

MUSTAHSIN UL AZIZ

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Research Interests



Environment



Urban/Regional



Energy



Applied Micro

Education

West Virginia University

Ph.D., Natural Resource Economics (Expected Graduation: Dec 2026)

August 2021 – Present

Morgantown, WV, USA

University of Dhaka

Master of Social Sciences (MSS), Economics

2017

Dhaka, Bangladesh

University of Dhaka

Bachelor of Social Sciences (BSS), Economics

2012 – 2016

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dissertation

Three Essays on Environmental Economics

Committee Members: Dr. Levan Elbakidze (Chair); Dr. Heather Stephens; Dr. Brad Humphreys; Dr. Palak Suri

Job Market Paper

The Role of Urban Greenspace in Shaping Labor Market Outcomes

This paper examines how urban greenspace influences wages and local economic dynamics within a spatial-equilibrium framework. Using panel data for 950 U.S. urban counties from 2011 to 2019 and an instrumental-variables strategy based on historical land cover, I show that greener cities exhibit significantly lower wages, consistent with compensating differentials. At the same time, greener cities experience faster population and employment growth over a three-year horizon, indicating that greenspace attracts households and expands labor supply. These results demonstrate that greenspace is not only an environmental amenity but also an economic force shaping wage levels, migration patterns, and regional development. This suggests that urban greenspace can be a viable lever for local economic policy, influencing where people live and work.

Publications

- **Aziz, M.**, & Elbakidze, L. (2025). Invisible barrier: The impact of air quality on chronic school absenteeism in the US. *Environmental and Resource Economics*, 88(3), 655–680. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10640-024-00943-1>
- Nakata, S., Sharma, U., Rahman, T., Rahman, M., & **Aziz, M.** (2021). Effects of Recognition of Prior Learning on Job Market Outcomes. *Policy Research Working Papers, The World Bank* <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-9644>
- Fakir, A., Karim, A., Mubde, M., **Aziz, M.**, & Ahmad, A. (2020). Can visual nudges reduce smoking tobacco expenditure? Evidence from a clustered randomized controlled trial in rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Smoking Cessation*, 15(3), 163-170. doi:10.1017/jsc.2020.20
- Fakir, A., Karim, A., Mubde, M., **Aziz, M.**, & Ahmad, A. (2020). A single-blind clustered randomised controlled trial of daily record-keeping for reducing smoking tobacco expenditure among adult male household heads in rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Smoking Cessation*, 15(2), 76-83. doi:10.1017/jsc.2020.12

Work in Progress

- Natural Disaster Disruption and Recovery: A Spatial Analysis with Remote Sensing and Cell-Phone Data
- Upstream Agricultural Production and Safe Drinking Water Act Compliance, *with Elbakidze, L. (Dissertation Chapter)*
- Assessing the Transportation Impact of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, *with Pyrialakou D.*
- Licensing Disparities in Physical Therapy Practitioners, *with Plemmons, A.*
- Electricity Demand Shocks and the Energy Transition: Evidence from U.S. Data Center Expansions

Experience

West Virginia University

Morgantown, WV, USA

Graduate Research Assistant – Regional Research Institute

January 2025 – Present

- Lead the design of an empirical study to better understand the role of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations; including methodology, data collection process, and analysis.
- Supervise carbon forecasting models and draft action plans exploring mitigation strategies for West Virginia under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in partnership with WV Department of Energy.

Instructor – ARE 150 (Introductory Agricultural & Agribusiness Economics)

August 2024 – December 2024

- 80% of students found the instructor helpful, and 70% of 41 students found the course beneficial.

Graduate Research Assistant – Division of Resource Economics and Management

August 2021 – July 2024

- Initiated remote-sensing data collection within the department to enhance spatial analysis of air, water, and wind dynamics.

The World Bank – Education Global Practice

Based in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Education Economist (Short-Term Consultant)

January 2019 – June 2021

- Designed second-generation regional Higher Education and Tertiary Education projects with a \$700 million portfolio, modernizing higher education and fostering regional collaboration. Led budget development, Environmental and Social Assessment, and Economic Analysis, including drafting the Project Appraisal Document.
- Organized an Early Childhood Education Global Learning Conference in China, coordinating logistics and engaging 60 government officials from South and Southeast Asia.
- Supported research initiatives via Randomized Control Trials to assess pilot programs, such as the Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment under the skills sector project.

Operations Analyst (Short-Term Consultant)

February 2018 – December 2018

- Managed project operations for national-level initiatives with a \$500 million portfolio, conducting target assessments and ensuring seamless project execution.
- Supported research data cleaning and analysis for ongoing projects to ensure proper impact assessment.

Char Tobacco Assessment Project (CTAP)

Bangladesh

Co-Principal Investigator

2019

- Secured \$10,000 funding from Johns Hopkins Institute of Global Tobacco Control through grant application drafting and submission.
- Conducted a Randomized Control Trial using nudge-based behavioral economics, reducing tobacco consumption expenditure by 14% per household in rural Bangladesh.
- Coordinated research design, questionnaire development, data analysis, and publication of project research papers.

Grants Received

- Institute for Humane Studies - \$15,000 (2026)
- Gempesaw/Alaby Family Scholarship - \$2,000 (2024)
- Johns Hopkins Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) - \$10,000 (2019)

Academic Presentations & Affiliations

- American Economic Association (ASSA) (2025)
- Agricultural & Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting (2022, 2026)
- Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (2025)
- National Association for Business Economics (2025)
- Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting (2023, 2024, 2025)
- Southern Regional Science Association Conference (2025, 2026)
- North American Regional Science Council Conference (2024, 2025)
- Association for University Business and Economic Research (2025, 2026)
- Association of Private Enterprise and Education Conference (2025)
- Public Choice Society Annual Meetings (2025)
- Western Economic Association International (WEAI) (2022, 2026)

Awards & Fellowships

Association of Private Enterprise Education – Student Fellow	January 2025 – January 2026
Public Choice Society – Student Fellow	January 2025 – January 2026
Mercatus Center – Paul Lewis Fellow	August 2025 – May 2026
Mercatus Center – Adam Smith Fellow	August 2024 – May 2025
Mercatus Center – Oskar Morgenstern Fellow	August 2023 – May 2024
USDA – Graduate Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Partners Fellow	August 2023 – May 2024
Division of Resource Economics and Management – Gempesaw/Alaby Family Scholarship	November 2022

Research Software

UrbanEye: Python-based computer vision platform that extracts environmental and infrastructure indicators from street-level imagery for urban and economic policy analysis.

Selected Applied Data & Policy Projects

- Developed computer vision models to map micro-spatial public investment patterns using street-level imagery, in collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.
- Conducted economic impact analysis of new energy technologies in West Virginia using IMPLAN.
- Modeled long-term energy transition scenarios for West Virginia, evaluating gas, nuclear, and carbon capture pathways.
- Constructed a national Scope of Practice Index for physical therapists and chiropractors using state regulatory data.

Data Visualization & Tools

- Built interactive dashboards and policy visualizations using Python to communicate spatial economic trends.
- Developed geospatial data pipelines integrating satellite imagery and economic data for regional analysis.

Peer Reviews

- Agricultural and Resource Economics Review
- International Journal Of Environmental Health Research
- Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences

Leadership & Service

Graduate Resource Economics Club – President	April 2023 – April 2024
Finding Bangladesh - A Documentary – Video Editor	2012 – 2019
Dhaka University Debating Society – Executive Committee Member	March 2015 – April 2017

Skills

- * **Data Analysis:** Python, R, STATA, SQL
- * **Economic Modeling:** IMPLAN, GAMS, Energy Policy Simulator
- * **Spatial Analysis:** Machine Learning, GIS, Remote Sensing
- * **Research Design:** Randomized Controlled Trial, Causal Inference, Econometric Analysis
- * **Other Software:** L^AT_EX, Notion, Adobe Creative Suite
- * **Policy Analysis:** Environmental Assessments, Workforce, Economic and Social Impact Analysis, Project Appraisal

Language Proficiency

English – Full Professional Proficiency	Hindi – Intermediate Proficiency
Bengali – Native Proficiency	French – Elementary Proficiency

References

Levan Elbakidze, Ph.D. – Professor <i>West Virginia University</i>	levan.elbakidze@mail.wvu.edu
Tashmina Rahman – Senior Education Specialist <i>The World Bank</i>	trahman3@worldbank.org
Heather Stephens, Ph.D. – Director <i>Regional Research Institute</i>	heather.stephens@mail.wvu.edu