

some interesting descriptions of the canal as he rode along its perfectly level towpaths for 40 to 60 mile stretches (the canal towpaths seem to have been especially popular despite frequent edicts published by the canal companies declaring them off limits to the cyclists). The cyclists' quests for adequate roads led some of them to rediscover the early nineteenth century turnpikes and they yield some unique perspectives on these early transportation systems. There were also efforts to combine the bicycle with the rapidly emerging transportation modes of the early twentieth century. For example, there was a creative proposal to build an elevated bicycle path over the Brooklyn Bridge that ultimately failed, but that influenced the successful effort to build bicycle paths on the Williamsburg Bridge. Those interested in some unique perspectives on early twentieth-century transportation systems may find value here. The book also has a potentially useful list of New York state sidepaths along with estimates of total mileage.

Finally, there are fascinating illustrations throughout the book that are worth examining in their own right. Most of these were engravings that originally appeared in publications like *The Wheelman*, and they add a rich visual dimension to the book. In the end, McCullough largely succeeds in what he set out to do by providing readers with some often ignored perspectives on how certain American landscapes were shaped during the golden age of the bicycle.

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The Rise of the Military Welfare State. By Jennifer Mittelstadt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 344. \$29.95, cloth.
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Jennifer Mittelstadt's latest book provides welcomed insight into the relationship between military personnel and the amorphous U.S. welfare state, and the varied implications of the 1973 creation of the all-volunteer force (AVF). Mittelstadt maintains that an "elaborate social and economic safety net" attracted prospective service members to the military following the end of conscription, and "convinced them to reenlist" (pp. 3–4). Focusing particularly on the Army, Mittelstadt describes the economic and social ideals that shaped entitlements from the 1970s through the early twenty-first century.

Mittelstadt's story begins soon after the establishment of the AVF, when free market economists like Milton Friedman argued that potential recruits should be treated as rational economic actors, and offered competitive pay rather than costly benefits like free housing and medical care. Military officials, however, worried that model would usher in "the age of the mercenary" (p. 33). A committed force, they suggested, could only be built by service members who were convinced they were being supported by a cohesive and interdependent institution. That model of "masculine familialism" eventually won the day (p. 36).

Just as free market economists viewed the military as a front in a larger battle to rein in government largesse, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) saw it as a site to wage a fight for workers' rights. AFGE's unionization effort of the 1970s was important, according to Mittelstadt, because it offered high-ranking military

officials and members of Congress a forum to highlight the “distinct and elevated status of military service” (p. 69). Here was a wholly unique work environment, they suggested, where unionization posed a distinct threat to hierarchy and performance. Arguments about the uniqueness of a military career helped to thwart AFGE’s campaign, and served as a justification for further expansions in benefits.

By the early 1980s, military officials and members of Congress recognized with alarm that increasing numbers of poor, minority, and under-educated recruits were joining the ranks. One Congressman wondered whether the Army was becoming a “social welfare institution” (p. 89). Army officials, for their part, feared that recruits who had fewer years of education were relatively “low-quality”—costly to train and not likely complete their enlistments.

Those dueling apprehensions shaped debates surrounding the 1984 Montgomery G.I. Bill, when free market economists again argued for the sanctity of cash incentives, as army officials and sociologists maintained that educational and other benefits would attract more “committed, responsible, upstanding” recruits (p. 105). Justifications for expanding military benefits, Mittelstadt presciently observes, were occasionally directly tied to arguments that civilian entitlements should be slashed. Existing student aid programs were, “kind of a G.I. Bill without service,” according to G.I. Bill sponsor, Sonny Montgomery (p. 114). Service members, unlike others, he and others suggested, had earned entitlements.

Policies did not only trickle down from above, but also percolated within the ranks. Mittelstadt focuses particularly on the efforts of Army wives, who organized multiple Army Family Symposia in the 1980s, where attendees could discuss mounting concerns about the pressures of military life. The upshot was the creation of new family programs focused on housing, child care, counseling, and employment assistance. As Mittelstadt puts it, “the institutional power of wives spurred tangible enhancements to the social welfare of army wives and children” (p. 145).

Once family programs were in place, army leaders ensured that they were infused with the ideals of a rising evangelical Christian movement, which maintained that happy families consisted of male breadwinners and supportive, churchgoing wives. Such representations, Mittelstadt points out, were hardly realistic; between one-sixth and one-fourth of army personnel—many of them women—had been or were single parents in the 1980s. But the impressions helped reinforce the notion that military families stood counter to a “degenerating civilian family structure,” and were thus more deserving of entitlements (p. 168).

An ideological shift occurred following the 1990–1991 Gulf War, when army officials and officers’ wives expressed dismay that “problem families” required “repeated interventions” (p. 181). Wives of mobilized soldiers who expected the Army to ensure that their lawns were mowed and their children cared for, Mittelstadt observes, were viewed as pathologically dependent. Such assessments, “mirrored analyses of civilian welfare clients” and helped usher in an era when the army compelled families to embrace self-reliance (p. 180).

Against that backdrop, multiple factors led to the limiting and privatization of the military welfare state in the 1990s and 2000s. At the end of the Cold War, amidst a general drawdown, free market economists finally had the ears not only of Republican and Democrat politicians eager to pursue broad-based welfare reform, but also army leaders open to adopting *en vogue* efficiency-focused programs like “Total Quality

Management.” Facing dwindling funding, the Army cut personnel and outsourced “non-core” jobs and housing and food services. The trends, Mittelstadt argues, signaled a powerful blow to the ideals espoused in the 1970s—that the Army should “take care of its own.”

Mittelstadt is most concerned with the ideological tensions surrounding entitlements, not with providing a political or institutional history of all forms of Army social assistance. A helpful Appendix briefly describes the variety of entitlements that comprised the military welfare state and could serve as the basis for further case studies.

The Rise of the Military Welfare State makes a variety of important contributions and deserves wide readership. Scholars have offered perspective on veterans’ benefits of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the selectivity and nebulosity of the U.S. welfare state, and the political underpinnings of the advent of the AVF and its impact on individuals and communities. Mittelstadt’s work relates to and builds upon each of those diverse fields of inquiry by artfully demonstrating that the military welfare state of the 1970s and beyond was predicated on historically contingent ideals regarding worthy service and just rewards.

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Building the Skyline: The Birth and Growth of Manhattan’s Skyscrapers. By Jason M. Barr. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xvii, 437. \$49.95, hardcover. doi: 10.1017/S0022050717000407

Jason Barr, Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at Rutgers University, is intrigued by the built environment of Manhattan and its many skyscrapers: Why does the skyline look the way it does? He reduced his curiosity to a series of research questions that he has endeavored to answer through historical research and economic theory. This book presents his various studies related to the general questions, “How and why was the skyline (of Manhattan) created, and what were the forces that shaped its history and growth?” More specifically, he focuses on skyscrapers: “what has driven and continues to drive skyscraper heights, locations, frequencies, and shapes since the late nineteenth century” (p. 3).

The book is not a narrative nor an extended argument. Rather, it collects previously published research (half the chapters are revisions of published articles), which deal with the development of Manhattan generally and skyscrapers particularly, and adds some history as background to the studies. The first part of the book, “Before the Skyscraper Revolution,” contains most of the background, with chapters on the geology of Manhattan, and early settlement and patterns of land use. The second part deals with topics related to skyscrapers: what accounts for their height, the reason Midtown became a location for tall buildings, and, most importantly, the reasons for the absence of tall buildings between Lower Manhattan and Midtown.

Because the book treats so many different, often unrelated topics, it is difficult to evaluate as a whole. The most interesting part for me was Barr’s discussion in Chapter 9 of who built skyscrapers in the 1920s and a source of project financing called Gold Bonds. But I found many parts of the book problematic. An example concerns the shape of early skyscrapers. He questions Carol Willis’s finding (*Form Follows Finance*. New