



ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

19th Annual International Conference on
Global Studies: Business, Economic,
Political, Social and Cultural Aspects
17-21 December 2025, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Kenneth Christie & Olga Gkounta

2025

Abstracts
19th Annual International
Conference on Global Studies:
Business, Economic, Political,
Social and Cultural Aspects
17-21 December 2025, Athens,
Greece

Edited by
Kenneth Christie & Olga Gkounta

First published in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute.

ISBN: 978-960-598-733-6

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9 Chalkokondili Street

10677 Athens, Greece

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the *19th Annual International Conference on Global Studies: Business, Economic, Political, Social and Cultural Aspects* (17-21 December 2025), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with the Institute's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of the Institute's many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of the Athens Institute and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. The Athens Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a new references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to Institute's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2010-2025*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2025	37	18	Christie and Gkounta (2025)
2024	51	23	Christie and Gkounta (2024)
2023	34	21	Christie and Gkounta (2023)
2022	39	22	Trafalis and Gkounta (2022)
2021	25	19	Papanikos (2021)
2020	22	18	Papanikos (2020)
2019	37	19	Papanikos (2019)
2018	37	18	Papanikos (2018)
2017	46	27	Papanikos (2017)
2016	47	29	Papanikos (2016)
2015	17	13	Papanikos (2015)
2014	20	14	Papanikos (2014)
2013	22	13	Papanikos (2013)
2012	40	26	Papanikos (2012)
2011	33	22	Papanikos (2011)
2010	32	24	Papanikos (2010)

It is our hope that through the Institute's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, the Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 7 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of the Athens Institute for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Global Studies. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

Athens Institute's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The 19th Annual International Conference on Global Studies, accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 18 different countries (Austria, Canada, France, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, UK, USA), that brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

Kenneth Christie & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**19th Annual International Conference on Global Studies:
Business, Economic, Political, Social and Cultural Aspects,
17-21 December 2025, Athens, Greece**

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All Athens Institute's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of the Athens Institute, who contributed by reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers.

1. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.
2. Demos Vardiabasis, Vice President of Business and Public Affairs and Director, Center for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (CSME), Athens Institute & Professor of Economics, Pepperdine University, USA.
3. Philip G. Cerny, Director, Social Sciences Division, Athens Institute & Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester (UK) and Rutgers University (USA).
4. Sonia Salari, Deputy Director, Social Sciences Division, Athens Institute & Professor, University of Utah, USA.
5. Evangelia Kasimati, Head, Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit, Athens Institute & Researcher, Department of Economic Analysis & Research, Central Bank of Greece, Greece.
6. Chris Sakellariou, Vice President of Finance, Athens Institute & Associate Professor of Economics (Retired), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.
7. Kenneth Christie, Head, Politics & International Affairs Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Royal Roads University, Canada.
8. Theodore Trafalis, Director, Engineering & Architecture Research Division, Athens Institute, Professor of Industrial & Systems Engineering and Director, Optimization & Intelligent Systems Laboratory, The University of Oklahoma, USA.
9. Henry Thompson, Head, Economics Unit, Athens Institute & Emeritus Professor, Auburn University, USA.
10. Cleopatra Veloutsou, Head, Marketing Unit, Athens Institute & Professor of Brand Management, University of Glasgow, UK.
11. Matthias Huehn, Mary S Carey Chair of Ethics & CST, Saint Vincent College, USA.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**19th Annual International Conference on Global Studies: Business,
Economic, Political, Social and Cultural Aspects, 17-21 December 2025,
Athens, Greece**

PROGRAM

Wednesday 17 December 2025

08.30-09.00

Registration

09:00-09:30

Opening and Welcoming Remarks:

- **Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, Athens Institute.

09:30-11:00 Session 1

Session 1a Moderator: Nathalie Homlong , Professor, Volda University College, Norway.	Session 1b Moderator: Gohar Marikyan , Full Professor, SUNY Empire State University, USA.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Kiridaran Kanagaretnam, Professor, York University, Canada. <i>Title: Climate Beliefs and Attitudes and Corporate Tax Savings.</i> Benjamin Gidron, Professor Emeritus, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. Maya Finger, Assistant Professor, The College of Management Academic Studies, Israel. Kfir Bar, Lecturer, Reichman University, Israel. <i>Title: Characterizing Impact Tech Startups' Investors: A Multivariate Analysis.</i> Abbas Al-Refaie, Professor, University of Jordan, Jordan. <i>Title: Effects of Satisfaction with PV Systems, Advertising, and Competition on Energy Security Using System Dynamics.</i> Anastasios Elemes, Associate Professor, ESSEC Business School, France. <i>Title: Navigating the Changing Tax Landscape: The Importance of Cross-border Advisory Alliances in Multinational Tax Planning.</i> Timothy Congdon, Chair, Institute of International Monetary Research, UK. <i>Title: Money and Inflation in the 2020s: What was the Cause of the Inflation Flare- up of 2021 and 2022?</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stefan Hall, Chair and Professor, Department of Game Design / Director of Communication Fellows, High Point University, USA. <i>Title: Reading "Japan-ness": Teaching Japanese Media and Popular Culture in a Global Context.</i> Marc Spooner, Professor, University of Regina, Canada. <i>Title: Democracy Needs Its Universities- Now More Than Ever.</i> Fernando Romero, Lecturer, University of Minho, Portugal. <i>Title: Social Network Perspectives of the Relations between University and Society.</i> Deric Shannon, Professor, Oxford College, Emory University, USA. <i>Title: Short-term Global Travel Courses as Entrypoint for Global Studies: Prospects and Limits.</i>

11:00-12:30 Session 2	
<p>Session 2a Moderator: Abbas Al-Refaie, Professor, University of Jordan, Jordan.</p>	<p>Session 2b Moderator: Stefan Hall, Chair and Professor, Department of Game Design / Director of Communication Fellows, High Point University, USA.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthias Huehn, Mary S. Carey Chair of Ethics and CST, Saint Vincent College, USA. <i>Title: Respect and Sympathy or Power and Empathy? Psychology's Harmful Effect on Leadership Theory.</i> 2. Frédéric Bérard, Lawyer, Frédéric Bérard Société d'avocats, Montreal, Canada. <i>Title: The Protection of Collective Aboriginal Interest as Opposed to Individual Rights.</i> 3. Tyler Smith, Assistant Professor, Western Carolina University, USA. <i>Title: Beyond the Holocaust: The Business of Genocide and Slave Labor.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reinhard Reitzenstein, Professor, Director of Sculpture Program, State University of New York at Buffalo, USA. <i>Title: Allegorical Minimalism.</i> 2. Gohar Marikyan, Full Professor, SUNY Empire State University, USA. <i>Title: Mathematics and Society.</i> 3. Gennadiy Chernov, Associate Professor, University of Regina, Canada. <i>Title: Need for Orientation and Its Place in the Motivational Framework of Needs and Goals.</i>
12:30-14:00 Session 3	
<p>Session 3a Moderator: Elisabeth Springler, Study Program Director, University of Applied Sciences, BFI Vienna, Austria.</p>	<p>Session 3b Moderator: Utku Özer, Research Fellow, Athens Institute.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gil Greenstein, Head of M.Sc. Program – Technology Management, Holon Institute of Technology (HIT), Israel. <i>Title: Handling Issues of Uncertainty while Designing DSS during the AI Era.</i> 2. Abdullah Salamai, Associate Professor, Jazan University, Saudi Arabia. <i>Title: Risk Management for Smart Healthcare System: A Hybrid MCDM Framework.</i> 3. Dragana Dabic, Research Fellow, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Serbia. <i>Title: Between Regulation and Identity-Building: Anthropocentric Technological Sovereignty as the European Response to the Challenges of Artificial Intelligence.</i> 4. Gift Mheta, Associate Professor & Manager, Writing Centre, Durban University of Technology, South Africa. <i>Title: Tutoring in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: The Reflections of Selected Tutors at the Durban University of Technology Writing Centre.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sarath Murugan, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. Sathya Harini K P, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. Santhosh Murugan, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. <i>Title: Factors Influencing Indian Consumers: Preference for Foreign Brands over Local Alternatives.</i> 2. Anugraha Rajalekshmi Nair, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. Rabekah Jayanthi Thomas, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. <i>Title: The Shift from Homemakers to Businesswomen: Exploring Influential Factors in Entrepreneurship.</i> 3. Sneha Roy, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. Anjana Kodapurath, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. Rishika Singh, MBA Student, Alliance University, Bangalore, India.

	<i>Title: Motivational Factors Driving Gig Workers' Participation Despite Challenges.</i>
<p>14:00-14:45 Session 4 – A Public Lecture on “With Knowledge Under Siege Globally, How May Canada Act As A Lighthouse?” Sponsored by the <i>Canadian University Alumni in Greece</i> (www.cuag.gr/) Moderator: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.</p> <p>Speaker: Marc Spooner, Professor, University of Regina, Canada.</p>	
Summary	
<p>The university’s biggest threats are not only occurring in fascist and authoritarian countries, but also in traditionally regarded as liberal democracies. Among a variety of developments of concern, our current moment features the outright banning of entire areas of study, the abolishment of tenure, and the curtailment of academic freedom, as well as a near ubiquitous push toward performance-based funding (Spooner, 2024). It also features chronic underfunding, international student quotas, and anti-woke sentiment with pushback against equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives meant to permit greater participation in increasingly conservative and authoritarian interventionist states. Canada, with its highly unionised higher education workforce, is uniquely positioned to resist as faculty associations fight to uphold the aspirational ideals of the university.</p>	
<p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kenneth Christie, Head, <u>Politics & International Affairs Unit</u>, Athens Institute & Professor, Royal Roads University, Canada. ○ Reinhard Reitzenstein, Professor, Director of Sculpture Program, State University of New York at Buffalo, USA. ○ Deric Shannon, Professor, Oxford College, Emory University, USA. ○ Timothy Congdon, Chair, Institute of International Monetary Research, UK. 	
<p>14:45-15:30 Lunch 19:30-21:30 Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music)</p>	
Thursday 18 December 2025	
<p>09:00-10:30 Session 5 Moderator: Matthias Huehn, Mary S. Carey Chair of Ethics and CST, Saint Vincent College, USA.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nathalie Homlong, Professor, Volda University College, Norway. Elisabeth Springler, Study Program Director, University of Applied Sciences, BFI Vienna, Austria. <i>Title: Daily Realities of Life in Indian Slums – A Case Study.</i> 2. Yaffa Moskovich, Head, Organizational Sociology Department, Zefat Academic College, Israel. <i>Title: Clan-Culture Attributes in a Privatized Kibbutz Industry: An Israeli Case Study.</i> 3. Marek Kociuba, Assistant Professor, Military University of Land Forces, Poland. <i>Title: Relationship between Digit Ratio (2D:4D) and Sports Achievements.</i> 4. Andreea Barbu, National University of Science and Technology Politehnica Bucharest, Romania. <i>Title: Responding to Employee Needs: A Market View of Workplace Satisfaction Solutions.</i> 	

10:30-12:00 Session 6

Moderator: Kenneth Christie, Head, Politics & International Affairs Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Royal Roads University, Canada.

1. **Hong Zhao**, Associate Professor, NEOMA Business School, France.
Ran Tao, Associate Professor, NEOMA Business School, France.
Title: Environmental and Social Incidents and Firm Responses: Evidence from a Multinational Study.
2. **Noor Sulastry Yurni Ahmad**, Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman.
Title: Youth, Politics, and the Digital Sphere: The Contradictory Impact of Social Media in South Korea.
3. **Volga Kurbanzade**, Lecturer, Yeditepe University, Türkiye.
Title: Framing of the Annan Plan in Print Media: A Comparative Analysis.
4. **Ludovico Iorio**, PhD Candidate, University of Parma, Italy.
Title: Transparency Warranties for Algorithmic Decisions in Administrative Procedures Among EU Law and the Italian Legal System.
5. **Sunguralp Solpan**, Lecturer, Yeditepe University, Türkiye.
Title: National Populist Discourse as a Lack of Content: Critical Discourse Analysis on Osman's Story and Newspapers in two Different Occasions.

12:00-14:00 Session 7

Moderator: Olga Gkounta, Researcher, Athens Institute.

1. **Mahmut Kubilay Akman**, Professor, Usak University, Türkiye.
Title: Feminine Diffractions and Biopolitics in Contemporary Arts.
2. **Nelson Michaud**, Full Professor, École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP), Canada.
Title: Mark Carney's Foreign Policy: Is Canada Renewing its Old Vows?
3. **Artur Bartoszewicz**, Assistant Professor, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland.
Robert Dygas, Assistant Professor, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland.
Paweł Lesiak, Associate Professor, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland.
Title: Self-proclaimed Germany's Leadership and Its Effect on EU Socio-Economic Development.
4. **Elina Vroblevska**, Researcher/Lecturer, Riga Stradins University, Latvia.
Beate Livdanska, Researcher/Lecturer, Riga Stradins University, Latvia.
Title: The Ideological Arms Race: A Comparative Analysis of Russia's Idea of "Civilizational Uniqueness" and Latvian and Lithuanian Counter-Strategies.
5. **Apostolos Xanthopoulos**, Assistant Professor, Lewis University, USA.
Title: The Ranking of the Greek Retirement System based on Human and Economic Freedom.
6. **Alexia Georgakopoulos**, Professor, Nova South University, USA.
Title: Conflict Transformation and Sustainable Peace Programs in Global Conflict and Crisis: Ukraine Training Project.

14:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-17:30 Session 8

Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by ATINER exclusively for the conference participants.

18:00-20:00

An Ancient Athenian Symposium: Continuous Dialogues, Timeless Flavors (featuring
authentic ancient Athenian dishes, local wine, and sweet delicacies from ancient Athens)

Friday 19 December 2025
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Saturday 20 December 2025
Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

Sunday 21 December 2025
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands

Noor Sulastry Yurni Ahmad

Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

Youth, Politics, and the Digital Sphere: The Contradictory Impact of Social Media in South Korea

Youth generations in South Korea have been consistently leading and playing decisive roles in social movements that criticize state policies or demand political change. Similar things happened in the big youth movements in South Korea, which usually were marches and online activism. It explores their active political engagement through the lens of the youth movement while taking into account the pace of changing technology that has provided unprecedented opportunities for access to up-to-the-moment information and knowledge. This study explores the relationship between youth political participation and digital or social media usage within this new context of digital and social media as tools of political communication, through the analysis of youth participation in key political protests within South Korea since the Candlelight Protests of 2008 and the post-2008 period. This study is about the social media platforms in South Korea, and the survey data were examined to find the factors impacting young South Koreans to use social media for political activities. Through surveys, focus groups, and data analysis, this study examines 200 South Korean youth ($N = 200$) to address the relationship between social media and activism, awareness, and mobilization, as well as political participation. The results suggest a two-way street: not only does social media encourage civic engagement, but young people also play an important role in sparking online and offline movements.

Mahmut Kubilay Akman
Professor, Usak University, Türkiye

Feminine Diffractions and Biopolitics in Contemporary Arts

In the second half of 20th Century and beginning of 21st Century we have witnessed a growing influence, actions and creativity by female artists challenging the power compositions of a field, modern art, which was male-dominated for a long time. Women as contemporary artists have combined several things in their aesthetic expressions and biopolitical constructions/deconstructions through their political discourses (feminist and beyond), semiotic messages and coding, usage of technology including digital possibilities, hardware, software, surgical operations, AI, mechanics and even biology. With artists like Tracey Emin, Orlan, Marina Abramović and many others joined them in the first decades of 21st Century contemporary arts' aesthetic possibilities, narrations and creativity have been revolutionized in a high level. Can we say that even it has had a transaesthetic dimension in the Baudrillardian sense of the concept? All these issues will be discussed in this presentation through visual sociology and with references of biopolitics discussions in social theory. Visual materials from female contemporary artists will be taken as samples and to be analyzed sociologically. The biopolitical layers and diffractions in their feminine language will be focused critically in order to construct an analytical model for this way of artistic activity. Considering the productivity and prolific expressions of these artists it will be a very multidimensional and transdisciplinary discussion. The subject will drive us beyond the limits of art history, sociology of art, visual studies and social theory. Philosophers and sociologists like Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Howard Becker, Giorgio Agamben and Jean Baudrillard will provide us the necessary concepts with their critical theories. Especially today's female artists create artworks highly relevant with biopolitical lines of social theory and contemporary philosophy. Things are all intertwined and interconnected regardless their roots are in arts or theory. We will find plenty of points to focus in these contexts.

Abbas Al-Refaie

Professor, University of Jordan, Jordan

Effects of Satisfaction with PV Systems, Advertising, and Competition on Energy Security Using System Dynamics

This study aims to predict the impacts of adopters' satisfaction with photovoltaic (PV) solar systems through Word-of-mouth (WOM), advertising, and competition on the number of PV installations and generated electricity power for rooftop buildings using system dynamics. A system dynamics model was developed to depict the cause-and-effect relationships between model factors including WOM, satisfaction, advertising, competition, and the number of PV installations. The simulation was then conducted to predict the generated energy from 2030 to 2040. Results revealed that the predicted cumulative PV installations will increase to 262 and 558 MW in 2030 and 2040, respectively. Due to this, the cumulative generated power (kWh) (= 42.5 GWh) will reach 452 and 964 GWh in 2030 and 2040, respectively. Finally, sensitivity analyses were made to confirm the robustness of simulation results for PV installations and generated power to variations and uncertainties in model parameters. In conclusion, the results of this research are valuable to decision-makers in the energy sector as well as manufacturers and suppliers of PV systems and products. Moreover, effective advertising and advancement of PV designs and technology can significantly support achieving energy sustainability in residential buildings.

Andreea Barbu

Associate Professor, National University of Science and Technology
Politehnica Bucharest, Romania

Responding to Employee Needs: A Market View of Workplace Satisfaction Solutions

This research aims to explore how organizations can meet the needs of employees by using digital technology solutions aimed at improving workplace satisfaction. The study continues the results of a focus group that identified five essential directions of digital technologies: communication and collaboration, task and project management, feedback and assessment, professional development and digital wellness. Based on these directions and the specialized literature, a market analysis of existing solutions was conducted, by centralizing the rankings published in the period 2023–2024 by specialized providers and companies. The results obtained provide an updated perspective on the most relevant technologies available to support employee well-being and satisfaction in organizations.

Artur Bartoszewicz

Assistant Professor, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland

Robert Dygas

Assistant Professor, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland

&

Paweł Lesiak

Associate Professor, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland

Self-proclaimed Germany's Leadership and its Effect on EU Socio-Economic Development

This paper examines the role of a self-proclaimed German leadership in shaping the socio-economic development of the European Union (EU). It focuses on three key initiatives—Nord Stream 2, the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), and the EU-MERCOSUR trade agreement—where Germany played a significant role in advancing EU policies. The study explores how these initiatives, often led by Germany, reflect coordination challenges and varying levels of consensus among Member States. Additionally, it analyzes the influence of major German political parties in shaping the EU's strategic vision and assesses the alignment of the EU Green Deal with broader European interests, including those of Germany. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates comparative case studies, expert interviews, institutional document analysis, and quantitative data from Eurostat and OECD indicators (e.g., FDI, HDI, GINI, regional GDP per capita). The findings suggest that German leadership often balances national priorities with collective EU objectives, which can lead to tensions in regional cohesion, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. The study highlights opportunities for enhancing institutional legitimacy and trust to support more inclusive EU integration. By addressing these dynamics, the paper contributes to the political economy literature and offers insights into how leading Member States can navigate supranational coordination to foster solidarity and shared prosperity.

Frederic Berard

Associate, Gattuso Bouchard Mazzone & Professor, University of
Montreal, Canada

The Protection of Collective Aboriginal Interest as Opposed to Individual Rights

This presentation will focus on the constitutional impacts of the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision concerning the coexistence of aboriginal collective rights with individual rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: *Dickson v. Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation*, 2024 SCC 10.

Article 25. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms **shall not be construed** so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada (...)

Briefly, this case involved a challenge by a member of the First Nation to the constitutionality of an electoral rule requiring her to live in the community in order to be elected as a council member. The Court addressed novel questions regarding (1) the application of the Charter to an autonomous Indigenous community (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, a self-governing Indigenous community) based on Article 32 of the Canadian Charter (2) if so, the residency obligation unjustifiably violates equality rights under section 15(1) of the Charter, and (3) if Article 25 can protect the residency obligation from a Charter challenge.

First, the court reexamines case law on the application of the Charter, which will be explained in detail during the presentation. The court concludes that the requirements allowing for the VGFN to be qualified as a government “by nature” are fulfilled (par. 77). Furthermore, the Charter applies to the “o the enactment and enforcement of the residency requirement as a specific “governmental activity””.

Second, the central element of the analysis revolves around Article 25. This decision by the highest Court represents the first in-depth analysis of article 25. There are two possible interpretations: either Article 25 is solely for interpretative purposes, or it is given substantive scope, a sort of derogatory power, allowing it to act as a shield with respect to collective choices, regulations, and laws adopted by Indigenous nations in relation to individual rights claims.

The four-step analysis is as followed:

- (1) *Prima Facie* Charter breach**
- (2) The scope of section 25's protection: the impugned conduct is a right, or an exercise of a right, protected under section 25**
- (3) Irreconcilable conflict between the Charter right and the Aboriginal, treaty, or other right or its exercise**
- (4) The operation of section 25**

The Supreme Court concludes that this provision ensures “that the designated rights and freedoms of Indigenous peoples are protected where giving effect to conflicting individual *Charter* rights and freedoms would diminish Indigenous difference.” (par. 17), however this protection is not absolute. The priority of collective Indigenous rights only applies when they conflict with an individual right guaranteed by the Charter. Furthermore, this primacy does not apply in cases where there is a conflict with the equality guarantee provided to both men and women under section 28 of the Charter and subsection 35(4) of the Constitution Act, 1982 (par. 110). Finally, the Court concluded that there was indeed discrimination within the meaning of section 15, but that section 25 of the Charter could act as a shield and uphold the constitutionality of the rule.

This case is significant because it clarified how the Canadian Charter interacts with Indigenous governance structure, and the limits of the application of the Charter to Indigenous governance. It also provided a framework for the application of Article 25, which must be considered in light of its purpose, as mentioned below, “with due consideration to its text, the *Charter's* character and larger object, and the provision's history.” The court emphasized the teleological approach in constitutional interpretation and also the unwritten principle of minority protection. According to certain doctrinal authors, several of the conclusions reached by the Supreme Court in this decision can be applied to the interpretation of the notwithstanding clause provided for in article 33, notably the interpretation according to its object in the light of 2024, its preventive use and the protection of minorities.

Gennadiy Chernov

Associate Professor, University of Regina, Canada

Need for Orientation and its Place in the Motivational Framework of Needs and Goals

There is little research analyzing the theoretical basis of NFO that could place the concept into broader psychological and mass communication contexts. This paper attempts to revisit NFO from a theoretical perspective. It describes what heuristic value NFO may hold for the further development of the agenda-setting placing this concept in a broader context of the psychology of needs and goals.

Need for orientation has not been considered in a broader framework of needs. Dweck (2017) proposed three basic needs: acceptance, predictability, and competence. Four additional needs that are formed from combinations of them: trust, control, self-esteem/status, and self-coherence are also included. NFO consists of two components: relevance and certainty. Following Dweck's (2017) classification, NFO will be compared to three basic needs: acceptance, predictability, and competence. As NFO is not a basic need, it could be called a compound need based on basic needs.

Agenda setting deals with media impact, so NFO leads media users to search for information to satisfy one of those needs. NFO could be a specific case of need for predictability because people attend the media, especially the news media, for making sense of the world, and to act based on the knowledge gleaned from the media. Acceptance may be a less universal state with which NFO can be associated: it requires media knowledge to be the central requirement for socialization, and that may pertain to a limited number of situations. Blumler's (1979) diversion orientation (entertainment, excitement) may be indirectly related to acceptance through shared common cultural values, which may become the basis for social acceptance. Competence may overlap with NFO requirements, but following the media for being knowledgeable per se does not appear as urgent or universal as being able to predict your environment. Predictability also looks requiring both components, relevance and certainty, to be involved. This preliminary discussion identifies predictability as having a broader scope and correspondence with NFO, while acceptance and competence depend on the situational and cultural context.

A more pronounced link between NFO and goals has been recently established (McCombs & Stroud (2014), Goals' introduction to agenda setting as motivation determinants allowed to account more precisely for information seeking and information processing behaviors. It also

helped better incorporate selective exposure to agenda setting (Lee, N, 2016). Selective exposure means more choice of media sources and messages which potentially could change setting the agenda dynamic. With homogenized mass media sources, the key motivation was either to attend to or skip the messages with a unified agenda. Different levels of NFO corresponded with more active or passive information seeking. With selective exposure at play, there emerged opportunities for existing diverging agendas for different segments of the public. A lack of awareness for the public agenda is complemented by avoiding the unified agenda. And these new elements require such explanatory tools such as motivated reasoning supplementing NFO with goal achievement behaviours and information processing, differentiating the possible agenda setting outcomes.

Timothy Congdon

Chair, Institute of International Monetary Research, UK

Money and Inflation in the 2020s: What was the Cause of the Inflation Flare-up of 2021 and 2022?

In spring and summer 2020 the overwhelming majority of economists expected the COVID-19 medical emergency to be followed by years of disinflation or perhaps even falling prices. Instead 2022 saw the highest inflation for over 40 years in most of the world's leading developed economies. At the start of 2022 Jason Furman - economic adviser to President Obama - lamented economists' "dismal performance" and "collective failure".

However, there were exceptions to the profession's blunder on inflation. In late March and early April 2020 I sent out warnings of an inflation flare-up, using - in particular - special e-mails from the Institute of International Monetary Research to spread the message. Governments and central banks were making policy announcements which would undoubtedly lead to a burst of rapid growth in the quantity of money, broadly-defined. Using a quantity-theoretic framework of analysis, in which broad money is pivotal to the economy's behaviour, I said that this rapid growth would lead to inflation, with the worst numbers probably in late 2022. (I was joined in my view by a handful of other economists, notably by Juan E. Castañeda, who was the Institute of International Monetary Research's second director from 2016 to 2022.)

My talk will discuss these events and ask why so many economists were wrong. It will also develop my theory of the determination of national income and wealth. This will differentiate it not only from the Keynesian mainstream, but only from versions of monetarism which seem to me to have failed in the last 50 or so years. The talk will draw heavily on my book *Money and Inflation at the Time of Covid*, to be published by Edward Elgar Publishing in the UK in October (i.e., next month).

Dragana Dabic

Research Fellow, Institute of International Politics and Economics,
Serbia

**Between Regulation and Identity-Building:
Anthropocentric Technological Sovereignty as the
European Response to the Challenges of Artificial
Intelligence**

By enacting the Artificial Intelligence Act in August 2024, the European Union (EU) became the first global actor to establish a comprehensive legal framework for governing artificial intelligence (AI). The EU approach towards developing and regulating AI is not merely a technical or economic matter, but also an opportunity to reaffirm its political and value-based identity. In this light, the concept of anthropocentric technological sovereignty plays a dual role: as a normative foundation for AI regulation and a component of symbolic supranational identity-building in the digital age. The paper aims to explore the potential and limitations of the European model of AI, so as to highlight the interplay between governance centralization and identity formation within the EU's digital agenda. Through its AI policy, the EU advances the notion of Europe as a singular, politically coherent global actor. The distinctive EU approach is analyzed through the lens of political philosophy, ethics, identity studies, as well as the popular notion of open strategic autonomy. In addition, the author questions whether the anthropocentric orientation is sustainable in the current global international landscape, where digital sovereignty and dominance in the domain of advanced technologies becomes a priority. The qualitative content analysis of EU documents is employed in order to identify and interpret the core guiding ideas and value principles that shape the European regulatory approach. The tension between ethical universalism and techno-political realism is highlighted. It is concluded that, through its ambition and (self-)perception as a global leader in ethical AI, the European Union, beyond cultivating an arguably self-flattering image and reinforcing its supranational governance features, seeks to present itself as a unified actor capable of reconciling a value-driven approach with contemporary geo-economics and security considerations. Although ethical and anthropocentric aspirations remain an indispensable part of the EU's identity, the pursuit of digital and technological sovereignty and the competitiveness of the European economy shape the actual priorities in the field of AI. Ultimately, by reflecting on whether the EU's vision of anthropocentric technological

sovereignty can serve as both a geopolitical strategy and an ethical AI governance model, the analysis contributes to the growing body of European studies literature on emerging challenges related to the rapid development of AI technology.

Anastasios Elemes

Associate Professor, ESSEC Business School, France

Travis Chow

Associate Professor, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

&

Kenneth Klassen

Professor, The University of Waterloo, Canada

Navigating the Changing Tax Landscape: The Importance of Cross-border Advisory Alliances in Multinational Tax Planning

In the early 2010s, Belgium's notional interest deduction regime lost much of its appeal as declining interest rates steadily eroded allowable deductions, while policymakers faced growing pressure to reform the system. At the same time, the UK's 2013 introduction of a highly advantageous patent box regime, combined with falling corporate tax rates, created new tax planning opportunities. This study examines how multinational corporation (MNC) affiliates adapted their tax strategies amid these shifts in the UK and EU tax landscape. We exploit the case of PwC Europe—a profit-pooling, cross-border alliance of local PwC member firms with harmonized partner appraisal and remuneration systems—to distinguish the responses of MNC affiliates that are clients of PwC Europe from other affiliates. Using a difference-in-differences design, we find that PwC-alliance-audited affiliates more extensively reorganized income-shifting activities to exploit the UK patent box than non-alliance peers. Treated affiliates relocated intangible and financial assets, shifted operating and financial income to UK PwC-audited affiliates, and routed dividends from the UK to Germany and Belgium via the Netherlands. Our findings provide the first large-sample empirical evidence that cross-border advisory firms enable MNCs to respond in a timely manner to changing tax incentives and effectively capitalize on emerging planning opportunities.

Alexia Georgakopoulos
Professor, Nova South University, USA

Conflict Transformation and Sustainable Peace Programs in Global Conflict and Crisis: Ukraine Training Project

This conference presentation will overview the ongoing and active training and research that our global peace building team is conducting in person and remotely in Ukraine to predominately Ukrainian psychology graduate students, faculty, and Ukrainian Military Veterans. In total 15 training programs have taken place with a notable small team of global peacebuilders since 2024 and a dozen more peacebuilding training programs are being organized for the years to follow. This program will illustrate the importance of conducting sustained programming of Conflict Transformation instead of only conflict resolution when global studies and conflict are involved. The programming will illustrate long term commitment to global communities engaged in conflict and crisis are met with long term commitment from peacebuilders. The University of Kyiv and The University of Hryhorii Skovoroda University in Pereiaslav, Ukraine has joined in Collaboration BRDGES Academy who is lead by former President of Mediators Beyond Borders (mediatorsbeyondborders.org/) Lynn Cole, and with collaboration of other peace builders including Professor Alexia Georgakopoulos of the Department of Conflict Resolution Studies at Nova Southeastern University [link](#), which happens to be among one of the earliest conflict resolution programs in the world that was established 30 years ago. This presentation will cover the Ukraine Peace Ambassador Project, which is a research and training program that involves ongoing training that is provided to Ukrainian university students, faculty, military veterans, and other stakeholders to remediate cultural tensions and enhance communication through mediation and other dispute resolution techniques in Ukraine society in order to promote after war recovery, peacebuilding, and support state centric democracy Ukrainians. The presentation will cover the psychology of war, nonviolent communication, conflict transformation, mediation, and other conflict intervention approaches to tackle crisis and war for the future. The project is being rolled out across universities in Ukraine with the goal to reach and train as many Ukrainian peace ambassadors as possible. This presentation has the goal to share with those in psychology and those in related fields that this is a model that is being used by peacebuilders, and it may be applied in other settings. The Non-Profit *Rebuilding Ukraine Association Incorporated* (RUAI) <https://www.rebukr.com/about/> has supported this applied training and research project and this Nonprofit was organized to provide education and technical assistance training to increase the capacity for Ukraine

to manage and sustain the reconstruction of the war damage from the Russian invasion.

Benjamin Gidron

Professor Emeritus, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

Maya Finger

Assistant Professor, The College of Management Academic Studies,
Israel

&

Kfir Bar

Lecturer, Reichman University, Israel

Characterizing Impact Tech Startups' Investors: A Multivariate Analysis

Startups that introduce technological innovation in the social and environmental domains have been categorized as Impact Tech Startups (ITSs) and have been analyzed conceptually and empirically (Gidron et al., 2021; 2023). The current study focuses on characterizing the *investors* in that category of organizations and attempts to provide initial data on their nature and preferences in their investment behavior.

The dataset, sourced from Crunchbase¹ up to April 2024, comprises 3,042 investors, who have invested in Israel. Using natural language processing (NLP) techniques, we extracted pertinent details for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) categorization from English-language descriptions of the startups' websites. Leveraging BERT, fine-tuned on expert-labeled startup descriptions, we ensured precise alignment with the 17 SDGs. The analysis employed descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis, and non-parametric tests to explore investor behavior, identify trends and clusters, and examine relationships between variables, offering insights into investment patterns and SDG alignment.

The paper focuses on the relationships between variables pertaining to the investor and its investments, such as the form of investment (private vs. corporate), size and number of investments, etc. and the target area of the startup, as expressed by its SDG category. The study provides an initial step in understanding the dynamics of the investment process in impact tech startups and enables the development of research questions regarding the preferences of investors in a given country.

¹<https://www.crunchbase.com/>.

Gil Greenstein

Head of M.Sc. Program - Technology Management, Holon Institute of
Technology (HIT), Israel

**Handling Issues of Uncertainty while Designing DSS
during the AI Era**

This research deals with various principles that were examined and identified during Decision-Making processes and integrate them to a comprehensive methodology for modeling an analytical model which instructs how to design a DSS properly.

The integration and implementation processes of those principles could lead to better "knowing how" of mechanisms of Human behavior. It could contribute to more effective analysis and design of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Infrastructure and implemented systems.

The analysis allows explaining a decision maker's behavior under the assumptions of bounded rationality over time and it leads to a better understanding of the performances of DSS during their life cycle. The model deals with the following principles:

The resolution of Information – The analysis demonstrates the trade-off between accuracy of information and time and costs resources to gain this information.

The timing of decision-making - the analysis shows how to support decision makers (e.g. politicians) to take their decisions in the right moment. A model will be under the assumption that information resources become more accurate over time, but opportunities sometimes vanish over time.

Bounded Rationality of decision-makers - it is assumed that decision makers could not adopt a new set of decision rules, and it takes to know how to handle a new DSS platform. The analytic model will clarify how to consider this issue during the design process of DSS.

Multi Criteria approach - the analysis deals with decision situation where it is assumed that a decision-maker cannot formulate a joint utility function constituted from different criteria which are completely inestimable or estimable partly.

In summary, the modeling of issues of bounded rationality could lead us to better understanding of scenarios of uncertainty and conflicts between contradict purposes and goals, while we design AI based decision support systems.

Stefan Hall

Chair and Professor, Department of Game Design / Director of
Communication Fellows, High Point University, USA

**Reading "Japan-ness": Teaching Japanese Media and
Popular Culture in a Global Context**

This presentation explores the global circulation and cultural significance of Japanese media artifacts—such as anime, manga, video games, and consumer goods—and how they are interpreted across cultural boundaries. Drawing on experience teaching a university-level course for many years on Japanese media and popular culture, this paper examines how students engage with the concept of "Japan-ness" embedded in these products and what values, aesthetics, and ideologies they reflect or challenge. A key component of the course includes an international study experience with a faculty-led trip to Japan, allowing students to compare their interpretations of Japanese media within the US context to firsthand cultural encounters in Japan. This dual framework—academic study and immersive travel—offers unique insights into how media artifacts function within global systems of cultural production, consumption, and exchange. The presentation situates these findings within broader discussions of globalization, cultural identity, and soft power, contributing to the conference's themes of cultural and social dynamics in a globalized world.

Nathalie Homlong

Professor, Volda University College, Norway

&

Elisabeth Springler

Study Program Director, University of Applied Sciences, BFI Vienna,
Austria

Daily Realities of Life in Indian Slums – A Case Study

About 37% of India's population is living in cities (Trading Economics, 2025), and a sizeable share of these are living in slums. However, there are widely different statistics of the percentage of India's urban population living in slums, ranging from 17.4% in India's latest census in 2011 to 49% in 2020 according to the World Bank. The difference can be explained by varying definitions of slums and data collection methods. Even though the percentage of slum dwellers may have been shrinking, rapidly increasing urbanization leads to steady or even increasing numbers of people living in slums in India. This paper aims at shedding light on the daily realities of life in Indian slums, looking especially at the aspects of overcrowding, sanitation, water and electricity. Taking slums in Mumbai as a case and analyzing housing improvement measures put in place by authorities and various institutions, this paper wants to give insight into the development of living conditions in Indian slums in recent years. Special focus will be put on crowding / density of slums, sanitation, and access to electricity and water. The Living Conditions Diamond and the Theory of Blight serve as theoretical basis for the analysis conducted in this paper.

Matthias Huehn

Mary S. Carey Chair of Ethics and CST, Saint Vincent College, USA

Respect and Sympathy or Power and Empathy? Psychology's Harmful Effect on Leadership Theory

Recent high-profile studies suggest that the prevalence of psychopathic traits among top managers is significantly higher than in the general population. Combined with the widespread notion that business success often requires to be an unethical person this could be interpreted as a radical outright condemnation of business and management in general. In this paper, we propose a completely different interpretation. We argue that psychopathic sentiments expressed by top managers are not natural parts of top managers' personalities, but attitudes habituated through common mainstream leadership theories. These mainstream approaches, driven by the "gloomy vision" and the "pretence of knowledge" inherent in economics *and* modern psychology, instruct managers to replace natural sentiments – such as sympathy – in favour of unnatural trained attitudes, like empathy. Whereas sympathy means feeling (*pathos*) with (*sum*) the other, empathy is the ability to read the other's feelings without feeling them. This paper also looks at a second philosophical term, dignity, and how psychological scholarship has turned into the opposite. Combined with seeing oneself (leader) and others (followers) as mere means to a given end, respect for the other's dignity in the Kantian sense is lost. Philosophical approaches to leadership offer a view of humanity that is at the same time more hopeful and realistic than modern psychological and economic approaches.

Ludovico Iorio

PhD Candidate, University of Parma, Italy

Transparency Warranties for Algorithmic Decisions in Administrative Procedures Among EU Law and the Italian Legal System

The digital transition is imposed for the administrative activity by the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan, considering the advantage that digital instruments may grant also to fulfil the public interest the administrations are responsible for.

The State Council quickly elaborated a case law in base of which artificial intelligence's application in administrative procedures can help defining a system more abiding of the Administration's efficiency and good performances principle, stated by the 97th article of the Italian Constitution, even though it requires a deep regulation. In that occasion, judges have foreseen how challenging might be the AI usage inside public procedures, considering how the whole system is based on transparency and on letting private people participate, also proactively, in the definition of the assuming measure.

The critical aspect regards the algorithm's capability in substituting the human decision-making process, since it provides for more efficiency to the administrations, appearing compliant with the mentioned constitutional principles; still, the quickness of the decision cannot sacrifice the legitimacy of the measure, making AI an instrument which should only sustain humans in deciding. Because of that, the "human in the loop" principle shows its importance, imposing the constant presence of a person to overlook the activity accomplished by the machine, to grant its correct functioning, which, in administrative procedure, is represented by reaching public interests in balance with private people's rights.

So, assuming an epistemic and anthropocentric point of view, the automation bias needs to be avoided, keeping self-determination the rule on which consciously choosing to rely on AI.

In fact, administrative case law affirmed that the technical rule steering the algorithm which elaborates the decision still remains the general administrative rule elaborated by humans, and not the algorithm itself. The administrative measure assumed by the machine is, thereby, representative of the digital administrative measure category, as long as it appears abiding the publicity, transparency, rationality and proportionality principles, which bear the whole discipline.

State Council also come up with the "reinforced" transparency principle, which remarks not only the administrative procedure's

transparency, but also the one that its algorithmic development requires. This implies the knowability of a rule expressed in a language different from the juridical one, regarding: the developers' activity, the algorithm making process, and the decision-making process.

Judges also stated that if the logical process followed by the AI appears insufficient, digital act's motivation is necessarily lacking explainability, leading to its inevitable annulment due to illegitimacy vice. The administration, to escape liability, should then demonstrate the assumption of all the measures required to avoid undermining privates' rights.

In conclusion, the present contribution aims to show how AI appears an essential instrument to enhance public authorities' efficiency, also keeping in mind how the impersonal mechanism on which measures may be assumed is lacking the evaluating-the-real-case capability indispensable in the preliminary phase of the procedure. Therefore, the dialectical method should remain the main administrative function's form of exercise, granting private participation when it is necessary to tackle (possibly) harmful algorithmic decisions.

Kiridaran Kanagaretnam
Professor, York University, Canada

Climate Beliefs and Attitudes and Corporate Tax Savings

In this paper, we examine the relationship between climate beliefs and attitudes (CBA) and corporate tax savings. We document that firms headquartered in counties with high CBA are more likely to utilize climate-change related tax incentives to lower their tax payments. Our evidence suggests that CBA's influence manifests through increased climate-related R&D investments and corporate environmental commitments, which give rise to various investment-related tax credits, resulting in lower tax payments. Further analyses indicate that the positive relationship between CBA and corporate tax savings is more pronounced for firms in climate-vulnerable industries and those in states with climate action plans in place. Using attention-grabbing disaster events, the implementation of climate adaptation plans, and corporate headquarters relocation events, we document that heightened CBA incentivizes firms to reap more tax benefits. Our results that firms headquartered in counties with high CBA are more likely to use climate-related tax incentives to reduce their tax payments are of interest to academics, investors, and policymakers as they provide insights into whether and how CBA influences firms to utilize tax incentives to combat climate change.

Marek Kociuba

Assistant Professor, Military University of Land Forces, Poland

Relationship between Digit Ratio (2D:4D) and Sports Achievements

Second-to-fourth digit lengths ratio (2D:4D) is known as an indicator of prenatal testosterone (PT) exposure. Lower 2D:4D indicates higher PT exposure and vice versa. The ratio of second-to-fourth digit length (2D:4D) is generally higher in women compared to men. Lower 2D:4D is linked with greater physical ability, strength, better sporting performance and a propensity towards jobs demanding greater physical ability.

The study attempted to evaluate whether 2D:4D was associated with playing high levels of handball among Polish males and females. It also assessed the difference among different levels of swimmers in contrast with a non-sport control group.

The participants of the study included a group of male and female handball players and swimmers in Polish leagues as well as a non-sport group of controls of both sexes from general population.

Results showed significant differences in 2D:4D across the study groups only among the females in case of handball players.

In swimming, a 2D:4D differentiation was found between the sports and non-sport groups for both women and men.

Volga Kurbanzade

Lecturer, Yeditepe University, Türkiye

Framing of the Annan Plan in Print Media: A Comparative Analysis

This study presents a comparative analysis of headline articles, op-eds, and cartoons on the Annan Plan that appeared in Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, Turkish and Greek newspapers in the month preceding the twin referenda held on 24 April 2004. Relying on two theoretical pillars, the prospect theory of Kahneman and Tversky (1979) and the Mediterranean Model of Mancini (2004), 12 newspapers central to the issue are analyzed: *Afrika*, *Kıbrıs*, *Vatan*, *Charavgi*, *Fileleftheros*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Rizospastis*, *Ta Nea* and *Kathimerini*. The research primarily investigates the patterns of similarity and difference in the use of “win-win”, “win-lose”, “lose-lose”, “there is no alternative” and “risky gambling” frames in print media. Second, it seeks to clarify whether the coverage of analyzed newspapers displays the characteristics of the Mediterranean Media Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) such as press-political party parallelism. By employing content analysis, the collected data from 12 newspapers across three main themes (articles, op-eds, and cartoons) are coded through a detailed codebook. The findings of the study indicate that the game theoretical frames were not only to present the “yes” or “no” choices by pro-yes and pro-no newspapers, but newspapers with a critical stance refuted the game theoretical logic when questioning the legitimacy of the referendum itself. In this sense, the logic of game theory and prospect theory appears as the backbone of the referendum and how it was framed by the print media. Findings also show that this logic originates from policymakers and then finds its place in the print media. Finally, the study sheds light on the complexity of multiparty conflict where primary and secondary parties adhere to the Mediterranean Media Model. The research combines several disciplines such as political science, media studies, social psychology, and conflict analysis and resolution, drawing from the related literature. Last but not the least, the comparative content analysis offers an important tool for further research in this domain that could be applied in other cases.

Gohar Marikyan

Full Professor, SUNY Empire State University, USA

Mathematics and Society

My research investigates the complex role that mathematical knowledge plays in society and its various implications. A fundamental question arises: Do we truly value mathematics as both a discipline and a critical tool for effective thinking and problem-solving? Additionally, what is the current level of mathematical proficiency within our communities, and how does it vary across countries? Some nations, with their rich mathematical heritage, consistently produce individuals who have a strong grasp of mathematical concepts, leading to significant advancements in fields such as science, technology, and engineering. In contrast, other countries may face challenges due to a less established mathematical traditions, which can greatly affect the quality of mathematics education available to their citizens. This disparity raises important concerns about how cultural and historical factors influence the overall mathematical literacy and competence of populations. As we navigate an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, one might question the ongoing relevance of mathematics. Nevertheless, mathematics remains an invaluable tool that empowers individuals to make informed decisions in their everyday lives, whether it involves budgeting, understanding statistical data, or engaging with technology. The consequences of inadequate mathematical knowledge can be profound, potentially leading to negative impacts of a country's economy and political landscape. Poor mathematical skills can hinder informed civic participation and economic decision-making, thereby contributing to broader social challenges. This brings to light another intriguing question: Are affluent and influential individuals typically proficient in mathematics? Examining this question invites an exploration of the role that education and opportunity play in shaping mathematical competence among those who hold significant social influence. Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights into the relationship between mathematics and societal success.

Gift Mheta

Associate Professor & Manager, Writing Centre, Durban University of
Technology, South Africa

**Tutoring in the Age of Artificial Intelligence:
The Reflections of Selected Tutors at the Durban
University of Technology Writing Centre**

The rapid proliferation of artificial intelligence technologies has fundamentally disrupted traditional paradigms across multiple sectors, with higher education experiencing particularly profound transformations. Within academic spaces, the integration of AI tools has precipitated significant shifts in teaching methodologies, learning practices, and academic support services. This study examines a critical yet under-explored dimension of this technological revolution: the changing landscape of academic writing support in the AI era, as observed through the experiences of writing centre tutors who work directly with students navigating these new digital realities.

Academic writing, long recognised as a cornerstone of university education and scholarly development, has become a contested site where traditional literacy practices intersect with emerging AI-mediated composing processes. Students across all levels of higher education—from first-year undergraduates to doctoral candidates—increasingly rely on generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Microsoft Co-Pilot to assist with various writing tasks, including assignments, projects, dissertations, and theses. This widespread adoption has generated considerable debate among educators and academic development practitioners regarding both the developmental potential and the risks associated with AI integration in academic writing contexts.

The dual nature of AI's impact on student writing has become increasingly apparent to those working in academic support services. On one hand, these technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for scaffolding learning, providing immediate feedback, and democratising access to writing assistance. On the other hand, concerns have emerged about academic integrity violations, the potential erosion of critical thinking skills, and students' overreliance on AI-generated content that may compromise their authentic voice and intellectual development.

This paper presents empirical insights drawn from interviews with nine tutors at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) Writing Centre, situated at the Steve Biko campus. These tutors work primarily with students from the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment and the Faculty of Applied Sciences—disciplines where scientific writing

abilities are essential for academic success and professional preparation. The tutors occupy a unique vantage point: they engage with students in one-on-one consultations, observe emerging writing practices firsthand, and must continually adapt their pedagogical approaches to address the evolving needs of AI-literate students.

Through their reflections, this study explores three interconnected dimensions of AI's influence on writing centre work. First, it examines tutors' observations regarding how AI tools are shaping students' writing processes, products, and perceptions of authorship. Second, it investigates the various ways students utilise AI in their academic writing—from productive, learning-oriented applications to problematic uses that undermine educational objectives. Third, it documents how tutors themselves are integrating AI into their tutoring practice, transforming the traditional role of "writing companionship" in an increasingly technology-mediated educational environment.

By foregrounding the perspectives of writing centre practitioners, this research contributes valuable ground-level insights into the practical challenges and opportunities that AI presents for academic literacy development in South African higher education contexts.

Nelson Michaud

Full Professor, École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP),
Canada

Mark Carney's Foreign Policy: Is Canada Renewing its Old Vows?

As a consequence of an internal crisis in his caucus, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stepped down and Mark Carney took the reins of the Liberal party of Canada. A general election followed, and, on the night of April 2025, the results showed that Carney succeeded in filling a 25-point gap (Nanos «Research 2024) and was chosen as the 24th Canadian Prime minister. The challenge Carney faced was to present himself as a promoter of change, although his party has lead Canada for the last ten years.

As Prime minister, Carney immediately – and even before the election – went abroad to meet with British Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, and French President, Emmanuel Macron. He then took the opportunity of his trip to Rome, attending Pope Leo XIV inaugural mass, to meet with European Commission President Ursula von de Leyen, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. He issued, with Macron and Starmer, a joint statement calling on Israel to end its war against the Palestinian terror group Hamas in Gaza, to allow humanitarian aid to the enclave, and to commit to the creation of a Palestinian state, a statement which infuriated Benjamin Netanyahu. Of course, PM Carney paid special – but in no way servile – attention to Canada's closest neighbor and succeeded to the extent that U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra says President Donald Trump will stop commenting about Canada becoming a 51st state and that the issue of Canada's annexation to the U.S. is now "behind us." (National Post 2025). As recently as May 21, 2025, PM Carney sent his ministers a Mandate Letter in which he outlines seven priorities for his government, three of which refer to a foreign policy objective (Prime Minister of Canada, 2025).

All these endeavours were undertaken in the first three months of his swearing in as Prime Minister. Following the little attention Prime Minister Harper (Smith and Sjolander 2012, Gecelovsky 2011-2012) and Prime Minister Trudeau (Coulon 2018) paid to foreign policy issues, questions of importance come to mind: can Mark Carney's attitude and responsiveness indeed be perceived as a result of his work as a promoter of change? Or does Mark Carney simply put back to the fore former

Canadian foreign policy values or Pearsonian internationalism? Or is Mark Carney commitment to foreign policy the obvious answer Canada must serve to Donald Trump's intent to recraft the world political order?

The paper will offer an indepth analysis of Mark Carney's statements and speeches that refer to foreign policy issues and relate them to markers of traditional Canadian foreign policy stances.

For indeed, Canada has a long story of international involvement that dates back to World War I, at a time it did not even have jurisdiction over its own international relations (Hilliker 1990, Hilliker and Barry 1995). With time, a tradition of specific involvement allowed the country to play a role that its mere size (population, economy) or status (a self-proclaimed "middle power") would have allowed. (Nossal, Roussel and Paquin 2023) Thanks to the work of key diplomats and engaging politicians, Canada built its trademark known in diplomatic circles as Pearsonian internationalism. This described a "self-confident, outward looking attitude" (Fortier 1996) that translated in institution building and a creativity that opened the doors to a Canadian participation in the UN Security Council or the G7. This stance no doubt well served Canadian interests (Donaghy and Carroll 2011). However, studies have demonstrated that Canadian international endeavours rested on a set of values that reflected a typical Canadian way of answering international challenges (Michaud 2005). In turn, these values fostered a context favorable to Canada's own interests, which were not defined in terms of might or power – hence, the "middle power" status.

Over the years, Canadian governments carried a continuous commitment towards internationalism. Mid-20th century liberal governments laid the cornerstone of this involvement, as did the Chrétien government, later on, with the landmines treaty, the International Criminal Court, or the responsibility to protect (Axworthy 2003, Bryden 2023). It is less recognized that Conservative governments did as well, although John Diefenbaker played an important role with an anti-apartheid declaration that led to South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth in 1961 (Smith 1997, Stevenson 2023). And the Mulroney government was probably one of the most active in this regard, contributing in the redefinition of large chunks of an end-of-the-Cold-war era (Michaud and Nossal 2001, Hampson 2018, Hayday 2023). Over the last years however, questions were raised regarding Canada's place and role in the world (Cohen 2003, Welsh 2004, Heinbecker 2010, Clark 2013, Paris and Owen 2016). Obviously, Canada has lost part of its clout as it is witnessed by the two consecutive failures to get a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council after being a regular participant for half a century, decade after decade.

This analysis of Mark Carney's foreign policy statements and speeches will provide a first glimpse that will help us understand if traditional internationalist values are back or if these statements usher a new paradigm in the Canadian foreign policymaking apparatus.

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Clan-Culture Attributes in a Privatized Kibbutz Industry: An Israeli Case Study

This research describes a notable exception to the general rule. Although Kibbutz Nadib has undergone the process of privatization, Naale Industries (both pseudonyms) has kept many of its original cooperative and communal features. Those features form an organizational culture very different from that of other factories belonging to privatized kibbutzim, where the process of privatization transformed the factories into “normal factories,” entailing a high level of alienation of the workers from the management. In the Naale factory, on the other hand, the pervasive organizational culture is “factory as home and family.”

This study focuses on one privatized kibbutz factory. The research question was: How did this factory preserve clan cultural features after the process of privatization, while most other privatized kibbutz factories discarded their communal nature and became bureaucratic and highly hierarchic?

While most privatized kibbutz factories experienced worker alienation and frustration, this case study describes an organization with a strong culture of commitment and solidarity among workers. Management, on its part, invests in the workers and encourages them to develop with the factory.

The findings indicate that a double social control mechanism maintains the factory's success. Within a family-like working environment, internal control demands professionalism, commitment, integrity, quality, and innovation. External control, from the surrounding kibbutz community, reinforces communal values.

The current research explores the special characteristics of Naale's organizational culture, which differ from those of most other privatized kibbutz factories. The study examines the ability to include familiar and personal organizational attributes in a business and still be economically successful, thus offering a more satisfactory model of how to run a kibbutz firm and to avoid the social costs usually associated with privatization. Looking beyond the kibbutz experience, this case study suggests that the economic business success of a firm does not necessarily result in social alienation between management and workers.

This study contributes to organizational culture theory by combining different elements: features of alternative organizations; a mixture of clan, competitive market, and bureaucratic components; and finally kibbutz industry research. The diverse theoretical perspective enriches the analysis of this case study and facilitates a better sociological interpretation.

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Factors Influencing Indian Consumers: Preference for Foreign Brands over Local Alternatives

The research study examines how people's choices of brands in India have changed, especially the move from choosing foreign brands to local ones. It looks at several things that influence brand choices, starting with price, then education, followed by social changes and beliefs about where a brand is from. To gather information, the study uses a quantitative approach with structured questionnaires that have fixed answer choices. These surveys are given to young students and working people in India. The data is then analyzed using chi-square methods to see how each factor affects brand preferences. The study explains how Indian consumer behavior has changed over the last twenty years due to globalization, and supporting factors such as increased spending power, and the growth of digital technology. It also looks at real needs in the market and areas where current theories are missing, offering useful insights for both international and local companies aiming to build a strong brand presence in India's competitive market. The main goal of this research is to identify the major affecting factor and provide findings that help manufacturers create marketing strategies that better match what the Indian market expects.

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The Shift from Homemakers to Businesswomen: Exploring Influential Factors in Entrepreneurship

In recent years, a growing number of Indian homemakers have shown strong entrepreneurial aspirations. This change is largely fuelled by the need for financial independence, personal identity, and a better balance between home and work. Many women are now stepping beyond traditional domestic boundaries to take on business ventures of their own. This study explores the major factors that drive this transformation, focusing on self-esteem, digital access, financial resources, and the desire for economic freedom. Drawing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, data were collected from 113 homemakers through a structured survey. Descriptive research methods and regression analysis were applied to identify the key predictors of entrepreneurial intention. The findings reveal that self-esteem and access to digital tools are the most influential factors encouraging entrepreneurship. Digital platforms, online networks, and psychological empowerment have emerged as strong enablers that help women overcome longstanding social and emotional barriers. In contrast, financial concerns and traditional stay-at-home motivations show a weaker impact. Overall, the study highlights the need for initiatives that build digital skills, boost confidence, and promote financial inclusion. The shift from homemaker to entrepreneur is not merely economic it represents personal growth, empowerment, and a quiet movement toward equality in the digital age.

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Allegorical Minimalism

“The right method of philosophy”, Wittgenstein wrote, “would be this. To say nothing except what can be said...and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions. This method would be unsatisfying to the other – he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy – but it would be the only strictly correct method.” There are things that can neither be captured in the confines of rational thought or the rigid straitjacket words impose on fluid thoughts and emotions. Much remains inexpressible. Of such things, for Wittgenstein, “one must be silent.”

Art, like philosophy, presumes to provide moral clarity and elucidate universal truths. Which too is plagued with sophistry. For what understandings can we impose on a work of art that will add to rather than detract from our experience of it? Interpretation is not merely undesirable. It is also impossible.

It is this denial of interpretation that lies at the heart of Allegorical Minimalism. The Allegorical Minimalist seeks to create a paradox that destabilizes the perceptions of the viewer and opens space for non-linear, non-linguistic, and non-logical forms of understanding. The allegory raises the question; the minimalism denies the answer.

Looking at the inverted tree, perhaps the most emblematic image in my work, one can, if so inclined, see Golgotha, the abattoir, or the funeral pyre, and in doing so conclude that I’m making a firm and urgent statement about our collective desecration of nature in the name of never-ending progress. But my purpose is more subtle: to decontextualize an immediately familiar product of the natural world, to contrive a juxtaposition that reorients the common, and so often passive, ways in which it is perceived, and to create a visual spectacle that hints at but ultimately denies a deeper meaning that can be accessed through logical forms of thought and expressed in didactic narratives.

I am not alone in my skepticism of the value of imposing strict understandings on artistic creation. For Sontag, interpretation is “reactionary, stifling” and “the revenge of the intellect” not only on art, but on the world itself. It robs art of the capacity to “make us nervous.” What is instead necessary, she contends, is “more attention to form”, and, in place of hermeneutics, “an erotics of art”. But that is not my project.

Art, for me, must unsettle the viewer, but primacy is given to the paradox, the unknowable answer, rather than to form. I am also thus not an advocate of *l'art pour l'art*. Allegorical Minimalism is indeed in part an aesthetic project, its epistemological minimalism stemming from the omission of the non-essential. But that essence does not point to truth. This absence, however, does not reflect a desire to wallow in a postmodernist haze. Here too my aim is different: not only are there no metanarratives; there are no narratives at all.

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Social Network Perspectives of the Relations between University and Society

University relations with society and with industry in particular, have been researched frequently, because of the importance of the university as an institution that is a locus of knowledge creation that affects all of society. Several methodological approaches have been used to research the issue, including documental research, several types of case studies, ethnographic and historical approaches or surveys with varying scopes. More recently, the tools of social network analysis have been applied to the study of university relations. Since the phenomena involves a large amount of actors, the methodology seems particularly appropriated to understand some of its aspects. It allows a more expanded perspective, compared to other empirical studies, thus providing different and new perspectives that can be confronted with some of the more or less established ideas or theories about the theme. In this work, a review of the literature that utilizes the techniques of social network analysis to analyse university relations is made. The review incorporates elements of both a narrative and a theoretical review, in the sense that, on the one hand, it synthesizes the literature to uncover patterns, and on the other hand, it explores and highlights theoretical constructs which are deemed to be relevant. The most important databases on scientific literature, including, but not reduced, to Web of Science and Scopus, were accessed and searched using a combination of relevant search strings. A significant number of articles was retrieved based on relevance, quality, non-redundancy and impact criteria. A set of approximately thirty papers was selected to write this review, based on the same criteria and on subjective appreciations of their contributions to the research objective. The results show several significant contributions to knowledge, coming out of descriptive studies, methodological experiments and deductive testing of established theories. The results also provide evidence of the changing role of the university and the central position that it occupies in heterogeneous networks.

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Motivational Factors Driving Gig Workers' Participation Despite Challenges

The gig economy offers flexibility and freedom but also exposes workers to income instability and a lack of social safety nets. This study examines the motivational factors influencing participation in gig work, focusing on autonomy, flexibility, social security, positive affect, demographics, and job satisfaction. A conceptual model was developed using insights from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Job Characteristics Theory (JCT) to explain self-determined participation amid systemic challenges. Data were collected from 120 gig workers, mainly aged 21–25 years, through a structured questionnaire. Statistical results reveal that job autonomy and positive emotions significantly enhance job satisfaction, while flexibility does not, due to its negative correlation with social security. The study supports the disengagement theory, emphasizing that fulfilling psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness drives engagement in precarious work. Moreover, generational differences were observed—young workers prioritize independence over stability, whereas older workers value job security and protections. Overall, the findings provide insights into how intrinsic motivation and work characteristics influence psychological satisfaction and retention in the gig economy.

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Risk Management for Smart Healthcare System: A Hybrid MCDM Framework

Smart healthcare management systems (SHMS) play a vital role in medical centers. SHMS has various risks and threats that affect patient care. So, risk management is the best choice to identify and mitigate these risks. This study proposed a multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) framework for identifying risks in SHMS and selecting the best project in SHMS to reduce risks. This study used the MCDM method to deal with conflict criteria. There are two MCDM methods: CRiteria Importance Through Intercriteria Correlation (CRITIC) and Additive Ration Assessment (ARAS). The CRITIC approach is used to compute the criteria weights, and the ARAS algorithm is used to select the appropriate projects in SHMS. The neutrosophic set (NS) was applied with MCDM methods to deal with inconsistent data in the evaluation process. The results show the Health Data Informational System project is the best. Sensitivity analysis was conducted to show the stability of the rank. The comparative study was conducted to show the effectiveness of the proposed methodology. The outcomes demonstrate the rank of projects is stable through all scenarios, and the proposed methodology is effective compared with others MCDM methods.

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Short-term Global Travel Courses as Entrypoint for Global Studies: Prospects and Limits

The globe is entering an era of relative instability that provides some unique problems for teacher-scholars who desire an internationalization of curriculum and to engage in global studies across academic disciplines. After a period marked by market-oriented approaches to globalization – which, for all of its faults, led to border policies that allowed for cross-border studies that were easy to navigate – global political trends seem to be ushering in an era of emergent right-wing populism, coupled with forms of isolationism, nativism, and anti-immigrant sentiment that includes tightening border controls (and, thus, more difficulties navigating global travel and learning).

Nevertheless, against this backdrop scholars are still engaging in forms of global travel as entry points for global studies. This paper navigates these troubling global developments from the perspective of a sociologist who has used short-term global travel for just this purpose. I have developed and delivered courses for over a decade, on three continents, through periods of relative ease and those of relative turmoil, navigating geopolitical developments in the process of focusing on topics of salience in global studies through this pedagogy. Drawing on this experience, I outline some strengths of this pedagogy and some of its limits.

For strengths, I focus on Kolb's model of experiential learning to show how classroom activities before and after short-term global travel can help students with reflective insights. For limits, I specifically focus on the short-term nature of this pedagogy and the lack of embodied experience that comes with it, arguing that only so much can be learned through observation absent participation in social relationships. Finally, I share some lessons about navigating some of the political tensions that have arisen as a result of increased parochialism, nationalism, and border anxiety in the context of these kinds of courses.

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Beyond the Holocaust: The Business of Genocide and Slave Labor

As some scholars consider to be the primary “paradigmatic” genocide of human history, the Holocaust has rightfully seen numerous works (scholarly and creative) focused on nearly all aspects, including the “business” of genocide. Rather than the SS forcing slave labor upon the German economy, the work of Michael Thad Allen has shown that leading German industrialists sought out the Business Administration Main Office of the Nazi government as a valued partner in their ventures of the war economy. This paper seeks to explore similar business ventures in the context of other genocides (or potential genocides) in the 20th century, and the ability to hold the countries or companies liable (or accountable in some other way) at the international level. Companies tied to the Chinese Communist Party, including fast fashion companies Shein and Temu, have been accused by the United Nations, the United States, and others of exploiting the Muslim minority Uyghur community as enslaved labor in sourcing raw cotton for clothing production. As the destruction of Gaza in the West Bank has advanced, while other nations have reduced their military aid to Israel, the United States has not. Thus, U.S. companies that produce weapons sold to Israel are complicit in the destruction of Gaza and the death of thousands. A much more complicated question is whether those companies can be held accountable, the answer to which this paper seeks to explore.

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**National Populist Discourse as a Lack of Content:
Critical Discourse Analysis on Osman's Story and
Newspapers in two Different Occasions**

Starting from the 90s, we perceive a right-wing political surge or a national populist wave especially in the Western democracies. Mass media entities such as television undoubtedly have an immense part on that political success. This makes media products under the shadow of political influence a strong case study when examining the political discourse, thus creating an important research field regarding media studies and political sciences. As political hegemonies are built upon discourse, each and every discursive field becomes fighting grounds for different groups that strive to create and maintain their corresponding hegemonies. National populist political figures -or populist politics in general- are the textbook example of that fact since the discourse they create is either inclusive or exclusive in nature, with the former creating more political mobilization around them and the latter solidifying the mobilization they have at the excluded group's expense. In this study, narrative structures of the first episodes of two series about the founder of the Ottoman Empire, *Kuruluş "Osmancık"* (1988) and *Kuruluş Osman* (2019) are analyzed with Greimas' actantial method in order to find the differences and similarities pertaining different political discourses. The findings are compared with the critical discourse analysis on the first pages of various newspapers in the week that respective episodes were aired in order to find discursive similarities which would point towards a greater hegemonic discursive structure. Historical contexts of each period are also examined underlining differences between Özal and Erdoğan eras.

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Democracy Needs its Universities-Now More Than Ever

When contemporary discussions turn to the institutional pillars of democracy, people will often name, in their aspirational ideal, the *free press* (independent journalism), the *legislature* (free and fair elections) and the *judiciary* (all being equal before the law) as the institutions that serve as a vital check and balance on power, but they often omit the *academy* (operating with academic freedom and tenure) (Cole, 2009; Daniels, 2021). However, one of the modern university's most vital roles may just be to support our fragile democracies.

Seeking truth, making discoveries, and passing on knowledge and wisdom - that's not a small mandate. But in addition, and perhaps most critically in the current political reality throughout the West, the university in a democracy has the unique purpose of asking difficult questions of governments, other power structures, and of society itself. Its role includes ensuring the best available evidence is informing public policy, and helping to foster critical and creative, participatory citizens, whose education prepares them for a lifetime of meaningful employment, following interests, and, perhaps most importantly, democratic engagement.

When a society and a higher education system are operating in an optimal fashion, these processes are occurring both inside and outside of campus. A healthy democracy exhibits a high tolerance for a plurality of perspectives and even dissent. Its citizens may hold and debate differing scientific, political, or cultural views, and dominant narratives may be troubled and informed, or contested and disrupted. Acting as hubs, its universities attract students and faculty from throughout the world, and a diversity of ideas will freely circulate and be exchanged in both friction and resonance. Its faculty are able to bring the best evidence to bear in the classroom, the courtroom, and in public policy debates, engaging with their peers and the public, regardless of whether it is contrary to powerful interests, including holding their own university to account or even the government of the day and its policies. In that regard, every one of its tenured professors is a potential whistleblower or societal lighthouse keeper, and can work in tandem with a free media for reporting on elected governments and their policies, providing transparency, long-term engagement and historical memory, accountability, and a further check and balance on power. Crucially, scholars may also challenge corporate research and development with

alternative research that is motivated by the public interest and made publicly available– such scholarship may at times be counter to corporate Research and Development that is often secretive, profit-oriented, and self-serving.

This is not a time for timidity. Across the globe, democratic backsliding is accelerating, and the freedom to teach and learn is increasingly under threat. Promoting and respecting diverse scholarship does not just signal a healthy democracy; it helps create one.

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The Ideological Arms Race: A Comparative Analysis of Russia's Idea of "Civilizational Uniqueness" and Latvian and Lithuanian Counter-Strategies

This study examines the "ideological arms race" between the Russian Federation and the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania, which are part of the broader Western-led perception and worldview on the global stage. It specifically analyzes the strategic deployment of Russia's idea of "civilizational uniqueness" as a tool of statecraft, contrasting it with the counter-strategies developed by these small states in response to Russia's information manipulation tactics. This paper argues that Russia's idea, which informs its identity and frames the nation as a distinct and morally superior civilization, serves as a foundational element for its broader foreign policy, justifying its geopolitical ambitions and challenging the post-Cold War liberal order.

Employing a qualitative, comparative case study methodology, this research systematically analyzes the ideological "weapons" and "defenses" of both sides. It investigates how Russia operationalizes its idea of "civilizational uniqueness" through its foreign policy, often explicitly characterized and acted upon in opposition to the West. Concurrently, it scrutinizes the multi-layered responses of Latvia and Lithuania, ranging from institutional measures such as media regulation and cybersecurity initiatives to societal efforts that foster resilience through strategic communication and media literacy. While Russia can be characterized as being more on the ideological offensive, Latvia and Lithuania are forced to develop robust defensive and counter-offensive strategies.

The findings highlight that this struggle is not merely a clash of political interests but a deep-seated ideological conflict. The paper's primary contribution is its framework of an "ideological arms race," which offers a new analytical lens for understanding the complex dynamics of small-state agency in an era of great power competition. It demonstrates how Latvia and Lithuania have become a critical case study for understanding effective countermeasures to modern ideological warfare. The core of the counter-strategy is to clearly articulate that Latvia and Lithuania are not part of Russia's "civilizational sphere".

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The Ranking of the Greek Retirement System based on Human and Economic Freedom

Mercer and the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute have devised an index of retirement systems by country, based on consultant opinions about their adequacy, sustainability, and integrity. The looming perils of the Greek retirement system, on the other hand, have been documented in various sources, premier among which is Dr. George Bitros's *Συνταξιοδοτικό: Το Πρόβλημα και η Λύση* (Retirement System" The Problem and the Solution). Greece was not even included in the Mercer-CFA World Index above, perhaps pointing to how bad things could be. This study is a quantification attempt for that question. I use the two indexes of Human Freedom and Economic Freedom, in which sources Greece does have a score. I link these two to the variables of Adequacy, Sustainability and Integrity of the Mercer-CFA study. I then attempt to arrive at aggregated value as an approximation to the index for where Greece should fall in the world map, had Mercer-CFA included it in its study. I use data for specific analytic methods of unsupervised learning and entropy-based decision trees to identify the sequence or importance of characteristics that would have led to the arrived at index value.

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Environmental and Social Incidents and Firm Responses: Evidence from a Multinational Study

Amid growing commitments to sustainability and heightened transparency driven by digital technologies, firms face unprecedented scrutiny of their environmental and social (ES) conduct. Our paper examines how firms respond to adverse environmental and social incidents in a global setting. We posit that firms have two ways to remedy ES incidents: substantive improvements in ES performance and relatively more decorative marketing campaigns. Yet, the use of remedial strategies is unlikely to be universal and may instead vary with country characteristics. In particular, we argue that a country's level of sustainable development plays a crucial role, especially in the adoption of the ES improvement strategy. Firms in countries of higher sustainability face both greater scrutiny for ES incidents and greater rewards for ES improvements, making them more likely to adopt the ES improvement strategy following ES incidents than firms in lower sustainability countries.

To empirically test our hypotheses, we collect panel data of a large sample of firms from 44 countries from 2007 to 2022. We use firm-level ES incident data from RepRisk, accounting data from Capital IQ, and ES improvement data from Refinitiv ASSET4. We categorize our sample countries into high and low sustainability groups based on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indices published by the United Nations. We use panel regressions with firm fixed effects to estimate firms' responses to ES incidents. The empirical results are largely consistent with our hypotheses. After an adverse incident, firms in both high and low sustainability countries promptly and substantially boost their marketing expenditures. In terms of the remedial strategy of ES improvement, firms in countries with higher sustainability engage in substantive ES improvement, especially in the category where the incident occurs. In contrast, firms in countries with lower sustainability do not exhibit significant improvement in ES performance. These results indicate that firms universally respond to the negative consequences posed by ES incidents but the response strategies they adopt are not universal. Firms in higher sustainability countries pursue dual corrective

measures, namely enhancing substantive CSR practices alongside marketing efforts to rebuild stakeholder trust. In contrast, firms in lower sustainability countries predominantly rely on marketing-driven strategies, with negligible improvements to ES performance-- a pattern consistent with symbolic rather than substantive remediation.

Regarding literature contribution and practical implication, our paper departs from prior work emphasizing the consequences of ES incidents by systematically analyzing remedial strategies, namely post-incident marketing campaigns and ES improvement. This shift redirects the literature toward proactive crisis management, bridging the gap in the study of ES shocks. Our finding also underscores the importance of a country's overall sustainable development level, which fosters stakeholders' ES consciousness and in turn induces firms' responsible behavior.

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