



BY Shirley Won

Climate migrants are coming. Northern countries need a plan

As the world begins grappling with the climate crisis, a globally co-ordinated effort is essential, science writer GAIA VINCE argues, beginning with plans to relocate the growing millions displaced by global warming

DROUGHTS, WILDFIRES, floods and extreme heat caused by climate change are driving many people from their homes. They are fleeing deserts, the tropics and coastal regions in places such as Latin America, Africa and South Asia. North America is also not immune. Wildfires have intensified in British Columbia and California, while coastal cities, such as New Orleans and Miami, are threatened by rising sea levels. In *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World*, British science writer Gaia Vince warns of the accelerating climate crisis, and argues that a well-planned, global strategy to help climate migrants move to northern latitudes, including parts of Canada, is a solution if done properly. Director Journal asked Vince why a climate emergency is looming, what is needed for a mass migration to more livable regions, and whether geo-engineering to manipulate the environment should be a tool to cool the planet.

What motivated you to write a book on climate migration?

For my first book, *Adventures in the Anthropocene: A Journey to the Heart of the Planet We Made*, I spent 2½ years travelling mainly in the global south to see how people were responding to environmental changes. The poorest, who live mainly in the tropics, face the biggest impact. When I wrote the book, the conversation around climate change, especially among leaders and the international community, was almost entirely about mitigation. How can we start to reduce emissions? There was little conversation about adaptation. People in the poor world adapt by doing things like build barriers against sea-level rise, shore up their coastlines, and try to build more stable houses. Nobody talked about people

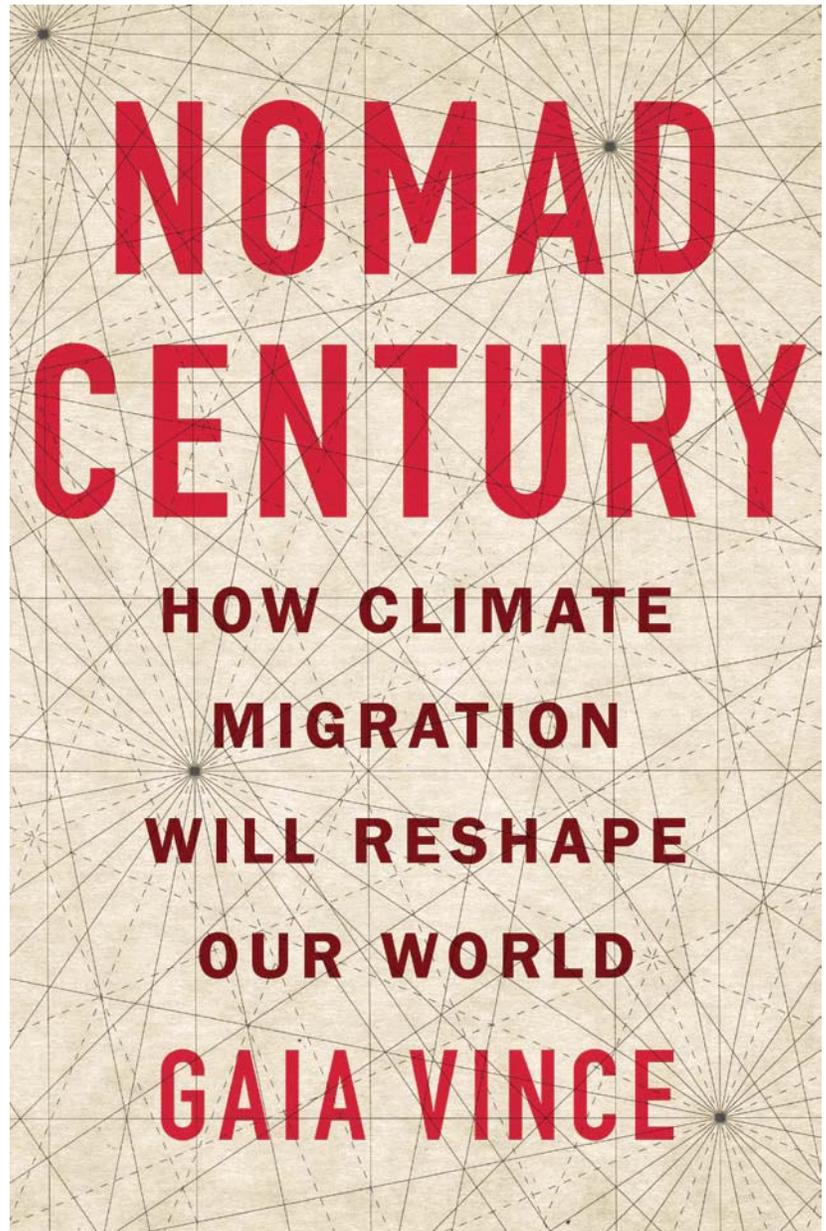
who cannot adapt to the rising temperatures happening over the coming decades. But I noticed that climate migration was already happening and has only increased.

Can you describe the impending climate emergency?

Temperatures are going up. We are going to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius [above preindustrial levels]. The more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the more the sun's energy is captured by the atmosphere. That's what is driving intense storms, heat waves, droughts and flash floods. It prevents people from producing adequate yields from agriculture and makes towns and villages unlivable. By 2050, some estimates suggest that 1.5 billion people will be displaced by climate change. If you look at the models predicting the next few decades, you see a belt of increasing unlivable areas across the equatorial regions. The more livable parts of our planet are the Far North, including parts of Canada, around the Arctic Circle, northern Europe, Russia and northern Asia. That is largely where people are going to move.

What stands out from your travels to climate-affected countries?

The iconic situation is people living in island states, such as Kiribati and the Maldives. The islands are disappearing before your eyes. You can see just the rooftops of houses, or top branches of drowned coconut palms. But Bangladesh is one of the most proactive and progressive in terms of climate adaptation. People regularly leave large tracts of land because they are inundated with seawater from oceans washing over their land, or the ground is contaminated. Their rice doesn't grow, so they move to shrimp farming. Even that becomes impossible when the fields become eroded. People then move to work in the garment industry. Or they move over the border illegally to India, or elsewhere in the country, or overseas if they can. Climate change, however, is a threat multiplier. It is not usually the main issue causing people to move. It's incremental pressures added on to an already intolerable situation, such as poverty, conflict or poor [agricultural] yields.



Your solution is a global humanitarian effort to help climate migrants relocate to northern countries. What is your proposal?

We need to manage migration rather than having what we have now, which is a desperate bid by people to move. Because we are talking about large numbers of people going to various countries, it needs some level of global co-ordination. I am pro-

posing a migration body, probably within the auspices of the United Nations, which international states sign up to, and would have powers that include funding. But co-ordination also needs to be done at the regional, state and city level. It requires decisions in the areas of infrastructure, housing, health care, and schooling [for migrants]. There are various ways to do

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this. For example, there could be an international quota system, where host states agree to take in a certain number of new citizens each year.

How realistic is this strategy, given an emerging nationalism trend and countries facing their own internal problems?

Immigration can help countries become more productive. Many places face economic hardships because of labour shortages. Even xenophobic countries are changing. Japan has one of the fastest-aging populations in the world, and where adult diapers massively outsell infant diapers. In the last five years, Japan has realized this problem, and has begun changing its citizen requirements. If you look at post-Brexit Britain, we have a situation where we have labour shortages across the board. Part of that is because European workers left through Brexit or didn't arrive. Then there is the demographic shortage, where we don't have enough workers [in many countries] to prop up an aging population as baby boomers live longer. This can only be balanced by immigration.

You suggest that Canada could be a role model in welcoming climate migrants. Can you explain?

Canada seems quite progressive. It has a nationally spelled-out policy to increase immigration. [Ottawa plans to welcome 500,000 immigrants per year by 2025.] That would horrify leaders of many countries. Canada also has inclusive policies to help people when they arrive, such as English classes or French classes in the case of Quebec. Many countries don't have a strategy to grow their populations, and that's a huge problem. We know the world population is at eight billion and growing. Costa Rica is a small and poor country but is a role model in many ways. It has stopped deforestation and has 100-per-cent renewable power. It has its own problems, but has also taken in a huge number of refugees from Venezuela, Colombia and Nicaragua.

How do you view geoengineering – a controversial technology – to reduce the planet's temperature? One idea gaining attention is spraying sulphate aerosols into the atmosphere to reduce sunlight coming to the Earth.

We haven't had a trial yet of spraying the atmosphere with sulphates. We know that it would work because this is what happens with volcanic eruptions. But is it going to happen because some country experiences heat waves so deadly that it acts independently? Or, are we going to make democratic decisions globally to talk about it, experiment and decide whether to do it in a co-ordinated fashion? I would rather that we plan and discuss these things, for example, at the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [which assesses the science related to climate change]. If it decides to go ahead, it must decide under what conditions we do it. If doing so would have negative consequences for communities or an entire country, are we going to put polices in place to compensate them? We need to start talking about this for sure. [DJ](#)

SHIRLEY WON is a Toronto-based freelance journalist and former business and investment reporter for The Globe and Mail. She also worked as a business reporter for the Montreal Gazette, covering transportation, real estate, retail and banking.

The great Canadian slide

The country is on course to soon lose status as a G20 nation. If we don't reduce bureaucracy and protectionism and overcome widespread complacency, Mexico, Vietnam, the Philippines and others could surpass Canada's economic might, argue authors Walid Hejazi, Dany Assaf and Joe Manget

CANADIANS ARE FOCUSED on rising interest rates and inflation, but there are other numbers – perhaps more troubling – to worry about. In 1967, when Canada celebrated its 100th birthday, it was the world's ninth-largest economy (ranked by gross domestic product based on purchasing power parity). Today, it is the 17th largest. In terms of income per person, Canada ranked third in 1967 after the United States and Switzerland. It has now fallen to 15th. In *Everybody's Business: How to Ensure Canadian Prosperity through the Twen-*

ty-First Century, co-authors Dany Assaf, Walid Hejazi and Joe Manget warn that further declines in economic rankings loom unless Canada shifts away from traditional economic drivers and protectionist policies to allow innovation by ambitious entrepreneurs to flourish. Director Journal asked Hejazi, a professor of international business at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, why Canada has fallen in prosperity rankings, how to turn the ship around, and what's the risk in remaining complacent.

The research for this book includes interviewing more than 100 politicians, chief executives, union officials and other thought leaders. What was the motivation for writing it?

It began when my co-authors, Dany Assaf [partner and co-chair of the competition and foreign investment group at Torys LLP] and Joe Manget [chair and CEO of EHN Canada, a chain of mental health and addiction treatment centres], attended a Toronto Maple Leafs game in 2014. They began thinking about when the team last won the

Canadian companies are not as innovative and productive as they need to be for Canada's economy to remain competitive with rising nations', says author Walid Hejazi.



Stanley Cup in 1967. That led to a discussion about Canada's future, and its poor productivity performance. They approached me, and we looked at the data, which surprised us. In 1967, Canada ranked third in terms of income per person, but fell to 15th by its 150th birthday in 2017. By Canada's 200th birthday [in 2067], our analysis shows that we are going to be 22nd. Our country is part of the G20 [group of developed economies], but given current growth rates, it will very soon fall out of the top 20 largest economies in the world. These are alarm bells.

Your book predicts that Canada's size of economy could be surpassed over the next 50 years by countries such as Mexico, Thailand, Nigeria, Vietnam, Iran and the Philippines, among others. How can that be?

These countries are hungry and want to advance. They are adopting new technologies and modernizing their economies. They are developing rapidly and are catching up to countries like Canada. The world is not going to stand still and wait for Canada to wake up. Size of economy is important because it speaks to our country's influence on the global stage. If we were to become the world's 25th largest economy, our influence diminishes rapidly.

Why is Canada falling so far behind?

Canadian companies are not as innovative and productive as they need to be. We have relied on two big sources for our prosperity, but that's changing. Because we are next door to the United States, we have had easy access to that market. But that is coming into question as the U.S. becomes more protectionist. Seventy-five per cent of our exports go the U.S., so we need to diversify. Secondly, we have a lot of natural resources. However, we pull them out of the ground and send them to the U.S., China or Europe, and bring them back as processed materials or final products. We should be doing these activities in Canada.

How can we have a stronger resource sector?

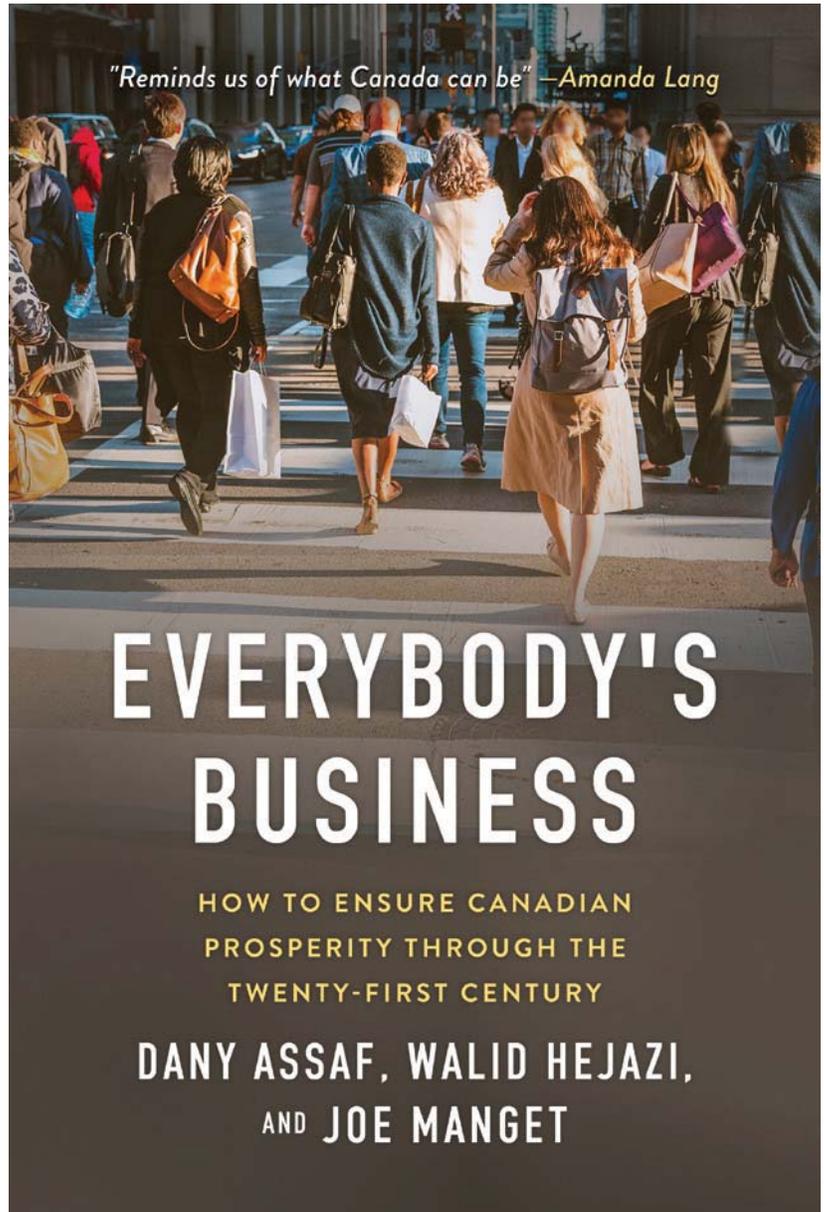
We support the federal government's [recently announced] \$13-billion subsidy to

Volkswagen to build an electric-vehicle battery plant in St. Thomas, Ont. We are thrilled that the government had the vision to help the Canadian economy pivot. When you think about the electrification of the world to move away from fossil fuels, this is what we need. If we did not get the battery plant, all those critical minerals in Northern Ontario's Ring of Fire region would have been mined and sent to the U.S. Now,

many research jobs are going to be created to support that, and other related industries are going to want to locate here.

Your book laments how entrepreneurship is being held back in Canada. What changes are needed?

Surveys by the World Economic Forum and others indicate that dealing with an inefficient government bureaucracy is the big-



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gest challenge that companies face doing business in Canada. We are not anti-government in any way, but governments need to allow companies to operate without massive hurdles in adhering to regulations. High tax rates are also a problem. According to Bill Robson, CEO of the C.D. Howe Institute, Canada needs to keep its top personal tax rate [now at 53.5 per cent] below 50 per cent. That is a psychological threshold. Canada is in a situation where interest rates are going up and that last thing that we want is governments relying on higher taxes to pay the bills. When you raise taxes, you stifle the economy. As Canada's taxes continue to rise, what happens is that a lot of businesses don't want to locate here. That's why so many Canadians just leave, and we lose.

What can be done to encourage innovation in Canada?

If you look at countries in Europe that are about the same economic size as Canada, they are doing better when it comes to innovation. It's unbelievable how Switzerland – remember, we were second after that country in income per person in 1967 – is taking off in innovations relative

to Canada. One problem is there is so much protectionism that companies become comfortable and don't need to innovate. The telecom sector is controlled by three companies, while there are unbelievable amounts of protection in the airline industry. That's why we pay high prices for cellphones and airfares. We make an exception for the banking sector, however, because it delivers stability in exchange for protection. Secondly, it is so difficult for startups to get access to funding from domestic banks and venture capital. The collapse of [U.S.-based] Silicon Valley Bank, which was expected to fund 40 per cent of Canada's technology and life sciences ventures, is going to set back the startup scene. Thirdly, there are subsidies, such as the Scientific Research & Experimental Development [SR&ED] tax credits, to help companies do research and development. The problem is that it is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency. The program should not be wrapped within another objective of getting to see company books. A lot of these credits are also not paid out because most companies must hire consulting firms to administer them due to their complexity.

What are the dangers if Canadians remain complacent?

The analogy I like to use is diabetes. With diabetes, you have all the symptoms, but you don't feel them. Once you do feel the symptoms, the disease has already advanced, but could have been prevented. If we remain complacent and these key issues are not discussed with more intensity and governments don't take them seriously, Canada will continue to fall behind. If the government response is simply to raise taxes, our prosperity slides, and we won't have the ability to fund health care, education or build hospitals and other infrastructure. If the issues become everyone's business, we are optimistic. Governments need to change from a backward-looking view to the economy of the future, which requires innovation, and to create an environment that enables individuals to be entrepreneurial and to commercialize their businesses. [DJ](#)

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Is Canada facing a growing threat to our democracy?

Rob Goodman thinks so. The political theorist and former congressional speechwriter says it's time for Canada to think differently about its relationship to the United States and combat anti-democratic forces at home

ON JAN. 6, 2021, former U.S. president Donald Trump gave a speech inciting his Republican supporters to attack the Capitol building in Washington. The mob tried to prevent Congress from ratifying Democrat Joe Biden's victory in the November 2020 presidential election. Rioters clashed with police, destroyed property, and sent members of Congress running to hide in offices and bunkers before National Guard troops arrived to quell the insurrection. In his book *Not Here: Why American Democracy Is Eroding and How Canada Can Protect Itself*, Rob Goodman

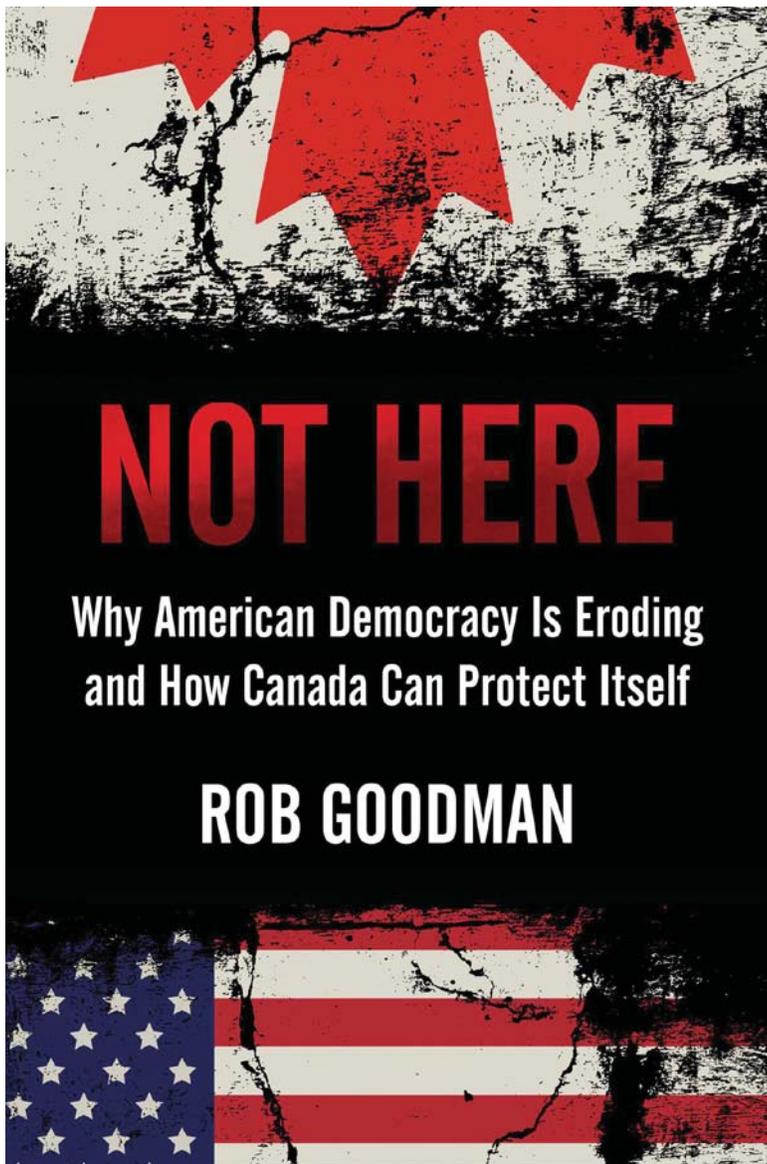
warns that the forces giving rise to authoritarianism in the United States could endanger democracy in this country unless Canada take steps to keep this threat at bay. *Director Journal* asked Goodman, an assistant professor of politics and public administration at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU), why last year's so-called Freedom Convoy blockade led by truckers in Ottawa alarmed him; why he is critical of how Canadian and U.S. leaders are dealing with authoritarian movements, and why Canadians need to become better self-mythologizers.

It's unusual for Americans to warn Canadians about a threat to our democracy from the United States. Was Trump's election [in 2016] a factor when you moved to this country?

I used to be a speechwriter for [former] Senator Chris Dodd and Congressman Steny Hoyer, both Democrats. After working in politics, I went to Columbia University for a PhD in political science. I moved to Montreal in 2018 to be a postdoctoral researcher at McGill University and was then fortunate to be hired at TMU. My wife and

If anti-democratic politicians win power in Washington, the United States could cease to be an ally and instead become 'a source of instability and democratic erosion,' argues the American political scientist and author Rob Goodman.





I see Canada as a great place to raise our kids because of the great public education system starting from elementary schools to universities. There is also less stress – be it from medical debt, student-loan debt, gun violence or school shootings – if they grow up here. That is the bet we are making. It's not really about [Trump].

What motivated you to write your book?

First, it was sadness, anger and frustration at watching what's happened in American politics. A lot of Canadians are rightfully

disturbed by the success of the authoritarian and far right in the United States. I think there is a Canadian assumption that America will always be a source of stability and democracy, and a friendly, helpful ally because that is how the relationship has been for generations. I am not sure the average Canadian is ready to face up to the possibility that we might not be able to count on the U.S. in future years, and that the relationship might be a source of instability and democratic erosion in Canada. It's important to prepare for scenarios that aren't as friendly.

In your book, you describe last year's blockade in Ottawa led by a convoy of truckers and other demonstrators protesting Covid-19 public health restrictions as a "slow motion Jan. 6th." Why?

It's a fair analogy because the trucker convoy represented a lot of the same political tendencies and same politics as Trump supporters – from anti-government conspiracy theories to the more recent anti-LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer] protests. We have seen the overlap between these two movements and the anti-vaccine protests, so I think politically these forces are very alive. Forty-four per cent of funding for the convoy came from American sources, and it was promoted on U.S. right-wing media. I think the blockade by the convoy was not simply a non-violent protest. Although a lot of people participated in the protest in good faith, parts of the movement were also interested in using force and threats to win power.

Why are you critical of the way government leaders have dealt with these anti-democratic or authoritarian movements?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and President Joe Biden's response to radical right forces leave a lot to be desired. It shows a lack of creativity. They don't have much of a playbook beyond law enforcement. I don't see a lot of engagement with what factors are contributing to democratic decline, what are the reasons why these movements are so attractive and what enables them to make these really plausible bids for power. In Canada, I would like to see more institutional changes, such as how we [ensure fair] political representation, a rethinking of whether our social safety net is living up to its promise, and whether maintaining high levels of immigration is going to be possible in a time of a housing crisis. I see the way Trudeau is dealing with the far right as treating the symptom rather than the cause. The approach needs to be holistic.

Do you see a greater threat to Canadian democracy if Donald Trump wins the Republican nomination and 2024 presidential election?

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Yes. A Trump government would not necessarily see eye to eye on foreign policy with Canadian parties – be it Liberal or Conservative. Should Trump pursue a policy that is more Russia-friendly, more American first and protectionist, a lot of Canadians would see it as a threat. But ideas also travel across borders. If Trump were to win the presidency, it would be a big victory for the far right or authoritarian movements and give them more international prestige. I think it would embolden figures in Canadian politics who identify with that.

You see Canada’s multiple founders – the Indigenous nations, the English, and the French – as key to our democratic resilience. Why?

When I look at what threatens democracy in the U.S., there is Trump’s appeal to the “real people.” It is an expression of who is entitled to rule that country. In Canada, that view is less plausible because it is a

country that sees itself as having multiple founding elements and multiple conflicting histories. It is harder for any political group to say that it represents real Canadians. That is something to build upon and is distinct from how the U.S. understands its own history. This theme of not having a “real people,” but a country of multiplicities gets to be part of the national political culture here in a way that I don’t think has quite permeated U.S. politics, even though it is a multicultural nation.

You say that Canadians need to become better self-mythologizers to help maintain our democratic tradition. Why?

Myths are stories we use to tell ourselves what we value, what is important and where we are going to orient ourselves. What I try to do in the book is to suggest that we should think about the kind of myths and beliefs that we need to make the far right less plausible here. They can in-

clude the idea of Canada as a fundamentally multiple-founding country, and one with a historically deep suspicion of its leaders and political charisma. Canadians live in a country of some 38 million that is next to a country that is 10 times its size with a dominant position in media and culture. The images that get reflected at Canadians are made to fill the needs of U.S. politics and culture. That image is going to be absorbed here because a lot of that gets echoed back and filtered to us through American media. If we don’t actively start to think about our own anti-authoritarian stories, they are going to be someone else’s stories for someone else’s needs. [DJ](#)

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