what is the likely shape of future policy changes?

Adie Tomer, Senior Research Associate and Associate Fellow

“America Moves: Transportation and Public Policy in the United States,” February 26, 2014

The United States is in a perpetual state of motion. Every day, Americans drive over 8 billion miles, board over 20,000 flights, and ship over 45 million tons of freight. But what drives all of this physical movement? And what is the relationship to public policy? This presentation begins to answer those questions, utilizing a combination of quantitative metrics and policy analysis to explain how, where, and why Americans move. The data outlines driving habits, and the disruptive moment every metropolitan area and state faces due to federal gridlock. It maps aviation patterns, and the emerging presence of global connections

in our congested skies. This research exposes the oft-hidden transportation category—freight—and how it is the secret ingredient to make modern life possible. Using the major Mountain West metropolitan areas as examples, the presentation aims to give attendees a new understanding and appreciation for America’s enormous transportation network and its inseparable connection to public policy.