GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

RESILIENCE

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Letter from the Editors-in-Chief

The year 2022 has seen the world grapple with the ongoing effects of COVID-19, a looming economic recession, democratic backsliding, various national security crises, and geopolitical instability. As the world has been forced to cope with these seemingly impossible issues, we've seen global actors adapt and challenge norms, showing resilience in the face of fear.

For our fall issue, we asked our writers to reflect on the ways in which our global community has shown resilience throughout this year. Canadian foreign policy is adapting to keep up with new political trends. The ties between climate change and mass migration have forced global leaders to reassess the impacts of climate-related displacement. The ongoing war in Ukraine has highlighted the fortitude of the Ukrainian economy and military. Fighters in Iran have given their lives in the defense of women's rights. Countries are looking to new alternatives to ensure access to clean water. All around the world, oppression and challenges are being met with incredible resolve.

As you read these pieces, we encourage you to imagine how our global community will continue to adapt to these matters and continue to show resilience in trying times. These issues can sometimes feel suffocating, as if we are too small to really alter their course. We hope this issue will challenge that feeling and that you'll join the conversation as to how we move forward together.

Editors-in-Chief,

Katie Bennett & Sara Duodu

INTRODUCTION

As 2022 comes to a close, it might seem as if the world is tired and unsettled. Nearly three years into the COVID-19 pandemic, new challenges continue to emerge that threaten our ways of life, economy, security, and wellbeing. Today, we continue to reel from the impacts of Russia's war on Ukraine, a looming global recession, and the constant threat of climate change.

In a world embroiled in conflict, fear, and uncertainty we have decided to focus this issue of Global Conversations on the theme of "resilience." How is the world tackling its greatest challenges? What strategies are in place to mitigate future crises? With a constant stream of "bad news" in the media, we hope to bring you some "good news" within these pages. Our writers have explored issues ranging from Ukraine's startup ecosystem and the feminist counter-revolution in Iran, to new innovations for ensuring access to clean drinking water, and more.

With just a few weeks remaining in 2022, we hope that these articles bring you hope for the new year. As Global Affairs students we have the power to change the world for the better; may we continue to find the light in the darkness and strive for a safer, sustainable, and more equitable future.

Directors of Long-Form Written Content,
Tom Chan & Sarah Klein

RESILIENCE

In this issue...

Jin, Jiyan, Azadi!

A Feminist Counter-Revolution in Iran

By SARAH WHELAN | Feminist Perspectives

"These days our hair looks like Medusa's snakes more than ever; a tool of resistance. On the streets of Tehran, we still find people to turn into stone so they can't even blink. This shall pass and that day will come when it is not necessary to wear armour and hold a shield every morning. A day when removing one's headscarf will no longer be the tool of resistance. A day when we all shall live a 'normal' life."

– Sana, Tehran
October 31, 2022

Events occurring on the Other side of the imagined borders of the West are too often reduced by the Western media machine as mere blips, devoid of historical and cultural context. But what is life, what is freedom, and what is revolution, without context?

Weeks have passed since the tragic death of Kurdish-Iranian woman Jîna (Mahsa) Amini at the hands of the Islamic Republic's morality police on September 16. The grounds of detainment – improper wearing of her hijab – reverberated through the women of Iran as all too familiar.

Weeks of resistance by Iranian women and girls, men and boys against the regime's oppressive, dictatorial power have ensued; weeks of footage flashed across the screens of the West. But Iranian women's opposition to subjugation is far from alien; when situated against the backdrop of history, continuity is unmistakable.

A History of Power

A complex web of power relations embodies the fabric of Iranian history. On one hand, these relations are animated by *subjugating* forms of power via the operation of neo-imperialism, patriarchy, racism, and capitalism; in opposition are *emancipatory* forms of power declared in liberation, feminist, and labour movements.

These ever-competing modes of power notably came to a head during the Iranian Revolution of 1979 which manifested the toppling of the Pahlavi Dynasty and the transfer of supreme power from Shah, the monarch, to Ayatollah, the theocrat.

The evolution of modes of power both *within* the Pahlavi Dynasty and eventually *away* from it, towards the Islamic Republic, show that Iran is no stranger to Western (neo-)imperial influence, and that women have had a distinct role in these transformations and transitions of power: often, *power plays out on women's bodies.*

Stoking the Embers of Women's Collective Political Identity

Since at least the early 20th century, Iranian women's active participation in social and political movements, including the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911, imbued them with a collective will to excise the norms of women's inferiority from society.

Protests against constitutional inequalities took many forms, including the formation of girls' schools, women's literacy classes, and the publication of over twenty feminist periodicals between 1910 and 1930. Such periodicals were prominent modes of consciousness-raising in early women's rights movements and were published despite the threat of persecution via detainment and/or exile.

Hence, by 1925 the Reza Shah inherited an Iran with progressive momentum, and began a reign that would be defined by Western-modelled modernization and secularisation.

Women's Awakening: The Road to a 'Modern' Iran

Autocracy is fatally incompatible with visible, organised unrest. So while opportunities for empowerment and advancement existed *on paper*, the women's movement was swiftly co-opted by the Shah's orchestration of the Women's Awakening project (1936-1941), essentially a mode of "*state feminism*" that dismantled independent women's groups in favour of the state-sponsored "Women's Society."

This turn was paired with increased police repression. The Women's Awakening juxtaposed seemingly "emancipatory" elements – mandatory unveiling, mixed-gender schools, women's higher education and wage work – with the understanding that while women should enter "formal society," their role in the home was not to be disrupted. This dissonance was reinforced through heavy state propaganda which showcased women's advancement as harmonious with motherhood.

Such aspects of the Shah's segue to a "modernised" Iran were predicated on women's bodies: through the chador ban, the Shah effectively revoked a woman's right to choose. As noted by Julia Billaud, a state's forced removal of the veil should be rejected just the same as state imposed veiling; there exists an imperative to "work against the reductive interpretation of veiling as the quintessential sign of women's unfreedom."

Furthermore, the perception of women, in their appearance and status, acts as a "sign of the times" both

within and *outside* the border. Within the border, the use of propaganda in projecting women's role(s) in a modern Iran suspended women in a state of tension – between reality and *proposed* reality.

Simultaneously, the state's projection of freedom and liberation imbued a sense of hope and – in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy – *expectation* for sustained momentum toward gender equality.

"The fundamental goal of the Women's Awakening was the creation of a woman who could 'enter society' … it was necessary that their minds and bodies be trained just like men's."

– Camron Michael Amin

To Veil or Not to Veil, Is That the Question?

The end of the Women's Awakening coincided with the forced abdication of the Shah in the midst of the Second World War. Succession fell onto the Shah's son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, in 1941; the new Shah eliminated the veil ban, reinstating women's right to choose. From 1941 until the post-Revolutionary period (the veil would be officially reinstated in 1981), women exercised choice in their public attire, an autonomy that empowered the women of Iran.

As there is much literature on the precedings of the Revolution, let us instead examine a series of events just-post-Revolution which present *women's bodies as battlegrounds*; these events centre on the concept of martyrdom, a prominent concept in Islamic culture.

Ayatollah Khomeini, the first Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, proclaimed the lives lost in attaining Revolution as martyrs. Cognizant of the Republic's vow to counteract the Pahlavi's secularisation, the Ayatollah decreed the reinstatement of veiling in 1979, a mandate initially limited to government offices. Beyond the veil's imbuement of piety and modesty, the Republic pronounced veiling as honorary to the blood of the martyrs; this rhetoric legitimising mandatory veiling politically instrumentalized martyrdom.

The backlash to this imposition manifested in tens of thousands of Iranian women joining forces on International Women's Day 1979 to protest for six straight days; this saw a quick retraction of Khomeini's decree a few days in. However, their victory was short-lived: by 1981, veiling became compulsory by law. This coincided with a severe crack-down on women's mobilisation and freedoms that prevails in the present day.

Haleh Esfandiari, an Iranian woman and journalist who fled on the eve of the Revolution, describes women as "the first sacrificial lambs of the [R]evolution" as their right to choose was so abruptly revoked. The popular chant "Independence, freedom, the Islamic Republic" did not, apparently, entail independence nor freedom for women.

The veil's return en masse reflected to the world an alleged Revolutionary victory. In this way, the state of women's bodies acts as a "sign of the times" also to those *outside* the border; hence, these actions are not ends in themselves, but are means to an end.

The woman's body, veiled or not veiled, is instrumentalized by the state in their projection of state-development onto the people and their projection of the *state of the state* to the eyes of the outside world.

Today's counter-revolution sees women claiming the veil for their *own* purposes of instrumentalization; the veil, through its removal, is instrumentalized by Iranian women as an act of defiance. The embers of the women's movement, despite years of repression, have yet to be extinguished.

Feminist Locality

It is crucial to veer from the too often *default* structures of feminist analysis used by the West: namely liberal, Western feminism. As described by Julia Billaud, liberal feminism posits women's emancipation as the "'breaking free' from a community, a religion, a culture," such that "within the liberal frame of mind, modernity is coupled with secularism." Hence in this framework, "Islam appears as a relic from the past … and denies Muslim actors' capacity to exercise agency and be part of modernity."

The liberal feminist perspective inherently reduces the demands of Iranian women to a rebelling against the veil and against Islam; what they *are* demonstrating against is *political* Islam, and the "hijacking of their religion by the political elite."

The West must respect the capacity of Iranian women to exercise their *own* agency and craft their *own* version of modernity in calling for an overthrow of a Republic which, notwithstanding the plethora of other issues, has used women's bodies as a battleground for decades.

The demands of this feminist counter-revolution emanate deeply from "Woman, Life, Freedom": the people of Iran are demanding not only women's rights but human

rights, an end to subjugation and inhumane state-sanctioned violence and death, and the termination of the Islamic Republic and its corrupt, autocratic rule.

In the words of Gilda Sahebi, let the West not put stones in their path. *Jin, jiyan, azadi!*

Sarah Whelan is a second year student in the Master of Global Affairs program with a focus on gender and development studies. Her interests are centred around exploring the role of women in the evolution of a state's development narrative. Sarah is currently on exchange at the Geneva Graduate Institute. Over the summer, Sarah interned with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as a Humanitarian Researcher in The Hague where she examined how satellite technology enables anticipatory action in climate-induced crises. Before starting her masters degree, she completed her undergraduate degree in Software Engineering at Western University and worked at various technology startups in Toronto with focuses on blockchain, quantum computing, and materials design. Sarah is also a Venture for Canada fellow.
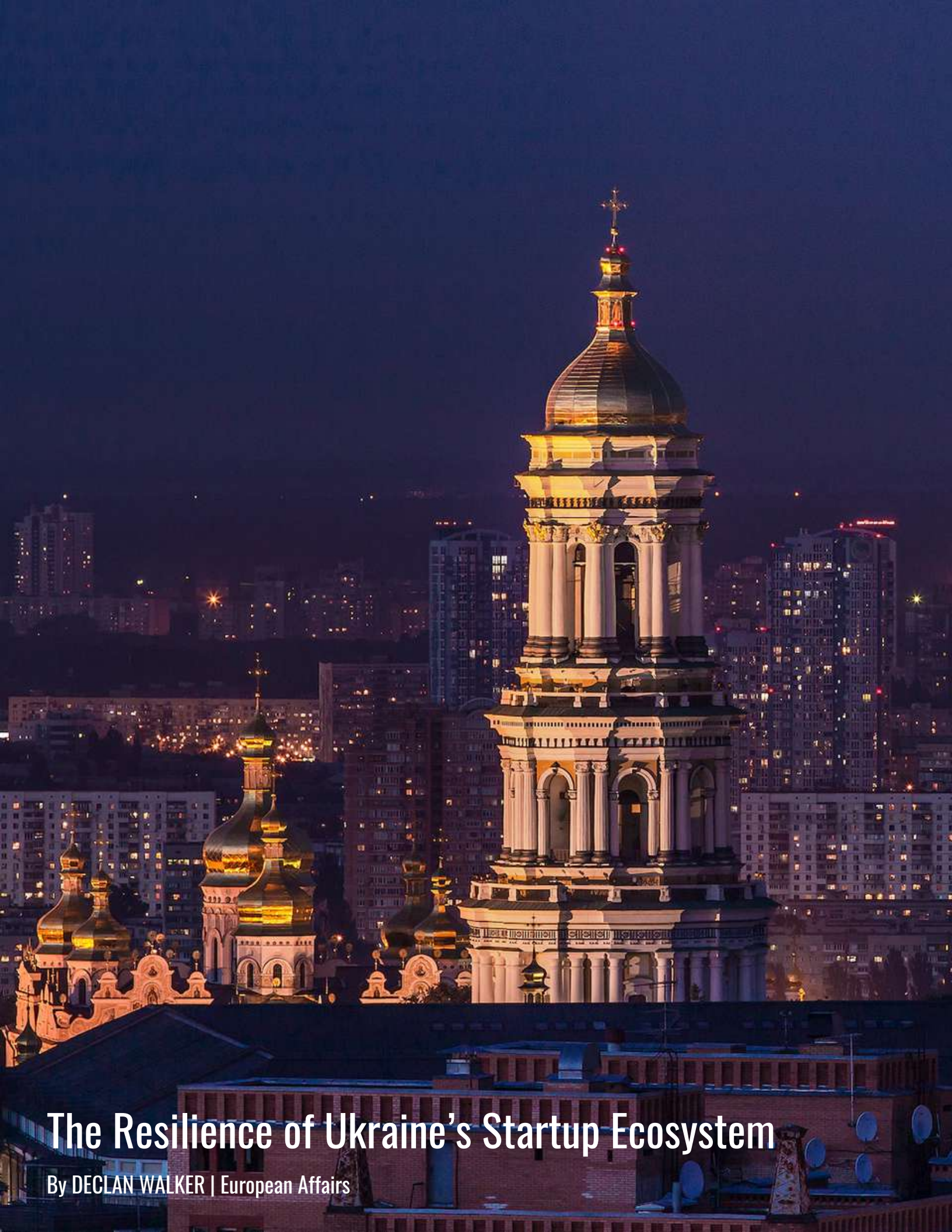
The Resilience of Ukraine's Startup Ecosystem

By DECLAN WALKER | European Affairs

Alex Serdiuk, CEO of Respeecher, a voice cloning software startup based in Kyiv, [laments](#) that Ukraine's status as a major European tech hub has been overlooked by the popular Western perceptions that it is still a corrupt, agrarian, post-Soviet state. However, notions of a desolate Ukrainian economy are from reality.

Prior to the war, Ukraine's startup ecosystem was thriving. In 2021, the Ukrainian tech sector generated [$6.8 billion USD](#) in export revenue (a 36 per cent increase from the previous year) and was the country's third biggest export sector. From 2015 to 2021, fiscal revenues from the tech sector more than [tripled](#).

The same year, it boasted four *unicorns*, a term that refers to privately held startup companies valued at over $1 billion USD: Firefly Aerospace, Genesis, Gitlab, and People.ai. The popular cloud-based writing assistant app, Grammarly – now based in San Francisco and currently valued at [$13 billion USD](#) – was founded by Ukrainians Max Lytvyn, Alex Shevchenko, and Dmytro Lider in Kyiv in 2009. [One in every five MacBooks](#) on the planet runs at least one application operated by MacPaw, a Kyiv-based startup.

The Ukrainian tech industry's impressive rise over the past six years is in large part because the right groundwork was already in place.

For one, its communist past has played a central role in producing the domestic technical talent necessary for technological innovation. The Soviet education system strongly [emphasized STEM disciplines](#) in an effort to remain competitive in the Cold War, and Ukraine had numerous universities and polytechnic institutes geared towards training technical specialists for work in the research and development fields in the Soviet defense industry. The importance of STEM disciplines in Ukrainian universities has endured following the fall of the Soviet Union, and as a result, has provided the Ukrainian startup ecosystem with a very strong talent pool to draw from.

Moreover, in response to cyber warfare resulting from the Russian annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas in 2014, Ukraine worked diligently to [strengthen its digital infrastructure](#). Following his election in 2019, President Volodymr Zelenskyy established the Ministry of Digital Transformation, exemplifying the country's commitment to facilitating technological innovation.

Startups in Wartime

[The World Bank](#) predicts that Ukraine's year-on-year GDP in 2022 will fall by 35 per cent. As Russian forces occupied the eastern parts of the country and war ravaged crucial tech hubs such as Kharkiv and Mariupol, many anticipated the demise of Ukraine's coveted tech sector. "It was sad because the war stopped the rise of the Ukrainian IT [sector] in its finest moment," [says Alex Bornyakov](#), Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Digital Transformation.

However, [96 per cent of startups and tech companies](#) have maintained their operations. Furthermore, tech sector export revenues for the first six months of 2022 [grew by 23 per cent](#) year-on-year. For an industry to grow nearly a quarter in war-time is incredible.

The Ukrainian startup ecosystem has remained fiercely resilient and driven to carry on business as usual. Doing so, [says Iryna Supruniuk](#) of TechUkraine, is the sector's way of participating in the country's resistance and defying its occupiers. [Ivan Babichuk of Lviv IT Cluster said](#) startups were keen to show their customer base that the war in their country would not hamper their ability or commitment to serve their clients. It was not uncommon for startup employees to be on Zoom calls with clients and investors in bomb-shelters as air raid sirens blared overhead.

But other than its intense desire to maintain its business functionality, the Ukrainian tech sector collectively exemplifies a deep sense of national duty and commitment to helping the people of Ukraine. Ivan Dmytrasevych of Startup Depot Lviv remarks that after the Russian invasion, the concept of "work-life balance" was replaced with "[work-war balance](#)." At the outset of the invasion, the top priority of startups was to do what they could to ensure the safety of their employees in warzones and to help relocate them to safer areas in the western part of the country.

Startups subsequently took a strong interest in doing what they could to aid refugees. For example, Startup [Depot Lviv converted its offices into a refugee shelter](#), while still continuing its day-to-day operations from the location. Two weeks into the war Yep Startup Incubator launched a free online homeschooling app for Ukrainian children who had fled the country as refugees to continue their education.

There are other factors that have helped safeguard the industry during wartime. The strong digital infrastructure built up after 2014 has proved to be highly beneficial, as has the Ukrainian government's decision to not conscript

tech workers into the military.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that startups were already equipped with the capacity to operate effectively via remote work, meaning that employees who have relocated to different parts of the country or to other countries can still continue to work. However, it's important to note that these factors alone would likely have been insufficient in driving tech sector growth in a war-torn economy without the resilient character of the Ukrainian startup sector.

The future for the Ukrainian tech industry looks positive, especially in light of recent military gains in the eastern part of the country. The startup ecosystem is also working closely with the military as it seeks to combat Russian cyber attacks, and the conflict will likely forge a closer relationship between the country's tech and defense sectors.

Zachary Taylor, an American political scientist, has studied the connection between states' defense sectors and technological innovation. His theory, which he terms "creative insecurity," stipulates that states that face long-term and immediate external security threats will be characterized by higher rates of technological innovation, since security threats will outweigh domestic opposition to funding R&D initiatives. He cites the cases of Taiwan, South Korea, and Israel as examples of states that face long-term, external security threats but are characterized by high levels of innovation.

Even before the war, the Ukrainian government had already shown a commitment to digital innovation, while its startup ecosystem was on the trajectory to become one of Europe's leading tech hubs. The war has shown the resilience of the Ukrainian tech sector, and if nothing else, that alone is enough to elicit investor confidence from abroad while its collaborations with the defense industry may facilitate further innovation within the sector. While the state of its tech sector will likely be determined by the outcome of the war, the past ten months have shown that Ukraine's startups have the resolve to weather the storm.

Declan Walker is a first-year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto in political science, and a Master's degree in political economy at Carleton University. His research interests include the political economy of global finance, the politics of innovation, climate governance, and British and European politics.

The Human Consequences of the Climate Crisis

Migration and Refugees

By REGAN McCORT | Environment & Climate Change

Beginning in June 2022, torrential monsoon rains and melting glaciers provoked heavy [flooding in Pakistan](#) that affected 33 million and displaced close to 8 million people. Similarly, destructive flooding has displaced more than 1.3 million in [Nigeria](#) and thousands in [Honduras](#), this year alone.

Cumulatively, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that an annual average of [21.5 million people](#) are forcibly displaced due to extreme weather events and natural disasters. This pattern will only intensify as the planet warms; a [2021 World Bank](#) study estimates that over 216 million people could be displaced by 2050.

Climate change is a powerful driver of internal and international migration because of its detrimental impacts on people's livelihoods and loss of community livability. Environmental disasters destroy regions while [slow-onset disasters](#) such as extreme droughts, soil erosion, desertification, and rising sea levels can make people's way of life impossible, thereby provoking migration.

Granted, climate change alone does not displace people; it acts as a "[threat multiplier](#)" that exacerbates existing societal vulnerabilities and tensions.

As it stands, emissions reductions are [nowhere near](#) the levels required to limit global warming below the 2015 Paris Agreement Pledge of 2 degrees Celsius. Unless immediate and concerted steps are taken to slash greenhouse gas emissions, we can expect global temperature rises to continue unabated and disaster-induced displacement to intensify.

What is the world doing about it?

The scale and scope of human migration triggered by climate change tests the limits of international and national governance, cooperation, and disaster preparedness. There is a lack of policy responses and legal frameworks suited to address the emerging crisis. While a number of conventions and conferences have addressed climate change and migration as isolated issues, there are a few agreements that treat them as intertwined phenomena.

The Paris Agreement, adopted at the 2015 UN Conference of Parties Climate Conference (COP21), mandated the creation of a [Task Force on Displacement](#) to develop recommendations on disaster displacement and human mobility in relation to climate change.

The 2018 [Global Compact on Refugees](#) was the first international agreement that explicitly acknowledged environmental disasters as driving forces of migration. Although the US did not sign on to the Compact, the Biden administration recently published a Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration which officially recognized the causal link between climate change, migration, and conflict.

However, none of these instruments are legally binding, nor sufficiently developed to support climate migrants. Cumulatively, these statements are an important step in raising awareness of the issue, but they stop short of implementing concrete policy recommendations and frameworks for action.

Although individuals who flee environmental degradation and disasters may resemble refugees, these migrants are not accorded legal protections under the [1951 Refugee Convention](#). The Convention only affords refugee status to people who have a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" – leaving individuals fleeing for climate-related causes outside of the realm of its protection.

As this Convention is considered the authoritative source in international law for refugee rights, these individuals are left without formal legal recourse mechanisms. The international community ought to fill this void, either by expanding the criteria for protection as per the 1951 Refugee Convention, or by developing a new legal category and accompanying institutional framework to protect the rights of climate migrants.

Building Resilience

Although the situation is dire, the window for action has not closed. A number of sessions held at the November 2022 [COP27](#) brought attention to the importance of building climate resilience and addressing disaster-driven displacement.

The conference concluded with a "[breakthrough agreement](#)" to establish a "loss and damage" fund for lower income countries heavily impacted by climate disasters. This agreement could provide vulnerable countries with greater financial capabilities to combat climate change-related challenges, including those related to climate migrants.

Whether or not developed countries will keep their end of the bargain remains to be seen, but this is a step in the right direction nonetheless. The international community should take advantage of the momentum created at the

conference and move beyond general affirmations about the gravity of the problem and towards the development of more extensive and targeted solutions.

As disaster displacement will undoubtedly become more frequent as the planet warms, the discussion should shift towards managing migration flows, as opposed to preventing them. However, the rise of far right populism across Europe and North America threaten to seriously hamper progress in this realm. Xenophobia and extreme nationalism could produce hostility towards migrants and limit refugee protections, rather than expand them. Hardening of borders would trap millions of people in increasingly unliveable environments.

Despite its inherent challenges, the international community must come up with formalized ways to address the needs of climate migrants given the urgency of the problem. Climate change will arguably be the defining crisis of the 21st century, and our action (or inaction) carries very human consequences. Forced displacement caused by climate change is not a future hypothetical problem – these migratory patterns are already underway and will only intensify with inaction.

The international community should seek to strengthen national and international climate resilience while taking drastic steps to cut emissions. All solutions to climate migration should not only address displacement, but its root causes as well. Unprecedented sectoral and systemic transformations are required to lessen the devastation of the changing climate.

If governments take steps to drastically reduce emissions and enhance climate resilience at home and abroad, the displacement of millions could be slowed. We must continue to educate and pressure our representatives to take bold, transformative climate actions that do not leave anyone behind.

Regan McCort is a first-year Masters of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. She recently received her undergraduate degree in International Relations from the University of Western Ontario. Her fields of interest include climate action, diplomacy, and the gendered dimensions of international relations.

With Friends Like These, Who Needs a Trade War?

Canada's move to play nice with other democracies may not be as easy as it sounds

By NICK PEARCE | Canada in the World

Canada is telling free trade not to let the door hit it on its way out. At least, that's what some international observers may believe as Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland hitched the country to the latest clumsy portmanteau to stumble out of foreign policy circles.

"Friend-shoring" is the buzzword on the lips of Freeland and U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. The phrase is exactly how it sounds. According to Yellen during a visit to Ottawa in June, it's the idea "that countries that espouse a common set of values on international trade … should trade and get the benefits of trade." Friends sit at the same table at lunch; why not form a trade bloc too?

The basic argument in favour of friend-shoring is this: as the four horsemen – climate, pandemic, authoritarianism, and growing rivalry between great powers – roil the international scene, democracies should find religion, and create more resilient, reliable trade between each other.

That would mean Canada's future resiliency is, in the view of Freeland, bound up in buddying up with democracies who share the country's avowed values.

The Deputy Prime Minister drops the term regularly these days, to the point where Goldy Hyder, president, and chief executive officer of the Business Council of Canada, calls it the "Freeland Doctrine."

This newfound fascination unsurprisingly is never far from recent history. The pandemic threw global supply chains into chaos when borders snapped shut and illness grounded production and distribution. The European Union and the United States moved in lockstep to make Russia an international pariah and plug up its gas pipelines following the invasion of Ukraine. A mounting rivalry with China is pushing the U.S. to uncouple trade, particularly after former President Donald Trump tried vainly to launch a trade war with China.

Nobody should be shocked that the "Freeland Doctrine" is en vogue. The U.S.'s Inflation Reduction Act gave tax credits for electric vehicles assembled in North America, which was great for Canadian firms. It also gave preference for battery minerals processed in countries that the Americans have a trade deal with.
Freeland – whose government is in the middle of pushing a critical minerals strategy – even nodded to those policies in a speech this October.

It may also be appealing for some hawks to build energy supply chains that exclude China as a Cold War redux heats up. Though, that may be a difficult pill to swallow for other non-North American "friends," like Japan and the European Union. It may be even harder for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who left Canada empty-handed this August despite requesting natural gas resources to counter a drop in Russian supply.

It's not all blue skies at home either. At a November talk at the Munk School, Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly even told Canadian businesses to think twice before investing in a "disruptive" China. The country's "sheer size" led her to stop short of arguing for complete decoupling, but the message was clear.

Of course, China is so imbricated in the world's economy, its growth so wound up in the standard of living in wealthy countries, that any possible uncoupling between it and the U.S. and its "friends" would at least take time. Foreign holdings of Chinese bonds and equities run over $1.2 trillion.

Pivoting to friend-shoring also doesn't even consider Canadian trading partners like Nigeria, who, despite considerable progress, aren't quite model democracies yet. When Freeland was bandying the idea at the Brookings Institute this October, an African Development Bank official told her that friend-shoring may simply open the door to democratic backsliding via reduced Western support and thus expanded influence from rivals like Russia.

It's easy for Canada to talk: there's money to be made when an economy as large and as close as the U.S. decides to work a little closer to home. Naked self-interest isn't necessarily a bad thing, and this apparent American pivot is going to create winners and losers. Governments will probably prefer to be among the former than the latter, Canada included.

That goes double when markets aren't far behind either. Finance publication Nikkei Asia reported in April that exchange-traded funds "linked to the Freedom 100 Emerging Markets Index, which uses the degree of a nation's political and economic freedom as key allocation metrics, logged its largest ever inflow in March at (USD) $53 million."

Who needs enemies?

Maybe there's something to cheer on after all, though. Friend-shoring, and its cousin reshoring, could help relieve and repair areas that deindustrialization gutted as the Washington Consensus failed to deliver on promises of good living through free trade.

Under the headline, "free trade has not made us free," Financial Times business columnist, Rana Foroohar, argues

that "the idea that trade was primarily a pathway to global peace and unity, rather than a necessary way of balancing both domestic and global concerns, is over."

We hear much the same in Canada. "Workers in our democracies have long understood that global trade without values-based rules to govern it made our people poorer and our countries more vulnerable. They have long known that it enriched the plutocrats, but not the people," Freeland said at that Brookings Institute speech this October.

Free trade, in other words, has made Canada and other wealthy countries less resilient, exposing them to fragmented production and supply chains as well as making domestic workers vulnerable to shifts in the market. Prominent inequality expert and former World Bank economist Branko Milanovic even waded in to point out his famous elephant graph showed how globalization "was good for Asian middle classes and the global top one-percenters, but not for the Western middle classes."

Granted, the new strategy may create a more mixed economy at home. However, Milanovic mentions, its motivations are bubbling up more from geopolitical upheaval rather than concern for the workers. Those concerned suffered long before Ukraine and COVID-19 made trade reform appealing to liberal-minded policymakers.

But Milanovic doesn't want us to mince words: friend-shoring strategies are trade blocs by another name. Ironically, countries like Canada, who've been the quickest to scold the Global South for lacking economic openness, have decided to reverse course when the winds changed to make it personally suitable.

"Who is going to tell this to the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO?" he asks.

Maybe it will at least incentivize labor and environmental standards that too often fall to the wayside in Canada's trade profile — the friend-shoring component of the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act deal clearly is climate-oriented. One can only hope these currents help, but it may be wise to hedge bets and check our expectations.

At the very least, friend-shoring sends us back to the bad old days of Cold War-style trade, defined by regional blocs sharpening their knives in their respective corners. Perhaps it will also disproportionately hurt poor countries, make everyday goods more expensive, and present a more complicated problem than Yellen and Freeland suggest when they're hobnobbing at friendly think tanks. Workers will have to wait and see without the power to shape the strategy.

Freeland adopting the strategy seems more like treading water than bravely setting forth a grand new strategy. If anything, Canada's speedy compliance with the latest word from Washington suggests the country doesn't have the policy latitude it yearned for when Trump was president and breaking everything in reach.

Resilience may be the reward for following those signals from the U.S. Doing so may insulate Canada against some risks, but any of those benefits will be the product of political calculations rather than principles.

They call it friend-shoring, but it is worth wondering what that even means when Canada has friends like these.

Nick Pearce is a first-year student in the Munk School's Masters of Global Affairs program with a collaborative specialization in Environmental Studies. He did his undergraduate degree at Queen's University, where he was the co-Editor in Chief of the university's student paper and co-wrote a story that won the Fraser MacDougall Prize for Best New Canadian Voice in Human Rights Reporting. He has since been a legislative reporter in the Northwest Territories and has covered Indigenous and rural communities in Saskatchewan for the Saskatoon StarPhoenix, where he shared the National Newspaper Award for Local Reporting for a team project on urbanization.
His academic research focuses on climate, governance, and inequality. He has never successfully made a perfect risotto.

Water in the Desert

A story of human resilience against climate change

By JORDAN EGAN | Human Rights

On July 28, 2010, the UN acknowledged "the importance of equitable access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as an integral component of the realization of all human rights." Similarly, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 regarding Clean water and sanitation for all, recognizes the essential role that water plays in every community and makes access to clean water a priority.

Globally, billions of people live in areas that cannot guarantee clean water for drinking and sanitation; an uncertainty poses endless health risks, especially for the most vulnerable populations. Communities that cannot reliably access clean water report higher levels of disease, higher rates of infant mortality, and overall lower quality of life. Areas that face water scarcity also face an increased risk of violence and conflict. A more resilient and sustainable world is one in which every person has access to clean, affordable, and reliable water sources.

Since the introduction of SDG 6, it has become clear that climate change will continue to exacerbate the issue of water access. More areas of the world than ever are facing water shortages due to longer, more severe droughts, storms, and other extreme weather events. These climate catastrophes can contribute to the contamination of existing water sources, making them unsafe for consumption.

The UN estimates that the global community is far behind the goals set to meet SDG 6: the current pace of progress would have to increase by four times in order to approach the 2030 deadline. There is a desperate need for new solutions that can provide fast, easy access to fresh water even under extreme conditions.

Hope for the Future

There might be an oasis in this desert. Israel once faced massive water shortages and the threat of drought that would have left the population short about 300 million gallons a day. However, today's generation has never faced a lack of clean water thanks to the desalination plants built at the beginning of the new millennium.

The plants were revolutionary and used a new process that halved the amount of energy required for traditional desalination methods. The use of a membrane to separate salt from water ensures that the energy usage of these plants is only a fraction of Israel's total energy use. Today these plants provide more than 80 per cent of the water used in Israeli cities.

The desalination plants are an amazing testament to human resilience and ingenuity. The rise in access to freshwater has had resounding benefits for Israel's agriculture and has reduced the strain on existing freshwater sources. There are plans to use the excess water from the desalination plants to refill the Sea of Galilee, Israel's freshwater lake that was once its main source of water.

The ability to produce clean, drinkable water with minimal energy directly from saltwater has the potential for worldwide application in coastal areas and island states that are currently facing similar climate challenges, putting their existing freshwater sources at risk.

Oasis or Mirage?

However, the desalination process comes with several environmental risks that still lack extensive understanding. For one, there are concerns over the high volume of wastewater that needs to be redistributed. There is also monitoring of the environmental effects of the runoff, and so far, impacts have remained localized. However, as production increases there is no guarantee that this runoff will not have greater impacts both locally and further afield.

Producing so much water that there is an excess in a desert seems like a mirage; but it is important not to overlook the drawbacks. The right to a clean, sustainable environment is also a human right declared by the UN, and Israel's water solution may put that at risk.

So are human rights, like freshwater, a finite resource in most areas of the world? If even the most promising of solutions to the problem of water access could cause irreversible damage to our planet, how do we move forward? Meeting the goals of SDG 6 requires great resilience and adaptation, and that can look different across the world. While no proposed solution has had perfect outcomes so far, it does not mean that we can or will give up.

Where desalination is not possible, there are increasingly effective and accessible ways to clean existing water sources and transport water to provide access to all. Each community demonstrates resilience in finding a way to provide this basic need. Chlorination can be an extremely effective and extremely easy way for individual households to clean their existing water sources. And every day new cheaper and more sustainable methods of transporting water to remote areas are being introduced. Water is a human right because we can't live without it. Despite the challenges faced, life generally finds a way to it.

Jordan Egan is a first year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Ottawa in International Development and Globalization where she also worked at Global Affairs Canada. Her research interests include the security, development, and humanitarian aid nexus. In her spare time, she loves swing dancing.

Too big to change? What is happening to France's pension system?

By GIANCARLO DA-RÉ | November 8, 2022

After promising large-scale economic and social security reforms since coming to power in 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron has faced heavy resistance from labour unions to his proposed changes. The French social security system has been a common cause for headache since its inception after World War II. President Macron is but the most recent champion for reform in a long line of French leaders, and as such, he has had to build a unique political narrative in support of his reform strategies. What differs from past (successful) French reform attempts, however, are the lengths that Macron is willing to go to see his reforms succeed.

Due to a combination of domestic politics and the landscape of professional companies at the time it was introduced, the French social security system, *sécurité sociale*, better reflects a Bismarckian insurance-based system than the three U-rule of the 1942 Beveridge Report. As a result, there are 42 pension schemes in France, with roughly 80 per cent of the population falling into the "*regime generale*". The French pension system has only been reformed twice (1971 and 1982) to increase the generosity of its benefits. Since then, however, efforts to reform the system have focused on retrenchment.

The French pay-as-you-go system relies on cross-generational solidarity and redistribution, meaning those who are currently working pay the pensions of those who are retired. By this logic, as the population ages and as life expectancy increases, fewer people pay into the pension system while more people take from it. The vulnerability of such a system to changes in the ratio of payers and takers first became evident in the 1990s, when the French government began facing mounting public deficits. This led to a reform in 1993 that impacted the benefits formula for the regime generale.

Noting the differences in contribution years between pension schemes, in 1995, Prime Minister Juppé aimed to push through another reform that would increase the number of contributory years for full retirement in *special systems* from 37.5 to 40 years. This was met with massive waves of protests in late 1995, peaking at two million people. President Chirac learned from his PM's failed top-down approach by working to build consensus through union negotiations, which led to the successful extension of the 1993 *regime generale* provisions to the public sector *special system* in 2003.

But while successful in their own respects, neither the 1993 nor the 2003 reform challenged the Bismarckian system underpinning French pensions, allowing for discrepancy in the rules of the game for workers of different industries. For example, while the minimum retirement age of those under the *regime generale* is 62, ballerinas can retire as early as 42. This has led the Macron government to push for a new universal system that would replace the 42 different pension schemes that exist today, bringing a narrative of social justice through universality.

But while most of the French population agrees it is unsustainable to carry on with the current system in light of an aging population, there have been massive protests in opposition to the proposed changes. Critics say that the new points-based-system is more individualistic, and that new incentives will make the true retirement age 64 rather than 62. To make matters worse, the striking of refinery workers in France has caused national refuelling problems, leading further strikes from yellow vest protesters and others worried about the cost of living.

President Macron has threatened that if his reforms do not pass through parliament, he will instantly dissolve the National Assembly and call new parliamentary elections. This suggests a willingness for Macron to hedge his bets on a sufficient level of electoral insulation. Additionally, France is not in great financial standing. The French government recently announced plans to borrow a record-setting €270 billion in 2023, after an estimated 111.5 per cent debt-to-GDP ratio at the end of 2022. It therefore seems that President Macron is weighing electoral insulation and a budgetary crisis against a highly visible and impactful reform attempt.

Originally, Macron committed to a Chirac-type strategy of union negotiations to find an area of compromise. Though, these negotiations have strung out with little result, leading to a change in strategy. The Macron government is now looking to pursue an unpopular, Juppé-type, top-down strategy via an amendment to the 2023 budget.

Only time will tell the outcome of France's latest attempt to reform its "*sticky*" 77-year-old pension system. Like his predecessors before him, President Macron finds himself in

a new politics of welfare resulting from a unique set of domestic and global influences. The French will finally know at the end of this year whether their pension system is too big to change.

Giancarlo Da-Ré is a second-year Master of Global Affairs candidate at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, where he is completing a collaborative specialization and Environmental Studies with emphases in Markets & Innovation. Giancarlo is a Lupina Fellow within the Munk School's Innovation Policy Lab, and the Director of External Affairs for the MGASA. He is also a Junior Fellow at Massey College.

Troubles in the UK.
But institutions in action.

By DAVID JONES | November 21, 2022

Three Prime Ministers in the last three months, a currency in freefall, rampant inflation, reputable independent organizations ignored, top public servants fired.

Whilst very few may have predicted that this would be the UK's current state of affairs, there are some important lessons that policymakers can learn from this episode with regards to politics, governance, and institutions, that are applicable to both the UK and Canada.

How did the UK get here? A brief canter through recent history provides important context.

The Conservative ('Tory') Party has been in government since 2010, initially under David Cameron's leadership, then in coalition with the Liberal Democrats, and winning an outright majority in 2015. Following the Brexit referendum in 2016, Cameron resigned, with the party electing Theresa May as prime minister (PM) to deliver Brexit. The fervent debate and dispute around the precise terms of a Brexit deal however, forced May to resign in 2019. After a leadership vote, Boris Johnson was elected in 2019 to finally 'get Brexit done'. He called a general election and secured a strong majority, empowering his Government to finalize Brexit legislation. Johnson ultimately lost the trust of the UK public and his party, as he and the Government failed to live up to the standards and restrictions conferred on the wider population during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Liz Truss entered Downing Street as the new PM in September 2022. She quickly filled her Cabinet with political allies, making it clear that the PM's office was setting the policy agenda, and discounting advice from key institutions such as the Treasury.

Markets were not so easily dismissed however, and with the Pound in freefall and the Bank of England forced into emergency financial interventions, Truss lost all support and was forced to resign. Rishi Sunak, the new PM, will seek to steer the UK through the current icy economic waters.

So what can policymakers learn from this experience? Before reaching to lessons learned, it is important to provide some points of context. First, the wounds of the British public are still raw from high inflation, economic instability, and government hypocrisy during the pandemic. Government policy has significant impacts on the lives of ordinary people, *so the 'lessons learned' from this crisis are not merely academic*. Second, policymakers should temper their (perhaps instinctive) critique of government with the recognition that there are many hard-working politicians with sincere ambitions to serve the country, and it is difficult to fully appreciate the pressures and challenges of the political arena.

Within this context, there are three important observations for parliamentary institutions, particularly those who operate under a Responsible Government model such as the UK and Canada:

(i) The recent experience of the UK highlights potential weaknesses of majority Governments, and by implication, a potential advantage of minority governments. The common thread across the Johnson and Truss Governments has been overconfidence – on occasions bordering on arrogance – towards MPs outside the Cabinet, expert institutions (including the public service), and the British public. Although strong leadership personalities were a contributing factor to government overconfidence, a significant driver has been the Conservative Government's strong majority win at the 2019 general election, cemented by the general confidence of having held office since 2010. In contrast, where minority Governments exist, such as in Canada currently, or in the UK during 2010-2015, minority parties challenge ruling parties, reducing the risk of material political and/or economic error.

(ii) The good news is that there are effective checks and balances within the UK party system. Johnson and Truss were forced to resign once they lost the support of cabinet members and backbench MPs – reflecting concerns of the UK voting public and government itself. There is a relatively high bar to reach this point, and typically, Cabinet

can maintain a tight grip on the policy-making reins. However, if government policy or conduct becomes materially misaligned with the sentiment of the public or government itself, it can create a tipping point, and the momentum of party opposition can overthrow government leadership relatively quickly. *This demonstrates that Cabinet power is not unlimited.* The rhetoric of "stability" espoused by the recently elected PM Rishi Sunak is evidence of a self-correcting humility mechanism which kicks in when powerful and confident governments are punished for going too far.

(iii) The institutions that govern leadership changes are rightly being debated. Both Truss and Sunak were elected without winning a general election – the former voted in by Conservative party members (constituting 0.3 per cent of the voting public), and the latter ultimately elected unopposed (based on the support of a majority of Conservative MPs). On one hand, this is the natural consequence of Responsible Government: Voters select their MP, and a government is formed based on the confidence of the House. On the other hand, holding multiple leadership contests within a short period of time will not leave the UK public feeling that they're being democratically represented.

In summary, despite the UK's recent troubles, the democratic checks and balances within existing parliamentary institutions have held firm to date. For the sake of the UK public, let's hope that continues.

David Jones is a first year student in the Master of Public Policy program and specialises in economic, financial and policy analysis and advice. He joins the Munk School following 13 years of professional experience across consulting and the public sector, which includes: 4 years experience working at the centre of UK healthcare policymaking, as Head of Workforce within the strategic finance team at NHS England, and most recently as the Chief Strategic Analyst for the NHS workforce plan, and 9 years as an economic consultant: advising, managing and delivering projects to a wide range of clients. David holds an undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Cambridge (UK) and CIMA certificate in Business Accounting.

Brazilian Elections:
Is global populism in retreat?
By DAN McDOWALL | Forthcoming

On 30 October, Brazil elected Lula da Silva as its new president, ousting populist leader Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro's departure sees the first incumbent president to fail to win re-election, a humiliating label for the former president.

Much of this unpopularity can be traced back to the Bolsonaro Administration's mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw 700,000 Brazilians killed. Another contributing factor to the defeat is the accompanying economic hardship deriving from the pandemic which has placed 33,000,000 more in hunger, increasing discontentment directed at the Government.

Bolsonaro's campaign was textbook populism. He railed against academics and the media, whilst alleging a leftist attack on family values. The former president also declared the only circumstances he could lose would be due to cheating, at the behest of faulty voting machines; echoing Trumpist rhetoric from the 2020 presidential election.

Following the election result, "Bolsonaristas," Bolsonaro's keenest supporters, have been creating domestic trouble largely through road blocks. On 31 October, following the result, there were as many as 300 of these roadblocks. While Bolsonaro may have encouraged these supporters to end their misbehaviour, it is evident that his more devout supporters may refuse to accept the result of this election.

Brazil has rejected Bolsonaro's style of politics by a slim margin of 50.9 per cent to 49.1 per cent, leaving the nation more divided than ever as Lula approaches his inauguration at the beginning of January 2023.

But what does this mean in the context of global populism? Brazil's rejection of Bolsonaro is part of a series of countries rejecting populism. Most notably, the United States voted President Trump out of office in 2020, replacing him with Joe Biden, a relatively more centrist style of governance.

Similarly, Boris Johnson's departure as prime minister could spell an end to populist rhetoric in the UK. Brexit is no longer the trump card that can be brought out to attack the Labour Party, and with the Conservative Party currently set to heavily lose the next general election in 2025 at the

very latest, a more moderate style of government could appear in the UK.

Furthermore, the French presidential election earlier this year saw France reject Marine Le Pen's brand of populism for the second time in a row, with Macron's re-election in April. Le Pen's party gained just 17 per cent of the vote in the legislative elections this year, albeit still making them the third largest party in the National Assembly. These are all positive movements in the public sphere of debate.

However, while there are reasons to be positive as to the direction in which populism is going, there are still plenty of worrying signs about the ideology's role in modern politics.

Similar to the Brazilian election, the margin by which Biden and Macron won their respective campaigns was much tighter than perhaps could be hoped for. Biden won by 51.3 per cent to Trump's 46.8 per cent. Macron's victory was by 58.55 per cent to 41.45 per cent, which was a closer result than when the pair faced off in 2017.

In addition to this, the emergence of new populist leaders, such as Italy's Giorgia Meloni, is concerning. Euroscepticism is prevalent in Meloni's ideology, as she attacks the European Union for being involved in ethnic replacement in Italy, while lambasting "woke ideology."

While new populist leaders emerging is an obvious concern, so are the well-established populists like Viktor Orban in Hungary. Orban has been in power since 2010 and has slowly eroded democratic institutions in Hungary. His populist beliefs take a similar shape to Meloni, believing non-European immigration to be a problem, and gay-rights a threat.

It is evident that populism is still very prevalent in modern politics, and while there has been an element of a roll-back on this type of politics, there is a substantial amount of work to do to erase it.

Several questions remain as to what happens next in terms of the future of populism. It is entirely plausible that the United States could re-elect Donald Trump as president in 2024, which would be an enormous boost to current populist leaders and potential candidates.

In addition to this, Putin's war in Ukraine also presents challenges. With the war going badly, it is likely Russia will interfere in future elections to try and split the united front that Europe and North America has created in support of Ukraine.

Furthermore, the cost-of-living crisis is bound to be a useful platform from which populists can launch attacks on incumbent governments and divide populations against each other.

It is likely this debate will present governments with both the greatest challenge while simultaneously being the largest attack point from populist candidates. If governments want to prevent further difficulties arising from populism, their management of the cost-of-living crisis must be expert.

Dan McDowall is a first-year student in the Master of Global Affairs program at the University of Toronto, looking to pursue a career in diplomacy and security. At undergraduate level, he studied History at Queen Mary University of London, and specialised in studies on Nazi Germany. His research dissertation concerning the British trade union movement during the 1930s won him the Peter Hennessy prize for the best dissertation on modern British history. Throughout his undergraduate degree he volunteered at the Cabinet War Rooms Museum. His research interests focus on European affairs, particularly British politics, as well as authoritarian regimes; both in Europe and worldwide. In addition to this, he also holds an interest in psephology and elections. Away from his studies, he is a keen football fan and also enjoys theatre, film and travelling.

Meet the Team

(CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF) Katie Bennett is a second-year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario in Media, Information, and Technoculture where she studied media theory and political science. Her research interests include cyber espionage, information warfare, and digital culture. She is currently the co-Editor-in-Chief of Global Conversations.

(CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF) Sara Duodu is a second-year student in the Master of Global Affairs program at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, specializing in innovation policy and global security. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario in History and Political Science. She also completed a master's degree at the University of Western Ontario in History, specifically focusing on how race was framed in early 20th century American newspapers. Sara's current research interests include the role of social media in social movements and the digital landscape of financial institutions. She currently holds a CGS-M scholarship through SSHRC.

(CO-DIRECTOR OF LONG FORM CONTENT) Sarah Klein is a second year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, emphasizing in Global Development and Policy in Europe & Eurasia. She received her bachelor's degree from Mercyhurst University located in Erie, Pennsylvania. Sarah recently spent the summer interning with World Education Services, conducting research related to supporting newcomers to Canada. She has a strong interest in the non-profit and humanitarian sectors, and hopes to leverage her experiences at Munk in a meaningful career post-graduation.

(CO-DIRECTOR OF LONG FORM CONTENT) Tom is a second-year Master of Global Affairs student emphasizing in Security and Global Policy & Asia. He completed his undergraduate degree in Conflict Studies and Human Rights from the University of Ottawa. Tom has worked across the federal government, including as a political staff member to a cabinet minister and in the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister for International Security and Political Affairs. He is currently working at the Consulate General of Canada in San Francisco. His research interests include press freedom, human rights, democracy, and security.

(DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL DESIGN) Chloe Yeung is a second-year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. With career interests in sustainable development and China & East Asia, Chloe is pursuing an emphasis in global markets, as well as a Collaborative Master's Specialization in Contemporary East and Southeast Asian Studies. Chloe holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts & Sciences from University College London. She is currently working as the Coordinator of Central Canada for the Canada China Business Council, where she liaises between policymakers and the business community to support bilateral trade and investment relations.

(DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA) Nayab Rana is a second-year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto. Her emphases are in Global Security and the Digital World as she is very interested in the growth of various sectors due to technological advancements but also the challenges that come along with it. Nayab completed her bachelor's degree in Foreign Service with a specialization in International Politics from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and has three years of industry experience working in the non-profit, financial, and energy sectors in Canada and internationally. She is currently working as the Procurement and Operations Officer at Digital Public Square.

(CO-DIRECTOR OF SHORT FORM CONTENT) Brittany (Britt) Barwise is in her second year of the MGA program emphasizing in Security and Development. This past summer Britt worked at Digital Public Square as their Public Health Intern addressing misinformation about COVID-19 and the vaccine online. Prior to coming to Munk, Britt completed her undergraduate degree in International Relations and Sustainable Development at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Her academic interests include sustainable development, ESG issues, global security, and addressing global issues on the local level.

(CO-DIRECTOR OF SHORT FORM CONTENT) Christie Ma is a second-year student in the Master of Global Affairs program at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy. She holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree, High Distinction, from the University of Toronto in Ethics, Society & Law and Sociology. Her research interests include international human rights, migration, gender-based violence, terrorism and cybersecurity. Christie has supported international criminal justice projects at the Global Justice Lab as a research assistant and is currently an analyst for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, specifically focused on the Civilian Criminal Investigation Project.

(ASSOCIATE EDITOR) Adhithya Krishnan is a first-year Master of Global Affairs Student at the University of Toronto. He earned an Honours Bachelor of Commerce undergraduate degree from McMaster University; his specialization was in Finance & Human Capital Management. He has also earned a Diploma in Business Administration from the McMaster Centre for Continuing Education. Professionally, Adhithya has had significant experience in the private and public sector. Most recently, he worked in the Audit function of Scotiabank's Capital Markets division. In his Master's program he aims to study the effects of the increase/decrease of geo-political tensions on capital markets, and how effective domestic policy and internal controls can mitigate systematic and unsystematic risk in the private and public sector.

(ASSOCIATE EDITOR) Chanel MacDiarmid is a second-year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy and experienced Associate Editor at Global Conversations. She completed a Bachelor of Arts at McGill University, where she studied Canadian politics and international relations. She is currently specializing in global security and global justice, and her current research interests are in the nexus of emerging technologies and human rights.

(ASSOCIATE EDITOR) Basmah Ramadan is a first-year student in the Masters of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto. She completed her undergraduate at the University of Toronto in International Relations with a double minor in Political Science and Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity. She is interested in exploring the local and global impacts of revolutions, especially in regard to those internally displaced, refugees, and immigrants.

(ASSOCIATE EDITOR) Cameron Vrckovnik is a first-year student in the Masters of Global Affairs program at the Munk School. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto, double majoring in History and Political Science. His research interests focus on the intersections between international conflict, foreign policy, and history.

(COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE) Marko Dakic is a first-year student in the Master of Global Affairs program. He has completed two Bachelor's Degrees at the University of Toronto – an Honour's Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and an Honour's Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics. Marko has 7 years of experience in the Financial Service Industry, most recently taking on the role of an Associate at RBC Wealth Management. His research interests include Global Markets and Political Economics of Development in Latin America and the Balkans.

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