

Mavericks



Oct-Dec 2024







“The advice I like to give anybody who’ll listen to me, is not to wait around for inspiration. Inspiration is for amateurs; the rest of us just show up and get to work. If you wait around for the clouds to part and a bolt of lightning to strike you in the brain, you are not going to do an awful lot of work.

All the best ideas come out of the process; they come out of the work itself. Things occur to you. If you’re sitting around trying to dream up a great idea, you can sit there a long time before anything happens. But if you just get to work, something will occur to you and something else will occur to you and something else that you reject will push you in another direction. Inspiration is absolutely unnecessary and somehow deceptive. You feel like you need this great idea before you can get down to work, and I find that’s almost never the case.”

— Chuck Close

Insights and Inspirations

Dear Alumni,

As we share the final quarterly newsletter of 2024, it's the perfect moment to reflect on a year filled with growth, unity, and remarkable achievements. This issue stands as a shining example of the extraordinary talent, determination, and inspiration within our alumni community here in Canada. It's also a celebration of your solid commitment that made this year truly special for IBA PU Alumni Canada.

This edition showcases a rich blend of perspectives and experiences. From inspirational articles contributed by our alumni to the uplifting success stories that demonstrate life's boundless potential, and the scholarly insights shared by Canadian university professors—each contribution leaves us with valuable lessons and fresh perspectives. These pieces together highlight the true spirit of learning, growth, and connection.

As we bring 2024 to a close, we do so with immense pride and deep gratitude. Your energy, enthusiasm, and invaluable contributions have been the backbone of our vibrant alumni activities and initiatives this year. From meaningful networking events to thought-provoking intellectual exchanges, this has been an exceptionally busy, rewarding, and successful year for all of us.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are filled with excitement and optimism. The new year promises even greater engagement, collaboration, and celebration, with more opportunities for everyone to contribute and shine. We eagerly await more voices, innovative ideas, and inspiring achievements to add to our shared journey.

Thank you sincerely for making 2024 unforgettable. Together, we have laid a foundation of inspiration and strength that will carry us into an even brighter and more prosperous future.

Wishing you and your families a joyous, healthy, and successful 2025. Let's continue to support, inspire, and uplift one another as we strive for new heights in the coming year!

All the best for 2025!

IBA PU Alumni Canada Board & Executive Committee

Estée Lauder on seizing the moments in life that matter the most:

"In every life there is a moment—an event or a realization—that changes that life irrevocably. If the change is to be a happy one, one must be able to recognize the moment and seize it without delay. Rose Kennedy once told me that good luck is something you make and bad luck is something you endure, a very wise observation indeed. People do make their luck by daring to follow their instincts, taking risks, and embracing every possibility."

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COOL CANADA

SHAHID ALI (1972-74)

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease and the Importance of the ADNI Study

Alzheimer's disease is a condition that impacts millions worldwide, particularly older adults. It's a brain disorder that slowly deteriorates memory, thinking skills, and the ability to perform even simple tasks. While often misunderstood, it's not just about forgetfulness; it's an irreversible disease that severely affects how the brain works over time.

What Happens in Alzheimer's Disease?

The root cause of Alzheimer's lies in the accumulation of abnormal proteins in the brain, leading to the death of brain cells. This results in a decline in cognitive functions like memory, reasoning, and communication. The initial symptoms are often subtle, such as occasional forgetfulness or confusion. However, as the disease advances, it robs individuals of their independence, making it challenging to recognize loved ones or perform daily tasks.

Currently, there is no cure for Alzheimer's. However, early diagnosis can significantly improve the management of the disease, helping patients maintain a better quality of life.

Alzheimer's Disease by the Numbers

The impact of Alzheimer's is staggering:

In the United States, approximately 6.5 million people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's. By 2050, this figure is expected to nearly double to 12.7 million.

In Canada, over 600,000 individuals are affected by dementia, with Alzheimer's being the most common form. By 2031, it's estimated that this number will rise to over 900,000.

Alzheimer's is also one of the leading causes of death among the elderly, with women being disproportionately affected. African American and Hispanic adults are at higher risk compared to their white counterparts.

The Risk Factors

Several factors increase the likelihood of developing Alzheimer's, including:

- **Age:** The risk increases significantly after age 65.
- **Family History and Genetics:** A family history of Alzheimer's may indicate a higher risk.
- **Brain Injuries:** Past injuries can make the brain more vulnerable.
- **Heart Health:** Poor cardiovascular health can contribute to the disease.

Can We Reduce the Risk?

While there's no guaranteed way to prevent Alzheimer's, certain lifestyle changes can lower the risk:

- **Regular physical activity** to keep the body and brain active.
- **Social engagement** to stimulate the mind and reduce isolation.
- **Good heart health**, which is linked to better brain health.
- **Getting enough sleep** to help the brain repair and regenerate.
- **Challenging the mind** through learning new hobbies or solving puzzles.

The Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI)

One of the most significant efforts in the fight against Alzheimer's is the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI). This global study, led by Dr. Michael Weiner, is currently in its fourth phase. Sunnybrook Research Institute serves as a key site in Canada for this project.

The ADNI study focuses on tracking the progression of Alzheimer's by collecting brain images, genetic data, and cognitive tests from participants over time. The goal is to refine early detection methods and improve our understanding of the disease. So far, data from ADNI has contributed to thousands of research papers, making it a vital resource for researchers worldwide.

How Can You Get Involved?

Volunteers aged 55-90 can join the ADNI study to help advance research. Participants are provided with various assessments, including memory tests and brain imaging, and receive reimbursement for their time. This research not only helps scientists better understand Alzheimer's but also offers participants valuable insights into their own cognitive health.

For more information or to see if you're eligible to participate, contact Sunnybrook Research Institute or visit ADNI's official website.

By supporting research initiatives like ADNI, we can make strides towards early diagnosis, better treatment options, and eventually, a cure for Alzheimer's disease.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

DR. ZOBIA JAWED (MCMASTER UNIVERSITY)

Wastewater treatment systems should flow toward circular economy

In an ideal world, clean water would flow from our taps and wastewater would disappear as it swirls down the drain, leaving us with little reason to be concerned about what happens after that.

But this is hardly an ideal world, and we need to stop living like it is.

The fact is that as cities grow and climate change generates more drastic events, including sometimes catastrophic rainfall, the distance between our drains and our taps is growing shorter, compelling us to deal with the fact that the water we flush today is ultimately the same water we will be drinking and bathing in tomorrow.

Even those who aren't concerned about the environment need to sit up and take notice. We need to do a much better job of taking care of the problems we have now and preparing for greater, more complex challenges — not just around the world, but right here at home in Hamilton and across Canada.

Municipalities must manage wastewater from multiple sources, including homes, businesses, industries and public institutions, plus all the water that falls in the form of rain and snow.

Managing and treating this wastewater varies across the country, from small on-site treatment and discharge facilities to complex wastewater collection systems and pumping stations that feed into rigorous modern wastewater treatment processes, which can yield usable energy.

It used to be considered enough that regulations and processes eliminated water pollution from various sources and allowed aquatic species to cope with outflow and for people to enjoy a wide range of recreational activities not far from where treated wastewater was discharged.

For all this treatment and management to work, these wastewater collection and treatment systems had to operate efficiently. And, for the most part, they did.

Cleaner Water

Greener Future

However, infrastructure built for another time and for much smaller volumes is aging and deteriorating, all too often leaving untreated water to discharge into the environment and leaving cash-strapped municipalities facing huge bills for repairs, let alone upgrades.

A continuous improvement system must be adopted to address these issues proactively and avoid more unwanted situations like the Chedoke Creek disaster, a 24-billion-litre sewage spill that disgusted Hamiltonians and will require huge remediation by the City of Hamilton.

*"From Wastewater
to Wealth:
Pioneering the
Circular Economy
with Water-Resource*

Traditionally, wastewater treatment focused on eliminating contaminants and pathogens to recover water and safely discharge it into the environment.

But as the impact of climate pressures increases, the need to protect human health and recover and conserve resources while adapting to a changing landscape — including new technologies and aging infrastructure — will drive advancement and innovations in wastewater systems.

The concept of sustainability and circular economy has steadily been gaining momentum in recent years, with the idea of taking wastewater and creating valuable products while reducing the amount of waste produced.

Municipal wastewater systems can redefine wastewater, changing it from a liability to a resource — one that offers valuable products to be extracted through treatment processes.

With the ability to recover valuable resources such as metals, phosphorus, nitrogen, and biogas, as well as conserving water for reuse, drinking, agriculture, or industrial use, wastewater systems are transitioning around the globe to become resources recovery facilities.

A paradigm shift from “use and dispose” to a “use, treat and re-use” approach is gaining traction, following the principles of circular economy: minimal resource consumption and greater effort on resource recovery.

A timely shift toward water-resource-recovery facilities can directly contribute to a circular economy by producing clean water, nutrients, renewable energy and other valuable elements from wastewater and re-using them for beneficial purposes, leaving our water cleaner while generating revenue that can help to pay the way for these new and evolving technologies.

***"Treat, Reuse, Thrive:
Leading the Shift
Toward a Water-
Resource Recovery
Revolution"***



Dr. Zobia Jawed is a distinguished environmental engineer, academic, and sustainability leader with extensive experience in research, teaching, and policy development. She is an Assistant Professor at McMaster University's W. Booth School of Engineering Practice and Technology, where she leads projects focused on sustainability, wastewater management, and climate change initiatives.

Dr. Jawed holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from McMaster University, with her dissertation recognized for prestigious awards. Her education includes an MBA specializing in Operations Management from Wilfrid Laurier University, along with several leadership and project management certifications.

She has held significant roles such as Director of Environmental Services for the Municipality of the County of Kings, Nova Scotia, managing large-scale environmental projects. As a community leader, she serves on boards like the Children's Aid Society of Hamilton and the Healthy Youth Network. Her contributions have earned her numerous accolades, including the Order of Hamilton Award and the Women of Distinction Award.

Dr. Jawed is dedicated to advancing environmental sustainability and empowering communities through education, research, and strategic collaborations.

SCHOOLS & SOCIAL MEDIA

DR. TERESA SCASSA (UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA)

Youth social media: Why proposed Ontario and federal legislation won't fix harms related to data exploitation

Ontario school board lawsuits against social media giants including Meta, Snapchat and TikTok are seeking damages — money paid as a remedy — for the disruption of the educational system.

A growing volume of evidence indicates that young people have become addicted to social media. It suggests social media platforms are designed to foster such addiction, that online activities contribute to behaviour such as bullying and harassment, and that excessive use of social networks can harm students' mental health, even influencing suicide.

"Addictive Algorithms: The Hidden Cost on Children's Minds"

Ontario school boards, speaking as a coalition called Schools for Social Media Change, argue "social media products, designed for compulsive use, have rewired the way children think, behave and learn" and that "schools are unfairly bearing the brunt of the learning and mental health epidemic caused by the alleged negligent conduct of social media companies." Lawsuits come as 95 per cent of Ontario schools report needing more resources to support student mental health.

At the core of the litigation are concerns about the impact on young people of social media companies' practices. But neither lawsuit victories, nor existing or proposed Ontario provincial or federal privacy or AI legislation will prevent problems related to rampant collection and processing of human-derived data.

Boards in U.S. and Canada

Four Ontario school boards announced that they were suing social media giants including Meta, Snapchat and TikTok in March 2024. Five other school boards and two private schools also filed suit shortly afterwards.

These actions follow a flood of lawsuits launched in the U.S. by over 200 school districts against social media companies.

The U.S. lawsuits link social media engagement with a decline in students' mental health. One U.S. statement of claim describes the situation as "perhaps the most serious mental health crisis [the nation's children, adolescents and teenagers] have ever faced."

The Canadian lawsuits make similar claims. For example, one alleges that the defendant social media companies "employ exploitative business practices and have negligently designed unsafe and/or addictive products" that they market and promote to students.

Regulating digital information The litigation on both sides of the border is novel. In Canada it has also been somewhat controversial. When asked about the Ontario lawsuits, premier Doug Ford called them “nonsense,” suggesting that the school boards should focus on educating students.

Shortly after the launch of these lawsuits, the Ontario government introduced Bill 194. This bill proposes, among other things, new regulation of digital information of children and youth in schools and in children’s aid societies.

Nonetheless, what is proposed in the bill won’t address what these lawsuits attempt to tackle: the impact on education from how social media companies engage with children and youth — including in time spent out of school. Ontario’s Information and Privacy Commissioner, in her submission on Bill 194, recommends largely replacing what the government proposes with improvements to existing privacy law.

Similarly, the province’s school cell phone ban tackles only one dimension of a much bigger problem.

Impact of company practices on youth

The Canadian lawsuits against social media giants are not framed as privacy claims. Indeed, school board led litigation could not raise such claims since any privacy rights are those of the children and youth who engage with social media and not those of the school boards.

The damage alleged by the school boards is the disruption of the operation of schools, but at the core of the litigation are concerns about the impact on young people of social media companies’ practices.

While privacy claims are not part of the school board litigation, they are not far from the surface. Social media user data fuels these companies’ business models, incentivizing them to engage in practices that draw users in, and that drive continued engagement and social dependence. Although all users are affected by these practices, evidence suggests that children and youth are particularly susceptible to becoming addicted.

Data gathered through engagement on these platforms also fuels targeted advertising, which can foster insecurities around body image and other self-confidence-affecting concerns of young people.

Privacy laws out of step?

The roots of the harm alleged by the boards are therefore in personal data collection and processing. However, the consequences far transcend the individual privacy harms recognized in privacy laws or privacy torts. This suggests that our privacy laws are out of step with contemporary data practices.

It would be good to take comfort from the fact that Bill C-27, currently before Parliament’s Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, proposes long-awaited reforms to Canada’s private sector privacy law in the form of a new Consumer Privacy Protection Act.

It also contains a new law that would regulate the development and use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. Unfortunately, even if the bill is passed into law before the coming election (which seems increasingly unlikely), these reforms will do little to address the broader systemic harms impacting our society that come from the exploitation of personal data.

*"Beyond Privacy: Fighting the Hidden Harms of
Data Exploitation on Youth"*

Legislation falling short

The proposed Consumer Privacy Protection Act takes only small steps to recognize the sensitivity of children's information. It falls far short of the United Kingdom's age-appropriate design code of practice for online services.

Further, although the proposed Artificial Intelligence and Data Act would set parameters for the design, development and deployment of AI systems, it defines harms in individual terms — and doesn't acknowledge group and community harms from algorithm-driven practices, such as the disruption of the educational system.

The European Union's AI Act is not so limited. In its first recital, it describes its broad goals to ensure "a high level of protection of health, safety, fundamental rights ... including democracy, the rule of law and environmental protection."

What the school boards are advancing in their litigation are novel claims for redressing what they and a growing body of experts say are harms rooted in the collection and processing of human-derived data. These harms go beyond the individuals whose data is harvested and impact society more broadly.

As this litigation unfolds, we should be asking: When new bills to regulate AI or privacy are introduced, how will they equip us to address the group and social harms of personal data exploitation?

Dr. Teresa Scassa is the Canada Research Chair in Information Law and Policy at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law. She is Chair of the Canadian Statistics Advisory Council, member of the Digital Strategy Advisory Panel for Waterfront Toronto, and member of the Canadian Advisory Council on Artificial Intelligence. Teresa Scassa is also a senior fellow with CIGI's International Law Research Program. She is the author of Canadian Trademark Law, and co-author of Digital Commerce in Canada, and Canadian Intellectual Property Law. She is a co-editor of the books Law and the Sharing Economy and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intellectual Property Law. Her research interests include: privacy law, data governance, intellectual property law, law and technology, law and artificial intelligence, and smart cities

RESILIENT CHAMPION

ASIF BAJWA (1982-84)

Asif Bajwa's journey is a testament to the power of resilience, perseverance, and adaptation. After completing his MBA, he initially leaned towards a career in badminton, his true passion. As a boy of just 14, Asif had already discovered his extraordinary talent for the sports, becoming the National Badminton Champion in both singles and doubles in 1974. His early success was followed by a rigorous journey of growth, from being selected for the national training camp in 1975 to representing Pakistan on the international stage by 1976. Competing in world-class events like the Thomas Cup, All England, and tournaments in Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Australia, Asif's name became synonymous with excellence in badminton.

Resilience, Leadership, and Legacy

For over a decade, he dominated the sport, holding the title of National Doubles Champion for five consecutive years from 1980 to 1985. His leadership extended beyond personal accolades, as he captained teams at Punjab University, WAPDA, ADBP, and HBL, guiding them to consistent victories. His success in badminton

serves as a reminder that achieving greatness requires not just talent, but also discipline, focus, and an unyielding passion for excellence.

However, life's realities soon caught up with Asif. Despite his success in sports, he realized that he needed a professional career to ensure his survival and support his family. After completing his MBA, Asif quickly secured a job and transitioned between organizations before moving to Australia, where he planned to pursue further education and settle permanently. But family responsibilities, particularly the health of his parents, called him back to Pakistan. His focus shifted towards building a career that could provide for his loved ones, blending the resilience he learned in sports with his newfound professional ambitions.

Transitioning into the corporate world, Asif's journey did not slow down. His professional career at Habib Bank Limited (HBL) mirrored the tenacity and hard work he demonstrated on the badminton court. Rising through the ranks, he was awarded Best Branch Manager multiple times, Best Area Manager in 2007 and 2009, and eventually, Best Regional General Manager in 2015. His leadership skills culminated in being named the Best Regional Operational Chief from 2017 to 2019, showcasing his ability to lead, inspire, and deliver results in the corporate sector.

***"Driven by Passion,
Defined by Purpose."***

Despite his many accolades in both sports and banking, Asif's story is most inspiring due to his unwavering commitment to giving back. Today, he is focused on establishing a free educational pre-school and junior school in his village, ensuring that both boys and girls have access to quality edu-

cation. This project reflects his deep belief that education is the greatest gift one can offer, a tool that can empower the next generation of leaders. It speaks to Asif's desire not just to succeed, but to use his success to create lasting, positive change in his community.

Reflecting on his journey, Asif acknowledges the sacrifices he made along the way—especially in balancing his career with family and giving up a more prominent sports career. Yet, his story is one of triumph, where every challenge became a stepping stone to further success. His message to new graduates is one of perseverance: "Never give up, and don't let others put you down. This is just the first step towards success, and many more are to come."

Asif Bajwa's life is a beacon of hope and inspiration, showing that true success isn't merely measured by personal achievements, but by the impact one leaves behind. Whether on the badminton court, in the boardroom, or in the classroom, Asif's journey illustrates that with determination, leadership, and a heart for service, we can overcome challenges and leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

"Winning on the Court,
Transforming in the Classroom."



DECISION MAKING

DR. LEDA STAWNYCHKO (MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY)

Struggling to make decisions at work? Learn how to build confidence

One of the most daunting tasks for new leaders is making decisions that impact others. Although the average person makes thousands of conscious decisions each day — some estimates suggest as many as 35,000 — when it comes to making decisions in the workplace, many hesitate.

A lack of experience often causes new leaders to hold back, intimidated by the fear of making mistakes. The stakes can feel high, as their choices can have far-reaching consequences, not only for themselves but also for the organization and its employees.

***Elevate Your Leadership
with Smart Decisions***

New leaders might face decisions such as delegating responsibilities among team members, prioritizing projects with limited resources or managing conflicts between employees.

With time and practice, leaders learn to develop decisiveness — the ability to listen to their intuition for making effective, quick decisions. Decisiveness is not about being rash, but about having the confidence to act based on evidence and experience.

Effective decision-makers balance competing priorities and options while staying deeply aware of the needs of their stakeholders, from employees and colleagues to customers and investors. Once they reach a decision, they follow through with firm, resolute action.

A bar above the rest

What sets effective leaders apart is their ability to consistently make decisions that drive organizational success. These leaders understand the difference between operational and strategic decisions, and how each serves a different purpose.

Operational decisions deal with immediate concerns, focusing on day-to-day activities that require quick responses to keep the business running smoothly. For example, an operational decision might involve addressing a staffing shortage, resolving a technical issue or adjusting a production schedule.

Strategic decisions, on the other hand, are more complex, involve higher risks and require a broader perspective. They focus on the future direction of the organization and may involve a careful assessment of external factors, such as launching a new product or restructuring a department.

Building decision-making skills

But how do emerging leaders develop the skill to confidently make decisions, especially when there are many possible options? To build a strong foundation for decisive leadership, consider these three practical strategies:

*"Unlock Your Leadership
Potential: Make Informed,
Values-Driven Decisions."*

1. Clarify your values

Understanding your core values is crucial for effective and ethical decision-making. When you and your staff are clear on what matters most to you, decision-making becomes easier.

For example, if you believe in transparency, you will communicate the decision-making process and outcomes to your team. They will trust that even if they don't all agree with your decision, they'll be informed promptly and consistently.

To gain clarity about your values, reflect on past decisions, consider what felt right or wrong, and identify common themes that guided your actions. You can also use one of the many free assessments available online.

2. Use a decision-making framework

There are several tools to help guide confident decision-making, especially early in your career. One simple and effective option is the 5 Ws Framework.

The framework helps leaders think through these essential questions: Who will be affected? What are the available options? When does the decision need to be made? Why is this decision necessary? And how will the decision be executed?

Using this framework helps emerging leaders quickly assess all angles of a situation and make thoughtful decisions that ensure no critical factors are missed.

*"Decisive Leadership: Balancing
Ethics, Strategy, and Success."*

3. Learn from your network

One of the most effective ways to develop leadership skills is by learning from others. Observe how your peers and more experienced leaders make decisions, ask them insightful questions and seek their feedback on your own decisions.

Reflecting on your interactions with them can help you refine your decision-making style and identify areas for growth. It can also help you become more comfortable with ambiguity, risk and uncertainty. The support from your network will boost your confidence and provide much-needed encouragement in times of doubt.

Other things to keep in mind

Leaders in AI-integrated workplaces will need not only strong decision-making skills but also the ability to apply a critical ethical lens.

Artificial intelligence offers many opportunities to accelerate decision-making and improve efficiency. However, the interconnectedness of algorithms, people and data also brings with it complex ethical and sustainability problems.

To avoid the unintended consequences of AI such as algorithmic bias or privacy violations, leaders across all sectors must carefully evaluate the ethical implications of all decisions and ensure they align with principles of fairness and long-term sustainability.

In technology-dependent workplaces, emotional intelligence becomes a crucial asset. Leaders who are self-aware and in tune with their emotions can pause to make thoughtful, deliberate decisions, instead of reacting impulsively.

*Lead with Confidence:
Master Decision-Making
for Lasting Impact.*

Mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing and meditation, can help maintain focus and clarity, particularly in situations of high pressure. A clear and centred mind allows leaders to make decisions that align with ethical standards and the long-term interests of people, the planet and profit.

As you continue to develop your leadership skills, be patient with yourself and remember that leader development is a life-long journey of growth. To help you stay sharp and avoid decision fatigue, prioritize self-care taking time to rest, recharge and reflect.

By practicing these strategies, staying true to your values, and leaning on your network, you'll build the confidence you need to tackle any challenge that comes your way. Embrace the process, take care of yourself and trust that each decision you make brings you closer to becoming the decisive leader you aspire to be.

Dr. Leda Stawnychko is an Assistant Professor of Strategy and Organizational Theory at Mount Royal University's Bissett School of Business. Her research interests include leadership development and effectiveness, organizational performance, and transformative learning. Leda also holds adjunct academic appointments at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business and Cumming School of Medicine.

Dr. Stawnychko has earned Ph.D from University of Calgary. She has also earned professional mediator designations from the ADR Institute of Canada and the Alberta Family Mediation Society. In addition to offering leadership training and coaching, she volunteers her time supporting individuals and community members navigating challenging transitions and assists non-profit organizations, including the Community Mediation Calgary Society and the Canadian Immigrant Women's Association. Leda has served as a board member of the ADR Institute of Alberta and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. She is also a member of Mount Royal University's General Faculties Council and the Academic Planning and Budget Committee.

SHOSHIN

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Shoshin (初心)

Shoshin, a Japanese term, translates to “beginner’s mind.” It refers to an attitude of openness, eagerness, and lack of preconceptions when approaching a subject, just as a beginner would. This concept is central to Zen Buddhism and is often applied in various aspects of life, including learning, creativity, and personal growth.

Key Elements of Shoshin:

- 1. Openness:** Shoshin encourages an open mind, free from biases and assumptions. By adopting this mindset, you remain receptive to new ideas, experiences, and perspectives.
- 2. Curiosity:** In the beginner’s mind, there is an eagerness to explore and learn without the limitations of “knowing” it all. This curiosity drives continuous growth and discovery.
- 3. Humility:** Shoshin involves recognizing that there is always more to learn, regardless of expertise or experience level. It is a reminder to stay humble and embrace the process of learning.
- 4. Adaptability:** With a beginner’s mind, you are more adaptable and willing to change your understanding based on new insights or feedback.

Applications of Shoshin:

In Learning: Adopting Shoshin helps you stay receptive to new information and ideas, avoiding the trap of assuming you already know everything. This approach can make learning more enjoyable and deepen understanding.

In Creativity: Shoshin fosters a creative mindset by freeing you from pre-set beliefs or limitations. Artists, writers, and musicians often benefit from this approach, as it allows them to explore new methods and styles without fear of judgment.

In Relationships: Approaching people with a beginner’s mind encourages you to listen actively and understand their perspectives without assuming you already know them completely.

In Personal Growth: Shoshin can aid in personal development by helping you recognize areas where growth is possible, regardless of past achievements or failures.

Practicing Shoshin

To cultivate Shoshin, consider these practices:

Mindfulness Meditation: Meditation helps clear your mind of preconceptions and judgments, making it easier to embrace a beginner's perspective.

Questioning Assumptions: Regularly challenge what you think you know, and approach situations with curiosity instead of certainty.

Active Listening: When engaging with others, listen fully without preparing a response in advance. This can deepen understanding and improve communication.

Embracing Uncertainty: Allow yourself to be comfortable with not having all the answers. View uncertainty as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Shoshin reminds us that, no matter our level of expertise, we can benefit from the openness, curiosity, and humility of a beginner. It's a skill that encourages lifelong learning and adaptability, making it an invaluable mindset in both personal and professional life.

DETERMINATION

MUHAMMAD YOUNUS IKRAM (1992-94)

A Journey of Determination

From a young age, Muhammad Younus Ikram had a clear vision for his future. Growing up in a modest family, he realized early on that financial stability was essential. Driven by this understanding, he chose a path that would provide him with the skills to build a secure future. After completing his matriculation in the General Group, he decided to pursue a career in Commerce, believing it would be more practical and beneficial than merely obtaining a BA or MA degree.

Upon completing his MBA, Younus set out to achieve his dream of a career in banking. He initially worked at two private firms but quickly realized that he was destined for something greater. He sought stability and growth—something beyond the traditional job of working for private owners. His heart was set on banking, a sector he had always admired. Determined to make his dream a reality, he worked diligently to secure a position in one of the country's prominent banks.

In a pivotal moment of his career journey, Younus was presented with two opportunities: one with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and another with the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP). He chose NBP, marking the beginning of a remarkable 28-year journey within the bank. Over these years, he took on various roles, from Marketing of Special Products at R.O. Lahore to managing General Banking and Foreign Currency Deposits & Remittances at branches in Multan. He led as a Manager at numerous NBP branches, including Alipur Jatoi Branch, Bhakkar, and the Main Branch in Muzaffar Garh, embracing each role with a passion to learn and grow.

Younus proved his mettle as a leader, serving on multiple regional management teams across D.G. Khan and Multan. In these roles, he was responsible for vital aspects of the bank's operations, including Commercial, SME, and Retail Business, as well as Liabilities, Banca Insurance, HR, and Administration. His work extended across regional leadership capacities, such as Regional Head in D.G. Khan and Bahawalpur, where he played a crucial role in driving KPIs and overseeing the development of key banking sectors.

"Perseverance and Passion: Building a Future with Every Role"

Through dedication and resilience, Younus earned numerous accolades, including a Cash Award in 2005 for his outstanding performance with Advance Salary Loans. His expertise in Banca Insurance led him to win the prestigious Banca Insurance Conventions of the State Life Insurance Corporation for Du-

bai in 2016 and Malaysia in 2017. These awards were a testament to his tireless effort and commitment to excellence, further recognized by achievement awards in 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019.

*"Building a Legacy in Banking
– A Story of Hard Work and
Resilience"*

Reflecting on his journey, Younus attributes his success to a few guiding principles: take risks, work hard, embrace mobility, and above all, love your profession. He acknowledges the challenges he faced, from long hours to immense stress, which often strained his social and family life. Yet, he believes these sacrifices were necessary for a brighter future.

Today, Younus stands as a Senior Vice President at the National Bank of Pakistan, a role he achieved through perseverance and a steadfast commitment to his goals. He remains passionate about the industry and aspires to start his career anew as a teacher, imparting the wisdom he has gained over three decades to the next generation. To new graduates, he advises entering banking with a clear understanding of the dedication it requires.

*Leading with
heart, Growing
with purpose*

Muhammad Younus Ikram's journey is a testament to the power of vision, determination, and a solid belief in oneself. His story inspires those around him, proving that with hard work and a clear purpose, any challenge can be overcome, and success can be achieved.



INSIGHT-FORESIGHT-HINDSIGHT

Saqib Cheema (1992-94)

Character

In leadership and personal development, the foundation of a strong individual lies in their character. Character is shaped by a set of core qualities that guide decisions, actions, and relationships. These elements, when embraced and cultivated, contribute to a well-rounded and principled person capable of navigating the complexities of life with integrity, compassion, and wisdom. The Institute of Corporate Directors have defined elements that shape character.

One of the most essential aspects of character is sound judgment. Individuals with strong judgment make decisions based on relevant information and critical analysis of facts. They do not act hastily, but rather consider the broader context in which decisions are made. Flexibility is key, as new information or evolving situations often require a shift in perspective. Great judgment allows a person to see into the heart of complex challenges and reason effectively, even in uncertain or ambiguous circumstances. It is this ability to make informed decisions that sets the foundation for leadership and personal growth.

"Strong Character, Enduring Influence"

Closely related to judgment is the element of courage. True courage is not just about boldness but involves doing the right thing, even when it is unpopular or could result in personal loss. A person with courage shows determination and perseverance, confronting difficult situations with confidence. Setbacks and challenges are inevitable, but those with courage rebound quickly and continue forward, undeterred. This quality ensures that even when the road is tough, one remains resolute in their values and decisions.

To complement courage, drive is necessary for excellence. A person with drive is fueled by a desire to succeed and continuously strives for improvement. They tackle challenges with urgency, passion, and energy, ensuring that every opportunity is met with a proactive mindset. Drive pushes individuals to go beyond what is expected, elevating not just their personal achievements but also inspiring those around them to reach for higher goals.

Despite their individual drive, a person of character understands the value of collaboration. Building and maintaining positive relationships with others is critical to success. Open dialogue and the ability to listen without defensiveness are key aspects of collaboration. By fostering meaningful connections, one encourages the sharing of ideas and perspectives. This recognition—that what affects one person can impact all—leads to a culture of collective progress, where the strength of the group becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

At the core of character is integrity. A person of integrity consistently holds themselves to a high moral standard, even in difficult or tempting situations. They behave in a manner that aligns with their personal values and the ethical standards of their organization. This consistency builds trust and respect, as others see them as reliable and honest, regardless of the circumstances. Integrity ensures that one's actions are always in line with their beliefs, creating a sense of authenticity that others can depend on.

Temperance brings balance to the elements of character by promoting calmness and composure. In tense or high-pressure situations, a person with temperance maintains the ability to think clearly and respond reasonably. They avoid extremes and resist the urge to react impulsively. Instead, they complete tasks thoughtfully and carefully, staying grounded in their approach. This quality allows individuals to navigate challenges with a steady hand, ensuring that decisions are made with careful consideration rather than haste.

***"Let Your Character
Guide You to
Excellence"***

Being accountable is another critical element of character. Accountability involves willingly accepting responsibility for one's decisions and actions. When faced with challenging issues, an accountable individual steps up and takes ownership, rather than shifting blame or avoiding responsibility. They can be counted on to reliably deliver on expectations, especially in tough situations.

This dependability creates a strong foundation of trust, both in personal and professional relationships.

A person of character also values justice, ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and that outcomes are proportionate to contributions. They strive to remain objective and minimize personal biases when making decisions. Justice involves giving others the opportunity to voice their opinions and offering clear, candid explanations for decisions. When wrongs occur, those who value justice seek to correct them, ensuring fairness both inside and outside their organization.

Humility is a crucial component of character that keeps accomplishments in perspective. Humble individuals let their achievements speak for themselves and are always open to acknowledging their limitations. They understand the importance of thoughtful reflection on their own opinions and are eager to embrace opportunities for personal growth. Humility fosters a sense of respect for others and an appreciation for their strengths, making it clear that no one person is more important or special than another.

At the heart of character lies humanity, which involves genuine concern and care for others. A person with humanity appreciates the values, feelings, and beliefs of others and can identify with their experiences. They are willing to forgive and do not hold grudges, understanding that everyone makes mistakes. By offering people opportunities to learn and grow from their missteps, they create an environment of compassion and mutual support.

Finally, transcendence rounds out the elements of character by drawing inspiration from excellence and the appreciation of beauty in areas like sports, music, and the arts. A person with transcendence sees possibilities where others may not and takes a broad, long-term view of life's challenges. This sense of purpose drives them to see beyond immediate concerns and to consider the greater impact of their actions.

In conclusion, the elements of character—judgment, courage, drive, collaboration, integrity, temperance, accountability, justice, humility, humanity, and transcendence—come together to form the foundation of a principled and effective individual. Cultivating these qualities not only leads to personal success but also creates a positive, lasting influence on others.

Key Takeaways:

Character is the Foundation: Strong leadership is rooted in character, which includes core qualities guiding actions and relationships.

Key Elements of Character:

- **Judgment:** Thoughtful decision-making with flexibility.
- **Courage:** Acting on values, even when difficult.
- **Drive:** Pursuing excellence and continuous improvement.
- **Collaboration:** Building meaningful connections and collective progress.
- **Integrity:** Consistently aligning actions with values.
- **Temperance:** Maintaining calmness and composure.
- **Accountability:** Taking responsibility, especially in challenges.
- **Justice:** Ensuring fairness and objectivity.
- **Humility:** Embracing growth and respecting others.
- **Humanity:** Demonstrating compassion and understanding.
- **Transcendence:** Looking beyond immediate concerns with purpose.

NETWORKING

Dr. Jamie Gruman (University of Guelph)

Networking doesn't have to be a chore — here are 3 ways to make it more enjoyable and effective

Does the thought of putting on a fake smile and making idle small talk with strangers in order to advance your career send shivers down your spine? Do you avoid networking as a result? If so, you're not alone.

People shun networking for a variety of reasons, such as shyness, a lack of confidence, feeling uncomfortable asking for help or because they want to be authentic and avoid "putting on an act."

However, avoiding networking can be a bad career move. Networking provides valuable benefits, including assistance with work, social and career support, and a way to gain new ideas and business opportunities.

Because of this, it may not come as a surprise to learn that networking has been shown to be associated with career success in the form of salary growth over time, and career satisfaction. In the end, avoiding networking may hurt your career.

Fortunately, there is no need to feel exploitative or awkward about networking — it can be as simple as making new friends. In fact, this is one of the main reasons people engage in networking in the first place.

Dispelling networking myths

Research suggests there are four myths about effective networking. First, some people believe effective networkers are born, not made. This is not true; effective networkers work hard at honing their networking abilities.

Second is the belief that effective networkers exploit other people. On the contrary, the most effective networkers are co-operative and consider building relationships to be an opportunity to give to others, instead of taking.

Third, some think effective networkers shield their networks from others. This is also inaccurate. People who are effective at networking are interested in helping others build their networks too, so they share their contacts with other people. This, in turn, can extend their networks even further.

Fourth, people assume effective networkers stay in constant contact with everyone they know. That would be exhausting. Instead, most networkers prioritize staying in touch with the people who are most important to them at any given time.

*"Transform awkward
small talk into
meaningful
relationships."*

Take advantage of opportunities

Based on academic research, books on interpersonal skills and training that targets them, there are three tactics you can implement to get better at networking and reap the associated benefits.

The first is creating and taking advantage of networking opportunities. Join social clubs, sports teams, professional associations, and attend as many work-related events as you can manage.

Prepare yourself for networking events by developing an elevator script to introduce yourself and serve as an ice-breaker. Include something unique and interesting about yourself that will capture people's interest and remember you, and practice your script so it flows naturally.

If possible, review the participant list before events and make a note of the people you'd like to meet. Research them and their organization online and on social media sites like LinkedIn to learn more about them.

Indeed, you can use social media to your advantage. Research has shown that work-related social media sites can help people develop networks and promote career success. It is the frequency of use, not the number of contacts, that is associated with positive career outcomes.

Build connections

During networking opportunities, aim to meet as many people as possible. One of the most important networking skills is making a good first impression, so, make sure to smile and speak calmly and confidently. Give people your full attention and don't look around the room like you're seeking out your next conversation target.

"Unlock career success by turning networking into friendship."

Based either on the research you have done or things you learn while chatting, ask open-ended questions that can stimulate rich conversation and uncover mutual interests.

When networking, it's OK to ask about personal matters like hobbies and leisure activities — as long as you don't pry and respect the signals you receive about whether or not people are comfortable discussing these things. Similarly, be willing to appropriately share your own personal interests.

Remember, being professional doesn't necessarily require being formal. Consider asking someone you know to introduce you to someone you don't. Always be thinking of how you can help others through your knowledge, skills or existing contacts, but don't force it. Try to find common ground.

When you leave a conversation, thank the person for their time, ask for their business card or contact information and express your interest in staying in touch.

Maintain connections

After networking opportunities, make notes to remember details about the people you've met, including important dates like birthdays and anniversaries. Also, pay attention to important events in your contacts' lives such as promotions, and contact them to stay in touch. Don't use social media for this — it's too impersonal.

On occasion, send people emails with details you think they'll find valuable or call them up and go for a coffee or lunch without the sole intention of discussing business. Be friendly, and always convey that you have time for people.

If all this sounds intimidating, take comfort in knowing that one study found that only two per cent of managers were effective at all of the networking skills the researchers identified. In other words, most people are still learning and improving.

Nobody is perfect at networking, but we can all improve with practice. With a little effort, you can network like a pro. If you do it right, it won't feel exploitative because you won't be manipulating anyone. It won't feel awkward either, because you'll simply be allowing your strengths and personality to shine. You may even find that networking is fun and enriches not only your career, but your life.



Dr Gruman is a Professor of organizational behaviour, a CBE Senior Research Fellow, and serves as the Graduate Coordinator in the Organizational Leadership stream of the Ph.D. in Management. He has taught in the undergraduate program, MA Leadership Program, MBA program, and Ph.D. program in Management at the University of Guelph. Dr. Gruman has previously taught in both the Psychology Department and the Odette School of Business at the University of Windsor, and in the Psychology Department and the Department of Management at the University of Toronto. Additionally, he has instructed in the Business Studies Area at St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology, and in the Ontario Management Development Program.

BSIS FRAMEWORK

DR. ANDREW GAUDES (BROCK UNIVERSITY)

Back in 1970, the economist Milton Friedman famously argued that businesses have a single responsibility: to increase profit. For decades, the so-called “Friedman doctrine” amounted to dogma in certain circles, including at many business schools.

A lot has changed since those days. Governments and other education funders are increasingly demanding that universities prioritize social goals, like those set out in the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Meanwhile, business schools are dealing with new market pressures, including global rankings that are now taking societal impact into account, and students, professors and accrediting bodies that increasingly value social responsibility.

But just what is “societal impact,” and can it be measured? As a professor of entrepreneurship and the former dean of a business school that went through the process of determining impact, I have an interest in these questions that is more than just theoretical.

A new standard of impact

In 2020, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, or AACSB — the organization that accredits more than 600 business schools in the U.S. — made a big decision: It revised its accreditation standards to include engagement and societal impact.

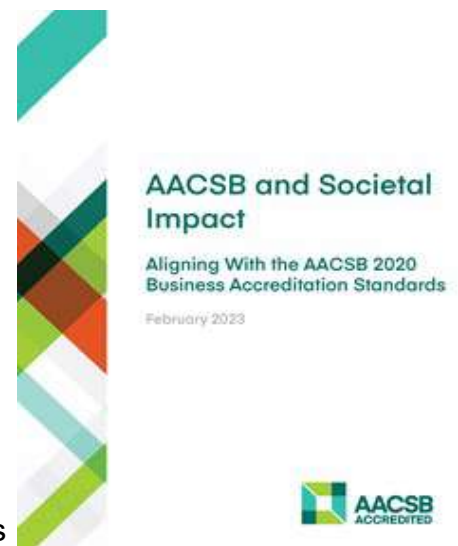
Societal impact, as defined by AACSB, refers to “how a school makes a positive impact on the betterment of society, as identified in the school’s mission and strategic plan.” While AACSB-accredited schools are now required to “demonstrate positive societal impact,” the organization offers schools wide discretion on how they work toward meeting the standard.

***"Empowering Business
Schools to Shape a Better
Society"***

While the overall response has been positive, business schools have been seeking additional insight that will help them identify and measure their societal impact. After all, universities benefit their communities in many ways. If you wanted to track a business school’s impact, where should you even begin?

Tools for assessing impact

Based on my personal experience, it’s good for a business school to start by looking at its strategic plan. That’s because determining impact is a complex process that requires analyzing massive amounts of data. Because it can be so sprawling, determining and measuring impact is best approached in alignment with the strategic intent of the organization.



A school’s strategic plan can serve as a strong basis for identifying areas of impact that align with the school’s aspirations. It also sends a message to accreditors and all stakeholders that the areas of impact are close to the core of its operations.

The next step for many schools, including my university, is to adopt an impact framework. An impact framework is a tool that organizations use to identify initiatives and measure progress toward goals. Research shows that impact frameworks can be effective at keeping organizations locked into a purposeful journey, offering guardrails to prevent people from losing sight of their objectives.

One such framework bespoke to business schools is offered by the European Foundation for Management Development, which is a global accrediting organization based in Brussels. Alongside its accreditation activities, the foundation offers the service known as the Business School Impact System, which has been initiated at more than 90 business schools worldwide.

Impact Beyond Classroom:

- * *Shaping a better society*
- * *Driving real world change*
- * *Social Responsibility*
- * *Sustainable Development*

The Business School Impact System is likely the longest-established system of its sort, since it was launched in 2012. At that time there was no other resource available – unless a school acquired the services of a consulting firm to undertake an impact analysis at great expense. The Business School Impact System framework looks at 120 indicators across seven dimensions of impact.

Other organizations, such as the U.N.-sponsored Principles for Responsible Education, offer further guidance.



What's in it for business schools

Assessing impact offers many benefits for business schools. For example, it can boost a program's reputation, attracting prospective students, employers and faculty. It can also offer compelling evidence for fundraising campaigns and grant applications. Additionally, insights from impact assessments can inform curriculum development, making programs relevant to contemporary social challenges.

Finally, societal impact assessments can foster stronger partnerships with community organizations and industry, encouraging universities to prioritize real-world learning opportunities for students and enabling them to contribute directly to society through collaborative projects and research initiatives.

Business schools have long played a crucial role in shaping society — it was true in Milton Friedman's era, and it's still true now. What's new is that business schools are trying to measure their impact. I think this is a welcome change.

Dr. Andrew Gaudes, BES (Arch), MFM, Ph.D., CRM, ICD.D, joined the Goodman School of Business in 2017 as Dean. He came to Goodman from the University of Regina where he was the Dean of the Hill and Levene Schools of Business. Prior to his time at the University of Regina, he spent nine years with the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, where he was Associate Dean of International Programs and before that, Director of Graduate Programs, within the Faculty of Business Administration.

Originally from Winnipeg, Dr. Gaudes earned his Ph.D. in management from the Asper School of business, University of Manitoba with a major in organization theory and minor in management information systems. He also possesses an undergraduate and graduate degree from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba, which is the field he worked in for thirteen years prior to entering doctoral studies.

AI IN HIRING

MEHNAZ RAFI (UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY)

When AI plays favourites: How algorithmic bias shapes the hiring process

A public interest group filed a U.S. federal complaint against artificial intelligence hiring tool, HireVue, in 2019 for deceptive hiring practices. The software, which has been adopted by hundreds of companies, favoured certain facial expressions, speaking styles and tones of voice, disproportionately disadvantaging minority candidates.

The Electronic Privacy Information Center argued HireVue's results were "biased, unprovable and not replicable." Though the company has since stopped using facial recognition, concerns remain about biases in other biometric data, such as speech patterns.

Navigating Ethical Challenges in AI-Driven Recruitment

Similarly, Amazon stopped using its AI recruitment tool, as reported in 2018, after discovering it was biased against women. The algorithm, trained on male-dominated resumes submitted over 10 years, favoured male candidates by downgrading applications that included the word "women's" and penalizing graduates of women's colleges. Engineers tried to address these biases, but could not guarantee neutrality, leading to the project's cancellation.

These examples highlight a growing concern in recruitment and selection: while some companies are using AI to remove human bias from hiring, it can often reinforce and amplify existing inequalities. Given the rapid integration of AI into human resource management across many organizations, it's important to raise awareness about the complex ethical challenges it presents.

Ways AI can create bias

As companies increasingly rely on algorithms to make critical hiring decisions, it's crucial to be aware of the following ways AI can create bias in hiring:

1. Bias in training data. AI systems rely on large datasets — referred to as training data — to learn patterns and make decisions, but their accuracy and fairness are only as good as the data they are trained on. If this data contains historical hiring biases that favour specific demographics, the AI will adopt and reproduce those same biases. Amazon's AI tool, for example, was trained on resumes from a male-dominated industry, which led to gender bias.

2. Flawed data sampling. Flawed data sampling occurs when the dataset used to train an algorithm is not representative of the broader population it's meant to serve. In the context of hiring, this can happen if training data over-represents certain groups — typically white men — while under-representing marginalized candidates.

As a result, the AI may learn to favour the characteristics and experiences of the over-represented group while penalizing or overlooking those from underrepresented groups. For example, facial analysis technologies have shown to have higher error rates for racialized individuals, particularly racialized women, because they are underrepresented in the data used to train these systems.

3. Bias in feature selection. When designing AI systems, developers choose certain features, attributes or characteristics to be prioritized or weighed more heavily when the AI is making decisions. But these selected features can lead to unfair, biased outcomes and perpetuate pre-existing inequalities.

For example, AI might disproportionately value graduates from prestigious universities, which have historically been attended by people from privileged backgrounds. Or, it might prioritize work experiences that are more common among certain demographics.

This problem is compounded when the features selected are proxies for protected characteristics, such as zip code, which can be strongly related to race and socioeconomic status due to historical housing segregation.



*AI in Hiring: A Double-Edged Sword
Reducing Bias or Reinforcing
Inequality?*

Bias in hiring algorithms raises serious ethical concerns and demands greater attention toward the mindful, responsible and inclusive use of AI. (Shutterstock)

4. Lack of transparency. Many AI systems function as “black boxes,” meaning their decision-making processes are opaque. This lack of transparency makes it difficult for organizations to identify where bias might exist and how it affects hiring decisions.

Without insight into how an AI tool makes decisions, it’s difficult to correct biased outcomes or ensure fairness. Both Amazon and HireVue faced this issue; users and developers struggled to understand how the systems assessed candidates and why certain groups were excluded.

5. Lack of human oversight. While AI plays an important role in many decision-making processes, it should augment, rather than replace, human judgment. Over-reliance on AI without adequate human oversight can lead to unchecked biases. This problem is exacerbated when hiring professionals trust AI more than their own judgment, believing in the technology’s infallibility.

Overcoming algorithmic bias in hiring

To mitigate these issues, companies must adopt strategies that prioritize inclusivity and transparency in AI-driven hiring processes. Below are some key solutions for overcoming AI bias:

1. Diversify training data. One of the most effective ways to combat AI bias is to ensure training data is inclusive, diverse and representative of a wide range of candidates. This means including data from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.

2. Conduct regular bias audits. Frequent and thorough audits of AI systems should be conducted to identify patterns of bias and discrimination. This includes examining the algorithm's outputs, decision-making processes and its impact on different demographic groups.

It is important to actively involve human judgment in AI-driven decisions, particularly when making final hiring choices. (Shutterstock)

3. Implement fairness-aware algorithms. Use AI software that incorporates fairness constraints and is designed to consider and mitigate bias by balancing outcomes for underrepresented groups. This can include integrating fairness metrics such as equal opportunity, modifying training data to show less bias and adjusting model predictions based on fairness criteria to increase equity.

4. Increase transparency. Seek AI solutions that offer insight into their algorithms and decision-making processes to make it easier to identify and address potential biases. Additionally, make sure to disclose any use of AI in the hiring process to candidates to maintain transparency with your job applicants and other stakeholders.

*Towards Inclusive Hiring:
The Need for Transparent
and Accountable AI*

5. Maintain human oversight. To maintain control over hiring algorithms, managers and leaders must actively review AI-driven decisions, especially when making final hiring choices. Emerging research highlights the critical role of human oversight in safeguarding against the risks posed by AI applications. However, for this oversight to be effective and meaningful, leaders must ensure that ethical considerations are part of the hiring process and promote the responsible, inclusive and ethical use of AI.

Bias in hiring algorithms raises serious ethical concerns and demands greater attention toward the mindful, responsible and inclusive use of AI. Understanding and addressing the ethical considerations and biases of AI-driven hiring is essential to ensuring fairer hiring outcomes and preventing technology from reinforcing systemic bias.

Mehnaz Rafi is a PhD candidate and sessional instructor at the University of Calgary. Before pursuing her PhD in Organizational Behavior, she received her MSc in management from Smith School of Business at Queen's University. She also has a BA with first-class Honours in Organizational Psychology from the University of Calgary.

As a researcher, she is interested in how uncertainty shapes employees' experiences, perceptions, and reactions at work. Specifically, she explores the interrelationships between uncertainty, leadership, diversity, and algorithms. She has presented her research on artificial intelligence and algorithms at large-scale conferences such as the Academy of Management and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.



CANADA'S HOUSING CRISIS

DR.YUSHU ZHU & HANAN ALI (SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY)

Canadians are in the grip of a deepening housing crisis, yet not everyone agrees on what exactly the housing crisis is. The common narrative focuses on an affordability crisis for homeownership, attributed to either excessive demand from immigrants and foreign buyers or a lack of supply.

Canada's housing market is among the most unaffordable, with one of the highest house-price-to-income ratios among OECD member states. Housing prices soared over 355 per cent between 2000 and 2021, while median nominal income increased by only 113 per cent.

But today's housing crisis extends beyond unaffordable homes and supply shortages. It's rooted in a deeply financialized housing system that idealizes homeownership and treats homes as financial assets instead of social goods.

What is the housing crisis?

The housing crisis is not new in Canada. In his book on the evolution of Canadian housing policy, historian John Bacher describes that, in the early 1900s, Canadians were "faced with the choice of accepting shelter that was overcrowded, poorly serviced, or below minimal building-code and sanitary standards."

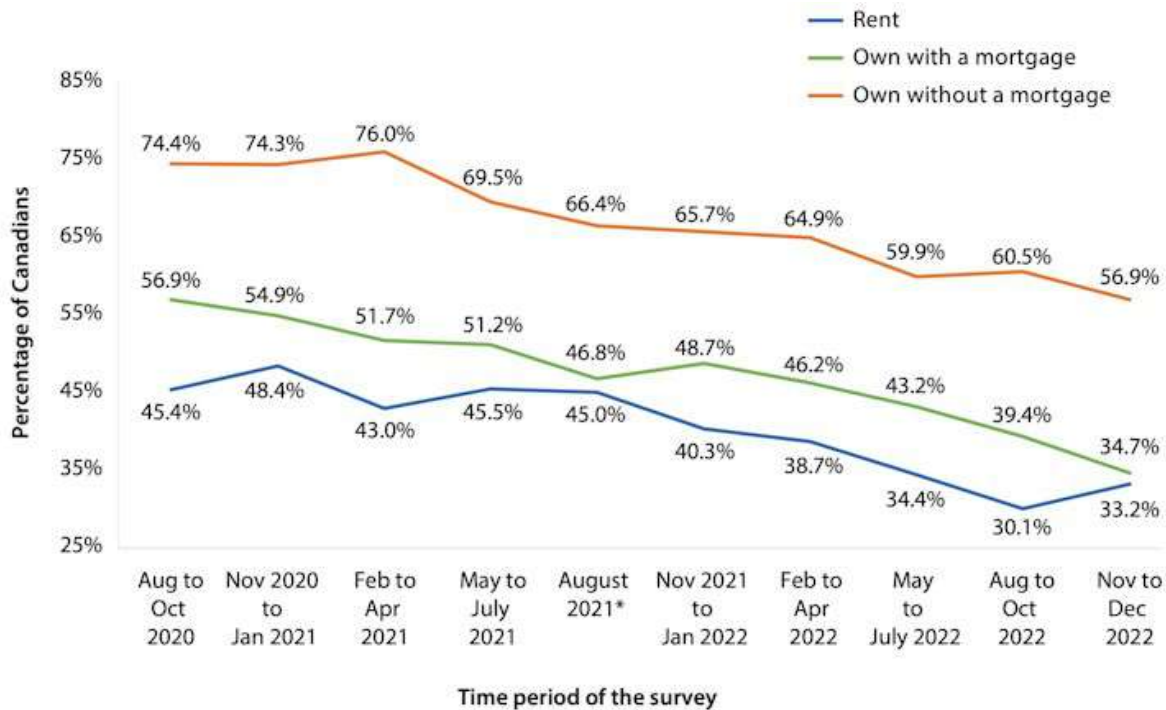
A century later, the housing crisis has not only persisted but worsened. The convergence of diverse housing vulnerabilities have affected people from all walks of life.

Renters, for instance, are facing rent increases double that of inflation, alongside evictions and displacement.

Homelessness is on the rise, disproportionately affecting Indigenous and Black people, gender minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Homeownership is increasingly precarious. Over one-third of Canadian households own a home with a mortgage, and of those, two-thirds have trouble meeting their financial commitments.

*Homes as Human Right,
Not Financial Assets*



Decreasing percentages of both homeowners and renters can meet their financial commitments without any problems. (Financial Consumer Agency of Canada)

As a result, many Canadians have had to sacrifice privacy, comfort, stability, and location, leading to hidden housing vulnerabilities like undesirable living conditions, overcrowding and dissatisfaction.

Many young adults are now delaying homeownership, staying in their parents' homes longer, postponing starting families or relying on parental financial support to buy homes, which can widen intergenerational wealth gaps.

How did the housing crisis happen?

These issues stem from policies in the 1980s to restructure the housing system, cultivating a culture of homeownership and market supremacy.

Canada had a strong housing welfare system in the 1960s and 1970s, but this changed in 1993 when the federal government stopped funding social housing programs. It shifted toward a commodified system that emphasized individual responsibility.

This shift was driven by two neoliberal beliefs. The first is that the private market is the most efficient way to provide housing, with the idea that older homes will become affordable as newer ones are built in a process called filtering.

In reality, older houses can become more expensive because of renovation costs and speculation, and affordability is tied more to land than property values.

The second belief is that homeownership promotes autonomy and reduces reliance on governments by building property assets, although the reality defies this belief.

Consequently, public divestment has created a siloed and marginalized social housing sector that now makes up about four per cent of the total housing stock. It primarily serves as a last resort for

the “deserving poor,” like those with complex housing needs. The concentration of poverty and vulnerability in this sector further reinforces the stigmas around it.

Housing financialization has intensified since 1999 when the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) shifted from building homes to insuring mortgages. CMHC’s mortgage securitization programs expanded access to mortgages, fuelling demand and real estate speculation, turning housing into a vehicle for asset-building and capital accumulation. Federal subsidies further encouraged homeownership.

Homeownership rates rose from 63 per cent to 69 per cent between 1991 and 2011. Meanwhile, median house prices increased by 142 per cent, while incomes grew by only seven per cent. Household debt soared, with debt-to-income ratios rising from 109 per cent to 173 per cent between 2002 and 2017. Homeownership rates have since started to fall.

Why does the current system fail?

Neoliberal housing policies foster landlordism. Across British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, one in five residential properties are used as investments rather than primary residences. This financialization of rental housing, including short-term rentals, has strained long-term rental markets.

Economic pressures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, rising construction costs, an aging workforce and population growth have worsened housing affordability.

Yet, the housing crisis is an inherent feature of a neoliberal housing system that created a tenure hierarchy, with homeownership at the top and non-market rental at the bottom. Everyone is expected to participate in the private market to climb the housing ladder from renting to owning.

Such a system will always fail to produce equitable housing outcomes. The market is most likely to respond to the housing needs of those with strong purchasing power, leaving behind low and moderate income families whose housing needs cannot generate effective market demand. The consequence is growing housing inequality, with many low-income families trapped in precarious living conditions.

Politically, the expansion of homeownership incentivizes electoral support for policies that prioritize homeownership and appeal to “homevoters.” Homeownership ideology is therefore reinforced and housing vulnerability becomes effectively “deadlocked.”

Current housing policies

Recent housing policy efforts have shown a renewed alignment between different levels of government in tackling housing challenges.

The federal government’s 2017 National Housing Strategy (NHS) focused on increasing rental supply, providing rent assistance and reducing homelessness.

The 2019 National Housing Strategy Act established access to adequate housing as a human right. The 2024 Canada Housing Plan aims to create 3.87 million homes by 2031 while recognizing tenants’ rights for the first time and protecting tenants’ tenure security.

Provincial governments followed suit. B.C.’s 2018 Homes for B.C. plan, for example, included measures to curtail non-resident investor speculation and boost market and non-market housing supply. It also established legislation to curb short-term rentals, end single-family zoning and increase density near public transit.

Municipalities implemented measures to cut red tape, streamline housing development, incentivize densification (like Montréal's inclusionary zoning by-law) and standardize housing design and construction.

More action is needed

These policies signal a positive shift toward acknowledging housing as a human right and recognizing tenants' rights. Renewed funding has supported rental housing construction, including co-op housing. Programs for community housing and homelessness are also pivotal for sustaining the aging social housing stock and supporting those in greatest need.

However, most policy approaches remain market-driven, prioritizing private developers and market supply. Of the NHS's \$115 billion budget over 10 years, 57 per cent is loans and under 40 per cent is budgetary expenditures with a small proportion to support community housing.

The biggest finance program, the Apartment Construction Loan Program, has mainly benefited private developers building above-market-rate housing.

Mortgage securitization programs remain central to the federal government's financing of homeownership. The 2024 Housing Plan continues to expand mortgage access.

Market supply may help moderate affordability, but the impact will be limited without policies to grow the community housing sector. It also leaves deeper housing vulnerabilities unaddressed.

Homelessness has increased since the NHS launch. An estimated seven-fold funding increase is needed to halve chronic homelessness. Advocates have been calling for at least a doubling of the community housing sector, but a significant shortage persists.

Breaking the housing crisis deadlock requires breaking the hierarchy between homeownership and rentership, and between the market and non-market rental sectors. De-commodifying and de-financializing housing is key. This means expanding community housing, prioritizing community-based solutions and ensuring long-term security for all.

Yushu Zhu is Assistant Professor at Simon Fraser University. Yushu worked at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and held postdoctoral fellowships at the Institute of Asian Research at UBC and at Brown University. Yushu received her Ph.D. in Architecture from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her M.Sc. and B.Sc. (Hons) in geography from Sun Yat-sen University, China.

Hanan Ali is a Policy Analyst at Métis Nation British Columbia and assistant researcher in Simon Fraser University's Urban Studies Program. As a M.A. alumnus of SFU's School for International Studies, her research interests cut across housing policy, comparative urban governance, social reproduction, place-making and the politics of belonging in city/ neighbourhood spaces

MONETARY POLICY LIMITS

DR.SORIN RIZEANU (UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA)

The Canadian and American economies are deeply intertwined. With the United States Federal Reserve cautious amid mixed signals from the labour market and rising inflation worries, the Bank of Canada has just lowered its key interest rate to 3.75 per cent — cutting it by half a percentage point.

Strong U.S. job growth and cooling inflation could result in a smaller Fed rate cut compared to its previous cut and to Canada's recent cut. It could also pause the rate entirely, which may change economic conditions in the U.S. and Canada in the months to come. Upcoming U.S. elections complicate the problem further.

In Canada, cooling inflation, slowing manufacturing sales and more cautious consumer spending opens the door to another half percentage point rate cut by the end of the year.

But does the Bank of Canada have the ability to offset shifts in U.S. monetary policies through its own monetary instruments? In fact, how much room does it have to diverge from U.S. policy at all?

Monetary conditions are transmitted from the world's biggest financial centres to the rest of the world through gross credit flows and leverage. Any policy differences between Canada and the U.S. immediately impact Canada, including spillover effects on the loonie exchange rates and other widespread economical and social effects.

Canada's double trilemmas

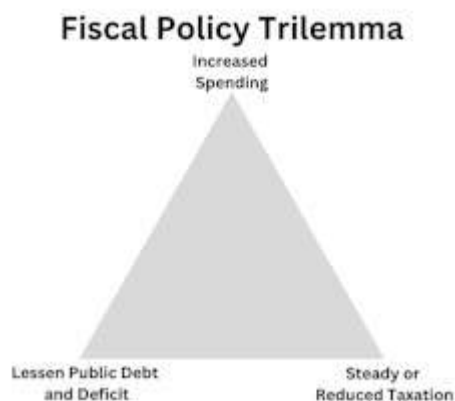
Canada's key challenges include economic growth as a potential recession looms, taming inflation, housing, managing interest rates while private and public debt is sky-high and stabilizing Canada's commodity-linked currency in an increasingly volatile geopolitical environment. Failing to address these challenges could lead to severe systemic imbalances.



A country cannot have an independent monetary policy, stable exchange rate and free capital flows simultaneously. It must choose one side of this triangle and give up the opposite corner. (Sorin Rizeanu),

The Bank of Canada has good reasons to cut the interest rate back to 2.5 to 3.5 per cent, but this could have a significant impact on the loonie.

Canada is facing two sets of trilemmas: a monetary one for the central bank and a fiscal one for the government. On the monetary side, stable exchange rates, independent monetary policy and financial market openness are three objectives that cannot all be achieved simultaneously. European countries have sacrificed monetary independence in exchange for a strong euro and financial openness.



It's impossible for policymakers to pursue all three choices at the same time. For instance, a country spending more without raising taxes has to increase public debt and deficit. (Sorin Rizeanu),

Canada, in contrast, has opted for free capital mobility and independent monetary policy at the expense of exchange rate stability. This allows the loonie to be determined by market forces, giving the central bank the ability to adjust interest rates while capital moves freely across the border.

On the fiscal side, the government is grappling with climate change, immigration and wealth inequality. However, there is also strong public resistance to higher taxes, and public debt and deficits are currently at alarming levels.

If the central banks are at odds

If the Bank of Canada were to cut interest rates while the Fed doesn't, the loonie would likely depreciate sharply, forcing a response. Such a divergence happened in June 2024, with the Fed following with a 0.5 per cent cut only in September.

On such short-term deviations, sterilization is typically implemented to dampen the depreciation of the loonie by acquiring Canadian dollars and selling reserves.

If the central banks were to remain at odds in the longer term, a decrease in money supply as investors flee would likely cause a decrease in domestic bank lending, which is already under pressure from public and private debt and increased default rates.

This could decrease longer term interest rates and put additional pressure on the economy through the capital account. If investors believe the central bank is merely delaying the inevitable depreciation of its currency, it could also reinforce carry trade dynamics — an investment strategy where money is borrowed at a low cost in one currency to earn higher returns from investments in another currency.

The bond market would also react, with notable effects in key economic sectors and asset valuation. Long-term interest rates tend to align more across countries than short-term rates, especially if global factors are influencing real rates or if investors are seeking safer assets.

While the Bank of Canada can set its policy rate independently of the Fed's rate, it has less control over the long-term. Long-term rates are tied to exchange rates and reflect expectations for future short-term rates and risk factors. Mortgage rates and corporate borrowing rates would be affected as well.

Monetary policy can't be the only answer

The Bank of Canada's mandate is to "keep inflation low, stable and predictable." While this can be fulfilled through rate cuts, diverging from U.S. policy will have widespread effects on the Canadian economy. These impacts will be uneven, with indebted investors and banks likely benefiting while the working class may bear the brunt.

The Bank of Canada focuses on providing liquidity to the financial sector, often with little regulation or oversight. However, this approach tends to overlook challenges faced by the working class. In 2022, for instance, Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem advised against employers increasing wages to match inflation over concern that a wage-price spiral would occur.

Even if the central bank wanted to address these issues, it's limited by the ability to manage multiple outputs with just one instrument. As a result, the central bank should report not only on inflation, but also on the overall trade-offs of rate cuts.

The Bank of Canada has a vested interest in tampering the effects of a new rate cut, especially since it could trigger a "capital famine" in the long-term and weaken the Canadian dollar. In the short-term, divergences from the U.S. will likely be manageable, but in the longer term, currency depreciation may be unavoidable to keep the economy afloat.

Monetary policy is vital, but it's merely the first line of defence against inflation. To truly address Canada's economic issues, both monetary and fiscal policies need to work together in harmony, with a broader public discussion that goes beyond inflation.

Dr. Sorin Rizeanu is a faculty member at the Gustavson School of Business, where he teaches managerial and international finance to both graduate and undergraduate students. His research primarily focuses on corporate governance and international finance, aiming to help investors more accurately value companies and understand their operational dynamics. His work has been featured in prominent publications such as Contemporary Accounting Research, the International Journal of Economics and Finance, and the Journal of Management and Governance. Prior to joining the University of Victoria, Sorin studied and taught at the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina.

DEEP THINKING

MURTAZA FAISAL PAUL (2008-10)

Lahore's Air Quality Crisis: Navigating Pollution Challenges Amidst Climate Change

Lahore, one of Pakistan's most historic and populous cities, faces significant environmental challenges, with pollution levels reaching alarming heights and air quality deteriorating rapidly. The city's ongoing struggle with high pollution is exacerbated by multiple interwoven factors, including rapid urbanization, unregulated industrial growth, and seasonal agricultural practices. These issues compound to produce some of the highest Air Quality Index (AQI) readings worldwide, which often enter hazardous levels, representing a serious public health crisis.

Contributing Factors to Lahore's Alarming Air Quality

1. Industrial and Vehicular Emissions Lahore's burgeoning industrial sector and ever-increasing vehicle population are key contributors to the city's severe air pollution. Factories located near Lahore release vast quantities of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and other pollutants as byproducts. Simultaneously, the rise in vehicular traffic has led to an increase in carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter, forming a complex pollution mix that heightens respiratory risks for residents. This unchecked emission from industrial and vehicular sources creates a constant source of pollution, contributing heavily to Lahore's degraded air quality.

"Tackling Pollution, Protecting Lives"

2. Construction and Urban Expansion Lahore's ongoing urban sprawl, alongside increased construction activities, has led to rising levels of airborne particulate matter, specifically PM2.5 and PM10 particles. These microscopic pollutants, generated from dust, debris, and construction materials, pose serious health risks, particularly as they easily enter the human respiratory system and exacerbate chronic health conditions. As Lahore continues to expand, the unregulated construction practices further burden the city's air quality, resulting in significant health challenges for urban dwellers.

3. Seasonal Crop Burning in Punjab Seasonal crop-burning practices in Punjab present a cyclical environmental challenge for Lahore. Farmers, clearing their fields for the subsequent planting season, burn agricultural residue, releasing enormous quantities of smoke, black carbon, and other pollutants into the atmosphere. This annual activity not only leads to a noticeable spike in AQI levels but also produces dense smog that blankets Lahore. The persistence of crop burning practices, despite their known adverse effects, continues to impact Lahore's air quality, particularly during specific times of the year.

4. Climate Change and Temperature Inversion The global climate crisis exacerbates Lahore's pollution levels, with changing weather patterns creating conditions like temperature inversion. During a temperature inversion, a layer of warm air traps cooler air beneath it, preventing pollutants

from dispersing upward into the atmosphere. This phenomenon leads to the accumulation of pollutants close to the ground, resulting in hazardous air quality that significantly impacts residents' health. Climate change's influence on local weather patterns thus worsens Lahore's air quality, amplifying the adverse effects of pollution and contributing to the persistence of smog.

Health and Societal Impacts of Air Pollution in Lahore

The consequences of Lahore's declining air quality are both immediate and far-reaching, with serious implications for public health and societal wellbeing. Continuous exposure to high pollution levels leads to an increase in respiratory ailments, such as asthma, bronchitis, and other chronic lung diseases. The elevated concentration of fine particulate matter, specifically PM_{2.5}, is particularly harmful, as these particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, contributing to cardiovascular diseases and increasing overall mortality rates.

In addition to health concerns, Lahore's high AQI levels impact daily life for its residents. Visibility is significantly reduced due to dense smog, disrupting transportation and affecting the efficiency of outdoor work. Educational institutions are occasionally forced to close or adjust schedules to protect students from prolonged exposure to pollutants. The city's smog crisis also discourages outdoor recreational activities, diminishing residents' quality of life and impacting the city's economic productivity.

Mitigation Measures and Government Initiatives

In response to Lahore's environmental crisis, the Punjab government and environmental bodies have taken steps to address pollution and improve air quality through several strategies:

- 1. Stricter Emission Regulations for Industries** To control industrial emissions, the government has implemented stringent emission standards and introduced penalties for factories that fail to comply. These policies are essential in curbing the release of pollutants from factories, aiming to reduce sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and other harmful emissions in the air.
- 2. Promotion of Electric Vehicles (EVs)** To tackle vehicular pollution, the government is promoting the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrid cars. Incentives for EVs and improvements to the public transportation infrastructure are part of the government's broader strategy to reduce Lahore's reliance on fossil-fuel-powered vehicles, thereby decreasing vehicular emissions.
- 3. Alternative Solutions for Crop Burning** Recognizing the impact of crop burning, authorities are working with agricultural communities to provide alternatives to traditional residue clearing methods. By promoting practices like mulching and crop residue management, the government hopes to reduce reliance on burning, which is a primary source of seasonal air pollution in Lahore.
- 4. Public Awareness Campaigns and AQI Monitoring** To empower residents with real-time information on air quality, Lahore's environmental bodies have launched public awareness campaigns and AQI monitoring systems. These initiatives aim to educate the public on preventive measures and encourage behavior that reduces personal exposure to air pollution. Public advisories and air

*"Lahore's Smog Crisis:
Time for Collective Action"*

quality updates are also disseminated to help citizens make informed decisions about outdoor activities during periods of high pollution.

Pakistan's Role in Addressing Climate Change

Lahore's air pollution crisis highlights the broader environmental challenges Pakistan faces as it navigates the global climate crisis. Rapid urbanization and industrialization, while vital for economic growth, require careful management to prevent environmental degradation. Pakistan's commitment to international climate agreements underscores its recognition of the need for sustainable development. However, local measures remain critical, as air pollution and climate change require both policy-driven action and regional cooperation, especially in cross-border pollution issues affecting shared air quality with neighboring India.

A Path Forward: Call for Collective Action

Lahore's environmental challenges underscore the urgent need for a collaborative approach that involves not only government action but also community engagement and international support. The city's residents, policymakers, and stakeholders must work together to implement sustainable practices, adopt cleaner technologies, and enforce policies that protect Lahore's environment. Only through a coordinated response can Lahore make meaningful progress toward improving air quality and fostering a healthier environment for its citizens.

While the path to a cleaner Lahore is challenging, this crisis also presents an opportunity to prioritize environmental health. By addressing its air pollution crisis, Lahore can serve as a model for other urban centers facing similar challenges, inspiring collective action across Pakistan and the region to combat the growing climate crisis



***"Breathe Easy, Lahore:
The Path to Clean Air"***

SOUTH ASIAN IMMIGRANTS

DR. REENA KUKREJA (QUEENS'S UNIVERSITY)

Anti-immigrant politics is fueling hate toward South Asian people in Canada

The Canadian government recently announced that it is making significant cuts to the number of immigrants admitted into Canada. The number of new permanent residents is expected to be cut by nearly 20 per cent next year, while fewer temporary foreign workers will be allowed to come to Canada.

*"Hate Crimes Begin with Hate Speech:
The Cost of Political Rhetoric"*

The government says the cuts would result in a 0.2 per cent decline in Canada's population and alleviate "pressures on housing, infrastructure and social services."

The cuts come as Canada's political leaders are increasingly blaming immigrants for the country's housing and health-care problems.

Political discourse from both Conservatives and Liberals routinely casts increased migration as the primary cause of Canada's housing and health-care crises.

The government's announcement of cuts further plays into this narrative and is already being used by anti-immigrant politicians, like Donald Trump, who said "even Justin Trudeau wants to close Canada's borders."

The broader societal fallout of this anti-immigrant discourse is the further normalization of everyday hate and animosity toward migrants, especially those who are racialized.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announcing the government's plan to cut immigration.

What is everyday hate?

In a recent incident in Waterloo, Ont., a South Asian man was verbally assaulted and given the middle finger by a white woman. After he confronted her to ask what he had done, she told him "Indians are taking over Canada" and that he should "go back to India."

This kind of everyday hate manifests during banal encounters between the victim and the perpetrators in the "everyday" of daily life. Hate constitutes violence and violent acts — covert and overt — targeted at people or groups "because of who they are, [rather] than because of what they do."

Race, skin colour, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender and disability are categories for hate that can range from discrimination, threats and slurs, to assaults and exclusionary policies.

In Canada, anti-immigrant and anti-newcomer hate often revolves around race, with racialized and ethno-religious groups, such as Sikhs and Muslims, becoming easy targets.

In 2023, 44.5 per cent of hate incidents in Canada were motivated by race or ethnicity with South Asian and Black people facing higher rates of hate threats and assaults. Between 2022 and 2023, there was a significant increase in reported hate crimes against Muslims.

Institutionalized hate takes the form of exclusionary policies like travel bans, while rhetoric from government officials influences public perception about targeted groups. This, in turn, filters into the larger society to legitimize discrimination, prejudice, hate and exclusionary practices by ordinary folks against those who are singled out as “the other.”

Hatred resulted in the stabbing death of a South Asian cab driver in Winnipeg in 2020 by a man who admitted that it was precipitated by animosity towards South Asian people.

In 2021, a man in London, Ont. killed a Pakistani Canadian family, running them over with his truck. Islamophobic hate and the online radicalization by racist content contributed to the attack which a judge described as white nationalist terrorism.

The 2017 Québec City mosque killings too illustrate what can happen when beliefs translate into violence, and the haunting impact on people’s psyche.

The trauma is long-lasting and felt both by the victimized individual and the community to which they belong.

Fueling ‘Great Replacement’ theories

Since Spring 2024, I have been conducting a study on the online spread of centre-right populism and white supremacist ideology in Canada and Southern Europe that specifically targets racialized male migrants.

Both regions have witnessed a rise in far right, nativist and Islamophobic beliefs, with political leaders and populist discourses scapegoating recent migrants for societal crises.

I am examining how the ratchetting-up of anti-immigrant discourse by the political elites translates into racialized abuse and attacks on migrants engaged in gig economy jobs like ride-hailing and food delivery.

According to my preliminary findings, the far-right online narrative both in Canada and across Southern Europe is increasingly using the Great Replacement Theory to stir up racial hate against migrants, especially against racialized male migrants.

A recent study by the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism revealed a sharp rise in online racism against South Asians. In Canada and elsewhere, online posts fueling Great Replacement Theory push the narrative that increased South Asian migrants will transform Canada into a nation with a non-white majority. This normalization of white nationalism and white Canadians as “exalted subjects” is exhibited when ordinary folks accost racialized people in the streets.

As Peter Smith, a researcher with the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, notes:

“There is definitely a trend within the far-right spaces, particularly in Canada, of targeting South Asian communities and individuals for derision...They are making them the focus of a lot of anti-immigrant narratives and we’re seeing the phrase, ‘they have to go back’ being deployed a lot.”

The socialization of a culture of hate through diverse media and the role of state policies and state actors in shaping hate discourse reveals a correlation between increased hate crimes against specific groups and/or people with the rise of far-right discourses.

*"Canada's Immigration Cuts:
Scapegoating Migrants for
Political Gains"*

White Canadian young men are being drawn to white supremacist ideology through movements like the neo-Nazi Active Club network. Online hate is particularly worrisome as it not only creates echo chambers easily across social media networks, it also gets diffused offline.

With racialized migrants often occupying hyper visible jobs in the gig economy and service sector, my study seeks to understand how their labour exposes them to a higher risk of racial abuse, and violence.

The trauma of hate

“Hate crimes are preceded by hate speech... We have to bear in mind that words kill. Words kill as bullets.” These words by Adama Dieng, former United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, remind us how politically expedient discourse about groups of people can easily translate into targeted violence against those who are not seen as “one of us.”

Anti-immigrant rhetoric makes racism and hate seem banal and everyday. It negatively influences the lived experiences of racialized people as they navigate public spaces where they are forced into face-to-face interactions with potential perpetrators of hate.

What makes these more traumatic to the individual psyche is that they occur in the everyday of daily life, are often unrecognized by the dominant society, and thus harder to prove by the victims. This hate results in racialized victims experiencing racial trauma, stress, depression and anxiety. In the everyday, the psychological impact is profound.

Hate crimes will only increase in Canada as anti-immigrant rhetoric is pushed and normalized by politicians. Governments need to see random acts of hate as part of a larger structural violence against racialized people in Canada. And they need to consider how their rhetoric might fuel that violence. Instead of waiting for the next targeted killing or attack, they need to stop scapegoating immigrants for political gains.



Dr. Reena Kukreja is an Associate Professor in Global Development Studies at Queen's University, with roles in Gender Studies and Cultural Studies. A feminist-activist, researcher, and award-winning documentary filmmaker, her work centers on gender, migration, conflict, and the impacts of globalization on marginalized communities in South Asia. Her documentaries, known for their powerful portrayals, have been screened globally, advocating for social change. She has also taught on gender and conflict at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and served as a Visiting Fellow at the International Migration Research Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University.

US ELECTIONS 2024

DR. MEREDITH RALSTON (Mount Saint Vincent University)

Like many women, I'm having a horrible flashback. It's 6 a.m. on Nov. 9, 2016 — the day after the United States presidential election that pitted Hillary Clinton against Donald Trump. I went to bed assuming Clinton had won.

I remember thinking to myself on the night of that election that there was nothing to be worried about. Americans would do the right thing and vote for the most qualified person, not the reality TV star. I came into the dining room where my partner was sitting reading the news and looked at him hopefully when he told me, still in shock: "Trump won."

I was wrong eight years ago and I was wrong today about Vice President Kamala Harris's chances of beating Trump.

I hoped the polls were wrong and the race was not as close as it appeared to be in the swing states. I believed women would come out in droves to protect their reproductive rights. I hoped and assumed that white women, in particular, would turn out for Harris en masse. That was a false hope.

*"Gender and Race: The
Unyielding Barriers in Kamala
Harris's Campaign"*

Trump has been declared the winner of the 2024 presidential election after handily winning several swing states. He's also on track to win the popular vote, something he failed to do in '16. In fact, he has done better with almost all demographics in 2024 than he did in 2020.

Tight race

It was a hard-fought battle and, according to the polls, neck and neck right up until the final days of the campaign.

In hindsight, several questions have been answered that were not so clear just a day ago. Will America vote for a Black woman? No. Will Harris be able to do what Clinton couldn't do eight years ago? No. Will she break the Oval Office glass ceiling? No.

The fact that these questions were still in play in 2024, as Harris waged a disciplined campaign against an opponent as flawed and felonious as Trump, seems revelatory about the misogyny and racism that bedevils America.

Gender played an outsized role in the election for several reasons. The overturning of *Roe v Wade* [in June 2022 galvanized women](#) across the U.S., especially when the deaths of several women after being refused pregnancy or miscarriage-related health care illustrated the consequences of these extreme anti-choice positions.

Concerns about women's reproductive rights and Trump's casual dismissal of sexualized violence seemingly gave women, young and old, a cause to embrace.

A survey in Iowa conducted by vaunted pollster Ann Selzer showed women 65 and older were voting for Harris by a two to one margin, though Trump ended up winning the state.

TikTok videos showing Trump's infamous "grab them by the pussy" comments went viral among young TikTokers who weren't old enough to remember when the remarks originally surfaced in 2016. They spoke of their astonishment that their fathers and anyone with daughters, sisters or mothers could vote for such a person.


But it was not enough, even though exit polls suggested a majority of women cast their ballots for Harris. Women apparently preferred Harris, but not by the margins her campaign had hoped.

Trump's allure to men


On the other side of the gender equation are men. Trump's appeal to young men increased as their apparent fears of being overtaken by women's gains in equality were exploited.

This is a disturbing trend. According to a September NBC poll, women backed the Democrats 58 per cent to 37 per cent, while men supported Republicans 52 per cent to 40 per cent. Research has shown that young women have become more liberal while young men have become more conservative, perhaps because they are angry at falling behind and losing their former advantages.

The candidates themselves recognized the differences in support with their choices of podcasts and media appearances. Trump spent three hours with Joe Rogan — who subsequently endorsed him — for his podcast that skews heavily towards young men while Harris went on Call Her Daddy, a podcast directed at women under 35.



***"The Day Misogyny and Racism
Converged to Shape America's
Future"***



In the end, the U.S. voted for what is called "hegemonic masculinity," a cultural valorization of stereotypical male traits, and Trump's endless and regressive belittling of women and "feminine" men won the day.

The impact of white women

Another key factor in the campaign was race.

Exit polls suggested white women without college educations overwhelmingly voted for Trump, while white college-educated women cast their ballots for Harris.

Prior to the election, most white women said they backed the Republican Party, but suggestions their support for Trump was wavering now seem unfounded. Exit polls suggest Harris didn't perform as well with women voters as Joe Biden did in 2020.

We don't have the final numbers yet in terms of how white women in swing states ultimately cast their ballots, but they probably weren't good. Democrats ran videos, one narrated by actress Julia Roberts, pointing out the obvious constitutional guarantee that women have the right to vote any way they wanted to — and that what happens in the ballot box should stay in the ballot box.

The backlash against these ads was illuminating, suggesting there are still many men who think their wives should vote the way their husbands do and that it's a betrayal if they don't — and perhaps Trump's win suggests their wives agreed.

The loss of reproductive freedom was evidently not enough for white women to go against their race, their class interests — or possibly their husbands.

Black, Latino men

The other racial factor in the campaign was the perception of the dwindling support for Harris from Black and Latino men. Trump also increased his share of the Latino vote.

And according to a *New York Times* poll, while Obama was supported by 93 per cent of Black Americans in 2008 and Biden was supported by 90 per cent in 2020, support had fallen to 73 per cent for Harris in 2024.

Is this the result of sexism or internalized misogyny? Could Black men not bring themselves to vote for a Black woman?

Barack Obama's plea to Black men certainly seems to suggest a problem with sexism within that cohort of voters.

Election stress disorder is a term coined by psychologists to refer to the anxiety around tense elections and the fear of the future.

That stress will be magnified as the world now watches what will happen as Trump, with no guardrails, no checks and balances in place and billionaires by his side, attempts to remake America in his own authoritarian image.

Dr. Meredith Ralston is Professor in the Departments of Women's Studies and Political Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She is also an award-winning filmmaker, and her film, Hope in Heaven (about sex tourism in the Philippines) is narrated by Kiefer Sutherland and was broadcast to great acclaim on CBC in Canada. She also wrote and directed two documentaries with the National Film Board of Canada on women in politics.

THE WEST COAST

DR. KAMRAN BASHIR (1992-94)

Being Truly Religious and Moral Reflections on an Ordinary Biography

The other day I came across a group of people discussing the life of an ordinary man, named Sulakha, who used to work as a gardener at someone's home. I was stunned to hear his attitude towards life. It carries a message for everyone. Let me recollect a few points from his biography:

He was born to a lower economic class family....Uneducated and a gardener by profession....Father of three or four children....A man of meager resources, he would move on a wretched bicycle – but surprisingly he never expressed any complaints, instead always appeared a very thankful individual towards God....He deemed this life as a temporary phase and it would not be long before he returns to his Lord; therefore he had no problems with any worldly misfortunes....He had a mentally retarded daughter; when asked who would take care of her after him, he replied that her brothers would; but if they did not, that should not be a great problem either– She is not supposed to live in this world for ever!....When someone expressed fear before him, he asked why any fear should kindle in one's heart; even death should not carry any fear – but it is after death what should worry everyone because this is where his or her worldly deeds comes in to rescue him or condemn him....His gratitude was unbelievable....He said to one of his listeners that he is enjoying God's bounty....The listener looked at him, confused....He added that he goes to work in a house where he is offered a lavish breakfast; he then goes to work somewhere else in the afternoon and they

**"A Gentle Life, A
Monument of Grace."**

***Fulfillment is found in
Thankfulness, not in
riches***

give him a wonderful lunch – “You know, I am enjoying the most favored status by my Lord”If one would observe him taking meal, he would time and again raise his head towards sky as if offering gratitude to his Creator and Sustainer....The other day he went to work at a house where there were post-funeral activities were going on. People were busy reading the scripture to send blessings to the dead and giving alms to the poor for that matter. He discussed it with one of his listeners, “Is this scripture reading and almsgiving going to help the person who is now dead?” He was absolutely clear that it was of no use to the dead person....When he saw an accident in which there was a loss of material resources but fortunately no casualties occurred, he looked to the brighter side and thanked God that lives of the people were saved....He was working in the garden in the scorching heat of the summer when someone offered him to take a break from this swelling temperature....He remained silent, thinking, and then replied, “All the weathers are from my Lord,

you know. He shows us heat and shows us cold; He shows us rain and shows us draught – So why to worry, my dear? Summers carry nothing save heat.” He carried an aesthetic sense as well and was rather uneasy when flowers were plucked unnecessarily from a garden. But he was mindful not to offend the perpetrators of this undesirable act. He would rather ask the owner to advise the wrongdoers.

*The Weather of Life is
from my Lord*

I was just amazed at reading this extraordinary biography of an ordinary man. At the same time, I compared the message that Sulakha's life conveys with what typical clergyman's sermons say, both Muslim and Christian. Often, these sermons are devoid of any moral content and without a clear concept of a perfect Creator. Instead of a stress on moral values, most of the clerical stuff is either geared towards interpreting historical incidents or eulogizing just their religious personalities and downplaying others'.

In sum, my spirit was touched by the sense of fulfillment and contentment of this innocent soul, and all this invited me to glean a few lines from the scriptural and literary sources:

Wa-sabiqun al-sabiqun (Qur'an 56:10)

(And the foremost in faith are the foremost in paradise.)

*'His Life was gentle, and the elements
so mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world: This was a man'*

(Shakespeare's *Julius Ceaser* Act 5, Scene 3)



Dr. Kamran Bashir is a distinguished academic and educational consultant with a multifaceted career spanning over two decades. Currently serving as a Scholar-in-Residence at Simon Fraser University since July 2022, Dr. Bashir brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Greater Vancouver community in British Columbia, Canada. He did MBA from the IBA ,University of the Punjab (1992-1994).

Dr. Kamran Bashir's diverse background and commitment to education and research make him a valuable asset to the IBA PU Alumni Canada

THE COCKTAIL

IMRAN RAZA SHAH (1972-74)

Belief vs. Trust: A Lifetime's Lesson

After a lifetime of responsibilities, trials, and milestones, I have come to understand one of the most profound lessons life has to offer: the difference between believing in the Creator and trusting Him. This understanding is rooted in years of personal and professional experiences, challenges faced, and blessings received.

Believing in the Almighty is something many of us grow up with—acknowledging His existence, power, and mercy. However, trust is something deeper, something earned through experience. Trust is the quiet conviction that, no matter the challenges we face, the Almighty will guide us through. It is surrendering to His wisdom, even when life seems uncertain or overwhelming.

Like many of you, I grew up believing in the Creator. But it was the trials of life that taught me to trust Him. When faced with challenges—whether personal, professional, family-related, or social—He provided solutions in ways I couldn't have foreseen. From nurturing a good family life, raising and educating my children, ensuring their marriages, to overcoming health issues and professional hurdles, the Creator's blessings were evident every step of the way.

Over time, this repeated reassurance transformed my belief into trust. I now approach life with the unwavering confidence that whatever trial comes my way, He will help me overcome it. This trust has brought me immense strength—a strength I want to share with you.

Can you imagine the peace and resilience that comes with trusting in the Creator? It frees you from worry, replacing anxiety with calm and fear with hope. Trusting is not just believing in His power but experiencing it in your life and relying on it in your darkest moments.

Reflect on your own journey: Do you merely believe, or have you developed trust? The answer could transform your outlook on life.

While my faith is rooted in the Islamic tradition, this lesson is universal. Regardless of your beliefs, the progression from acknowledgment to absolute trust—whether in the Divine, in life, or even in yourself—can give you unparalleled strength. Trust is the foundation of resilience and the antidote to fear.

Life is full of trials and blessings, responsibilities and milestones. But with trust in the Creator—or in a higher purpose—you find strength to navigate it all. Trust doesn't negate challenges; it reframes them, offering you the peace of knowing you are never alone in facing them.

As I reflect on my own journey, I invite you to reflect on yours. Perhaps it's time to ask yourself: Do you simply believe, or do you trust? The answer might just change your life.

CANADA'S SPACE MISSION

DR. GORDON OSINSKY (WESTERN UNIVERSITY)

Canada's first moon rover will soon have a name as it prepares to explore a hostile lunar region:

The Canadian Space Agency announced a competition today to name Canada's first-ever rover mission to the moon. This unmanned mission will explore the south polar region of the moon to search for water ice and explore its unique geology.

I am a professor and planetary geologist. I am also the principal investigator for Canada's first rover mission to the moon and a member of the science team for the upcoming Artemis III mission, the first human trip to the moon since 1972.

A Canadian first

It is almost two years to the day that Canadensys Aerospace Corporation and its team was selected to build the Canadian lunar rover.

This mission is hugely significant because it's not only the first rover that Canada will send to the moon, but it will be the first-ever Canadian-led mission to another planetary body.

While Canadian technology has made it to the surface of the moon and Mars before, it's always been on missions led by other nations.

Not that this is a bad thing: science is only possible through collaboration. But it's a testament to the calibre of Canada's space community that, for the first time in history, we are in the driver's seat.

Canada's first rover mission is truly a team effort. Supporting Canadensys are seven Canadian companies that will build various parts of the rover and its science instruments.

I am proud to lead the science team, which includes faculty and students from six Canadian universities in Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. In keeping with the spirit of collaboration in space, we also have several scientists from the United States and the United Kingdom on our team.

One of the science instruments is also being provided by the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, supported by NASA. In return, Canada gets a launch from NASA.

*"South Pole of the Moon:
A Canadian-Led Quest for
Water and Knowledge."*



Infographic on Canada's lunar rover mission. (Canadian Space Agency), CC BY

What's in a name?

Every mission needs a name, but not everything is equal when it comes to naming spacecraft. Satellites, for example, are often named in a very functional way — like Radarsat, Canada's flagship satellite program.

When it comes to rover missions, however, NASA has been choosing inspirational names since the early 1990s with its first Mars rover, Sojourner. Then came along Spirit and Opportunity in 2004 followed by Curiosity eight years later.

The most recent arrival on Mars was Perseverance in 2021, which is currently emerging from a deep meteorite impact crater called Jezero.

NASA's goal in naming its rovers is to inspire interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); this has undoubtedly been a huge success.

The connection to rovers has also become deeply personal, evident in the outpouring of grief when Oppy — the nickname given to NASA's Opportunity rover — was declared "dead" in 2019.

The European Space Agency followed suit with its hugely popular animated stories for the Rosetta mission — the first mission designed to orbit and land on a comet — that depicted its Philae lander with a backpack and yellow helmet.

Four potential names

The names of NASA's series of Mars rovers are inspirational and capture the quest of exploration. In contrast, the Apollo and Artemis programs and many other space missions were named after figures in Greek mythology. Other mission names have historical connotations; some also allude to the culture and values of the country leading the mission.

For Canada's first moon rover, the Canadian Space Agency has come up with a shortlist of four potential names that conjure up various characteristics of Canada as well as capturing the spirit and goals of the mission:

1. *Athabasca* — A famous river that flows from the Rockies through Alberta to Lake Athabasca. Canada's rivers have been used for millennia and continue to be pathways of discovery, transport and exchange.
2. *Courage* — A name that would be representative of the work that has led to the Canadian lunar rover mission.
3. *Glacier* — Not only are glaciers associated with the polar regions of Canada, but one of the goals of the rover mission is to find water ice on the moon.
4. *Pol-R* — A word play on polar. Canada is a polar country and the rover mission will be landing in the south polar region of the Moon.

The online voting form to name Canada's first rover mission to the moon is open until Dec. 20, 2024.



"Small Rover, Big Leap: Canada's Journey to Another World Begins."

The work continues

As our team waits for Canadians to choose the name of our mission, we are hard at work on all aspects of its design and implementation.

In June, we got the green light for our preliminary design review aimed at assessing whether the original design met all the requirements set forth by the government of Canada, and that the risks, cost and schedule, were all acceptable.

We haven't chosen an easy mission for Canada's first trip to the moon. We are going to one of the most hostile regions of the lunar surface: the South Pole. Because of this, our rover must survive very long and cold lunar nights, where the temperature can drop below minus 200C for up to 14 Earth days.

We also have to pack all the hardware, plus our six science instruments, into the rover, which is the size of a small coffee table and weighs only 35 kilograms.

I recently provided an update on the science of our soon-to-be-named mission at the International Astronautical Congress in Milan, Italy. In addition to talking about our science instruments, I also delved into the three main objectives of the mission:

1. To investigate the geology of this unique region of the moon where, so far, no human or robot has ever been.
2. To search for water ice, a major discovery in the decades since the Apollo missions. The moon was thought to be devoid of water, but satellite observations suggest deposits of water

ice may be present in this polar region. But we need boots on the ground — or wheels, in our case — to confirm these satellite observations.

3. To study the radiation environment of this region in preparation for the return of humans to the moon.

Canada's long involvement in space rovers

Over the past two decades, the Canadian Space Agency has funded the construction of a series of prototype planetary rovers ranging from small so-called nano-rovers to massive machines capable of carrying two astronauts. Our new lunar rover has a lot of heritage behind it.

If not for the delay to the launch of the European Space Agency's ExoMars rover mission, originally scheduled for 2022, Canada would have already had wheels on Mars. The wheels, chassis and drive train for the Rosalind Franklin ExoMars rover was built by Canada's MDA Space. Launch is now set for 2028.

Canada has also set its sights on a much bigger moon rover. Announced in the 2023 federal budget, Canada aims to build a lunar utility vehicle that will help to transport cargo, perform science investigations and support astronauts on the moon.

This rover will be a major contribution to the NASA-led Artemis program. Following the flight of Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen on the upcoming Artemis II lunar flyby mission, the Lunar Utility Vehicle, Canadarm3 and other Canadian contributions to the Artemis program will ensure a Canadian will one day walk on the moon.



Dr. Gordon "Oz" Osinski is a Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Western Ontario (Western), Canada. He holds a PhD from the University of New Brunswick (2004) and a BSc (Hons) from the University of St. Andrews (1999), Scotland, both in Geology. Dr. Osinski is also the Director of the Canadian Lunar Research Network and the founder and Chair of the Planetary Sciences Division of the Geological Association of Canada. He also served as Associate Director and then Director of the Centre for Planetary Science and Exploration from 2008 to 2019 and was the Founding Director of its successor, the Institute for Earth and Space Exploration (2019 – 2021)

AI & ENVIRONMENT

BURCU OLGUN (CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY)

Science fiction stories allow us to explore what we want, and what we reject with AI

Science fiction has long been a window into possible futures, often anticipating technological advancements and societal shifts with surprising accuracy.

While AI is now widely recognized for its practical uses — like natural language processing and pattern recognition — science fiction often brings more captivating and thought-provoking perspectives.

Movies and shows have depicted AI and robots both as harmonious and menacing, imagining futures where technology seamlessly integrates into daily routines. These stories spark important conversations about how AI might shape our world.

In a recent study with Carmela Cucuzzella, dean of the Faculty of Environmental Design at Université de Montréal, and Negarsadat Rahimi, a doctoral researcher examining the impact of façade design on sustainability and livability in the city, we explored how AI can be harnessed to raise environmental awareness and foster meaningful community dialogues.

AI for environmental education and action

Public spaces like streets, squares, transportation hubs and vehicles create ideal environments for fostering community interaction, raising awareness and promoting environmental action. One effective way to raise awareness and educate people in public spaces is through eco-art, which has a powerful emotional impact and can inspire individuals to adopt more eco-friendly behaviors.

Our study examined the potential real-world applications of AI and other futuristic technologies as represented in science fiction series like *Black Mirror*, *Westworld* and *Altered Carbon*.

Trailer for Season 1 of *Westworld*.

Sci-fi technologies seen on TV

We conducted a survey asking people how likely it is they would want to see various sci-fi technologies from these series become a reality. The survey included 30 participants from North America and Europe, recruited through social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram and X.

The top two preferred technologies were smart screens and mirrors (grouped together as one category) and smart assistants with voice activation; self-driving cars and flying vehicles were among technologies which followed. This indicates a preference for safer, low-impact innovations.

In contrast, the least favoured technologies were simulated reality, AI-driven behavioural prediction, social media rating systems for human interaction and AI humanoids. These choices reveal a reluctance towards AI's deeper involvement in social interactions often depicted in shows' dystopic visions.

We also interviewed Ozgur Ozkan, CEO of Keymate.AI, who noted that popular culture influences tech innovation by driving public demand and investor interest, crucial for major developments. On AI's environmental impact, he argued that while AI could be used to reduce waste, its energy demands and the push for cost reduction could undermine true sustainability — a problem also flagged by computing and energy researchers.

Environmental public communication

We developed two contrasting future scenarios related to how governments can communicate with people about the environment and sustainability. The first, scenario, “Participatory Communication in the Public Realm,” envisions safer technologies with a focus on individual control and strict regulations. AI would be used to enhance public spaces like parks and libraries to encourage community collaboration on environmental education. Data privacy is safeguarded by strong regulations, balancing technological progress with social welfare.

In the second scenario, “AI-Operated Social Structure,” our society permits less regulated technologies, prioritizing surveillance. Minimal regulation would allow advanced AI to offer personalized services in urban areas, focusing on individual data harvesting to be leveraged for corporate profit. AI algorithms gather personal data from citizens, identify patterns and customize the environmental content to suit individuals’ needs and learning styles. However, privacy concerns arise due to the lack of data protection.



These scenarios are both plausible. The key question is: how can we design safe and inclusive public spaces to foster discussions on environmental issues and sustainability? Public spaces should be welcoming to diverse communities and promote a sense of belonging.

Technologies like virtual reality and augmented reality offer opportunities to create new digital spaces for interaction and collaboration, though they also pose challenges in maintaining meaningful human connections.

Environmental impact

AI technologies have the potential to support sustainable practices. But the substantial energy demands of advanced AI systems must be carefully managed to prevent undermining their environmental benefits.

Generative AI requires massive amounts of energy to even train the models, not to mention using them. Policy researchers suggest AI will intensify greenhouse gas emissions, consume increasing amounts of energy and demand bigger amounts of natural resources. Yet AI also offers opportunities for optimizing energy use. For example, AI can be used to track behavioural patterns to adjust energy use in buildings. We should do our best to use AI efficiently and for good causes. Stakeholders such as designers, architects, engineers, policymakers and educators should create sustainable solutions for its applications and use the technology in meaningful ways.

Energy-efficient AI?



New technologies are being developed to support energy-efficient use of AI. For example, a recent breakthrough from Massachusetts Institute of Technology introduces new “nanoscale” transistors that solve energy limitations of traditional silicon-based devices like smartphones. These transistors work efficiently at much lower voltages.

Implementing thoughtful policies and developing innovative energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable solutions matters for steering AI towards sustainable and ethical uses. Additionally,

emphasizing the artistic and design elements of public space experiences can enhance their value and accessibility for everyone.

Burcu Olgen is an architectural designer, university lecturer, and scholar specializing in sustainability, interaction design, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the built environment. A 2024–25 Public Scholar at Concordia University and doctoral candidate in the Individualized Program in Design, her research focuses on how AI technologies and interactive engagements can foster community dialogues around sustainability. She is currently developing an AI-augmented eco-didactic gamification project aimed at public engagement and environmental awareness.

THE THOUGHT PROCESS

ABDUL HAYEE (1972-74)

Delights of Reading

It is often said that no entertainment is as inexpensive as reading, nor any pleasure as enduring. A good book is like a garden in your pocket, offering boundless beauty and peace. Books have an incredible ability to ease our sorrows, provide comfort in old age, and become a lifelong source of joy. For many, they are an irresistible intoxication.

In today's ever-evolving world of technological advancements, much of our time is consumed by gadgets of all kinds. Yet, the importance of books remains irreplaceable. The quiet, profound pleasure of holding a book while sitting on a couch with a mug of coffee is a sublime experience—one that words can scarcely capture.

As a newspaper poem beautifully expresses:

*The poorest soul can claim the throne,
The lonely finds a friend;
The seeker sees beyond their time,
Where truth and dreams extend.*

**"Turning Pages, Finding
Peace: The Irresistible
Charm of Books"**

I cannot pinpoint exactly when I was bitten by the reading bug, but the spell has held me captive ever since. Even in old age, I remain an incurable bibliophile, devouring any book I can lay my hands on. Perhaps this passion runs in my blood. My Nana (maternal grandfather) and Mamu (maternal uncle) owned two large almirahs filled with books. Their collection included literary gems like *Nigar* magazine edited by Niaz Fatehpuri, *Aajkal* under Josh Malihabadi, various issues of Murray College's student magazine, and a 21-volume set of the *New Popular Encyclopedia* printed in the 1930s. Thus, my first encounter with books came from our ancestral home.

Early Phases of Reading

My love for reading began before the age of 15, nurtured by children's magazines like *Taleem o Tarbiat*, *Phulwari*, and *Nounahal*. Every bit of pocket money went toward buying these treasures. The second phase started in the late sixties when I, like many of my friends, became mesmerized by the works of the Urdu classic writer Ibn-e-Safi. His series *Jasoosi Dunya* brought a thrilling new novel every month, featuring unforgettable characters like the detectives Colonel Faridi and Captain Hameed. Another series starred the ingenious yet seemingly foolish secret agent Imran, whose intellect always triumphed.

There were over 200 novels under these banners, and reading them became a daily ritual. Back then, small libraries thrived in every neighborhood, renting novels for just one *ana* (1/16th of a rupee) per day. Most of us returned our books the next day to save on extra rent. Occasionally, when the desired *jasoosi* novel wasn't available, we turned to Urdu romantic novels.

Cricket and English Proficiency

While reading was my first love, cricket came a close second. Playing with neighborhood teams was a favorite pastime, and English cricket commentary on the radio was a constant companion. Iconic voices like John Arlott, Alan McGilvray, Jim Swanton, and our own Jamshed Marker and Omar Qureshi were as melodious to my ears as music. This love for cricket commentary also helped me develop a decent grasp of the English language.

I recall an amusing episode when I gained admission to Murray College. Classes hadn't yet started, but with my library card in hand, I ventured into the college library. I searched for autobiographies of cricketers like Don Bradman, Ray Lindwall, and Keith Miller and requested the librarian to issue them to me. She looked over her glasses with a skeptical expression and asked who I was taking the books for. "For myself," I replied confidently. Although she seemed doubtful, she issued the books, marking the start of my journey with English literature. Despite a limited vocabulary at the time, my familiarity with cricket terminology helped me grasp the essence of the text.

A Lifelong Affair with Books

As time passed, my interest in books expanded and deepened. I became an ardent literature enthusiast, exploring every genre—from poetry and prose to history, religion, travelogues, and autobiographies. Over time, I learned the art of skimming and selectively reading books, which allowed to enjoy more works without feeling overwhelmed.

*"A Book in Hand: A Lifetime
of Beauty, Comfort, and
Discovery"*

me

Books have remained my steadfast companions, offering solace, joy, and a window into countless worlds. They are more than a pastime; they are a profound source of inner peace. While I could recount many memorable books and moments, as they say, *"Yeh kahani phir sahi, "*

GIGIFICATION AT CANADA POST

DR. ADAM KING (UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA)

The Canada Post strike has entered its second week, with no resolution in sight yet. Though a federal mediator is attempting to broker a settlement between the Crown corporation and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, reports suggest the parties remain far apart.

The strike began on Nov. 15 after Canada Post workers failed to reach an agreement with their employer. The union is seeking wage increases, secure pensions and safe working conditions, but the strike is about much more than just the pay and benefits of postal workers.

Rather, the issue animating this dispute is the growth of gig work and other forms of precarious labour across the private delivery sector, and consequently, the sustainability of Canada Post in the face of this low-cost competition.

The strike raises important questions about how Canada should respond to the growth of the gig economy, at Canada Post and across the broader economy.

“Protecting Labour Standards in a Shifting Economy”

Financial challenges at Canada Post

Canada Post is experiencing considerable financial strain. The crown corporation has registered losses of roughly \$3 billion since 2018. It lost \$748 million in 2023 and reported an additional \$315 million drop in the most recent quarter.

However, management and the union disagree about the causes of Canada Post’s financial woes, as well as how to resolve them.

In the company’s 2023 annual report, Canada Post president and CEO Doug Ettinger called for “greater flexibility in how we deliver, how and when the service is provided, and how we cover the cost of providing the service.”

Describing its current business model as “unsustainable,” the company is seeking to reduce labour costs by introducing more part-time and temporary jobs to allow delivery services on weekends.

In contrast, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers has pointed to Canada Post’s past investment decisions as a source of current financial strain. The union argues the company over-invested in response to a surge in parcel delivery demand, leaving it incapable of sustaining business relationships with key customers, such as Amazon.

The postal worker union is opposed to what it calls the “gigification” of work at Canada Post. Instead, the union proposes expanding Canada Post’s mandate to include additional services and open new revenue streams, such as postal banking.

What the company and union do seem to agree on is the pressure low-cost delivery competitors are exerting on Canada Post. When it comes to resolving this issue, however, there is little agreement.

Low-cost competition and gig work

With demand for its mail services falling, parcel delivery now accounts for a larger portion of Canada Post's business. But the latter sector is increasingly dominated by low-cost firms that engage workers through subcontracting and other forms of precarious employment. These firms have cut into the postal service's market share.

Large e-commerce firms, such as Amazon, do not employ their delivery drivers directly. Instead, they rely on an ecosystem of "delivery service partners" working solely with Amazon. Competition for contracts and strict price-setting rules compel these delivery firms to compete by keeping pay and other labour costs low.



Many private delivery firms classify their workers as "independent contractors," paying them by the delivery rather than by the hour and evading work regulations like overtime pay, and maximum daily and weekly work rules.

While companies engaging gig workers can drive down their labour expenses, the costs are displaced onto society more broadly.

Research from Canada and the United States suggests gig companies avoid paying millions of dollars in payroll taxes and workers' compensation premiums. This not only deprives workers of protections, but also drains revenues from vital social benefit programs, such as unemployment insurance.

Workers themselves also bear costs. Independent contractor workers are unable to unionize and collectively bargain. Instead of company vehicles, many contractors use their own, personally cover-

ing gas, maintenance and repair expenses. Health and safety regulations are virtually non-existent and compensation is limited for workers injured on the job.

Delivery firms utilizing such work arrangements compete with Canada Post largely on the basis of low labour costs sustained by denying workers access to benefits and protections.

Governments failed to regulate gig economy

A recent study from Statistics Canada found that 871,000 people had a job consistent with characteristics of the gig economy, while another 1.5 million engaged in gig work of some type during the study's reference period. These figures have grown steadily over the last several years.

Labour scholars have long warned that allowing gig and platform work to expand would undermine labour standards and regulations. Left unchecked, poorly paid and precarious forms of work generate a race to the bottom.

Because governments across the country have permitted various forms of poorly regulated gig work to spread, many unionized workers now find themselves in pitched battles with employers seeking concessions in the name of competition.

*"The fight for fair
Labour in the face of
Gigification"*

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers itself is affiliated with Gig Workers United, a group seeking to organize gig workers and advocating for worker-friendly policy changes.

Had governments responded to the gig economy by guaranteeing employment status to all workers, reforming labour laws to facilitate greater access to unionization and cracking down on employee misclassification, fewer union members would likely be facing pressure to lower their standards and expectations.

By introducing only minimal reforms, as Ontario and British Columbia have done, governments set the stage for labour strife between union members trying to defend their relatively better pay and working conditions, and employers squeezed by unfair competition.

Whether the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is able to win its demand and protect members' past gains remains to be seen. But until governments address the proliferation of gig work through meaningful regulation, we are likely to see similar disputes.



Dr. Adam King is an Assistant Professor in the Labour Studies Program at the University of Manitoba.

Prior to academia, Dr. King worked as a social and economic policy researcher in the labour movement. He frequently provides expert commentary on labour issues for major Canadian media outlets and writes the weekly newsletter Class Struggle for The Maple.

Dr. King earned his PhD in Sociology from York University, an MA in History from the University of Toronto, and a BA in Sociology and History from Trent University.

CLIMATE INEQUALITY

DR. BONNY IBHAHO (MCMaster UNIVERSITY)

In a cruel case of injustice heaped upon injustice, the people who stand to suffer the most from climate change have the least responsibility for causing it and the fewest resources to avoid its ravages.

For centuries, richer nations accrued vast wealth by exploiting the planet's resources at the expense of less developed, poorer countries. Most of these countries are in what we once called the Third World and what we now call the Global South — Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Today, the wealthiest 10 per cent of the world's population contributes 49 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions, while the 50 per cent of the world's population living in developing nations is accountable for only 12 per cent. At the same time, the wealthiest country on Earth, the United States, has just elected a climate denier to the presidency.

The election of Donald Trump, a known climate skeptic, represents a significant setback for climate action. At the same time, a senior member of Azerbaijan's COP29 team has been filmed trying to use the conference to secure oil deals for the host country.

"Climate justice: A shared responsibility, an equitable future."

Extreme drought, flooding, unprecedented storms, sea-level rise and wildfire are hitting the Global South especially hard bringing renewed attention to the longstanding calls for just transition and climate justice.

While the United Nations climate conferences, known as Conferences of the Parties (COP) have made strides in international climate policy, their efforts to address climate justice remain contentious and widely considered inadequate.

I am a legal historian and scholar of human rights currently involved in an ongoing UN-led research project which seeks to identify the challenges and good practices necessary for developing processes and systems to address climate injustice. As part of that work, I am currently in Azerbaijan to discuss my preliminary findings with a range of stakeholders at COP29.

This year's COP29 represents a critical moment to centre climate justice at the heart of the global effort against climate change.

Climate (in)justice

The concept of climate justice is rooted in the knowledge that the impacts of climate change are unevenly distributed across the globe. It emphasizes the ethical responsibility of those who have reaped the most benefits from carbon-intensive development to reduce their emissions and assist those who are most affected by climate change.

We can't have conversations about our climate and environmental goals without including the parties who have suffered the most and stand to suffer more.

Many developing countries are just starting their own industrial revolutions. A lack of practical alternatives is forcing many developing nations to build refineries and coal mines while some developed countries are trying to get rid of them. They need help to catch up, to avoid worsening the problems that wealthier neighbours have already inflicted on the planet.

Help could come in the form of climate finance and technology transfer. At COP15 in 2009, developed countries pledged US\$100 billion annually by 2020 to support climate action in developing nations. The commitment was achieved two years late in 2022.

Building a truly healthy planet requires a forward-looking approach to climate action which looks past short-term solutions. However, we must also recognize that while all states are responsible for addressing global environmental destruction, not all are equally responsible.

To achieve consensus on climate action, we must address underlying inequities. We must recognize that we can no longer deny poorer countries the right to have equal voices in setting the forward-looking plans which need to be made in the coming years. Put simply, we must reassert the value of fairness.

Going beyond current initiatives

Climate justice requires a commitment to the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, ensuring that the costs and benefits of climate action are shared fairly. In other words, climate justice must be integrated into all aspects of the global political economy, including development financing, technology transfer and international trade policies.

"Climate justice isn't charity, it's humanity's investment in itself."

Existing initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund, climate adaptation and resilience initiatives and the UN's Loss and Damage Mechanism under the Climate Change Framework Convention do provide important frameworks for climate justice.

However, these programs alone are not sufficient to address climate injustice. We need to do much more, and that will take more buy-in and greater investment from the world's wealthier countries.

Global investments in climate justice must extend beyond existing frameworks. Our efforts should encompass reforms to international trade and global governance to ensure greater equity and fairer representation for all peoples.

Enlightened self-interest

It doesn't take an expert in political science to predict that when asked to pay most countries will become mired in politics and inaction. In that case, the most practical, substantial motivation to act may lie in enlightened self-interest.

As experts had predicted, weather catastrophes are directly and indirectly creating growing numbers of climate refugees, driving more displaced people from the Global South to seek safety and prosperity in Europe and North America, straining resources, fueling xenophobia and driving politicians to close borders.

By helping countries in the Global South to address their climate-driven crises, developed countries would help people remain in their homes and instead of having to seek refuge in the Global North.

That cynical calculus may finally be what drives the change necessary to address climate issues around the world.

At this point, the source of the motivation matters much less than motivation itself. Only quick, significant and inclusive action can help save what is not already doomed.

COP29 is set to be all about finance as discussions will largely focus on increasing funding to help lower-income countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As UN Secretary-General António Guterres noted at the opening of COP29, climate finance is not charity, it's an investment in the collective well-being of all humanity.

These deliberations offer a renewed opportunity to prioritize climate justice by reinforcing financing for mitigation and adaptation strategies rooted in equity and fairness.

Dr. Bonny Ibhawoh (Ph.D., Dalhousie) is a distinguished scholar and educator specializing in Global Human Rights History and African History. He serves as the Director of the McMaster Centre for Human Rights and Restorative Justice and teaches in McMaster University's Department of History, Centre for Peace Studies, Arts & Science Program, and the Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition.

Dr. Ibhawoh has held academic positions worldwide, including Brock University, the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and the University of Texas at Austin. He is a United Nations Expert-Rapporteur on the Right to Development and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

HEALTH SPAN & LIFE SPAN

DR. MATTHEW LEES (MCMASTER UNIVERSITY)

We'd all like to live longer; at least, I would. But what about enjoying the time we have while we're here and living healthier?

Over the past century, human life expectancy has dramatically increased for a variety of reasons. Chief among these are our advances in sanitation, public health, nutrition and medicine that have reduced mortality, especially in young people. As a result, many more people are able to reach older age.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2021, Canadians had a life expectancy of 81.6 years, which is a astonishing increase of 24.5 years since 1921. By the year 2050, it is projected that the number of people aged 85 years and older will triple.

The extension of life expectancy in the 20th century and beyond is one of humanity's greatest achievements. However, it is crucial to draw a distinction between lifespan — the amount of time between birth and death — and healthspan, which is the amount of time during which a person is healthy within their lifespan. Older people are spending more time in poor health, and this represents a major individual and public health burden.

*"Healthy muscles, healthy life:
Aging gracefully starts with
action."*

At an advanced age, the ability to maintain an independent lifestyle largely defines a person's quality of life. As such, it's not enough to merely extend life without a sufficiently long healthspan to accompany it. Our goals should therefore be to bring lifespan and healthspan as close together as possible.

The idea of extending healthspan is important because it challenges the idea that age-associated diseases are inevitable and can't be mitigated or ablated.

Why muscle is important for extending healthspan:

Beginning at around the fifth decade of life, muscle mass is lost at a rate of about one per cent per year, and strength at about three per cent per year. Exercise and optimal nutrition are two of our most important countermeasures against this. (Shutterstock)

One major health challenge in the aging population is the decline in muscle mass, strength and function (otherwise known as sarcopenia), which can lead to functional impairment, loss of autonomy, metabolic disease and a greater risk of falls and fractures.

Alongside its role in posture and locomotion, muscle is a major contributor to resting metabolism, serving as an important reservoir of glucose (sugar) and lipids (fats). It also represents an important "buffer" of amino acids during periods of catabolic stress, such as that seen in critical illness. Markers of muscle health on admission to intensive care units are predictive of important outcomes like the number of ventilator-free days and mortality, and being older compounds this risk.

Beginning at around the fifth decade of life, muscle mass is lost at a rate of about one per cent per year, and strength at about three per cent per year. These reductions in mass and strength are typi-

cally interspersed with periods of muscle disuse (hospitalization and/or illness, for example) that accelerate losses in muscle mass and strength.

Even a relative reduction in walking activity (measured by a decline in daily step count) for as little as two or three weeks can bring about negative changes in body composition, reduced muscle strength and quality, anabolic resistance (an impaired ability to use dietary protein for muscle building), and disrupted blood glucose control in older people.

Given the fundamental role of muscle tissue in metabolic and general health, the maintenance of adequate muscle mass and quality has particular relevance for extending healthspan.

Maintaining muscle health with age

Skeletal muscle tissue is highly plastic: it remodels in accordance with the physical stresses placed upon it. It grows (termed “hypertrophy”) in response to the application of external loads and is rapidly lost (termed “atrophy”) when these loads are withdrawn — if you’ve ever had your arm or leg in a cast, you know what I mean. The good news is that we can leverage the plasticity of muscle tissue to our advantage.

In kinesiology professor Stuart Phillips’s research group at McMaster University, we study the impact of exercise and nutrition on human skeletal muscle health, with a particular interest in aging.

The lab’s work has shown that resistance exercise (strength training), even when performed sporadically and with lighter loads, can be an effective strategy to offset muscle losses during periods of reduced activity and disuse in older people. What’s more, this type of training can enhance the sensitivity of muscle tissue to dietary protein and help overcome anabolic resistance. It can also make your muscle more ready to take up glucose and reduce your risk of diseases like Type 2 diabetes.

"Your healthspan is in your hands—train smart, eat right, and thrive."



Research now indicates that older people require more dietary protein (the source of “building blocks” for muscle) than the established guidelines suggest. Recent work from our lab has shown that higher-quality protein sources can improve muscle growth in older people. The optimal strategy appears to be consuming 1.2 – 1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight of protein daily (50 to 100 per cent greater than what is currently recommended), from a mixture of animal (e.g., meat, fish, dairy) and plant-based (e.g., legumes) sources.

No matter what age you start, you can build the metabolic equivalent of a retirement savings plan by repeatedly engaging in physical exercise and consuming adequate high-quality protein. In doing so, you can effectively close the gap between healthspan and lifespan, maintain independence and maximize quality of life in older age.

***Dr. Matthew Lees** is a postdoctoral researcher specializing in muscle physiology, aging, nutrition, and physical activity. His work focuses on understanding how nutrition and exercise influence skeletal muscle mass regulation across the lifespan, with additional interests in frailty, immune function, and body composition in sport and health.*

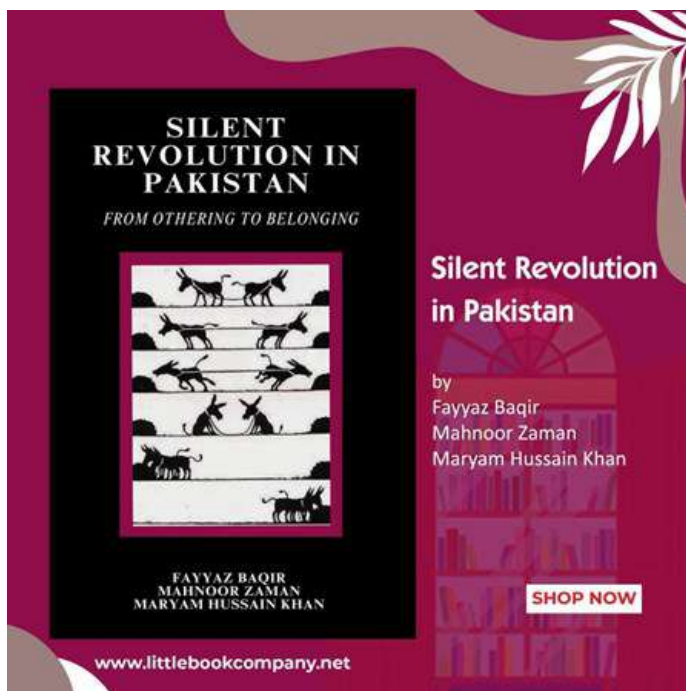
Dr. Lees is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at McMaster University and has held similar roles at the University of Toronto. He completed his PhD in Exercise Physiology and Metabolism at Leeds Beckett University, where he also earned an MSc in Sport and Exercise Nutrition. His academic journey began with a BA in Sport and Exercise Studies from the University of Derby.

With expertise in whole-body and cellular methods, Dr. Lees is passionate about advancing human health and wellbeing through research in exercise and nutrition science.

BOOK REVIEW

SILENT REVOLUTION IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan has given birth to many trail-blazing stories of hope. However, these stories are hidden from the public gaze, especially from the youth. Pakistani chattering classes and youth feed on the outmoded narrative of fear regularly recycled in the mainstream media and social media. Most of the public opinion leaders are not even aware that 14 Pakistanis have received Ramon Magsaysay Award which considered for the Nobel Prize of Asia- for their outstanding services to marginalized communities. These stories range from doubling the incomes of 100,000 families in the highest mountain ranges in the world to providing sanitation facilities to the residents of an informal settlement of 1000,000 people to providing shelter to 10 million people in the metropolitan city of Karachi to providing interest-free credit to millions of micro entrepreneurs to establishing peace in areas hit by communal and sectarian violence and protecting victims of discriminatory laws. All these successes have one underlying principle in common, anyone can make the difference; This book is based on the interviews of people who have tried to make a difference.



About Author

Fayyaz Baqir is the CEO of The Knowledge Executive and a visiting professor at the School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS) at the University of Ottawa. He has also served as an O'Brien Fellow at McGill University and as visiting scholar at Gothenburg University and Tilburg University. His work focuses on participatory development, human rights, aid effectiveness, poverty alleviation, and social accountability. Baqir has authored numerous publications, including journal articles, books, and training manuals, contributing to the advancement of inclusive governance and sustainable development through both academic and practical approaches.

Mahnoor Zaman is an undergraduate scholar at McGill University, pursuing a bachelor's degree in international development studies with a focus on global economic and political systems. With a deep commitment to academic and community engagement, Mahnoor serves as President of the McGill International Development Studies Students' Association (IDSSA), where she has previously held roles as Vice President of Finance and Academic Tutor. Her leadership emphasizes fostering collaboration, securing funding for initiatives, and mentoring peers in courses such as Economic Development and Introduction to International Development.

As a Research Assistant at McGill's Indian Ocean World Centre and an intern at the Consulate General of Pakistan in Montreal, Mahnoor explores historical and contemporary global dynamics, honing her expertise in policy and international relations. She is also an editor and contributing writer for *Catalyst McGill* and a peer reviewer for *Chrysalis McGill*, showcasing her dedication to critical inquiry and academic excellence.

Maryam Hussain Khan is currently serving as a visiting lecturer in the Department of Politics & International Studies at Karakoram International University, the leading public sector university in Gilgit. She holds an MPhil in Political Science from Government College University, Lahore, and a BS (Hons) in Defence & Diplomatic Studies from Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi.

Her academic and professional interests focus on rural community development, human rights, public policy, and governance. With a strong passion for social impact, Maryam is actively involved with The Knowledge Executive and collaborates with a group of friends to raise charity funds to support local communities and university students. Her work reflects a deep commitment to fostering positive change through education, policy, and grassroots initiatives.

The book can be purchased online:

<https://www.littlebookcompany.net/SilentRevolutioninPakistan>



Closing Thoughts

As we bring 2024 to a close, we are reminded of the remarkable power of community and collaboration. This past year, each of you has contributed unique perspectives and experiences that have enriched our shared journey, and we deeply appreciate your dedication and support.

As we step into 2025, let's take a moment to reflect on the achievements and lessons of the year gone by, while setting ambitious goals for the future. We invite you to play an even more active role in shaping our upcoming quarterly newsletter. Share your ideas, success stories, and lessons learned—your insights are invaluable, and we want to amplify your voice!

Submit your articles and content by February 15th, 2025, to ibapuac@gmail.com.

We are also eager to hear your feedback on how we can make our newsletter even more engaging in 2025. What resonated with you most this year? What could be improved? Are there new ideas or features you'd like to see? Your suggestions are key to creating content that truly reflects your needs and aspirations.

Thank you for being an essential part of our community. Together, let's strive for even greater heights, embrace new opportunities, and make 2025 our most successful year yet!

