

# HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL

magazine

SUMMER 2023



NEWS MAKERS  
UNLOCKING POTENTIAL  
READY. SET. GOVERN.

## WHAT LIES AHEAD?

HKS Faculty on the AI Revolution







VIC HOGG MPP 2023 delivered the Graduate English Address at Harvard University's Commencement Exercises on Thursday, May 25. Hogg, who is a member of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, spoke about being an Indigenous and nonbinary person and about surviving a life-threatening attack in December.

PHOTO BY MARTHA STEWART



THE PACE OF CHANGE IN THE WORLD—in technology, science, and the economy—is rapid, and it can be a challenge for policy to catch up. Nevertheless, it is crucial for public-sector leaders and policymakers to understand these changes and their consequences. This issue of *HKS Magazine* features stories about change—technological breakthroughs, the difficult evolution of a traditional industry, transitions in government administrations, and new ways of thinking about growth and development.

On the topic of technological advancement, you can read a series of essays by Harvard Kennedy School faculty members and alumni on various aspects of artificial intelligence—from the way AI might influence democracy, to opportunities for its use in sustainable urban development and criminal justice reform, to the implications for human rights.

Technological advances are also at play in the transformation of the news industry. This issue includes a story featuring faculty members who study the importance of bolstering local news as a form of “civic infrastructure,” along with alumni who work for newspapers and radio stations in cities across the United States, contributing to and innovating within the news ecosystem.



Concerning change within government, this issue also looks at Transition Term, a Kennedy School experiential learning program that gives students an opportunity to support mayoral and gubernatorial transition teams across the country and across the ideological spectrum. HKS students came up with the idea five years ago, and the program is growing and going strong.

Zooming out from the local and regional to the international: Our Center for International Development is at the forefront in thinking about how to renew approaches to development in countries across the world during a time of both promise

and peril. This magazine includes a profile of the center’s director, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, the Sumitomo-FASID Professor of International Finance and Development, and his work to reimagine international development.

The world will always change, requiring new thinking and energy. Novel threats emerge, as do opportunities. But the people of the Kennedy School always rise to the challenge. I hope you enjoy reading their stories, as I did.

Dean Doug Elmendorf  
Don K. Price Professor of Public Policy

Dean Doug Elmendorf attends  
the Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE)  
showcase in April.

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LYDIA ROSENBERG



Jane Seagrave MC/MPA 1989,  
publisher of the Vineyard Gazette

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COVER ILLUSTRATION CREATED USING ADOBE FIREFLY (BETA) USING THE PROMPT “ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIETY, DATA”





## A Community for Changemakers

### THE SOCIAL INNOVATION + CHANGE INITIATIVE

(SICI), based at HKS's Center for Public Leadership, was established in 2016 to accelerate the world's capacity for social changemaking and, in doing so, to help address the pressing systemic social and environmental issues of our time. One of SICI's first priorities was to create a hub for social-change projects on campus, and it did so through a social-impact accelerator: the New World Social Innovation Fellows Program.

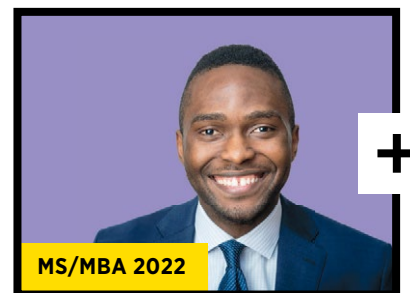
This accelerator is a rigorous weekly cocurricular experience for Harvard students who are actively advancing innovative social-change efforts spanning issues, geography, and sectors. Faculty members, staffers, and practitioners engaged in supporting selected students—known as Adrian Cheng Fellows—work closely with them to shape the social-impact-strategy layer of their work through weekly sessions, coaching, mentorship, and funding plans.

Alumni of the program—today numbering close to 100 from across Harvard schools—frequently say that this experience at HKS defined their time at Harvard and shaped the trajectory of their social-change efforts after graduation. Here are just a few of them, a brief insight into their work, and their thoughts on the program.

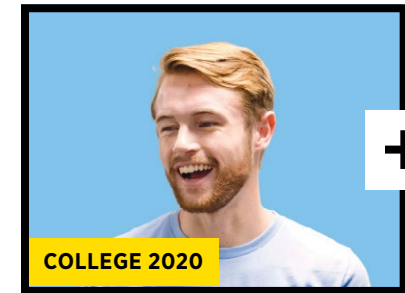


“The Cheng Fellowship was instrumental in advancing my social venture. I walked away with concrete learnings on how to build a successful organization, strong connections to individuals who share a passion for social justice, and a stronger belief in my ability to make a significant impact on the world around us.”

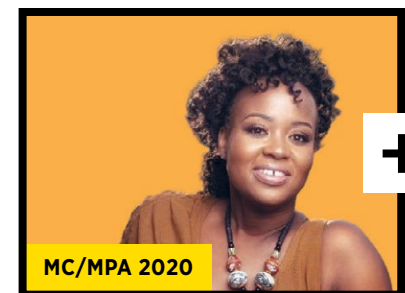
**SHAWON JACKSON** is the founder of **Vocal Justice**, whose mission is to teach undervalued high school students how to communicate authentically and persuasively about social justice—wherever they aim to go in life.



**PELKINS AJANOH** is a cofounder of **CassVita**, a tech-enabled agribusiness that empowers local farmers through its novel technology for increasing the shelf life of cassava, a rapidly deteriorating root vegetable.

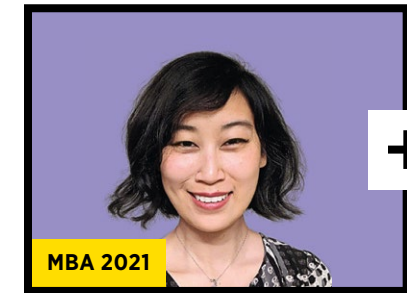


**CONNOR SCHOEN** is a cofounder of **Breaktime**, a Boston-based, youth-led nonprofit that elevates young adults out of homelessness through transitional employment and empowerment.



“It was validating to wake up every day and say, ‘Yes, I am going to make a way in my community—to harness all of the brilliance and goodness that I have, or via my networks—to really provide a solution for marginalized communities.’ I value Cheng in giving me that opportunity to say, ‘Yes, it’s okay that “social entrepreneur” is my tagline.’ ... Going into SICI’s accelerator program allowed me to validate this new aspect of my life.”

**SAMLARA BAAH** is the founder of **Loo Works**, which leverages green technology to provide container-based toilet solutions to low-income households within peri-urban neighborhoods in Ghana.



“This is my family away from home. SICI and the Cheng Fellowship have made me a better founder and a better person. I joined with a product idea and left with the drive to systematically shift the industry. I will be forever grateful for this community.”

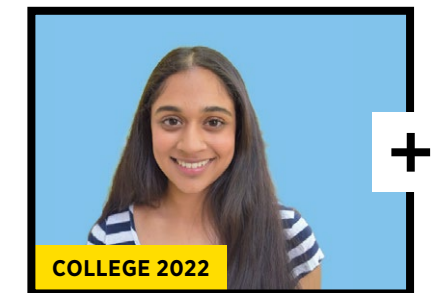
**SHELLY XU** is the founder of **Shelly Xu Design**, the first fashion-tech start-up to make beautiful, accessible, 100% zero-waste designs so that eliminating the carbon footprint in what we wear becomes second nature rather than a compromise.



**CHRIS KUANG** is a cofounder of **Coding it Forward**—a nonprofit by and for young people creating new opportunities and pathways in social impact and civic technology. Coding it Forward served as a blueprint for the U.S. Digital Corps—a new two-year fellowship program within the federal government that recruits early-career technologists to contribute to high-impact digital efforts—where Chris Kuang now leads as a cofounder.



**ALENA VACHNOVÁ** is a housing advocate leveraging her role at **Foundation DEDO** to end family homelessness by adapting a housing-first approach in Slovakia.



“SICI [has] somehow found a way to maximize organizational efficacy and teach super-valuable tools and, at the same time, create an organization that is rooted in values of compassion and empathy. I feel like many organizations see those things as a trade-off; [SICI] understood rightly that those goals can be reinforcing and mutually supportive.”

**TRISHA PRABHU** is the founder and CEO of **ReThink™**, which is built on patented technology that detects bullying language as it’s typed and prompts users to rethink their words before the damage is done.



## Expediting the approval of vital medicines shows no additional safety risks

RECENT EVIDENCE SUGGESTS that the regulatory process for new drugs can be made more efficient without compromising



safety. In a working paper, “Regulatory Incentives for Innovation: The FDA’s Breakthrough Therapy Designation,” researchers

including **AMITABH CHANDRA**, the Ethel Zimmerman Wiener Professor of Public Policy, investigate the trade-off between speed and thoroughness when regulators such as the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration approve new medicines. Using FDA data from 2006 through 2018, the researchers studied 396 drugs, including some that had received the FDA’s breakthrough therapy designation (BTD), which prioritizes therapies that show great promise or address new health issues, and which comes under an expedited approval process. Medicines receiving the BTD went through the final stage of clinical trials 23% quicker than other therapies did, saving research time and funds while showing no evidence of greater safety concerns.

## Government communications should be formal, not fun

INFORMAL MESSAGING, the thinking goes among academics and practitioners, is more effective than formal letters. But when it comes to government communications, it may be best to put away colorful graphics and casual language, according to “The Formality Effect,”



a working paper coauthored by scholars from the Kennedy School’s People Lab. In a series of studies, a group including the lab’s **ELIZABETH LINOS**, the Emma Bloomberg Professor of Public Policy and Management, and Jessica Lasky-Fink found that people see formal government communications as more credible and important than informal communications—and are therefore more likely to act on them. The researchers compared how people responded to letters from local government using black-and-white text and formal language to shorter letters using an informal tone and colorful design. They found that the former generated more responses—which was not what experts who were polled predicted.

The researchers write, “These findings have immediate implications for government communicators and open the door for a renewed focus on how the design and presentation of information impacts behavior.”

## Doctors’ political views may have influenced COVID-19 treatment recommendations

IN A REPORT PUBLISHED in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, “The Political Polarization of COVID-19 Treatments Among Physicians and Laypeople in the United States,” faculty members from the University of Pittsburgh and HKS Associate Professor of Public Policy **JULIA MINSON** find that physicians’ political beliefs affect their treatment recommendations when it comes to the coronavirus. The authors write that “conservative physicians were approximately five times more likely than their liberal and moderate colleagues to say that they would treat a hypothetical COVID-19 patient with hydroxychloroquine”—a nonstandard treatment that former president Donald Trump touted.



The authors recruited 592 critical-care physicians and 900 laypeople and surveyed them between April 2020 and April 2022. The physicians were asked to evaluate a vignette about a severely ill COVID-19 patient and make treatment recommendations. The laypeople were asked to share their beliefs about treatment (but not make recommendations). Both groups were asked about their views on COVID-19 vaccines, masks, and related issues, and were also asked what news media they consume.

## China as a growing player in international rescue lending

OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, China has played a growing role in the global financial system, more recently providing rescue lending to developing



economies. **CARMEN REINHART**, the Minos A. Zombanakis Professor of the International Financial System,

and her coauthors, Sebastian Horn, Brad Parks, and Christoph Trebesch, have built “the first comprehensive dataset on China’s overseas bailouts between 2000 and 2021 and provide new insights into China’s growing role in the global financial system.” They share their findings in the working paper “China



as an International Lender of Last Resort,” writing that “China’s role as an international crisis manager has grown exponentially

in recent years following its long boom in overseas lending. Its position is still far from rivaling that of the United States or the IMF, which are at the center of today’s international financial and monetary system, and the effectiveness of its rescue lending operations is not well understood.” The researchers note that China’s loan process is markedly more opaque when compared with that of established rescue lenders, and that the loans carry high interest rates. They write, “These findings have implications for the international financial and monetary architecture, which is becoming more multipolar, less institutionalized, and less transparent.”

## Understanding and improving support for job training

FUNDING FOR JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS in the United States leaves room for improvement, according to a report by the Kennedy School’s Project on Workforce, coauthored by **DAVID DEMING**, the Isabelle and Scott Black Professor of Political Economy. In “Navigating Public Job Training,” the authors find that federal funding for job training is only a fifth of what is spent on college and university grants. At the same time, the job training landscape is large and complex, with more than 75,000 eligible programs in more than 700 fields. “Performance information at the provider level is very limited and of questionable accuracy,” the researchers



write. “The net result is a highly fragmented system, where strong programs are not differentiated from weak ones.” Policymakers can improve job training by making the system easier for participants to navigate, they say, and by increasing funding overall, but particularly for high-quality training options.

## How a good-jobs strategy can replace neoliberal thinking

ECONOMIC POLICY is shifting away from the neoliberal paradigm. But what will replace it? That is the subject matter of “On Productivism,” an essay by **DANI RODRIK**, the



Ford Foundation Professor of International

Political Economy, published as an HKS faculty working paper. Rodrik writes that current levels of economic inequality and the shrinking of the middle class in many nations require a focus on the creation of good jobs to boost productivity. He writes, “Advanced and developing nations alike will need a new breed of coordinated policies aimed at the supply and demand sides of labor markets, combining skill training programs with support for firms.”

Current economic conditions, he writes, may be improved by private-public collaborations and policies that “encourage an increase in the quantity and quality of jobs that are available for the less educated and less skilled members of the workforce, where they choose (or can afford to) live.” However, Rodrik warns, such productivism—as he calls these ideas—is not a one-size-fits-all permanent paradigm. Rather, it is a pragmatic and nonpartisan approach to developing an intentional “good-jobs strategy” and shoring up the middle class at a time when it is shrinking in many countries.



## New Faculty

Harvard Kennedy School welcomes new faculty members:

**Luis Armona**, Assistant Professor of Public Policy\*

**Anthony Foxx**, Emma Bloomberg Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership

**Juan Jimenez**, Lecturer in Public Policy

**Rana Mitter**, S.T. Lee Professor of U.S.-Asia Relations

**Charles Taylor**, Assistant Professor of Public Policy\*

**Juan Saavedra**, Lecturer in Public Policy

*\* announced last year but starting this year*

FACULTY PORTRAITS BY MARTHA STEWART

## Retiring Faculty

Harvard Kennedy School recognized five retiring faculty members this year.

**DAVID GERGEN** joined the HKS faculty in 1999 and was the director of the Center of Public Leadership for nearly two decades. He mentored young people committed to service, is a prominent political commentator, and was a White House adviser to four U.S. presidents.

**STEVEN KELMAN**, the Albert J. Weatherhead III and Richard W. Weatherhead Professor of Public Management, taught and conducted research on public management and government performance. He has also served as administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

**JEFFREY SEGLIN**, a senior lecturer in public policy, directed and grew the Kennedy School Communications Program. He is also an expert on ethics and has authored numerous books on ethical decision-making.

**MICHAEL WALTON**, a senior lecturer in public policy, is an expert in economic development and has written on poverty, equity, and development. Before joining the Kennedy School, he worked at the World Bank.

**JULIE BOATRIGHT WILSON**, the Harry S. Kahn Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, taught and conducted research on poverty policy, family policy, and child welfare, and she has worked for the New York State Department of Social Services.





ALUMNI  
Citizen-centric technology

In July 2019, the prime minister of Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, appointed KYRIAKOS PIERRAKAKIS MPP 2007 as minister of digital governance. Since then, Pierrakakis has overseen a dramatic transformation in how citizens interact with the government in areas ranging from real estate to driver's licenses to health care. Pierrakakis had moved back to his home country after earning his MPP at the Kennedy School and his MS in technology and policy at MIT in 2009. He spoke with *HKS Magazine* about how his work has shaped the relationship between Greek citizens and the state.

*Greece's Ministry of Digital Governance was formed in 2019 after a merger, then separation, of several precursor ministries. Even before the election, you had prepared for this new structure. How did you go about fashioning an*

*organization that makes sense in today's fast-moving digital era?*

This new ministry was created by reassembling different IT parts of the government under a single roof, which happened on the Tuesday morning after the election and which required a lot of preparation. We also endowed the role of the minister with specific legal powers: veto power over all digital procurement of the state, the power to interoperate all the datasets of the state, and more. We thought these things through and recruited a very good team before the election from the public sector and from academia and the startup ecosystem of Greece. Having this plan enabled us to develop what we called the "Digital Transformation Bible," a public document that codifies more than 440 specific projects that will be implemented in Greece by 2025.

*What were some of your initial goals for the new ministry?*

I focused on how we could change our bureaucracy in Greece to make things cleaner and simpler, to facilitate interaction between citizens, corporations, and the government and the state: We thought in citizen-centric terms and life-event terms. This is a new culture for a government, and there was a cultural resistance to change. But with the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, we had to ensure government continuity and state continuity in the same manner that businesses had to ensure business continuity. These unique circumstances accelerated everything.

*What are you most proud of so far?*

We're mostly proud of the creation of *gov.gr*, the government portal, which offers more than 1,500 government

services. It started in March 2020 with 500 services—now we have tripled the number, which has led to an almost hundredfold leap in digital transactions, from 8.8 million in 2018 to 772 million in 2022. Also, we designed the overall vaccination processing system in Greece, which was a joint effort between us and the ministries of health, the Greek army, which runs the logistics, and many other state authorities.

*What are potential uses of generative AI in government? What are the pitfalls?*

We're thinking about this a lot. Greece has developed a law for emerging technologies in anticipation of what will happen at the European level. For instance, we mandate that all companies using AI algorithms to reach, say, labor decisions, shall notify those who are affected by those decisions. So we have a culture of projecting our values through law to the deployment of technological systems.

We need to develop capacities with regards to using machine learning in all sectors, especially in the capabilities to read data, and to try to learn about the ways the government operates. This always should happen in a manner that's commensurate with our core value system of human-centricity and transparency, and integrating fundamental constitutional and social values. And this is what we're trying to achieve as Europeans; this is what we're trying to achieve as Greeks.

IMAGES COURTESY OF KYRIAKOS PIERRAKAKIS

## FACULTY

### The world through a wider lens



**ELIANA LA FERRARA**, professor of public policy, has studied the effect of Brazilian *telenovelas* on women's fertility and marriage outcomes, how kinship and social standing affect wealth in Tanzanian villages, and the levels of trust in multiracial communities in the United States. The thread running through her work is an unwillingness to limit herself to traditional microeconomic models, where "prices and quantities" overshadow all else, and instead pay attention "to psychological, sociological, and sometimes anthropological factors that I believe as economists we cannot overlook."

*How does your work connect to solutions to pressing global problems?*

I study the constraints that prevent individuals and communities from escaping poverty. Traditionally, economics has focused on material constraints like lack of access to capital, education, and health. I'm interested in social constraints. So, in which cases do societies facilitate getting out of poverty, and in which cases do they magnify the problem by adding additional constraints?

For example, I've studied kin groups and networks, and I've shown that this social structure can help poor people get access to credit when they wouldn't be granted formal loans because they lack collateral. But I also found that stereotypes and social norms imposed by communities may prevent vulnerable groups—defined in terms of gender, ethnicity, or race—from accessing the same opportunities that other members of society do.

My approach to addressing these problems is, firstly, to use economic theory to understand the incentives of individuals and communities, secondly, to collaborate with policy partners on the ground, in order to design solutions to address these problems, and then, finally, to collect original data and conduct rigorous empirical analysis to test the effectiveness of these approaches.

*How has your research surprised you?*

One of the things I found surprising is the extent to which it's possible to use unconventional tools to generate behavior change that is conducive to economic development. For example, I worked a lot on the use of entertainment media as a tool to fight poverty or generate behavior change in developing countries. In early

work, I studied soap operas—*telenovelas*—in Brazil. And what I found is that exposure to soap operas where the main female characters were childless or maybe had one child led to sharp decreases in fertility in a country where the total fertility rate was about five [children per family] when television was introduced.

More recently, I've collaborated with TV producers to create series or reality shows in which we embed educational messages, and we try to change behaviors related, for example, to HIV/AIDS or to technology adoption in agriculture. And with a group of colleagues, I found that one of these TV series, *Shuga*, which is produced by MTV Staying Alive Foundation [a social- and behavior-change charity], led to increases in testing rates for HIV and improvements in attitudes towards HIV-positive people in Nigeria. That is quite surprising, because these are deep-seated preferences that are hard to measure and have been traditionally difficult to change through top-down educational messages.



*What are the big takeaways from your work?*

Although I was trained as—and I think like—an economist, the problems that fascinate me the most are those that cannot be solved purely by using an economic lens. I think it's extremely important to take into account dimensions such as identity, stereotypes, and aspirations when trying to tackle the problems that people who live in poverty need to solve.

KAYANA SZYMCAK





# THROUGH TURMOIL AND TRAGEDY, FINDING THE HUMAN CONNECTIONS

**Chantale Wong MC/MPA 1988 has broken barriers and lifted others in a long career in public service.**

BY MAYA SHWAYDER

PHOTOS BY CHERISS MAY

THE PUNGENT ODOR OF THE KITCHEN ON THE BOAT in which she escaped China has stayed with **CHANTALE WONG MC/MPA 1988.**

Wong was born in Mao Zedong's China, part of a generation raised under what her mother, now 96, called "the sheet of red." Driven to desperation by a series of upheavals and famines, Wong's parents made one of the most excruciating decisions a parent can make: At age 6, their daughter was smuggled out of China with her grandmother, hidden in the hold of a trawler as it sailed from Guangzhou to Hong Kong. She didn't see them again for 21 years, this time catalyzing their emigration from China in 1989, after the events of Tiananmen Square.

Throughout her life, Wong, motivated in part by that harrowing ride to Hong Kong, learned how to find connections and build deep relationships that would acutely influence her journey. She went on to study engineering—which inspired her to shift her attention to public policy—and then to attend the Kennedy School. Her path took her to NASA, the Treasury, the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Management and Budget, and eventually to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), where she served as the U.S. director. Wong

is the first out lesbian and first LGBTQ+ person of color in history to serve as a U.S. ambassador. She spoke to *HKS Magazine* from Manila, in the Philippines, where the ADB is based.

"What could have been my life if my parents had not [sent me away]?" she said. "It would certainly have been stalled in terms of education, opportunities, potential. Only in America could I, years later, be chief of staff to [OMB Director] Alice Rivlin. That opportunity would not have been given to me if I had stayed in China."

Peter L. Levin, the CEO of Amida and a former White House Fellow who worked under Wong at the OMB, says, "I think more than any faith-based commitment, which is very profound in her, and mentorship and human connection, which is transcendent in her, what really drives her is that experience. I think she considers herself successful if one little girl less has to go through that."

Wong began her career with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. "I went into civil engineering because it was the only scholarship I could find," she said. But she learned quickly that all the rules she had to follow as a wastewater engineer were being made by people far away in Washington, D.C., who didn't understand the problems at the local level. So in a way, Wong says, it was sewage and wastewater—and the desire to change policy in Washington—that brought her to the Kennedy School. It was also there that she met Rivlin, who had come to HKS to teach for one semester.

"I took a course from her on the federal budget and macroeconomic policy, and ... that was it!" Wong said. "She helped me every step of the way. She wrote letters, made phone calls, and opened doors. I didn't grow up with my loving parents, but I had nuns who taught and nurtured me in high school, in undergrad I had a professor who paid me to do research, and then I had Alice."

Wong has made paying that mentorship forward a central part of her life. "It's about finding the focused, deep relationships," she said. "It's not just, 'Hi, how are you? I need help.' It's developing the relationships over time. I would call it a personal board of directors. People you go to for certain things, whether it's having a family, or how to navigate family and a career, or how to deal with bosses."

Her passion for connection and helping others inspired her in 1989 to establish the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL), a nonprofit dedicated to bringing more people of AAPI descent into policymaking circles.

"When I first went to Washington, there weren't many Asian Americans, certainly not in the metro D.C. area, but also not in the policy discussions that mattered," Wong said. "I started this organization in my basement apartment to encourage young Asian Americans to seek a career in public service. Now generations of Asian Americans have gone through it. I have a lot of 'mini-mes' out there." She spoke with an infectious smile.

During a short-lived retirement that began in 2014, Wong had time to pursue another passion—photography—and became internationally known for her artistry. She was, for example, an official photographer for the civil rights leader John Lewis in the last four years of his life. Her iconic black-and-white photograph of him surrounded by statues of slaves will grace the entrance to the Smithsonian's "democracy collection" at the Museum of African American History this fall.

"She's present; she's just all there all the time," says her protégé Levin. "There's no sense of anything else she may be distracted by, or thinking about, or feeling pressure from. When you're with Chantale, you're the only person in the world who matters."

Literally thousands of people whose lives she has directly touched, in her church, as a community organizer, and as a civic leader, know exactly what he means. Those relationships have endured over two generations, and the wake of her impact means opportunity and safety for millions of little girls all over the world.

**"When I first went to Washington, there weren't many Asian Americans, certainly not in the metro D.C. area, but also not in the policy discussions that mattered."**

CHANTALE WONG





# WHAT LIES AHEAD?



For policymakers, AI’s limitless possibilities range from improved decision-making to doomsday scenarios. Leading thinkers discuss how to harness, and how to rein in, this burgeoning technology.



Designer note: All the art for this article has been created by Adobe Firefly (Beta), a generative AI platform trained only on images owned by Adobe or in the public domain. The use of these images does not indicate a new approach to editorial illustration in HKS Magazine. All captions reflect the prompts used to create these images. This image (left) was generated with: “Illustration combining artificial intelligence and democracy, present day, vibrant colors.”



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE seemed like a problem for tomorrow—until it wasn’t. The arrival of OpenAI’s ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence chatbot, in late 2022 engaged the popular imagination. But while at first much discussion seemed to be about how students might use ChatGPT to do their homework for them, the more serious implications soon became apparent, and thoughts quickly turned to the idea that artificial intelligence was evolving at a pace few had anticipated. Of course, we’ve been living with algorithms and machine learning and big data for some time—from ads that appear on our web browsers specifically tailored to our interests, to devices like Siri and Alexa that suggest answers and solutions to our daily problems, to more-serious applications such as chatbots that help us navigate bureaucracies and algorithms that suggest flight risk (and bail amounts) for people charged with criminal offenses. But suddenly AI appears more immediate, and perhaps less controllable, than before. At Harvard Kennedy School, AI within the sphere of public policy is being studied in myriad ways. Its perils and possibilities include the ethics of using AI and the treatment of sentient machines, the inbuilt prejudices of algorithms, how AI might vastly improve human decision-making, and the huge changes this new technology will bring to bear on the labor force and the economy. In the pages that follow, some HKS experts—technologists and philosophers, economists and ethicists—tell us what they think about the AI revolution.



## Can AI make the justice system fairer? \_

SHARAD GOEL

OVER THE PAST DECADE, my collaborators and I have worked to reform areas of the criminal justice system, designing algorithms and building tools that mitigate human biases and reduce incarceration. Our work demonstrates the power of technology to bring about more-equitable outcomes, but it also exposes the limits of technological solutions to complex policy problems.

When someone is arrested for a crime, police officers write a report detailing the circumstances of the incident. Prosecutors decide whether to charge the individual on the basis of that narrative. If they do bring charges, that triggers a labyrinthine legal process that often ends with a steep fine or incarceration. If they don’t, the individual is typically released without sanctions. The decision to bring charges is one of the most consequential in the criminal justice system, with life-altering impacts on arrested individuals, their families, and their communities.

In many states, prosecutors have nearly unlimited discretion when deciding whom to charge. That creates worry that implicit or explicit racial bias may taint the process. To guard against that possibility, we built a “blind charging” algorithm to automatically mask race-related information in police reports—not only explicit mentions of race but also implicit markers, such as hair and eye color, names, and locations. We tested the effectiveness of our tool by building a machine learning algorithm that tries to guess an individual’s race from the masked reports. We also asked a human expert to do the same thing. Our blind-charging algorithm stumped both the machine and the human, giving us confidence that we had successfully stripped racial cues from the narratives.

In some cases, prosecutors need to review physical evidence, such as video footage, before reaching a charging decision, making it impossible to conceal race. To accommodate such situations, we proposed a two-step case-review process. In the first step, prosecutors reach initial charging decisions on the basis of the blinded police narratives. In the second step, they see the complete, unredacted reports, including any physical evidence, and make a final charging decision. But if they change their minds after seeing the unredacted reports, they must explain why. That helps reduce racial bias while ensuring that prosecutors have all the information they need to make informed decisions. Our research led the California state legislature to require that by 2025, prosecutors across



the state mask police narratives when making charging decisions—either using our blind-charging tool or doing so manually.

Someone who is ultimately charged with an offense must usually appear in court multiple times as the case proceeds through the legal system. Failing to appear at even one of those court hearings often results in the judge’s issuing an arrest warrant. But people rarely miss court because they’re actively trying to skirt the law. More often they have a justifiable reason, such as lack of childcare or transportation, or confusion about when and where to show up.

To increase appearance rates, we worked with the Santa Clara County Public Defender Office to build a tool that automatically texts reminders to clients with upcoming court dates. We measured the tool’s effectiveness by texting a random subset of clients and comparing the outcome with that for clients who didn’t receive reminders. We found that the court date reminders reduced arrest warrants by more than 20%. At a cost of less than a dollar per case, these reminders

are a promising, cost-effective strategy for improving appearance rates and mitigating the consequences of missing court.

Advances in computing are ushering in new opportunities to reform the criminal justice system. But we must recognize the limitations of technology to solve deeper policy problems. Our blind-charging algorithm can mitigate racial bias in prosecutorial decisions, but it can’t rectify unjust laws that disproportionately affect communities of color. Text-message reminders boost court appearance rates, but they don’t resolve the underlying social and financial obstacles many people face when trying to attend court. Tackling these larger, systemic problems will require collaboration among policymakers, activists, technologists, and others committed to fostering a more equitable future.

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*Sharad Goel, a professor of public policy, looks at public policy through the lens of computer science.*



## Can AI be a better doctor? \_

SORUSH SAGHAfIAN

LIKE MANY OTHER technological advances, the tools being developed around artificial intelligence, algorithms, and data science can be used in positive or negative ways, and it is natural to fear their potential misuse. However, the possibilities for solving societal problems are endless, and the potential impact beyond limits.

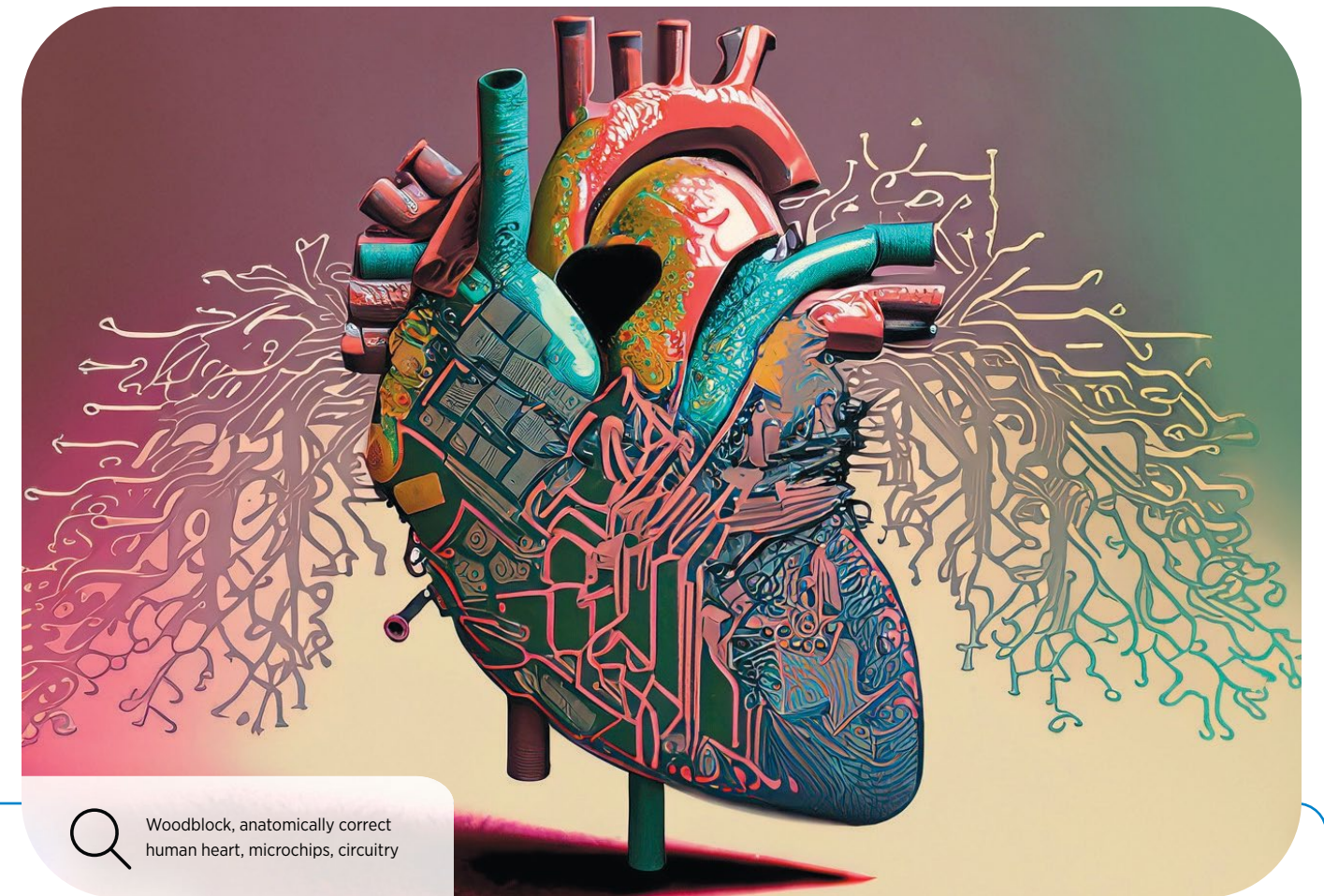
Policy decisions are naturally complex and extremely challenging. The AI and machine learning branches of analytics science are great tools because they allow us to move away from opinion-based solutions and instead adopt data-driven strategies. To harness them responsibly, though, we must use them in specific ways. For example, we need to ensure that they are not trained solely on data generated by human decision-makers, who are by nature biased toward their own views.

In the Public Impact Analytics Science Lab (PIAS-Lab), which I founded and direct, we are collaborating with a variety of organizations to solve problems that can have public impact. We take a problem-driven approach, meaning that we make use of the best analytics science methods to most effectively address each unique problem. These tools come from various branches of analytics science, including operations research, machine

learning and big data, decision science, statistics, and artificial intelligence, among others.

We have been using these tools to help hospitals, start-ups, public agencies in the United States and beyond, and private firms solving problems that have public impact. The tools and related collaborations with these entities have enabled us to find the best ways to save lives, improve the quality of care delivered to patients, decrease health care expenditures, reduce existing inequalities, design superior policies, and make better use of technological advances such as mobile health, smart devices, and telemedicine.

The many challenges can be illustrated by our attempts to make a meaningful impact in one of the most complex sectors—health care. That sector involves a variety of stakeholders, especially in the United States, where health care is extremely decentralized yet highly regulated. Analytics-based solutions that can help in one part of this sector might cause harm in other parts, making finding globally optimal solutions extremely difficult. Obtaining effective analytics-based solutions also requires overcoming various challenges related to data collection and data use. Then there are various



Woodblock, anatomically correct human heart, microchips, circuitry

ADOBE FIREFLY (BETA) | FACULTY PORTRAITS BY MARTHA STEWART

challenges in implementation. At PIAS-Lab, we can design advanced machine learning and AI algorithms that perform outstandingly. But if they are not put into practice, or if the recommendations they provide are not followed, they will have no tangible impact.

In some of our recent experiments, for example, we found that the algorithms we had designed outperformed expert physicians at a leading U.S. hospital. But when we provided physicians with our algorithmic-based recommendations, they gave the advice little weight and ignored it when treating patients, although they knew the algorithm had most likely outperformed them. So we studied ways of removing this obstacle. We found that combining human intuition with the algorithmic recommendations—what is called a “centaur model” in analytics and decision-making—not only made it more likely that the physicians would give more weight to the algorithms’ advice, but also resulted in recommendations that were superior to both the best algorithms and the human experts.

The potential for centaurs is endless, and we expect that most data-driven organizations will take advantage of them in the near future. For example, a department

of human services could use algorithms to help predict which child-welfare cases were likely to lead to child fatalities and raise a red flag for those cases. Human experts could review those cases and share the results with frontline staffers, who could choose remedies designed to lower risk and improve outcomes. Other examples might include systems for spotting anomalies and preventing cyberattacks, improving design components in manufacturing systems, and assisting police officers to balance their workloads and better ensure public safety. Even the latest advancements in large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT are inherently centaur-based, because they benefit from human feedback in their training phase.

It is appropriate to offer this new technology with humility and caution. But it would be shortsighted not to explore its virtually unlimited potential for improving public decision-making.

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*Soroush Saghaian, associate professor of public policy, works on applying the science of data analytics to solving societal problems.*





## Will AI hack our democracy? \_

BRUCE SCHNEIER

BACK IN 2021, I wrote an essay titled “The Coming AI Hackers,” about how AI would hack our political, economic, and social systems. That ended up being a theme of my latest book, *A Hacker’s Mind*, and is something I have continued to think and write about.

I believe that AI will hack public policy in a way unlike anything that’s come before. It will change the speed, scale, scope, and sophistication of hacking, which in turn will change so many things that we can’t even imagine how it will all shake out. At a minimum, everything about public policy—how it is crafted, how it is implemented, what effects it has on individuals—will change in ways we cannot foresee.

But let me back up. “Hack” is a techie term for a trick that subverts computer code. In my book, I generalize it to cover all sorts of rules. The tax code, for example, isn’t computer code, but it is nevertheless code of a sort. It’s a set of rules that determine how much tax you have to pay. Those rules have mistakes, or bugs, that lead to vulnerabilities that lead to exploitation. We call them loopholes and tax-

avoidance strategies, but it’s the same idea.

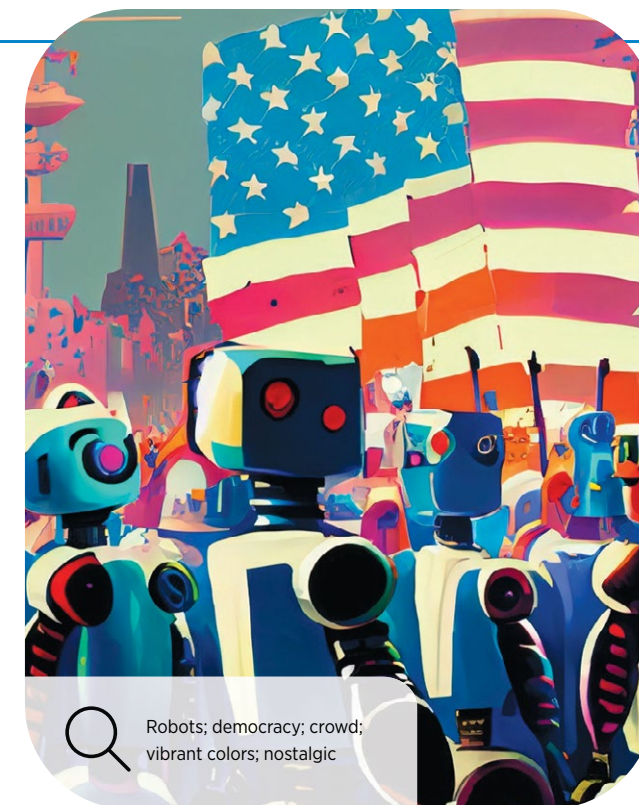
A hack follows the rules but subverts their intent. In public policy, think of gerrymandering, filibusters, tricks to get around campaign finance rules, must-pass legislation, and everything gig-economy companies do to skirt labor laws. None of this is new, and finding these loopholes is a human creative endeavor.

AI has the potential to change that. Someday soon, it will be able to optimize lobbying strategy, finding hidden connections between legislators and constituents. It will create “micro-legislation”: tiny units of law that surreptitiously benefit one person or group without being obvious about it. It will find new tax loopholes, possibly utilizing complicated strategies involving multiple countries. It will be able to do all these things and more, faster than any human possibly could, and deploy them at a scale and scope that no human could match. The world isn’t ready for hundreds, or thousands, of new tax loopholes, or for new tricks to make money in the financial markets. At computer speed, scale, scope, and sophistication,

such hacks could overwhelm our existing systems of governance.

But not all is bleak. The same AI that could exploit these loopholes could also close them. And the same reforms that make these systems fairer for humans will also make them less exploitable by hackers—whether human or AI. But we need governance systems to be more agile. This is a bigger issue than hacking by AI, of course; it’s about governing our fast-moving technological world. The real problem of AI is less what the technology can do and more who it is doing it for. The AI that will figure out new tax loopholes, or new hedge-fund strategies, isn’t in a university and working for the good of humanity. It’s in the basement of a multinational financial corporation and working for its clients. Right now, AI technology makes the powerful even more powerful. And that’s something public policy can address today.

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*Bruce Schneier, adjunct lecturer in public policy, is a security technologist.*



Robots; democracy; crowd; vibrant colors; nostalgic



Human rights; crowd; data collection; charts; graphs; global



## Will AI change the way we think about human rights? \_

MATHIAS RISSE

SOME 10 TO 15 YEARS AGO, many observers thought that China’s increasing wealth (and the accompanying rise of the middle class) would lead to more democratization and then to improvements in the human rights situation. Instead, the Chinese Communist Party succeeded in a large-scale effort to upgrade its governance system to new technological heights, building on a stupefying amount of data collection and the kind of data mining that ever more sophisticated AI algorithms make possible. And although during this same period the private sector in democratic countries engaged in the same activities, in China they led to the creation of what Shoshana Zuboff calls “surveillance capitalism” rather than to large-scale efforts to use technology to upgrade democratic governance and adjust human rights to the new realities. Such an upgrade is vital. At the very least, it will have to include two things.

First, epistemic rights—rights that protect us as both knowers and knowns—become more central to our human rights discourse. To be protected as knowers means entitlement to share in the wealth of information that modern societies generate, and that has increased enormously through the ever-growing penetration of our lives by digital technologies. To be protected as knowns means to have a reasonable level of control over our personal data. But it also means to have a voice in how the accumulated data are used to change our societies. To some extent, epistemic rights are already part of the existing set of human rights, and have been since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was passed, in 1948. But back then the possibilities of knowing and of being known were much more limited than they have become through the waves of innovation over the past 15 years or so. So talk about epistemic rights should be much more



integrated into our understanding of what human rights are all about. A solid protection of such rights in existing coding is also essential to secure protection of a distinctively human life in the event of a takeover by artificial intelligence (which many experts think is plausible well within this century).

Second, data collection should also be considered from the standpoint of social justice. Control over data will shape the future in much the same way control over machines shaped the industrial age and control over land shaped preindustrial societies. Data collection and data mining make societies legible in ways that allow for the prediction of both macro-trends and individual behavior, and ultimately permit those who control the data and the data-mining algorithms to shape behavior. The virtual realities that will become possible through Web 3.0 technologies will lead to ever more sophisticated

possibilities for doing just that. Social justice requires that both data collection and data mining be subject to democratic control. What data reveal about human behavior in our society should be regulated to be generally beneficial rather than to enhance the wealth of small parts of the population or to allow for the manipulation of democratic mechanisms in their favor.

Much ingenuity will be required to ensure that democracies, with their accompanying human rights protection, remain appealing vis-à-vis authoritarian alternatives but also remain credible vis-à-vis private-sector and partial-political interests that seek to put technological innovation in the service of only a few.

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*Mathias Risse is the Berthold Beitz Professor in Human Rights, Global Affairs and Philosophy and director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.*



## Will AI come for the cognitive class? \_

LAWRENCE SUMMERS

SEVENTY YEARS AGO, the computer scientist and pioneer Alan Turing said that it was going to be a threshold for humanity when a machine could imitate a human being's answer to questions in such a way that another human being wouldn't be able to tell the difference. The "Turing test" became known as the process of testing a machine's ability to "think." We are somewhere in the territory Turing described right now. This is a profound moment for humanity. The printing press and electricity were huge changes because they were general-purpose technology; AI and enabled tools like ChatGPT could be the most important general-purpose technology since the wheel or fire.

This points to a profound change in the way we are all going to work. Many of us will have a kind of caddy that augments our creativity, our capacity to bring knowledge to bear, and also our accuracy. When I went to graduate school, we estimated statistical models with five parameters. Now 175 billion parameters will go into one of these systems.

Thinking about the Industrial Revolution 200 years later, we see extraordinarily positive things but also the carnage and catastrophe of the first half of the 20th century.

I am seeing more and more now that ChatGPT is coming for the cognitive class. It will replace what doctors do—hearing symptoms and making diagnoses—before it changes what nurses do: helping patients get up and

handle themselves in the hospital. It will change what traders do—going in and out of financial markets—before it changes what salespeople do: making relationships with potential clients. It will change what authors and editors do before it changes what people in bookstores do.

AI, and enabled tools like ChatGPT, are going to alter our society enormously over time. I do believe that they have the potential to level a lot of playing fields. Some of the people who have been quickest to say that structural change is just something you have to live with and accept as part of modern society when it was happening to other people—many of whom wore uniforms to work—are now going to have it happen to them. It will be interesting to see how they respond.

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*Lawrence Summers, the Charles W. Eliot University Professor, is a former president of Harvard University and former secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.*



A lightbulb covered in circuitry and data



## What worries us about AI? \_

SHEILA JASANOFF

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS THE NEW DARLING of the policy world. At Davos, it was the buzzy trend of the year, as Fareed Zakaria reported in the *Washington Post* in January 2023. It is a technology that seems poised to change everything. It will transform our work habits, communication patterns, consumption practices, environmental footprints, and transport systems. Built into a new generation of chatbots, AI will remake how journalists write, lawyers argue, and students respond to essay questions in exams. In the hands of rogues and terrorists, it may spread misinformation, sabotage critical infrastructure, and undermine democracy. All these expectations, both promising and perilous, call for governance, and that makes AI a critically important subject for public policy.

of the stick in their arguments against it? My answer to both questions is no.

The rise of the digital economy over the past 30 years has shown that rapid access to information is not the only good that societies need or want. The shiny dream of Silicon Valley is tarnished today by stories of fraud and hype, rising inequality, alienation, and misinformation—in short, a reality that does not comport well with the visions of liberation fervently preached by early apostles of the digital age. So what is to be done?

Given the diversity of AI applications and their rapid development, it is clear that America's usual approach to regulating technology, which the moratorium critics support, will fall short. Typically,



Artificial intelligence; machine learning; computing

This past spring, the Future of Life Institute, an organization dedicated to steering transformative technologies, issued an open call for all AI labs to declare a moratorium of at least six months on the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4. Predictably, critics attacked the proposal as unworkable, unenforceable, and likely to hinder beneficial technology development in an intensely competitive international arena. Is a moratorium the right solution? And have critics grasped the right end

U.S. entrepreneurs are relatively free to design and develop new technological systems unless they are shown to pose plausible threats to human health, safety, or well-being. Until the risks become palpable, self-regulation is the order of the day. Many believe that this laissez-faire approach leads to more-efficient outcomes, with less chance of nipping breakthrough technologies in the bud through premature, possibly unenforceable controls. But what works for relatively self-contained technologies, such as vaccines and



self-driving cars, is less well suited to the hydra-headed monster that AI is shaping up to be.

Nor is a six-month moratorium the right answer. The pause is not the problem. What, after all, is a six-month delay in the grand march of technological development? The important issue is not whether a moratorium is appropriate but what should happen during such a pause, and here history offers less than satisfying lessons.

Moratoriums have been under discussion in American technology policy since the famous voluntary restraint adopted in 1974 by molecular biologists developing genetic-engineering techniques using recombinant DNA (rDNA). Widely hailed as a success, that moratorium gave scientists both moral and technical standing to assert that they, and they alone, had the authority to regulate their own research. Subsequent breakthroughs in many technological areas, such as genome editing with CRISPR-Cas9 technology, have elicited similar calls for pauses, but with the thought that responsible scientists would be the ones who built frameworks of self-regulation during such periods of restraint.

The troubled history of genetic engineering, especially as applied to bioengineered crops, suggests that scientists of the gene-editing era construed the regulatory challenge too narrowly. It turned out that the risks people cared about with rDNA research did not relate only to accidental

releases. They also involved people's visceral sense of what was normal, what they were prepared to eat, and what kinds of agriculture seemed natural.

AI offers an even more elusive regulatory target. What worries us about AI? Is it the "A" for "artificial," because a machine that is learning to think and act like a human blurs a line around human agency that has been fundamental to centuries of ethical thought? Or is it the "I" for "intelligence," because we do not know whether machinic intelligence will combine analytic speed and a voracious appetite for information with judgment or compassion? Who, after all, would have imagined that the lip-reading computer HAL in Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* would outfox and kill its human controllers?

Signing a six-month moratorium may feel good because it's taking a stand on an issue of emerging concern. But to make a difference in how we deploy AI calls for a deeper, more prolonged engagement, one that arouses a society's ethical and political intelligence. We need to bring AI back onto the agenda of deliberative democracy. That project will take more than six months, but it will be wholly worth it.

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*Sheila Jasanoff, the Pforzheimer Professor of Science and Technology Studies, studies the role of science and technology in policy, law, and politics.*



## BETO ALTAMIRANO MC/MPA 2022

ADOBE FIREFLY (BETO) | PORTRAIT COURTESY OF BETO ALTAMIRANO

### How can AI make cities better? \_

THE WORLD'S CITIES are the beating heart of human civilization, bustling hubs of innovation, culture, and progress. From the towering skyscrapers of New York City to the ancient temples of Tokyo, cities have played a critical role in shaping our collective history and defining our cultural identity. However, as the global population continues to urbanize at an unprecedented rate—according to the United Nations, 55% of the world's population currently lives in urban areas, and that figure is projected to increase to 68% by 2050—cities are facing unprecedented challenges. Traffic congestion, waste management, air pollution, and sustainable development are just a few of the complex issues they must navigate in the 21st century. Fortunately, AI and other emerging technologies offer tremendous potential in our quest for a more sustainable future in which cities can be smarter, cleaner, and more equitable than ever before.

AI-powered solutions have significant advantages, for example, in traffic management. Traffic congestion leads to longer travel times, increased fuel consumption, and higher emissions. Flow Labs' AI-powered traffic-management technology has proved successful in reducing traffic congestion by up to 24% in some areas. In Utah, Flow Labs has helped optimize traffic-light timing and predict traffic patterns, resulting in shorter travel times and decreased emissions.

Similarly, Rubicon Global's AI-powered waste-management solutions have helped improve practices in multiple cities across the United States, optimizing collection routes to reduce emissions and waste. Its technology has lowered carbon emissions and has the potential to save U.S. cities \$208 million over the next 10 years through reduced disposal costs, optimized fleets, and other metrics.

Moreover, AI can be a critical tool in improving air quality, which is essential for public health. According to the World Health Organization, air pollution is responsible for some 7 million premature deaths annually. Green City Watch is a German start-up that uses AI-powered solutions to monitor urban green spaces and promote sustainable urban development. Its technology analyzes satellite images and maps green spaces in urban areas, providing policymakers with real-time data on urban greenery and air quality. Green City Watch's technology has been implemented in Berlin, Amsterdam, Madrid, and

other cities across Europe.

Gjenge Makers, a Kenyan start-up, is transforming plastic waste into affordable, durable building materials using AI-powered solutions. Kenya is facing a major plastic-waste problem: The city of Nairobi alone generates approximately 2,400 tons of solid waste a day, 20% of which is plastic. Gjenge Makers' technology promotes sustainable construction practices by using AI to sort and process plastic waste, converting it into strong building blocks for construction.

Despite the potential benefits of AI, implementing these solutions in cities presents challenges. Their high cost can be a barrier to entry, and concerns over privacy and data security can hinder adoption. However, I believe that the benefits outweigh the challenges. To overcome these challenges, it is essential that policymakers, start-ups, and other stakeholders collaborate to promote innovative solutions for sustainable urban development. Furthermore, it is crucial to prioritize equitable access to AI-powered solutions to ensure that all communities benefit.

One effective way to do that is through public-private partnerships, which can leverage the strengths of both sectors to promote innovation and ensure fair and broad access to AI solutions. An excellent case in point is the partnership between the Atlanta city government and Rubicon Global to implement cutting-edge waste-management technology. That collaboration resulted in better waste collection and reduced emissions and decreased the amount of recyclables sent to landfills by a remarkable 83%, by adjusting the city's solid-waste service schedule.

The potential impact of AI-powered solutions on sustainable urban development is significant. The International Data Corporation predicts that global spending on digital transformation investments will reach \$3.4 trillion in 2026, with AI being one of the key drivers of this growth. By leveraging the power of AI, we can build smarter, cleaner, and more equitable cities for all. To do so, we must collaborate across sectors to drive innovation and positive change.

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*Beto Altamirano MC/MPA 2022 is the CEO and co-founder of Irys, a company developing AI-driven tools to increase community engagement.*



Bird's-eye view of a New York City block with greenery, microchip, circuit boards, circuitry



# News Makers

The infrastructure of local news is crumbling or nonexistent, with dire effects on democracy and civic life, experts say. HKS scholars and alumni are working to rebuild it.

BY RALPH RANALLI

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, the French aristocrat and political scientist who observed American culture in the early 1830s, saw local newspapers as the lifeblood of civic participation in the United States and called them “the power which impels the circulation of political life.” America’s founders considered journalism so vital to informed democracy that they not only guaranteed the press unprecedented freedom in the first amendment to their new constitution but also subsidized it with special low postal rates, since in those days most newspapers were distributed by mail. “Newspapers were traditionally the common bond in the community, with shared information being



MYRNA JOHNSON MC/MPA 2007  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MADELINE KING



the basis for people thinking somehow they're on the same ship," says Professor **THOMAS PATTERSON** of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School.

Patterson, the Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press, says because local news organizations gave citizens the information necessary to make important decisions about their lives and their communities, they functioned for more than 200 years as de facto civic infrastructure. But now that infrastructure is crumbling in many places and nonexistent in others—devastated by transformations in the economic ecosystem of local news, by takeovers by cost-cutting corporate chains and so-called “vulture capital” firms that strip them of their assets, and by changing habits of information consumption. The Shorenstein Center’s director, **NANCY GIBBS**, who with Patterson has been raising the alarm this year about the decline of local news and its effects on democracy, including voting rates and other forms of civic participation, says the situation has reached a critical stage.

“We have seen a dramatic decline in the last 10 or 15 years, as we’ve seen the whole business model across media disrupted to where we are losing two newspapers every week,” Gibbs said on an episode of the HKS PolicyCast podcast. “Half of all counties now only have one local newspaper news source. Usually, it’s a weekly. Many of those newsrooms have been hollowed out.” According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, more than a quarter of local newspapers in America have shut down since the early 2000s. Half of all journalism jobs are now gone, as are half of all newspaper subscribers. More than 1,800 communities in the United States are now defined as “news deserts”—places where no professional source of local news exists. Patterson says the decline has been going on long enough that a robust body of social science research now exists about what happens when a community loses its

local news source. “There’ve been a dozen really pretty good studies of this, and they all come to the same conclusion,” he says. “It harms the civic health of the community on virtually every dimension. Social trust goes down. Party polarization goes up. Voting locally declines. Accountability of local officials goes away.”

A growing number of people in academia, politics, and the news industry say an urgent response is needed, with new ideas about what local news organizations should look like and how they can be supported financially and in other important ways. That contingent includes HKS faculty members, staffers, and alumni who are working to tackle a problem that has no easy answers.

## The Survivor

From her position as the recent past president of the Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association, **Jane Seagrave MC/MPA 1989** has had a bird’s-eye view of the problems faced by local news organizations. “It’s the same refrain I’ve been literally hearing for the past 20 years,” she says. “You’re being attacked from every angle. Your revenue streams are being undermined, there are ever-increasing numbers of alternatives, and people are not reading the way they used to.”

Yet as the publisher of the *Vineyard Gazette*, on the island of Martha’s Vineyard, Seagrave is one of the lucky ones. The *Gazette* still rolls a weekly print edition off its own presses in addition to offering news about the Vineyard’s six towns on its website. Recent headlines include “Chilmark Town Meeting Rejects High School Budget” and “Steamship Authority Grapples with Deck Officer Shortage.” Local stories on issues that affect people’s daily lives resonate with the island community, which tends to be pretty stable, according to Seagrave. “We have a market that’s extremely well-read,” she says. “People go out of their way to be informed. They read to the end of stories. They really engage with the news.”

Those dedicated readers form a solid subscription base, generating revenue that the *Gazette* has augmented with periodic specialty publications about weddings, real estate, and tourism. Plus, being on an island 7 miles off the coast helps keep down competition, Seagrave says. It also helps that the *Gazette* has stable owners: In 2010 it was purchased by



JANE SEAGRAVE MC/MPA 1989  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEANNA SHEPHERD

**“You’re being attacked from every angle. Your revenue streams are being undermined, there are ever-increasing numbers of alternatives, and people are not reading the way they used to.”** JANE SEAGRAVE

billionaire businessman and Vineyard resident Jerome Kohlberg, Jr. (the first “K” of investment giant KK&R). It is now owned by a nonprofit corporation chaired by Kohlberg’s daughter Pamela. Kohlberg, who died in 2015, also bought the *Gazette*’s building and donated it to the Martha’s Vineyard Historic Trust, preserving and protecting it from venture capital firms that might covet it as real estate. (The average home price on the Vineyard is now around \$2 million.)

When she attended the Kennedy School, Seagrave wasn’t planning to work in the business side of publishing. A reporter and editor for the Associated Press, she thought a degree from HKS would make her a better political journalist. “But at the Kennedy School, you know, they tell you to play to your weaknesses,” she says. “And my weaknesses really were the numbers. So I took a bunch of financial management classes.”



Tom Patterson and Nancy Gibbs.  
Photos by Martha Stewart





MYRNA JOHNSON MC/MPA 2007  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MADELEINE KING

**“If you look across the country, there are lots of smaller stations, many of which have really tiny newsrooms, but they have real connections in their communities.”** MYRNA JOHNSON

She eventually returned to the AP in 2003 as a vice president of product development and chief revenue officer, just in time to see internet giants like Google and Facebook beginning to bleed news organizations of both their customers and their advertisers.

“It was the dawn of the technology companies really eating our lunch,” she says. “A lot of my career at the AP was trying to get licensing dollars out of companies that were effectively, in my opinion, stealing our content. And for a while it worked: We got Google to give up \$30 million one year. Then they got their lawyers together and said, ‘No, we have fair-use rights to this content.’ That’s one of the reasons I finally left—it was so frustrating, and we could not get our point across.”

That trend continued. According to Gibbs, newspapers were once a \$100 billion business in America,

but that figure has shrunk to just \$17 billion today. “You don’t think of Amazon as an advertiser, but Amazon alone makes more money in advertising than every newspaper in the world put together,” she says. “Google’s advertising business is now north of \$200 billion.”

## The Nonprofit Model

Because of the collapse in revenue that supports news gathering, Gibbs says, restoring local media to its role in civic life will be extremely difficult. “I don’t think there’s a way that we can really think about the ideal role that the press should be playing without thinking about the ways in which, some 15 years ago now, the entire industry was

blown up—and no one has figured out a strategy.”

Yet if a viable strategy does emerge, many media analysts say it will most likely involve an evolution with local news changing from a mostly for-profit ecosystem to a largely nonprofit one. Successful nonprofit news organizations include start-ups in small and underserved markets, ownership groups that are now running regional news organizations in Philadelphia and other markets, and long-standing public media organizations such as National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). In fact, in a recent research study, Patterson proposed building out a more robust local news ecosystem using the existing infrastructure of NPR, which disseminates news both on broadcast radio and online. Surveying 215 NPR senior editors and managers across the United States, Patterson found that half said they could become the leading news outlet in their community—if they had more funding. “Public radio has the capacity to fill much of the gap in local news created by the decline of the newspaper,” he says. “Strengthening local public radio stations is a democratic imperative.”

**Myrna Johnson MC/MPA 2007**, the executive director of Iowa Public Radio, believes that Patterson’s idea has merit. “I think there’s real potential there,” she says. “If you look across the country, there are lots of smaller stations, many of which have really tiny newsrooms, but they have real connections in their communities. The question is how do you support it and how do you grow it?”



Johnson says Iowa Public Radio is already working to fill gaps created by the shrinking for-profit news industry. Two years ago, the Gannett newspaper chain announced that it would lay off 700 people nationwide, including 14 reporters and editors at the *Des Moines Register*. Another shrinking regional chain, the Davenport-based Lee Newspapers, last year barely staved off a takeover bid by Alden Global Capital.

Meanwhile, Iowa Public Radio has been experimenting with newsletters and other new distribution channels and is collaborating with local philanthropists and foundations to fund additional reporting positions. It is also working on a funding model that is independent of state support and even includes its own endowment. The idea, she says, is modeled on other successful nonprofit community institutions—museums, hospitals, colleges—that use endowments as a stable base for their yearly budgets and to help ride out cyclical economic downturns. An endowment is a way to persuade local people to make a long-term investment in their community, she says, and Iowa Public Radio has launched a \$6.5 million “Resounding Future Campaign” to get things started. “We’re asking them to invest in the next-generation talent and technology that we require to create great radio and great journalism, to help us develop an endowment that will help us be a really strong nonprofit institution here in the state—one that can weather the ups and downs,” she says.

Johnson enrolled at HKS because of her background in government relations; at the time, she was advocating for public lands through the Outdoor Industry Association. But earlier in her career she had worked in NPR’s government affairs department and had thought seriously of getting back into public radio. “I went to a lot of Shorenstein Center talks,” she says. “I just cared a ton about it. Good journalism is the backbone of democracy, and I was thinking, ‘What role do I want to play in that?’”

## The Start-Up

One thing Jane Seagrave says she found encouraging in her role as head of the Massachusetts Newspaper Association was the energy being poured into local-news start-ups. Her favorites include the *New Bedford Light* and the *Provincetown Independent*, both nonprofits working to fill local-news gaps in





**“People really appreciated the depth of our reporting and our support of the community. It made people say, ‘Hey, this is not a bunch of crazy hippies; this is a real newspaper.’”** RANDY HOLHUT

their communities. Several hours north, in Vermont, fellow HKS alum **Randy Holhut MC/MPA 1997** is the news editor for a similar project, *The Commons*, a Brattleboro-based news source that publishes both an online and a weekly print edition for a highly engaged local readership. “We put more than 8,000 papers on the street every week, and people snap them up and they love it,” he says. “I’ve never worked at any other journalism organization where people come up to me and say, ‘I love that paper.’”

Yet Holhut says running a nonprofit news organization these days isn’t for the faint of heart.



**“We have seen a dramatic decline in the last 10 or 15 years, as we’ve seen the whole business model across media disrupted to where we are losing two newspapers every week.”** NANCY GIBBS

Funding for *The Commons* comes mostly from advertising, donations, and foundation grants. “We’ve had several near-death financial experiences,” he says. “Brattleboro has only about 12,000 people in it. Throw in the rest of Windham County, and it’s about 40,000 people. But it’s a very opinionated 40,000 people, who like to read about themselves in the newspaper.” Founded in 2006, *The Commons* was helped by a literal trial by fire 12 years ago, Holhut says. “Our big year was 2011: We had a major fire that destroyed a commercial block, a shooting at the local food coop, and Hurricane Irene,” he says. “People really appreciated the depth of our reporting and our support of the community. It made people say, ‘Hey, this is not a bunch of crazy hippies; this is a real newspaper.’”

Holhut’s acceptance to HKS was boosted by a letter of recommendation from one of Windham County’s most famous summer residents, economist John Kenneth Galbraith. Like Johnson, Holhut says, he spent a lot of time going to Shorenstein Center events and talking journalism with his academic advisor, the center’s founding director, Marvin Kalb. His advice to others looking to enter nonprofit journalism is to “listen to readers, learn about their concerns, and then show up when things are happening.”

says Carmen Nobel, the director and editor in chief of *The Journalist’s Resource*. “If a newsroom even exists in a community, it’s often two or three reporters, and somebody who’s the education reporter one day is the health reporter the next day. In the meantime, academic researchers can help provide context if the journalists know how to find them. So we see our core mission as informing the news by bridging the gap between academia and journalism.”

In addition to creating tip sheets and conducting webinars that teach journalists how research works, *The Journalist’s Resource* regularly publishes “research roundups,” which curate and summarize topical studies in plain language to make them more easily accessible to reporters and editors. Recent featured content has included disparities in HIV prevalence, prevention, and treatment; rules for prescribing drugs via telemedicine; and how indoor air quality in schools affects students’ learning and health. Nobel says *The Journalist’s Resource* is also working proactively with newsroom groups such as the Mental Health Parity Collaborative, a joint project of the Center for Public Integrity and the Carter Center in Georgia that is examining equity in mental health issues in America. The collaborative includes several newspapers, public radio stations, and television stations from across the country.

*The Journalist’s Resource* currently has a full-time staff of four but is hoping for growth if it can find money to support it. “Funding permitting, we would like to expand our staff to bolster our coverage of climate studies,” Nobel says.

Funding and resources are what saving local news and its role in democracy will ultimately be all about, Patterson says. The local news industry once pulled in \$50 billion in annual revenue. Now that figure is about \$10 billion. Ideas for recovering the missing \$40 billion have ranged from increased philanthropy to tax breaks to charging platforms like Google and Facebook for content, but the financial conundrum has been the one thing no one has been able to figure out, he says.

“If we’re going to put local news back in such a way that it’s really robust across the country and in local communities, we’re talking about a lot of money,” Patterson says. “This is just not an enterprise you can do on the cheap.”

## The Resource

One strategy nonprofit journalists use to create quality journalism with minimal money is to take advantage of a growing number of outside groups that offer free help to local-journalism start-ups. Some, like the American Journalism Project, provide seed capital to get new nonprofit newsrooms off the ground, while others, such as the GroundTruth Project’s Report for America, pay the salaries of reporters who are placed in local newsrooms across the country to report on undercovered issues. *The Journalist’s Resource*, based at the Shorenstein Center, helps newsrooms produce fact-based journalism by integrating academic research into their reporting.

“I think there’s never been more of a need for what we do because of the state of local journalism,”



# UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

Kennedy School professor and director of the Center for International Development Asim Ijaz Khwaja seeks to build a thriving world for all.

BY DIANA KING | PORTRAIT BY M. SCOTT BRAUER

CHANCE CAN SEEM AN UNFORGIVING and immutable constraint. Disease or accident can strike at any time; some are born into plenty, others struggle. But what if we could move the needle of chance toward greater equity and better outcomes for all? What if, by changing a person's life chances, we could change the outcomes for an entire nation—and with enough changes at scale, the world?

Building a thriving world for all is the ambitious new mission of the Center for International Development (CID) under the leadership of ASIM IJAZ KHWAJA, its faculty director and the Sumitomo-FASID Professor of International Finance and Development. He believes deeply in the power of human potential to transform outcomes, to overcome circumstances with small shifts in conditions, because he has experienced it—and studied it.

Over the past two decades, Khwaja has led extensive fieldwork in Pakistan as a cofounder of the Center for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP). His seminal projects include Learning and Educational Achievement in Pakistan Schools (LEAPS), the largest longitudinal study of Pakistan's education system (and one of the most comprehensive such studies in the world); using school and student report cards and school grants to raise educational quality throughout the region; testing incentives to drive tax collectors' productivity (one of the field's first-ever personnel experiments in tax collection); and linking taxes to public benefits to enhance government credibility.

Asim Ijaz Khwaja is the faculty director of the Center for International Development and the Sumitomo-FASID Professor of International Finance Development.



PIECES OF A PUZZLE

Tahir Andrabi, a cofounder of LEAPS and CERP and the Stedman-Sumner Professor of Economics at Pomona College, notes that at a time when most development researchers focusing on education were looking at school enrollment (the question of whether or not poor rural families were sending their kids to school), Khwaja was deeply embedded in the field, interviewing parents and local communities and using on-the-ground observations to guide completely different questions. The LEAPS team, led by Khwaja, Andrabi, and Jishnu Das, mapped out “the complete educational universe” of 120 villages, identifying all the relevant actors (children, parents, teachers, school and government officials, private tutors, textbook providers, and other educational actors) and the complex relationships among them. They saw a change in the rural landscape—the rise of low-cost private schools—and shifted their line of questioning to school choice. Over two decades the team conducted a series of vanguard experiments on improving school quality that are changing the entire field by demonstrating the power of a systems-based approach to research and reform.

Their landmark study on report cards showed that lowering an obstacle to decision-making—information on school performance and student outcomes—creates positive competitive pressure on all the schools in a region. Schools were pushed to improve quality; some poorly performing schools were forced to shut down; and, interestingly, the top schools were pressured to lower tuition costs. In effect, “quality went up, and price went down,” says Andrabi.

What the LEAPS work shows is that “when you change something in a school, the entire education environment changes, and it changes in ways that could potentially, massively amplify the effect of the original intervention,” says Abhijit Banerjee, the Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics and a

This grand vision centers on a simple belief: The most crucial capital is human talent and even the most under-resourced communities have talent in abundance.

cofounder and the director of the Abdul Latif Jamal Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at MIT. Banerjee, who with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer won the Nobel Prize for economics of randomized controlled trials, was Khwaja’s doctoral thesis advisor. Khwaja “was always asking more-ambitious questions,” going a step further than others in the field, he says.

The questions LEAPS was asking—How do parents make decisions? Where should resources and funds be allocated? What kinds of regulation should be instituted? What is the role of competition in public services? What is the link between public and private providers?—would prove relevant to theorists and policymakers in any country.

Khwaja’s systems approach to finance, likewise, “highlights that we cannot isolate actors or interventions in understanding how to solve big problems like increasing tax revenues and public goods provision,” says Oyebola Okunogbe, an economist at the World Bank and Khwaja’s former doctoral advisee. “We need to understand how the different pieces of the puzzle come together.”

Analyzing all those pieces is not the work of a single economist. To help Pakistan paint a clearer economic picture, Khwaja led the building of the country’s institutional research capacity through CERP. “Asim understands, on an organic level, the role of organizations,” says Andrabi. In the United States, which has rich and broad organizational research structures such as funding agencies, universities, regulatory bodies, and data collection agencies, “academics can focus on generating knowledge,” he explains. “In developing countries, you can’t take any of those elements [funding, peers, collaboration] for granted.” Over the past decade, CERP has grown to include more than 90 research fellows investigating diverse issues such as the environment, health, labor, gender, taxation, technology, and more.

“Asim has inspired talent at CERP in incredibly meaningful ways,” says Maroof A. Syed, the president and CEO of CERP. “He has cultivated many young minds and helped them thrive over time. Some of them came from the most remote areas of Pakistan and now are PhD candidates at top programs in the United States.”

As a mentor, Khwaja was encouraging and empathetic and demanding and disciplined, recalls Niharika Singh, an assistant professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame. As someone passionate about ideas, “he was often willing to engage with me on research topics that are outside mainstream economics,” she says. But “idea exploration was always structured to maximize learning.”

Today, Khwaja is applying the systems approach, his institution-building experience, and his dedication to training the next generation to build on and harness Harvard’s university-wide resources—its people, convening power, and extensive worldwide networks—to enable human flourishing on a global scale. This grand vision centers on a simple belief: The most crucial capital is human talent, and even the most under-resourced communities have talent in abundance.



Left to right: Khwaja with parents and elder brothers, Kano, Nigeria, 1976; Receiving academic achievement awards at high school graduation from president of Pakistan, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, 1991.



DIVERGENT DESTINIES

High in the Himalayas, cradling the peaks of K2 on the Pakistan side of the Ladakh range, lies a remote mountain community. Cold and barren, with few land endowments, the Shigar Valley in Baltistan is nevertheless richer and better educated than its neighbors.

Khwaja, who was studying communities in the region for his PhD thesis, wondered why this area, which started out worse, was so much better off. He discovered that it flourished precisely because, like other regions with few natural resources, such as Singapore and Taiwan, it had no choice but to invest in human capital. Again and again he has seen that investing in talent, when compounded across a community and over time, can accrue tremendous results. Within his own family, a single decision by his maternal grandfather to educate first himself and then his siblings and children created three generations of highly mobile and high-achieving individuals, including two Harvard faculty members.

The extended clan is originally from Kashmir, a region of artisans, makers of silk shawls and other crafts. There is a beauty and value in staying close to your roots and maintaining family ties, Khwaja reflects. But his family chose to move away. The youngest son of an ophthalmologist and a gynecologist, Khwaja was born in London and grew up in Nigeria and Pakistan. His brothers stayed in England for boarding school; one became a serial entrepreneur in London, and the other was a transplant

surgeon and a Harvard Medical School professor. An HMS award recognizing those who foster talent is named for him.

Early on, Khwaja’s parents instilled the importance of education and public service in their children, modeling the call to use one’s talents to serve others. When Asim was 2 years old, the family moved from Gujranwala, a town in the Punjab, to the city of Kano, in northern Nigeria, which at the time was experiencing rapid growth and importing talent (doctors, engineers, educators) from around the world to build its capacities.

“Nigeria was in its heyday,” says Khwaja. He was surrounded by “amazing talent,” with Nigerians and immigrants from all over coming together to make an impact. There was vitality in the air. “We would joke that the Nigerian currency, the naira, was as strong as the British pound,” he recalls. “We’d say, Look how strong we are! Nigeria had some of the best runners in the world in the 100-meter dash. Its soccer team was really good. It was a place of growth and vibrancy.”

He recalls an idyllic childhood of lasting friendships and meandering exploration. His parents were at the peak of their careers. It was through their work that he first glimpsed the effects of poverty, along with the possibility of alleviating them.

“I remember, very distinctly, one day my dad showed me this little glass vial with tiny legs of flies,” he says. “These parasitic flies cause onchocerciasis, or river blindness. He said, ‘Asim, this can create blindness, but we can cure it. Without our cures, people would go blind.’” His mother, long retired, still helps run



Active learning at low-cost private school in Kasur, Pakistan, 2014.

CID'S EVIDENCE FOR POLICY DESIGN RESEARCH PROGRAM (CERP)

MOHAMED MAHER / AP IMAGES



Left to right: Teaching mathematics in an Islamabad public school, 2023; Khwaja conducting a focus group with tutors in Faisalabad, Pakistan, 2018.



free medical-specialist service programs for disadvantaged people with alums of her medical school. These early powerful realizations that even tragic outcomes can be changed with science have stayed with him.

In early adolescence, Khwaja moved with his parents to Pakistan, where he came into his own academically, attending the prestigious Aitchison College, a sprawling colonial institution in the center of Lahore, built by the British in the 1800s to train “princely elites” and, later, professional classes. It was a difficult transition, not only because of the change in place. In Kano, he had roamed freely, the jungle was his backyard, and wildlife was integrated with domestic life in a natural way. Lahore was a densely populated city full of cars and noise. He had to learn a new alphabet, and although “I looked Pakistani,” he says, “I felt African.” That sensation of simultaneously being an outsider and an insider, and the realization that “physical appearances need not exclusively define your sense of belonging,” unlocked a kind of double sight that has become a hallmark of his work: an ability to look beyond the surface to grasp the underlying mechanisms, the guts of a system, and see both the mechanisms and the big picture.

Khwaja went on to MIT, where he studied economics, mathematics, and computer science with a minor in theater arts, and to Harvard for his PhD in economics. As he refined his studies, he remarked that “an outsider’s view gives you something critical as a researcher.” There’s a danger to familiarity, he says, because the more familiar you are, the less

curious you are and the more you take things for granted. At the same time, “in any conversation, you need to be familiar enough, comfortable enough, to ask revealing questions.” The balance between the two is crucial.

In development fieldwork, there is sometimes a tendency to exoticize the rural village. “But communities are not that different,” he says. “How people get sad, what makes them happy, their sorrow and their laughter, there’s a deep commonality. Out of that commonality, we can start to help each other.”

## REIMAGINING DEVELOPMENT

The energy at CID is palpable: It is the start of year two of a grand five-year plan, and a new executive team has been hired to build on the strong programming the center is known for.

“There’s a hunger at CID to think differently, to do differently,” says Fatema Z. Sumar, CID’s executive director, a former diplomat and development professional, and most recently the vice president of compact operations at the Millennium Challenge Corporation under the Biden administration. “Having been on the front lines of development and diplomacy, I have seen firsthand how most of our international-aid architecture is outdated and colonial,” she says. “I came to CID to partner with Asim because he sees we need a fundamental shift in how we think about poverty.”

On the surface, Khwaja and Sumar come from separate worlds: He’s an academic teaching in Cambridge and doing research in development; she’s a D.C.-based practitioner with

literally a million miles under her belt in dozens of countries. But although they took different journeys, they ended up in the same place, wanting to train the next generation of development leaders and doers to think and lead in new ways. And their unique partnership is already producing results. More than 120 faculty affiliates are conducting research in more than 115 countries; new experiential learning programs and global internships are being scaled up; and innovative collaborations are being forged among students, researchers, alumni, practitioners, local communities, and the media.

“We’re not here just to end poverty, which is the focus of most development organizations,” observes Sumar. “That’s the floor. But at CID we are reaching for the ceiling. We want people to go beyond surviving to thriving.” Success requires seeing the full potential of people wherever they are in the world. “Too often,” she says, “people associate innovation and opportunity with what is happening in the global North—New York, London, Tel Aviv, or Tokyo. Asim realizes that the real play is making connections between Harvard and the rest of the world, where some of the most exciting breakthrough solutions are happening. Because he comes from Nigeria and Pakistan, he understands the richness in places often associated with the poor.”

It’s a deeply egalitarian vision, shaped in part by personal tragedy in the midst of a historic global pandemic. Khwaja’s appointment to faculty director of CID, in 2020, coincided with the unexpected losses of his father, his father-in-law, a

brother, and a childhood friend in the span of a few months. At a particularly dark moment, he recalls, he had a conversation with his wife—a miniature artist inspired by Islamic Sufi traditions—about how sharing the grief of others can lessen one’s own. For Khwaja, grief crystallized truths about what really matters—our impact on other people’s lives—and solidified his belief that the biggest impact comes from investing in and enabling people.

During a recent trip to a primary school in a low-income settlement near Islamabad, Khwaja met two siblings, a sister who was academically precocious and her younger brother, who did less well in school. The sister wanted to be a doctor but was told by peers that it was impossible, because her family had little money. The brother had no discernible aspirations, but it turned out he was already a savvy entrepreneur: He salvaged discarded toys, repaired them, and sold them. He had sold toys to almost every child in the school. Khwaja, wanting both of them to recognize their own potential, suggested that the boy promise to one day pay for his sister’s schooling, and the girl promise to treat her brother’s kids free. Laughing, they agreed.

“Talent shines,” says Khwaja. “It’s hard to suppress. You just have to give it a little nudge, and it flourishes.”

We may never know the outcome for those siblings. Chance landed them in a place where talent often goes unseen. That’s the CID challenge: to create pathways for talent of all kinds to be recognized and thrive.

“Luck matters,” Khwaja says. “But we can change luck.”



CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH IN PAKISTAN (CERP)

MATT TEUTEN

**“Talent shines, it’s hard to suppress. You just have to give it a little nudge, and it flourishes.”**

**ASIM IJAZ KHWAJA**



Left to right: Addressing guests and discussing global food security at the welcome dinner of CID’s Global Empowerment Meeting, May 2023; Khwaja welcoming Dr. Osmani-Sidru, president of the Republic of Kosovo, to HKS to deliver the keynote address at CID’s Global Empowerment Meeting, May 2023.





The Taubman Center's experiential learning program is more popular than ever with students and state and local elected officials. And now governors across the country can use it as part of their transition strategy.

# Ready. Set. Govern.

BY SUSAN A. HUGHES

FOR NICK SIMMONS MPP 2019, participating in the Transition Term (T-Term) program was not only a unique experience; it launched his civil service career.

Transition Term was created in the fall of 2018 as an experiential learning program to provide HKS students with a paid fellowship during January break to support newly elected governors, mayors, and county executives as they assumed office. Launched and run by the Taubman Center for State and Local Government, the program was actually first proposed by students eager for an opportunity to work in government.

Simmons was in the first T-Term cohort, along with Yasmin Inam MPP 2020 and Lillie Carroll MPA 2019. A native of Connecticut, he was eager to work with the state's newly elected governor, Ned Lamont. "I wasn't really thinking about getting a job in government when I started T-Term," Simmons says, "but I was really excited about the team there, about the governor's leadership and his vision."

**RAFAEL CARBONELL**, executive director of the Taubman Center for State and Local Government and an adjunct professor at HKS, oversees the program as part of the center's portfolio of student-facing initiatives. He knows firsthand how fast and furious those early weeks in office can be from his time in Boston during the city's mayoral transition from Tom Menino to Marty Walsh. "Transitions have incredibly high energy," he says. "It's a frenetic, sometimes chaotic time."

Simmons' experience echoed that. Although Lamont had a core transition team ready to go, it had much to do in very little time. "There are so many agency commissioners to select and a cabinet to build out," says Simmons. "Staffing





**“It was a very rewarding outcome to be able to help the governor and his team bring to life the plan that my classmates and I had created during T-Term.”**

NICK SIMMONS MPP 2019

happens simultaneously with policy building, which is very unusual. But it’s also one of the most entrepreneurial times, because everything is on the table in terms of bold vision.”

He and two T-Term teammates created a plan to launch the governor’s workforce development bill, an important campaign plank. “We did a deep-dive analysis of the workforce system in Connecticut, the governance structure, and the ecosystem across the state,” Simmons says. “We then came up with some recommendations for how to improve that system in Lamont’s first term.”

Shortly after graduating, Simmons (above left, with Governor Ned Lamont) received a call from the governor’s chief of staff with a job offer: “They asked me if I wanted to join the administration and help implement the plan we created and help build a new office of workforce strategy,” he says. He came on as director of strategic initiatives. “It was a very rewarding outcome to be able to help the governor and his team bring to life the plan that my classmates and I had created during T-Term,” he says. He later joined the Biden administration as senior advisor to the secretary of education, and just recently returned to Governor Lamont’s team as deputy chief of staff.

The T-Term program can boast many similar stories from the five years

since it was launched. Statistics from the program are impressive: It has seen 152 student fellows participate in 51 state and local government administrations, and in 2023, the year with the largest number of participants to date, the program placed 54 students with six governors, one county executive, and 10 mayors throughout the country. Starting in 2022, the Taubman Center connected with the National Governors Association to help place students with incoming gubernatorial administrations. But the story of T-Term isn’t just about successful outcomes. It is also about student ingenuity, institutional support, and community investment.

“In 2018, three students came to see me with an idea for the January break in the Kennedy School schedule,” says **JEFF LIEBMAN**, the Robert W. Scrivner Professor of Social Policy and director of the Taubman Center. The three students—Alison Dorsey Eden MC/MPA 2019, Daniel Goetzel MC/MPA 2019, and Sam Birnbaum MPP 2020—drew from their own career experiences for the idea. Dorsey Eden and Goetzel had worked in newly elected administrations and knew that the pace was fast and the staffs were spare. They saw transitions as a great way for students considering a career in public service to get involved.

“The students knew that newly elected administrations of mayors and governors didn’t yet have their teams set up or were understaffed,” Liebman recalls. “They wondered, ‘Why not send Kennedy School students to help staff these administrations during their transitions?’ When I heard this idea, I immediately knew it was a good one.”

Liebman recognized the value of actually engaging students in state and local government work. “As soon as someone has those experiences, they’re hooked for life,” he says. But he also had another, more personal reason to think that the program would fit into the core strategy of HKS. “My family knew Dick Neustadt, one of the founding professors at the Kennedy School,” he says. “He famously wrote the memo for President Kennedy about how to plan his transition into the White House. After that, each administration called on Professor Neustadt for transition advice. I knew that the Kennedy School had this history of being the place to go for transitions, and the idea of being able to rekindle that really excited me.”

Liebman had worked on a presidential transition team himself. “Whether it’s at the federal level or at the state and local level, these periods are so important



**“We’re so glad the program has been institutionalized, because our vision was that graduates would go into government and then continue supporting this opportunity for the next generation of students coming in.”**

ALISON DORSEY EDEN MC/MPA 2019

## Public Service Primer

JAMIE MITTELMAN MPA 2022 perceived an opportunity with Transition Term that went beyond academics. “I saw in my personal and professional life friendships being cut off, working relationships being blocked, because people were on different sides of the political aisle,” says Mittelman, who founded Flame Bearers, the first global storytelling platform illuminating the unsung stories of resilient women Olympians & Paralympians. “Transition Term was an opportunity to engage with someone

who thought very differently than I.”

Mittelman, a Democrat, specifically requested to be placed in a Republican administration. And though she got what she asked for—her team joined the newly elected governor of Utah, Spencer Cox—she never imagined how powerful that placement would be. Her first day with the Cox transition team was January 6, 2021: the day of the insurrection at the Capitol. It was a key learning moment for her.

“I think Governor Cox and I disagree on pretty much every policy,” she says, “but I was blown away by him as a leader and I

was really, really impressed by him as he was coming in. I think he leads with a compassion and integrity that I have not usually seen in Washington, to be honest. And I really admired how he led in that difficult moment.”

Mittelman’s team had two projects. One was to survey all state employees on their satisfaction with human resource issues. That would be for the governor’s internal staff. The other was to create a dashboard to track the governor’s actions during the first 100 days in office. “This was an externally facing dashboard to go on his website that basically tracked his campaign promises and



would show his constituents the progress he was making,” Mittelman says. “I loved that, because it showed his commitment to transparency and his commitment to following up on his promises, which I think is something that not a lot of politicians do.” The dashboard is still on the governor’s website today.

Mittelman found his team supportive and with a sense of urgency during the transition period. She always felt welcome and that her contributions were helpful and substantive. “In the real world, you’re going to have managers

who have other priorities; you’re not always going to be at the top of the list. I think it’s an important skill set to be able to adapt.”

Mittelman found T-Term an excellent primer for public service. “Being in on the ground floor allowed me to see how much of governing is not creating policy, how much of it is just everyday work that needs to be done by someone,” she says. She also found a mentor in Governor Cox. “As I think about my political future, I hold him up as a role model for someone on the opposite side of the aisle who I would love to emulate in terms of his ability to hold true to his values.”



**“We had more than 120 students apply for a brand-new program. ... People were excited on all sides of the project.”**

DANIEL GOETZEL MC/MPA 2019



because of all the decisions that get made for an entire two- or four-year term,” he says. “Many get made within the first few weeks. Being able to make good decisions and get a team off to the right start and build momentum has a big impact that lasts well beyond those first few weeks.”

Liebman also points to the collaboration around HKS that helped launch the program and keep it going for the past five years. “In the first year, we cobbled together resources from the Taubman Center, from contributions from other centers, and from the HKS Alumni Fund,” he says. “Then, when we expanded in the second year, Dean Elmendorf was very generous in helping fund the expansion. It’s not just the funding that was important, but the dean’s commitment to state and local government and to experiential learning.” Since then, the program has received funding support from the Taubman Center’s Advisory Board members and has expanded through a partnership with the Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University. Ten U.S. mayors taking part in the Bloomberg Center for Cities and the Institute of Politics’ Program for New Mayors hosted transition fellows in January 2023, following their on-campus sessions.

“We’re so glad the program has been institutionalized,” says Dorsey Eden. “Our vision was that students would be inspired by their transition experience and go on to serve in state and local government after graduation. Then they could continue building the pipeline of talent by providing this opportunity for the next generation of students coming in.”

Dorsey Eden previously worked for the State of North Carolina Department of Commerce and currently works as a consultant in government innovation, philanthropy, and community development in North Carolina. She sees the longevity of the program as proof of student interest in public service. She says, “We saw a big opportunity for students to contribute during some of the most exciting and high-paced moments in a new administration, the very first days, when so many key decisions are being made, and when the new administration is

in need of more capacity. We also hoped that the transition moment would help students see their own path into public service. We are thrilled to see that it has.”

Goetzel, who works in the Biden administration on regional economic development and innovation at the National Science Foundation, a government research funding agency, remembers that the two biggest unknowns for the program—would students be interested, and would newly elected governors take cold calls from grad students?—turned out not to be problems at all. “We had more than 120 students apply for a brand-new program,” he says. And the elected governors and their senior teams embraced the idea. “They said, ‘We have a skeleton staff working on our top priorities (during the transition period), and you’re telling me that you’re going to bring in smart, passionate Harvard grad students to work full-time for three weeks on the projects that we value the most?’ So we got really lucky. People were excited on all sides of the project.”

For Birnbaum, the big lesson was seeing how much interpersonal dynamics and connections mattered. He now works for Settlement Housing Fund, Inc., a nonprofit that builds and rehabilitates affordable housing in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. “For me, the most valuable thing was less the subject matter stuff,” he says. “It was literally seeing the people interact. Any time the governor was in the room, 30 people would be following him, trying to advocate for their pet project or idea. It was impressive to watch a newly elected official deal with everyone having a priority, listening to them, making them feel heard, sifting through them, mapping the ideas onto his own priorities, and coming up with a decision. I’m not someone who remembers the nitty-gritty policy minutiae, but I remember the interactions, and that was the most valuable to me, because you can’t replicate that in a classroom.”

Carbonell agrees. “Those meaningful connections that happen through this work really paint a much richer and more holistic picture for our students of what it means to serve in state and local government,” he says. “And it brings in the



**“I’m not someone who remembers the nitty-gritty policy minutiae, but I remember the interactions, and that was most valuable to me, because you can’t replicate that in a classroom.”**

SAM BIRNBAUM MPP 2020

## Hometown Team

NITHIN VENKATRAMAN and AYANNA WARRINGTON wanted a specific placement with their 2023 cohort: the office of Maryland’s newly elected governor Wes Moore.

“I worked in the Maryland general assembly for two and a half years,” Venkatraman says. “I was in Annapolis, but on the legislative side of all the policy the state was doing. For me, T-Term was an opportunity to go home, because my family is there.”

Warrington agrees. “I knew that T-Term likes to place a mix of students in both an area where they have some kind of connection and other areas where they have no connection at all,” she says, “so I was really hopeful I would

get placed with Governor Moore, our country’s third Black governor and Maryland’s first Black governor. I really am moved by a lot of what he stands for.”

Warrington, who will focus on workforce development after commencement, worked on a team that helped provide support as the new administration placed people in leadership roles on boards and commissions throughout the state. “Governor Moore’s philosophy was that the government is really of the people, and all kinds of backgrounds should be considered for these roles, and they should know that these roles are available,” she explains. She worked on a web-based application tool available to

all Maryland’s residents where they could see a complete list of available positions.

“Growing up, my idea of government was federal service,” she says. “That’s what I saw all my classmates interning in and going into full-time. And I got this horrible impression that government is super slow, super bureaucratic, and you must know someone to get in.” T-Term quickly changed her thinking. “I was impressed,” she says. “I was only there for three weeks. Everything was super fast-paced. The team was incredibly nimble. When I showed up, there was no tool. When I left, there was a tool that had been launched to everyone in the state.”

Venkatraman plans to return to Maryland after graduation. For him,

T-Term provided an opportunity to scope out future service. “I really love state and local government,” he says. “I think that’s where, as a policymaker, you get to be close to the communities that you serve.”

During Transition Term he was placed in the chief counsel’s office. “It was just me and her,” he says. “That’s what it’s like in a transition. I got to do work that was very different from other work that I’ve done in the past in the legal profession. Last year, I was at a nonprofit doing mainly litigation stuff. And here I am helping provide support to an executive who is working on implementing change.”

Then Venkatraman pointed out the one thing that perhaps ties all the T-Term



experiences together. When his team arrived at the Maryland State House, they were met by the governor’s deputy chief of staff, Jonny Dorsey MPA 2014. As Venkatraman began to introduce

the HKS group, Dorsey stopped him. “I know who you are,” he said. “My sister [Alison Dorsey Eden] helped to start this program at the Kennedy School. I’m so happy you are here.”





**“I knew that the Kennedy School had this history of being the place to go for transitions, and the idea of being able to rekindle that really excited me.”**

JEFF LIEBMAN



**“Those meaningful connections that happen through this work really paint a much richer and more holistic picture for our students of what it means to serve in state and local government.”**

RAFAEL CARBONELL

human element that we want to make sure is core to their experience.”

He points out that those connections help generate interest in other HKS opportunities. “When the administrations have a great experience with our students,” he says, they often ask, ‘How else can you be of service?’ We are then able to offer other opportunities to work with HKS, like hosting students doing summer fellowships through the Dukakis Summer Fellowship Program. HKS also has the Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE) for all second-year MPP students. We’ve had a team of students work on their PAE with Governor Cox in Utah and with Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava after they had hosted a team of T-Term students.”

Carbonell says that one of the most exciting developments for the T-Term program was the collaboration in 2023 with the National Governors Association (NGA). “It’s impossible to overstate just how important a strong transition period is to a successful governorship,” says Bill McBride, executive director of the NGA, a bipartisan organization representing the leaders of 55 states, commonwealths, and territories. “Programs like Transition Term and NGA’s Seminar for New Governors provide valuable opportunities for newly elected governors to gain insights to ensure a successful transition and lay the groundwork for an effective tenure delivering solutions for their states.”

“I think we could standardize this as part of the NGA resources we provide in other collaborations,” he continues. “There is such a short window from Election Day to swearing in, and the first few weeks of an administration are very critical, so the more helpful resources that NGA and others can provide, the better.”

As for what’s ahead for the T-Term program, Liebman remembers what excited him in the first place: making HKS the go-to source for successful transitions for newly elected officials. “Now that we have this history, we’re starting to see common patterns that can improve the training we give to our students before they go out into the field,” he says. “But we’re also seeing things that we think new administrations should know even during their campaigns to have a successful transition.”

KAYANA SZYMCAK | PETER VANDERWARKER

## ALUMNI

2023

# Alumni Awards

Each year, HKS honors several outstanding alumni and one alumni network for exceptional public service and significant contributions to the Kennedy School and to local, national, and global communities.

### Alumni Public Service Award

Jean-Sélim Kanaan MPP 1996 (*posthumous*)

### Emerging Global Leader Award

Halimatou Hima MPP 2014

### Julius E. Babbitt Memorial Volunteer Award

David Rosenberg MC/MPA 1986

### Alumni Network Engagement Award

HKS Black Alumni Association

### HKS Fund Outstanding Alumni Award

Harriett “Tee” Taggart MCP 1973

Hien Dao MPP 2005

### Digital Innovation Award

Inder Singh MPP 2004





## Promoting peace

**Jean-Sélim Kanaan MPP 1996**

1970–2003 (posthumous)

PASSIONATE. COURAGEOUS. KIND. FUNNY. This is how colleagues, classmates, and his widow describe Jean-Sélim Kanaan MPP 1996, the 2023 recipient of Harvard Kennedy School’s Alumni Public Service Award.

Twenty years ago, on August 19, 2003, Kanaan was among 22 United Nations humanitarian workers who perished in the terrorist attack against the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad. He had just returned to the mission after spending a month home in Geneva with his wife, Laura Dolci, as she gave birth to their child. Kanaan was only 33 years old when he died.

“He touched so many lives in the short period he was on this planet,” says Dolci, who has continued to work for the U.N. “How many more would he have touched, had he lived?” The observation is not an understatement. Kanaan had been working to help people in conflict zones before and after graduating from college. In his book *My War Against Indifference* (published less than a year before his death), he wrote: “I was more determined than ever when, in 1992, I signed up for a humanitarian mission in Somalia, a country devastated by war and famine. To this day, I still wonder what made me give up my family and friends, and my comfortable life between Paris and Rome for such a plunge into the unknown.”

Born in Italy, Kanaan was the son of a French mother and an Egyptian father who served as a diplomat with the U.N.’s Food and Agricultural Organisation. His international upbringing, which included time in Italy, China, and France, gave him an aptitude for languages: He spoke Italian, French, English, Spanish, Arabic, and Serbo-Croat. As he noted in his book, “I was an Arab, a Christian, and a Westerner rolled into one. ... I felt equally at home in Paris, Rome, Sarajevo, Peking, Bihać, Pristina, and New York.”

Kanaan was deeply affected by the violence he witnessed, first in Somalia and then during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina—and he was angered that the NGOs he worked for did nothing to help employees with the mental health impacts of their experiences. He wrote in his book, “When someone broke down, he had to cope with his nightmare on his own.” It was something the U.N. would improve in later years but, nevertheless, remains insufficient, according to Dolci.

In 1994, Kanaan arrived at the Kennedy School, where Laila Manji MPP 1996 and he became fast friends. “He knew from a very young age that he wanted to serve vulnerable populations,” Manji says, “and by the age of 25—when he joined the Kennedy School—he had already worked in communities caught in the middle of brutal conflict. He was burning with rage at inhumanity and injustice—and that was his purpose at school. Everything he learned to do was to equip himself in his professional life to lead so that he could make a difference for these communities.”

Kanaan’s classmate Michael Burke MC/MPA 1995, who was an officer in the U.S. Navy, recalls their conversations about U.S. foreign policy: “It was all good discussion and good friendship. And that’s part of what being at the Kennedy School is for—to hear those different perspectives and have people from different segments that impact public policy and humanitarian missions and foreign policy so that everybody has a benefit of how other people approach these things.”

After graduating from HKS, Kanaan realized his lifelong dream: to follow in his late father’s footsteps to a position at the United Nations. Christophe Bouvier was heading the new U.N. Office for Project Services when he hired Kanaan. In a twist of fate, Bouvier had known Kanaan’s father when they worked together in the U.N. Development Programme in China—and he believed that Kanaan’s experience in Bosnia would help build peace in the Balkans after the Dayton Agreement was signed.

Eventually, after serving in New York, Kanaan was assigned to another hot spot—Baghdad in the wake of the U.S. invasion. In one of his last letters to his wife, he wrote, “The common denominator of these last few days is a feeling of insecurity. We had to change hotels because the Sheraton seems to be on the list of possible targets for a major attack such as a car or bus bombing.... I am sure there is nothing to worry about, but I don’t want to go out much anymore.... Above all, we cannot abandon for the umpteenth time the Iraqi people who have been left in a dead-end to deal in silence with their pain and the most abject injustice. It is our duty to reach out with no ulterior motive other than to promote peace.”

When accepting the Alumni Public Service Award on behalf of her late husband, Dolci said, “Jean-Sélim’s fearless and generous spirit lives on. He considered the hyphen in his name, between Jean and Sélim, a symbolic bridge between different cultures. His son proudly carries the same in his own name. He, along with many talented and courageous young people, will—I’m sure—endeavor to build stronger and innovative bridges for the well-being and sustainability of our humanity and planet.”



## Helping children affected by violent conflict

**Halimatou Hima MPP 2014**

HALIMATOU HIMA MPP 2014 is passionate about improving education for children, in particular those who have experienced conflict. For her ability to create positive change, including with multilateral groups such as the U.N. Security Council and by shaping the global agenda on education in crisis settings, the HKS Alumni Board selected her to receive the 2023 Emerging Global Leader Award.

Hima learned the value of education from her family, especially her great-grandmother. “One lesson from her that I carry with me everywhere I go, is to search for *ilimi*,” she says. Hima notes that *ilimi* means “knowledge” in Hausa, the most widely spoken language in West Africa. But her great-grandmother added a key element to the concept: “She explained it to me as the harmonious combination of knowledge, humility, and purpose.”

This sense of purpose led Hima to become, at age 15, the first president of the Youth Parliament of her home country of Niger. She says it was a challenging experience. “We faced threats from some of the voices that didn’t really agree with some of the work that we did,” she says. “Yet as we engaged with communities, it became very clear to me that we have to be able to create unlikely alliances [among] people who might not necessarily sit together. And even people who may initially appear hostile need to be part of the discussion if we are to really create meaningful discourse.”

Her ability to negotiate among people with diverse viewpoints was essential when she served as an expert counselor at the United Nations in 2020–2021, during Niger’s tenure as a member of the Security Council. Amid the global pandemic, Hima successfully

shepherded Resolution 2601 through the Security Council—the first-ever U.N. resolution to assert the right of children to education during armed conflict. Ninety-nine nations cosponsored the resolution—a number surpassed only by the 130 nations that cosponsored a 2014 resolution on the Ebola outbreak.

“At its core, this resolution states what should be self-evident—that in armed-conflict situations, education is as essential to children as water and food,” says Hima. “It is not and should not be an afterthought or something to do when things get better. Education can be the light that carries children through the darkness of conflict. Education allows children to find a sense of normality.”

Violent conflict has a significant impact on large numbers of children. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack estimates that from 2015 to 2019, nearly 22,000 students and teachers were killed or injured, with tens of thousands more prevented from being in school—and more than 222 million children around the world have had their education affected by conflict and humanitarian crises. Given how important education is to economic development, says Hima, violence today affects entire regions for years into the future. “When children and young people no longer learn, the very foundations needed to rebuild strong societies and economies are compromised. It is therefore not surprising that some of the poorest countries today are countries facing fragility or conflict.”

Hima takes a special interest in the education of girls. “In armed-conflict situations, girls face heightened vulnerability, and schools often fail girls,” she says. “They are more likely to be out of school, less likely to return after school closure, and less likely to complete secondary school. Sometimes schools do not have proper sanitation and wash facilities, so adolescent girls can easily drop out. Yet to many children in forced displacement, the ability to continue learning can be a reminder that a better tomorrow is possible, and for girls, education can give a sense of possibilities.”

For the past few years, Hima has served as an ambassador of the Next Einstein Forum (NEF), an organization dedicated to making Africa a global hub for science, research, and technology. She organizes Science Week in Niger, part of NEF’s continent-wide effort to encourage young people—especially women, who are underrepresented in science and research—to explore opportunities in STEM and to see that science is within their reach. “During the first two editions,” she says, “in 2018 and 2019, over 3,000 children from public schools joined a weeklong ‘science village,’ where they had the opportunity to experience science firsthand in tangible—and for some, magical—ways.”

Today, Hima is a senior fragility specialist covering coastal West Africa at the World Bank, a position that allows her to use the skills she learned not just at the Kennedy School but also at the University of Cambridge, where she earned a PhD at the Centre of Development Studies. Carl Manlan MC/MPA 2012, a former member of the HKS Alumni Board who nominated Hima for the Emerging Global Leader Award, says, “Halimatou is an exceptional individual who believes that success does not come at the expense of others.” Her selfless devotion to improving lives through education has made a difference for countless children—and will continue to do so for many years to come.





2023 Julius E. Babbitt Memorial Volunteer Award

## Connecting community

David Rosenberg MC/MPA 1986

SINCE HIS GRADUATION and especially during the last decade, David Rosenberg MC/MPA 1986 has been an active member of the HKS and Harvard alumni communities. For his exceptional contributions and for volunteering his time, creativity, and energy to enhance the alumni experience, Rosenberg is this year's recipient of the Julius E. Babbitt Memorial Volunteer Award.

An expert on organizational transformation, innovation, and development—among other work, he consults for U.S. federal agencies and nonprofits on these issues—Rosenberg was tapped in 2012 by his classmate Wendy Pangburn MC/MPA 1986, the Alumni Board chair at the time, to help revitalize the board's efforts.

"Given my background, Wendy asked me to work with her and the Alumni Relations Office," he says. "We began with the basics: What is the nature of our alumni community? What is its purpose? Why and how do we organize it? And we started from the principle that we had all committed ourselves to a vision of public service, and that we as alumni should help each other to maintain and strengthen that commitment, even when it is difficult."

Rosenberg worked with the board to develop new structures and committees that would harness alumni's dedication to public service and to each other, in addition to supporting HKS and current students. He joined the board in 2013, where he developed a

reputation as a humble, hands-on contributor. "I admire that David digs into the hard, unglamorous, and time-consuming, behind-the-scenes work," says Jen Tutak MPA 2012, who chaired the board in 2020–2021 and nominated Rosenberg for this award. "We as a board learned so much from him. He consistently articulated and demonstrated that we are a lifetime community, connected and engaged in a wide variety of ways, and above all dedicated to the core mission of public service across sectors."

Rosenberg is a true connector of people, not just at alumni and student events—when he finds a commonality between attendees and makes sure to introduce them to each other—but also across Harvard University's various alumni communities and organizations.

Says Tutak, "As an HKS representative to the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA), which had focused largely on College alumni, David helped elevate its newly established graduate school directors into a respected voice for graduate school alumni within the HAA, championing alumni collaboration across Harvard's often siloed graduate schools."

At first, some people were skeptical. "People didn't quite understand our role and value to the University, especially given the different durations and natures of the diverse graduate programs. But we realized we could learn a whole lot from each other," Rosenberg says of the graduate school alumni group. "And we found receptivity and growing recognition in the larger HAA."

It is this broad perspective (Rosenberg is also a graduate of Harvard College) that allows him to amplify the collective impact of talented people throughout Harvard's many alumni communities. In addition to his involvement in the top HKS and University alumni groups, he has served as a class volunteer for his HKS reunions and as a longtime elected member of the HKS Washington, D.C., Alumni Council. He has also consistently supported HKS students through his generosity to the HKS Fund.

Rosenberg believes that HKS alumni are among the School's greatest assets. "Alumni are one of the most effective and important parts of how HKS affects the world," he says. "The School sends hundreds of graduates every year to apply what we have learned to make the world a better place wherever we can."

This commitment to action is what makes Rosenberg such a powerful volunteer on behalf of the Kennedy School and its alumni—and is what helped him earn this year's Julius E. Babbitt Memorial Volunteer Award.

*"People didn't quite understand our role and value to the University, especially given the different durations and natures of the diverse graduate programs. But we realized we could learn a whole lot from each other."*

DAVID ROSENBERG



2023 Alumni Network Engagement Award

## Building community

HKS Black Alumni Association

THE HKS BLACK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (BAA) has flourished through the leadership, dedication, and teamwork of its executive board. Expanded programming, including joint events with students, enhanced communications, and more opportunities for alumni to connect with each other and the school led the HKS Alumni Board to choose the BAA as this year's recipient of the Alumni Network Engagement Award.

The BAA aims to raise awareness of policies and strategies that will make societies more fair, just, and equitable; to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; to strengthen connections among alumni and between alumni and HKS; to deepen understanding of social, economic, justice, health, and civic issues facing Black communities in the United States and around the world; and to advance the School's mission.

Being part of a larger community with common interests is what motivates alumni to become involved. Says Rudy Brioché MPP 2000, president of the BAA's executive board, "Essentially, it is about shared needs and shared values. Although we focus on providing meaningful engagement for all Black alumni, not only in the United States but in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and around the world, we are not a race-based organization but a values-based organization. Our common values include public service, engagement, and diversity and inclusion—and when we focus on values, we maximize our potential."

Last year, the BAA's five events drew more than 300 participants. Its first "State of Leadership" event—an annual series during Black History Month—featured former Massachusetts

Governor Deval Patrick, who had recently been appointed as co-director of the Center for Public Leadership and joined the HKS faculty as professor of the practice of public leadership.

Brioché attributes the network's success to the executive board's commitment. For example, members of the board regularly attend events organized by HKS's Black Student Union and Harvard's Black Alumni Society; they support and attend the annual, student-organized Black Policy Conference; and they partner with the Harvard Alumni Association on events and other initiatives. Board member Orondaam Otto MC/MPA 2022, who lives in Nigeria, says, "The board meets every two weeks, which is rare for people with so many other commitments. This level of devotion is inspiring."

On the communications front, board member Kia Coleman MPP 1999 spearheaded an improved website, an expanded social media presence, and the launch of a biweekly newsletter including a "Spotlight" series, which highlights the work of alumni and staff. Rodas Seyoum MC/MPA 2021, Oliver Queen Jr. HKSEE 2014, and Otto improved the accuracy of membership lists; Queen and Brioché finalized the BAA's application for federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status; Annette Raggette MPP 1994 developed programming with groups across HKS; and René Rambo-Rodgers MC/MPA 1990 led efforts to revise the BAA's bylaws.

The BAA also collaborates with the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid to offer virtual discussions for applicants who have been admitted but have not yet decided to attend HKS. Says Brioché, "We reflect on our experiences at HKS and we share a bit about the HKS and Harvard community and answer questions about where they want to go in their careers."

"One of the most rewarding things about attending HKS is the rich and wonderful relationships we form with faculty, staff, and classmates," Raggette says. "The BAA is committed to furthering those relationships by connecting alums with each other and the HKS community through programming and communications. Together, we seek to educate and uplift Black people everywhere."





2023 HKS Fund Outstanding Alumni Award



## Making a difference for HKS students

Harriett “Tee” Taggart MCP 1973  
Hien Dao MPP 2005

THIS YEAR’S HKS FUND OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD goes to two pathbreaking women who have worked in government and the private sector: Harriett “Tee” Taggart MCP 1973 (above, left) and Hien Dao MPP 2005 (above, right). Their consistent generosity to the HKS Fund has enhanced the experience of countless HKS students.

Taggart has donated to the School every year for more than two decades. One reason for her generosity is that she has personally experienced the benefits of internships as both a student and an employer—and the HKS Fund provides essential support for interns. Says Taggart, “Particularly for a professional school, many students come in with a fair amount of work experience under their belts, but trying something different and without committing to a career decision gives students an opportunity to explore areas that they might not otherwise.”

Her own internship was at the Massachusetts state legislature, where she worked before, during, and after her time at HKS. “It was a seminal period in trying to rebuild urban neighborhoods,” she says. “I became very involved in home-mortgage financing in city neighborhoods, particularly for minority communities.” She went on to earn her PhD in planning and capital markets from MIT, then forged a path in finance, where she focused initially on high-yield credit—a new concept in 1983.

She later was one of just a few women serving on the boards of directors of public companies. Today, she continues to serve as an engaged trustee and advisor on a number of nonprofit boards. Her

many interests include helping women advance to senior leadership positions, enhancing educational opportunities for girls and people of color in the STEM fields, and combating climate change.

Hien’s career, too, has included diverse chapters. She started out as a journalist, first in her native Vietnam and later in Africa and North America. Of her switch to public policy, she says, “I felt like there were so many problems in the world, and we kept writing about them over and over and nothing seemed to change. I wanted to be involved in solutions, so I decided to go back to school to study policy and government.”

A consistent donor to the HKS Fund for a decade, Hien understands the collective impact of many gifts. “The first time that I left Vietnam to go abroad to study, for my first master’s degree [in journalism] at Columbia, I received donations from so many people who just wanted to help. Friends organized campaigns and even people I had never met would donate \$10, \$50, or whatnot.”

After graduating from HKS, Hien worked in city government in New York, first as a senior analyst in the office of Mayor Mike Bloomberg and then as a director and policy advisor for the city’s finance commissioner. Today, she is back in Vietnam, directing a school system with 3,000 students and chairing Golden Path Academics, the company she founded in 2012 to help Vietnamese students receive a well-rounded education and enter college in a globalized world.

Hien is involved at HKS beyond her generosity to the HKS Fund. She has served on the School’s Alumni Board; she started and led the Harvard Club of Vietnam; and she is now involved in the Harvard Business School Advisory Board for the Asia-Pacific region.

“I have benefited a great deal from my education at Harvard, and also continue to believe that the School plays a really important role in educating policymakers, leaders, and responsible citizens,” she says. “I really want to support that in whatever way I can.”



2023 Digital Innovation Award

## Technology for health

Inder Singh MPP 2004

HOW CAN YOU STOP AN OUTBREAK before it becomes an epidemic? How do you know when and where symptoms start?

For Inder Singh MPP 2004, these questions are not rhetorical. He had seen, through his job at the Clinton Health Access Initiative, how expanding access to drugs could help millions of people with HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases—but he was frustrated that no one was collecting data that would allow society to prevent and even predict their spread.

“Kinsa was born out of that experience,” says Singh, referring to the company he founded in 2012—a company that continues to amass a vast trove of data that, through machine learning and advanced analytics, identifies hotspots of disease, predicts their spread, and forecasts the impact of infectious illnesses on the health system, such as surges in emergency department visits and where and when the stock of crucial medications may run low. It does this using one of the most common diagnostic tools available: a thermometer—which, says Singh, is “one of the only products that exists in the home that you can use to confirm illness.”

To Singh, the thermometer was always a means to an end. The company’s thermometers are unique because they connect to an app via Bluetooth to guide users to better care and treatment in the moment. With customer consent, the app then transmits the anonymized data, including temperature and self-reported symptoms, back to the company, which then aggregates and analyzes the information.

Says Singh, “We had to get years of data to see a pattern, in order to extrapolate. Only then could we truly say, ‘Yes, we can predict outbreaks.’ Shortly after we developed some amazing forecasting models, the COVID pandemic hit. And that’s when *healthweather.us* was born.”

Using just a ZIP code entered by users, this website provides

a snapshot of the risk for flu, COVID, stomach bugs, and colds and other illnesses in a specific area. “The pandemic became a huge proof point in that not only could we predict seasonal illnesses like colds and flu, but we could detect a novel, anomalous illness well before other systems could,” Singh says.

With its temperature and symptom data, Kinsa was able to spot COVID outbreaks weeks before health authorities could do so using other, more traditional metrics such as hospitalizations. And unlike systems that monitor wastewater to track known pathogens, Kinsa can identify surges of illnesses that may be caused by viruses not yet on health authorities’ radar.

In addition to selling its thermometers, Kinsa has to date distributed more than 500,000 thermometers free to students in school districts from New York to Sacramento through its FLUency School Health Program. In total, approximately 2.5 million households in the United States use a Kinsa thermometer—and Singh is working to expand the company globally.

He notes that Kinsa is essentially creating a new market for outbreak analytics.

The next step, he says, is to ensure that this novel market is widely accepted across all sectors. “We’ve got very good scale in the U.S.—and if we can accomplish that in other areas in the world, we’ll have a global network. And if you have that global network, where you’re informing people about what’s going on and supporting the institutions that can actually respond, you now have a global early-warning system. And that’s the dream.”

For his work on improving public health through the innovative use of technology, Singh is the 2023 recipient of the Digital Innovation Award.

*“If you have that global network, where you’re informing people about what’s going on and supporting the institutions that can actually respond, you now have a global early-warning system.”*

INDER SINGH





EVENT

# Where pandemics and policy meet

NEARLY FOUR DECADES after he had stood in the audience as a graduating student, former United Nations Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon MC/MPA 1984** looked out at hundreds of Harvard Kennedy School graduates during Commencement Week and exhorted them to fix what his generation had failed to.

Speaking about the existential threat of climate change, Ban, who led the U.N. from 2007 to 2016, said future generations will live in a world increasingly resembling the dystopian planets imagined in science-fiction movies unless the political leaders take necessary action now.

“The fact of the matter is that today’s world leaders have thus far failed miserably by putting selfish national interests ahead of urgent global needs,” Ban told the HKS graduating class of 2023. “They have failed to see the big picture—that the world will sink or swim together—or they have decided to play a dangerous game of chicken, demanding that others do more to curb CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.”

Ban, who returned to HKS as an Angelopoulos Global Public Leaders Fellow in 2017, was addressing a class of 706 graduates from 42 U.S. states and 84 countries and territories. He urged them to “do more to cultivate and expand the great virtue of global citizenship with compassion.”

“To be a global citizen and leverage the power of compassion is a significant step as an individual to create a brighter future for all of humanity and our planet,” Ban said. “Today, 8 billion people live on our planet. I have met countless people from all around the world who possess enormous amounts of passion and courage. Passion and courage constitute a significant portion of human power, but they are valuable only when accompanied by compassion.”

THE BUZZ



“We need people in the streets, we need people who negotiate with governments, and we need people who are in government.”

U.S. Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons **Jessica Stern** at a Forum in February



“I believe inequality is among the greatest threats to our democracy because inequality asphyxiates hope, and hope is the oxygen of democracy.”

Ford Foundation President **Darren Walker** at a Forum in February



“If we don’t have journalists who are pouring themselves into digging up the facts...asking tough questions and holding people accountable, then our country is hurt by that.”

2023 Shorenstein Goldsmith Career Award Winner **Judy Woodruff** speaking in March



“I think the future of America is in the effective class of governors, both Republican and Democrat. Government at the local level is the best government.”

New Hampshire Governor **Chris Sununu** at a Forum in March



“If you only focus on who’s president, you will miss that your democracy is being taken from you by the people who are sitting in your state capitol.”

Tennessee State Rep. **Justin Pearson** at a Forum in April



“A nuclear weapon is not just about technology. ... We would need to give up many of the values we have been upholding if we decided to develop our nuclear weapons.”

South Korean President **Yoon Suk Yeol** at a Forum in April

TOP: KAVANA SZYMCAK | PORTRAITS: MARTHA STEWART | BETHANY VERSOY | STEPHANIE MITCHELL



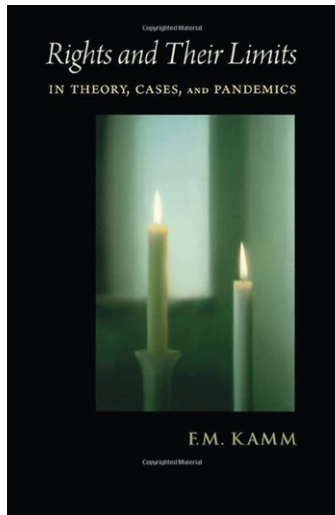
Rights and Their Limits

In Theory, Cases, and Pandemics

Frances M. Kamm, Littauer Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy, Emerita



IN HER TENTH BOOK ON MORALITY, Kamm uses hypothetical and practical cases to understand the limits of rights. Written during



the COVID-19 years (the last two chapters are extensions of her 2020 article “Moral Reasoning in a Pandemic” and 2021 article “Harms, Wrongs and Meaning in a Pandemic”), the discussion explores three areas. The first, what she calls “rightsousness”—her coinage for rights-respecting attitudes and behaviors—explores the idea of rights and their correlative duties in light of some theories and judgments about real and hypothetical cases. The

second area involves the limits of rights to constrain our conduct and considers the moral significance of the various ways we harm and not aid others, as in the trolley problem, for example. And the third focuses on why someone’s rights can fail to constrain us in extreme cases.



Democratize Work

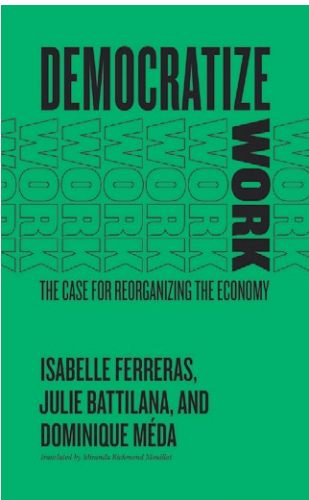
The Case for Reorganizing the Economy

Julie Battilana, Alan L. Gleitsman Professor of Social Innovation; Isabelle Ferreras, University of Louvain; Dominique Méda, Paris Dauphine University



AT THE CORE OF THIS BOOK is a manifesto about the urgent need to democratize firms, decommodify work, and decarbonize our environment. Written by Julie Battilana, Isabelle Ferreras, and Dominique Méda in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the manifesto was signed by more than 3,000 academics across the world and published in May 2020. *Democratize Work* includes essays by Battilana, Ferreras, Méda, and 10 other social scientists, who use phrases and ideas from the manifesto to spur further discussion.

In her introduction, Battilana writes that the pandemic provided a unique opportunity to change the way we work and



threw into sharp relief how those we considered essential workers were the most vulnerable, prompting the authors’ call to action. “Our manifesto is built on three pillars: democratize firms—give power and voice to employees so that they can participate in organizational decisions; decommodify work—ensure that work is not governed by market forces alone and that every person has the right to work; and, finally, decarbonize our environment—commit to preserving and protecting our natural ecosystems,” Battilana

writes. “These are the three levers we have at our disposal to make our societies of tomorrow fairer, more democratic, and greener.”



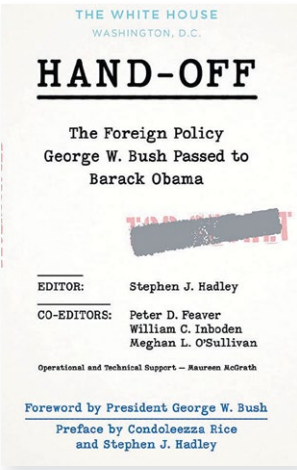
Hand-Off

The Foreign Policy George W. Bush Passed to Barack Obama

Editors: Meghan O’Sullivan, Jeane Kirkpatrick Professor of the Practice of International Affairs; Stephen Hadley; Peter Feaver, Duke University; William Inboden, University of Texas, Austin



THIS SUBSTANTIAL VOLUME provides a record of the national security and foreign policy concerns the George W. Bush



administration faced as it prepared for the incoming Obama administration in 2008. *Hand-Off* includes 30 declassified transition memoranda, accompanied by new postscripts that provide context for these contemporaneous accounts on issues such as U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan, the United States’ stance toward China, HIV/AIDS, and nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran. The memoranda are supplemented by essays on biodefense and pandemic planning, cyber preparedness, and climate change and clean

development, written with the benefit of hindsight by Bush administration officials.

Meghan O’Sullivan—an HKS faculty member who served as special assistant to President George W. Bush and deputy national security advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan—joins Stephen Hadley, a former national security advisor, in introducing the volume. “These memoranda were not partisan talking points designed to shape the public assessment of the departing president,” they write. “They were written to help the next president and his team get up to speed as quickly as possible under daunting circumstances. The memoranda were to be shared only with the new president and the new president’s national security team. Collectively the memoranda represent the most well-informed, comprehensive, and contemporaneous judgment about how the Bush NSC staff saw the Bush administration’s legacy at the time—and the challenges it believed the new Obama administration would face.”



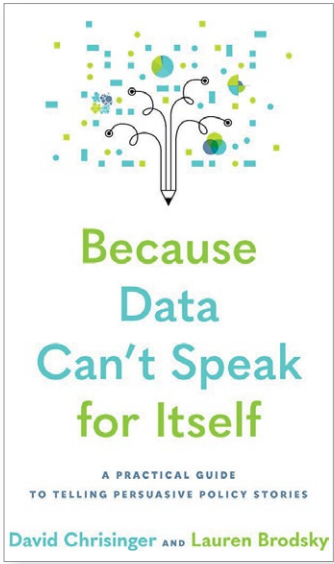
Because Data Can’t Speak for Itself

A Practical Guide to Telling Persuasive Policy Stories

Lauren Brodsky, Lecturer in Public Policy; David Chrisinger, University of Chicago



*BECAUSE DATA CAN’T SPEAK FOR ITSELF* is a practical, concise book that pairs its lessons with concrete examples of challenges in



telling stories with data—from understanding COVID-19 statistics in the early days of the pandemic to using data to track down a Canadian serial killer. Lauren Brodsky and David Chrisinger lay out 32 tips for understanding the stories data tells, contextualizing it, and writing more effectively about it in ways that are meaningful for readers. They emphasize that researchers and writers need to understand the narrative their data is telling and get it across to their audiences clearly and accurately.

“Our interest in communicating effectively with data stems from our combined decades of teaching public policy students and practitioners to use their data in support of a story that helps readers make sense of something,” the authors write. “Sometimes the people

we teach must learn how to use more data, other times less. Some need to learn how to explain and contextualize the evidence they have, while others need to figure out how to collect data that would help them say something valuable. Above all else, nearly every writer we’ve ever taught or consulted with has needed help figuring out how to tell stories about data that meet the needs specific to their readers.”



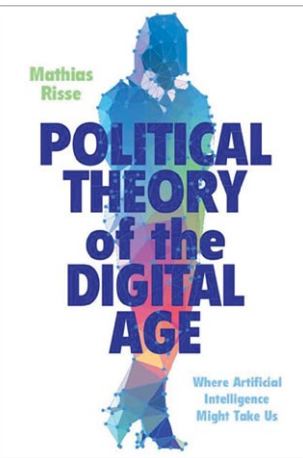
Political Theory of the Digital Age

Where Artificial Intelligence Might Take Us

Mathias Risse, Berthold Beitz Professor in Human Rights, Global Affairs and Philosophy



IN THIS TIMELY, EXPLORATORY BOOK, Mathias Risse draws on frameworks and concepts from a wide range of political theorists and



philosophers to explore themes of the current and future digital age. He considers how we might live alongside intelligent machines and navigate questions of rights and knowledge when data and disinformation are omnipresent. As Risse explains, “This book aims to create a better footing for the philosophy of technology and for discussions around epistemic rights and justice in the liberal-egalitarian outlook, as a way of helping to bring into the digital era—the era of AI and Big Data, and possibly the age of the

singularity—the debates that have traditionally preoccupied political thinkers.” Starting with John Rawls’s theory of justice as fairness as a foundation, along with elements from the Marxist tradition, Risse incorporates ideas from a spectrum of schools of thought to examine questions pertaining to the digital realm—from deepfakes to data ownership to how we might structure political life alongside machine intelligence. Along the way, he introduces concepts not only from political thinkers narrowly defined, but also from novelists, technologists, and others. “One point I have made throughout is that the advent of AI requires that the relationship among various traditions of political thought be reassessed,” Risse writes. “All such traditions must fully integrate the philosophy of technology.”





# CLASSNOTES



Every year the School says goodbye to a graduating class and hello to a new cohort of alumni. Graduates of the Class of 2023, clockwise from top left: Amita Ramachandran MPA, Caio Poli MPA, Itika Gupta MPA, David Rifkin MPA, Tess Kelly MPA, Esteban Santos MPA.

LYDIA ROSENBERG

## 1980

**Eric Cody MCRP** has a new book out titled *Rescuing Ellisville Marsh: The Long Fight to Restore Lost Connections* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2023). The book tells the story of a 15-year project to revitalize fisheries and wildlife in a 70-acre salt marsh in Plymouth, Massachusetts. This is Eric’s first foray into environmental activism after a 40-year career in the energy sector. The book has received a favorable mention in *The Boston Globe*.

## 1981

**Joe Leitmann MPP** married Kyungsuk Brien in October 2022; they are enjoying hiking, traveling, and cooking together. Joe was elected vice president of The International Emergency Management Society and was selected to serve on the executive board of the International Science Reserve. He continues to serve as executive director of the University of California Disaster Resilience Network and CEO of Rapid Assessment, Planning and Implementation for Development (RAPID LLC).

**Robert Reiner MCRP** reports that his graphic novel adaptation of a lost “mini masterpiece” by science fiction and fantasy writer Otto Binder (Captain Marvel, Black Adam, Superman, and I, Robot) was recently published by Fantagraphics. Written in 1953 but left unpublished until now, *Otto Binder’s The Unwanted* uses literary metaphors to address the McCarthy era repression of the time. Remarkably prescient, many of the themes of racism, antisemitism, gender discrimination, military aggression, and fake news reverberate today.

## 1982

**Erik Ferguson MCRP** writes, “The fundamental equation has finally been published, thank God. You may find it Down Under at *Antipodean SF*, an online magazine permanently archived by the Australian government, in a story called ‘Flowers’ by an author named ‘Keech Ballard,’ which is me. Enjoy!”

## 1984 40TH REUNION

**Judy Bunnell MPP** was joined by almost 100 alumni and Judy Kugel, former associate dean of students and head of HKS Career Services, to discuss how to retire gracefully and age well. Judy K. discussed her 30-plus years at HKS and when she knew it was time to retire. She touched on health decisions,

housing options, and how to keep active after leaving HKS. More “lifestyle” webinars are promised for alumni.

**Marc Pomper MPA**, after a 35-year-plus career in finance, has retired with his wife, Rayna, to a life of leisure and travel, with a present base in Philadelphia. There, he has become increasingly involved in support for arts and cultural institutions, as well other civic improvement initiatives. He is greatly looking forward to reconnecting with KSG alumni in the coming months and years!

## 1985

**Barbara Lamont MC/MPA** is still living in Lafayette, Louisiana, where she runs a 24-hour contact center for government agencies in all 50 states. She is working on retiring this year or early next year. “Call or stop by if you are in the area.”

## 1986

**John Hill MC/MPA** received an Exceptional Service Award from U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in recognition of his 30 years of service to the nation. “Throughout his career, Mr. Hill has helped Treasury meet the challenges of the times,” cited Yellen. John prepared the nation’s import system for Y2K and post-9/11 security requirements, and managed Treasury’s financial agents in resolving troubled assets during the 2008–2009 financial crisis. During the coronavirus pandemic, John led the disbursement of \$500 billion in relief funds under the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan. John is currently chairman of the board of Alexandria Renew Enterprises, his city’s water reclamation facility.

## 1987

**Nadine Hack MC/MPA** recently received the Catalyst for Change Award and gave a keynote speech at Business and Professional Women Lake Geneva. She has written articles for *Forbes* as well as a book titled *Power of Connectedness*, featuring a foreword by Desmond Tutu. Nadine teaches a grad course at the University of Lausanne, and has been a guest on podcasts including “Conversations with Coaches,” “What Makes Work Work?,” “Your Path to Success,” and “Women Leading Audaciously.”

## 1989 35TH REUNION

**Joyce Barr MPA** retired in 2017 after serving as U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Namibia, deputy commandant and interim

chancellor at National Defense University, and assistant secretary of administration at the Department of State. Currently, Joyce is a regent at Pacific Lutheran University, a fellow at the National Academy of Public Administration, and a professor of practice at Virginia Tech.

**James Brett MPA**, president and CEO of The New England Council, was recently named the chair of the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) by President Joe Biden. PCPID is a federal advisory committee that promotes policies and initiatives that support independence and lifelong inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in their respective communities. James has been a lifelong champion for individuals with disabilities and previously served on PCPID under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

## 1992

**Juliette Fay MPP** has published her seventh novel, *The Half of It* (HarperCollins, 2023). The novel tells the story of a woman reflecting on the most impactful night of her life—and reuniting with the man involved after 40 years apart. Juliette and her husband, Tom, live in Wayland, Massachusetts, where Tom’s role on the Select Board has him eating breakfast with half the town, and Juliette can often be found in her garden up to her elbows in dirt.

**Chuck Flacks MPP** was hired this past December as the homelessness services coordinator for the City of Goleta, California.

## 1993

**Xavier Briggs MPA**, after six years in a global role as vice president for inclusive economies and markets at the Ford Foundation, has moved with his family back to Washington, D.C., where he works as a senior scholar and advisor at The Brookings Institution, focused mainly on equitable economic development and climate action in the United States. He’s also inspired by serving on the boards of Dēmos, JUST Capital, One Fair Wage, and other nonprofits.

**Miki Sawanishi MPP** writes, “Hi to all fellow 1993 MPPs! I’m working for the United Nations Democracy Fund to support grassroots democracy worldwide. I hope to reconnect with many of you and please send me emails if you have a chance to come to NYC.”



Eric Cody  
MCRP 1980



Robert Reiner  
MCRP 1981



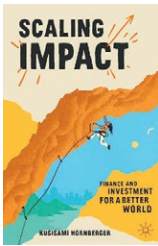
Juliette Fay  
MPP 1992



WIENER  
CONFERENCE  
CALLS



The New Geopolitics of Energy  
“The war in Ukraine has really emphasized that when push comes to shove, if energy security is challenged at the same time climate security is challenged, if the two are not compatible, then the desire to satisfy energy security needs wins out.”  
Meghan O’Sullivan



— Kusi Hornberger  
MPA/ID 2007

1995

**Lorene Flaming MPP** writes, “My love of kimonos was born in 2016 when I made a pilgrimage to the Itchuku Kubota museum at the base of Mount Fuji and encountered Kubota’s unusual landscape kimonos, honoring the seasons and cosmos. I started collecting vintage Japanese textiles that invoke a deep sense of simplicity, beauty, and enduring craft, and eventually founded Distant Mountain to help them go out into the world to be appreciated anew. I’m currently collaborating with the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum store in Santa Fe, New Mexico, curating pieces that reflect O’Keeffe’s art and personal style in conjunction with the “Making a Life” exhibit. I divide my time between Asia, White Salmon, Washington, and a Zen center in the foothills of Santa Fe.”

1996

**Nancy Brune MPP** was recently elected to serve on the Las Vegas City Council (a nonpartisan seat). She continues to work as a research professor at the Desert Research Institute, where she is examining issues of water security and the impact of extreme heat on the built environment.

**Veit Dengler MPA** writes, “I would like to support Michele Zanini’s nomination of Jean-Sélim Kanaan for the 2023 Alumni Public Service Award. This year marks the 20th anniversary of Jean-Sélim’s death in the line of duty at the U.N. compound in Baghdad. Jean-Sélim was not only a swashbuckling, hands-on public servant wherever there was real need, he was also a kind and very fun person. I have no doubt he would have had massive impact throughout his life, but even as short as it was, he has inspired many of us.”

**Carol Gentry MC/MPA** writes, “I have found a club of fun retired scientists, professors, doctors, lawyers, and business execs who keep learning and growing and sharing knowledge: the Academy for Senior Professionals at Eckerd College (ASPEC). The clubhouse, the former college president’s home, is right on the water here in St. Petersburg, Florida. I’ve been doing research and presentations on fascinating topics, from behavioral economics to private equity intrusion in health care.”

**Todd Harper MPP** was inducted in late February into the African-American Credit Union Coalition’s Hall of Fame for his efforts to advance economic equity and justice as chairman of the National Credit Union Administration. His work has included

expanding access to capital for minority depository institutions, hosting diversity summits, enhancing fair lending supervision, and mitigating appraisal bias.

1998

**Jenny Korn MPP** was interviewed for WGBH about Asian representation in media, particularly in the series “Sort Of” and the movie “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” which won this year’s best picture Oscar.

1999 25<sup>TH</sup> REUNION

**Verónica Loewe Muñoz MPA** keeps working as a senior researcher at INFOR, and since 2021 has also been principal investigator at the National Center of Excellence for the Wood Industry (CENAMAD, ANID) in the Forest Sustainability line. Most of her work relates to improving the sustainability of the forestry production, developing forest and fruit-forest species of high value for Chile, and monitoring the effects of climate change. Regarding stone pine domestication, she is focused on the commercial use of cones, validating technologies for harvesting and processing pine nuts. Verónica is living with her mother, husband, and son in Santiago, close to her daughter Caterina’s family, and is enjoying her two grandsons.

**Raghu Narain MPA** writes, “I am delighted to serve on the HKS Alumni Board. I hope to deepen the connection with the alumni community via various interesting initiatives. We are living in Hong Kong and if in the area, please contact me.”

2003

**Matthew Garcia MPP** was nominated by President Biden to serve as a federal district court judge for the District of New Mexico. The Senate confirmed Matthew on February 14, 2023, and he was sworn in two days later. Matthew is the 26th U.S. district judge in New Mexico since statehood in 1912. Albuquerque will be the official duty station for Matthew, and a formal ceremony was held in May at the Pete V. Domenici U.S. Courthouse.

2005

**Sylvia Clute MPA** and **Molly Soeby MPA 2004** are working together for the nonprofit the Alliance for Unitive Justice ([a4uj.org](http://a4uj.org)). Sylvia is president and executive director and Molly is AUJ’s director of the UJEd Whole School Program. Molly and Sylvia are teaching UJEd leadership teams at Hopewell Public High School and Woodson Middle School in

Hopewell, Virginia. They teach a one-year online UJEd course on how to transform school culture using the Unitive Justice approach to replace zero tolerance school discipline. Unitive Justice has no punitive elements. More programs using cutting-edge Unitive Justice theory are in development, including transforming the culture of jails and prisons.

2006

**Angela Joo-Hyun Kang MC/MPA** was appointed as the co-chair of the Climate Change Taskforce of Women 20 (W20), G20’s official policy engagement group for gender equality and women’s empowerment, during India’s 2023 presidency year. In her multiple roles as the co-head of the South Korean delegation to W20 and the Seoul/Korea Chapter Lead of Harvard Kennedy School Women’s Network (HKS WN), Angela strengthened the HKS WN’s presence and visibility at the W20 inception meeting on February 27, 2023, in Aurangabad, India, and helped W20 and HKS WN collaborate on a bilateral memorandum of understanding on March 8, 2023.



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**Dana Trytten MC/MPA** was named an assistant director with the National Park Service (NPS).

2007

**Kusi Hornberger MPA/ID** writes, “I am happy to share that I recently fulfilled a lifelong dream to publish a book. My book, inspired by my time at HKS, is titled *Scaling Impact: Finance and Investment for a Better World*. In the book I pull together two decades of experience on what I see as six major paradigm shifts that need to happen to make the capitalist tools of finance and investment work to accelerate progress against the world’s biggest remaining collective challenges like climate change, poverty, and systemic inequality. More information about my book and where to buy it can be found here: [scalingimpact.co](http://scalingimpact.co). I hope you will all purchase, read and share widely.”

**Siri Khalsa MC/MPA** just launched a new podcast, “The Corporate Activist.” The podcast explores the role of the business sector in today’s complex social and political landscape. Siri writes, “We look at the role of the business sector from all angles, examining the benefits of engagement, as

well as the risks. I talk with a broad range of experts to get their perspectives, take an in-depth look at some case studies, as well as answer your questions on how you can best navigate these issues in your own business. Please join the conversation!”

2008

**Bina Venkataraman MPP** writes, “I’ve taken on a new role in 2023 as *The Washington Post*’s first columnist of the future. I am moving to D.C. later this summer, and I’d love to connect with fellow HKS alumni in the DMV—and, of course, around the world whenever we can travel each other’s way.”

2009 15<sup>TH</sup> REUNION

**Nora Nickum MPP** authored a children’s middle-grade nonfiction book called *Superpod: Saving the Endangered Orcas of the Pacific Northwest*, published by Chicago Review Press in April 2023. Nora is the senior ocean policy manager at the Seattle Aquarium.

2010

**Josh Stephens MPP** published his latest book, *Planners Across America*, a collection of interviews with directors of city planning for the largest cities in the United States. It’s available from Planetizen Press.

2011

**Joel Engardio MC/MPA** was elected as a city supervisor of San Francisco in November 2022. He serves as one of 11 supervisors who oversee a \$14 billion budget and draft local laws. Joel’s election made history twice. He was the first candidate to oust an elected incumbent supervisor in two decades. Joel is also the first openly gay supervisor elected in San Francisco’s historically conservative westside districts. Read Joel’s blog post about how he won: [engardio.com/blog/we-won](http://engardio.com/blog/we-won). “We deserve to live in a city that works,” Joel said. “We can create our best San Francisco—if we’re willing to address today’s problems with equal doses of innovation and common sense.”

2012

**Claudia Núñez Sañudo MPP** writes, “As of November 2022, I was appointed executive director of Fundación Amparo, based in Mexico. The foundation created the “Museo Amparo” in Puebla, and runs three community centers in Puebla and Mexico City. All efforts focus on empowering beneficiaries through education and art, and the community centers

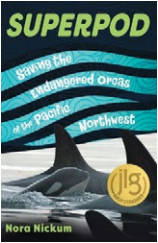


Immigration in the United States  
February 28, 2023

“We have a border management system that really has in mind single adults, who are easily processed and who can be returned if they don’t have a lawful basis to stay. Increasingly, we’ve seen families who are coming to the Southwest border.”

— Adam Hunter  
MPA 2007

[ken.sc/atp](http://ken.sc/atp)



— Nora Nickum  
MPP 2009



— Josh Stephens  
MPP 2010



# Connect.

Make your NETWORK matter.  
Update your profile to receive news  
and invitations to events.

[ken.sc/haa-directory](https://ken.sc/haa-directory)

# Volunteer.

Make a DIFFERENCE in your HKS community.  
Join a regional network or Shared Interest  
Group or become an alumni ambassador.

[hks.harvard.edu/alumni/volunteer](https://hks.harvard.edu/alumni/volunteer)

# Give Back.

Make your GIFT today. Support the next  
generation of public leaders.

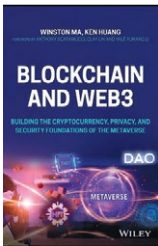
[hks.harvard.edu/donate](https://hks.harvard.edu/donate)



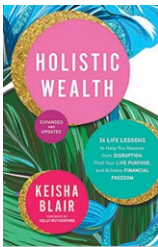
WIENER  
CONFERENCE  
CALLS

Challenges for Today's Public Leaders  
“In lots of other places, whether it's infrastructure  
or social services or other kinds of civic things,  
there's much more fluid engagement between  
the public and the private sector. In the United  
States, that line seems brighter, like it's a line you  
can't cross.”

Deval Patrick



—  
Winston Ma  
MPP 2014



—  
Keisha Blair  
HKSEE 2019

after warnings of threats to my life. It has  
been a powerful lesson that acting for public  
good can come at great cost.”

## 2014 10<sup>TH</sup> REUNION

**Winston Ma MPP** has joined the International  
Data Center Authority (IDCA) as the chief  
investment officer and executive vice  
chairman. The author of the books *The Hunt  
for Unicorns* and *The Digital War*, Winston  
most recently released *Blockchain and Web3:  
Building the Cryptocurrency, Privacy, and  
Security Foundations of the Metaverse*  
(Wiley, 2022). Winston is currently the board  
chairman of Nasdaq-listed MCAA, a  
European tech SPAC, an advisory board  
member of Capgemini, and an adjunct  
professor at NYU Law School.

**Tim Purinton MPA** writes, “In the spring of  
2023 I became a special assistant to the  
deputy director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
Service under an Intergovernment Personnel  
Act posting where I will remain until the end  
of President Biden's first term.”

## 2016

**Maroof Mohsin MC/MPA** is currently teaching  
at the School of Global Affairs Kings College  
in London. Since graduating from HKS, he  
has been teaching as a lecturer at the  
Institute of Business Administration (IBA)  
of the University of Dhaka and in the  
Department of Political Science and  
Sociology (PSS) at North South University  
Bangladesh. Prior to attending Harvard  
University in 2015, he was working for the  
Yunus Centre in Dhaka and Bloomberg in  
London.

## 2017

**Kirsten Rulf MPP** is a new partner and  
associate director at the Boston Consulting  
Group. She just concluded four successful  
years as senior advisor to former German  
Chancellor Angela Merkel and current  
German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and their  
Cabinets in all strategic questions of  
innovation and emerging technologies, like  
AI or quantum computing. In her new role  
at BCG, Kirsten will build up a global  
knowledge hub to advise businesses on the  
major digital and data regulations currently  
being rolled out by the EU, United States,  
and China, e.g., the EU Digital Services Act  
and the AI Act. Kirsten negotiated most of  
these laws in her previous role with  
Chancellor Merkel.

## 2018

**Dana Rassas MC/MPA** writes, “It has been an  
incredible five years since our graduation in  
2018. I have been blessed on so many levels:  
I have a baby girl named Kinzi who turned  
one year this past January. I live in the  
Mishawaka/South Bend area of Indiana with  
my partner and our baby. Our Michiana  
region is the best place to raise a family  
amidst the beautiful nature, water bodies  
(we are 30 minutes away from Lake  
Michigan), and the reputable schools of  
higher education (Indiana University, Notre  
Dame, St. Mary's, and many more). I work for  
Indiana University in South Bend as the  
major gifts officer in the University Relations  
and Advancement Department. If you are  
around, come visit, you will enjoy it!”

## 2019 5<sup>TH</sup> REUNION

**Keisha Blair HKSEE** writes, “In March 2023 I  
published the new *Holistic Wealth  
(Expanded and Updated): 36 Life Lessons to  
Help You Recover from Disruption, Find Your  
Life Purpose and Achieve Financial Freedom*.  
The foreword for the book was written by  
iconic actress Kelly Rutherford, star of *Gossip  
Girl*, *Melrose Place*, and *Dynasty*. *Holistic  
Wealth* has been called “an essential guide to  
the ‘art of recovery from disruption’ by CNN  
senior political analyst Kirsten Powers and  
‘game-changing’ by actress Kelly  
Rutherford.”

**Stefan Chavez-Norgaard MPP** married  
Bianca Chavez in 2022 and is now Stefan  
Chavez-Norgaard! He's in the fourth year of  
his PhD in urban planning at Columbia  
University. From September to May, Stefan  
will spend the 2023–2024 academic year in  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, working as a  
scholar-in-residence at the Lincoln Institute  
of Land Policy while finishing his PhD. For  
those HKS alumni still around Cambridge,  
please reach out and say hello!

## 2021

**Josh Altman MPP** was recently promoted to  
national security advisor to United States  
Senator Jon Ossoff (D-GA). Josh previously  
served as Senator Ossoff's military legislative  
assistant.





# Reunion 2023



Classes of 1973 | 1978 | 1983 | 1988 | 1993 | 1998 | 2003 | 2008 | 2013 | 2018

More than 750 alumni attended Reunion 2023 both in person and virtually May 17 to 19. View highlights:

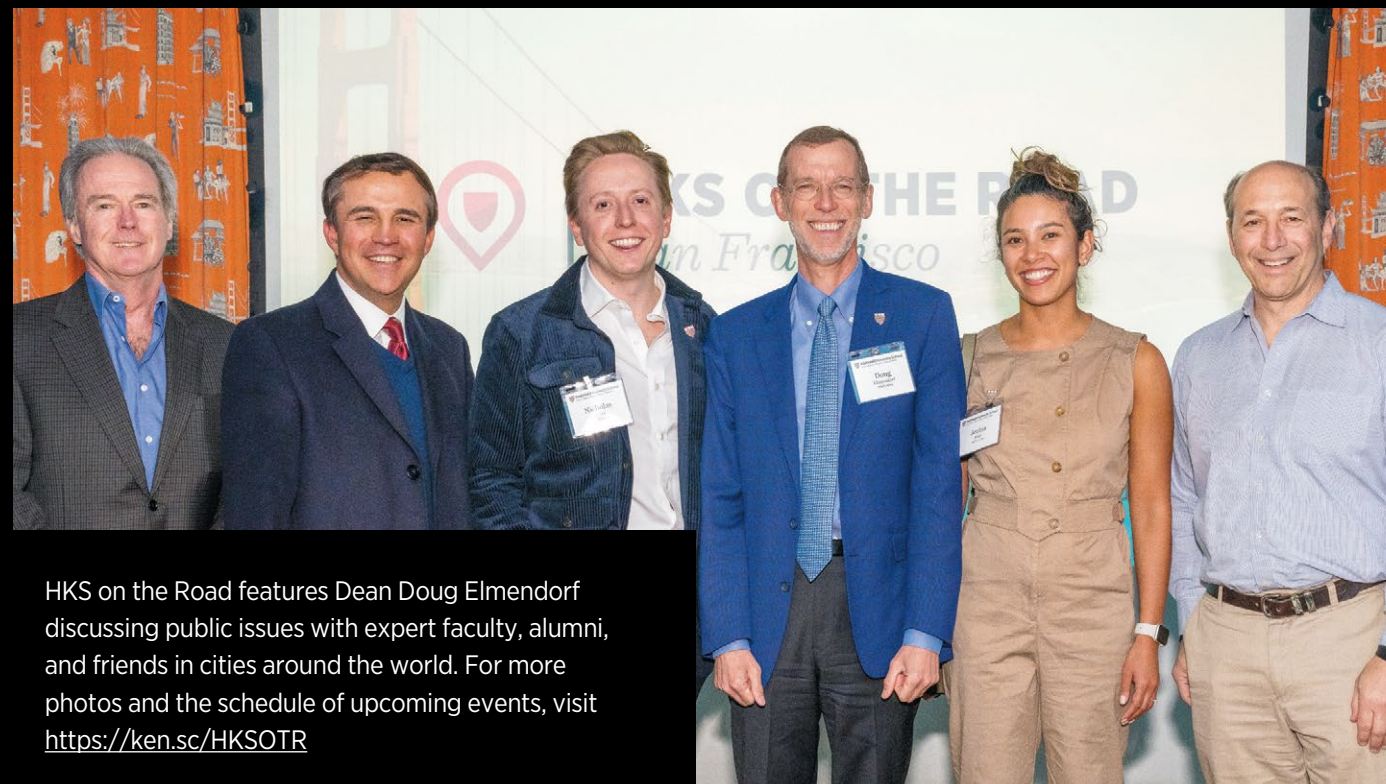
- **Youtube playlist:** <https://bit.ly/304fuCy>
- **Facebook album:** <https://bit.ly/3D3c01C>
- **Instagram story:** <https://bit.ly/3pGhsPZ>



MARTHA STEWART



## HKS ON THE ROAD



HKS on the Road features Dean Doug Elmendorf discussing public issues with expert faculty, alumni, and friends in cities around the world. For more photos and the schedule of upcoming events, visit <https://ken.sc/HKSOTR>



Clockwise from top: Robert Ferri MC/MPA 1986, Jorge Jaramillo HKSEE 2010, 2012, Nicholas Butts MPA 2018, Dean Doug Elmendorf, Jenina Soto MPA 2018, and Jeff Bleich MPP 1986 in San Francisco last March; Deval Patrick, co-director of the Center for Public Leadership (third from left), with alumni at the New York City event last November; Lorie Jackson MC/MPA 1982 asks a question at HKS On the Road in Washington, D.C., last October.





# INCREASING ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

The HKS Fund provides crucial aid to the next generation of changemakers

THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL TOOL for attracting superb students to Harvard Kennedy School and empowering them to pursue careers in public service is financial aid. But existing resources allow the School to provide substantial assistance to only a small fraction of students who have demonstrated need. We spoke with Dean Doug Elmendorf about HKS's plan to increase philanthropy dedicated to financial aid at the School.

## Why is financial aid so important?

Our students come to the Kennedy School because they are passionate about improving the lives of others through better governments, nonprofit organizations, and public-oriented aspects of private enterprises. Once here, they learn from our outstanding faculty, exceptional convening power, and strong connections to public leaders—and these remarkable opportunities simply cannot be found elsewhere with the depth and breadth available at HKS.

But not all great emerging public leaders have the means to attend the School—especially because they need to step away from their jobs and uproot their lives to come to Cambridge, in some cases moving here from the other side of the world.

Our goal is to help many more students be able to afford a Kennedy School education so that they can gain the skills and opportunities they need to make a difference in the world. And to do that, we need robust financial aid.

## How is this priority integral to the mission of the Kennedy School?

Enabling the most promising policymakers and public leaders to come to HKS is essential for us to make the greatest possible



**“We must raise more funds for financial aid so that our graduates can pursue their passion and talent for public service.”**

DEAN DOUG ELMENDORF

TOP: KAYANA SZYMCAK | PORTRAIT: MARTHA STEWART

impact on the lives of people across the United States and around the world. Moreover, policymaking and public leadership benefit from incorporating perspectives from diverse backgrounds, including varying income levels and life experiences, because diverse perspectives can improve the caliber of public decision-making and because diverse leadership can build trust and legitimacy among people who are affected.

## Do you hear from applicants who cannot afford to attend the Kennedy School?

Yes. Every year, I receive emails from exceptional people who have been admitted to the School but cannot afford to attend—and those messages are truly heartbreaking.

## Many students assume significant debt to fund their education. What role did this play in your decision to make a concerted effort to raise additional resources for financial aid?

Carrying a heavy debt load forces some graduates to take jobs in which their contributions to public policy and leadership will be more limited than in other jobs—which means that many organizations miss out on having these talented and passionate individuals to seek solutions to public problems. We must raise more funds for financial aid so that our graduates can pursue their passion and talent for public service.



Tomás Recart MPA/ID 2008 co-founded *Enseña Chile (Teach Chile)*, which helps all Chilean children maximize their potential through education, regardless of where they were born.

COURTESY OF TOMÁS RECARTE



COURTESY OF SOLEDAD RUEDA

Soledad Rueda MC/MPA 2019 is an operations coordinator for the International Committee of the Red Cross, where she drives positive change in some of our world's most challenging environments.

## Who donates to the School to help provide financial aid?

Support comes from around the globe, from alumni and friends who believe in our mission. These gifts of various amounts make a tremendous difference in the lives of students who would otherwise not be able to attend the Kennedy School.

What many people do not know is that the Kennedy School can access only 3 percent of Harvard's overall endowment, and those funds are highly restricted to specific purposes. Alumni often give because they have experienced the difference financial aid made in their own education, and others give because they believe in our mission and our ability to execute on it. We are very thankful to everyone whose generous philanthropy fuels our mission by helping our students.

## What goals do you hope to achieve?

By the time the Kennedy School celebrates its 90th anniversary, in 2026, we want to be able to offer at least half our students the fellowships they need to partially or fully cover their tuition and fees. That means helping at least 200 more students.

To do this we are making the importance of financial aid a cornerstone of our conversations with alumni and friends. We will ask every member of the Harvard Kennedy School community to contribute—and their combined philanthropy will help us achieve our goal.

Our alumni and donors support the School's mission in many ways, including through their work and their generosity. They wfocus on creating positive change for others, and they do so without hesitation. Our community is very driven by this mission—and that's why we expect to succeed in reaching our goal.





"The sounds of your life ... comes into full play only when another hand is added, only when other people are added to your life," Arthur Brooks, the Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership, told HKS alumni at the closing keynote speech of the 2023 Reunions. Brooks, who founded and directs the Leadership and Happiness Laboratory at the Center for Public Leadership, spoke about the pursuit of success, happiness, and deep purpose in life.

PHOTO BY MARTHA STEWART





# HARVARD Kennedy School

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PHOTO BY KAYANA SZYMCAK

## Welcome Class of 2023!

Your HKS alumni experience awaits.

[hks.harvard.edu/alumni](https://hks.harvard.edu/alumni)