



ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

**24th Annual International Conference on
Politics & International Studies
15-19 June 2026, Athens, Greece**

**Edited by
Philip G. Cerny & Olga Gkounta**

2026

Abstracts
24th Annual International
Conference on Politics &
International Studies
15-19 June 2026, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Philip G. Cerny & Olga Gkounta

First published in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute.

ISBN: 978-960-598-758-9

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, retrieved system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the written permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover.

9 Chalkokondili Street

10677 Athens, Greece

www.atiner.gr

©Copyright 2026 by the Athens Institute. The individual essays remain the intellectual properties of the contributors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(In Alphabetical Order by Author's Family Name)

Preface		7
Editors' Note		9
Organizing & Scientific Committee		10
Conference Program		11
1.	Geopolitics of Energy Security and Green Transition: How may Middle-Income Countries Contribute? <i>Ratih D. Adiputri</i>	15
2.	Transformation of International Negotiations Under the Influence of Digital Technologies <i>Aykush Avanesyan</i>	16
3.	Space Diplomacy: Collaborative Policies for the Future of Space Governance and Law <i>Rachel Nefertari Boveja</i>	18
4.	Multi-Ethnic Social Integration: A Nominal and Operational Definition <i>Giada Cascino, Fabio Aiello & Sergio Severino</i>	19
5.	Migrant Older Adults' Use of Digital Technology for Transnational Health Care Practices: Policy Implications <i>Cristina Catallo, Sepali Guruge, Alanna De Fry, Kateryna Metersky, Hasina Amanzai, Lixia Yang, Zhixi C. Zhuang, Lu Wang, Areej Al-Hamad & Yasin M. Yasin</i>	21
6.	Strengthening Sustainable Long-Term Care Workforce Systems in Ageing Societies: Multisectoral Collaboration and Policy Gaps in China and Lessons for LMICs <i>Meifang Chen</i>	23
7.	Unpacking Gender-Based Violence in Australian Universities: A Demographic Approach <i>Michael Dzator & Portia Simelane</i>	25
8.	Participation and Care Relationships of Older Adults in Rural Areas: An Examination of How Older Adults Participate in Social Life in Forest Villages in Düzce <i>Yasar Selman Gultekin, Pinar Gültekin & Serap Bayram</i>	27
9.	Love Made Material: Parenting, Consumption, and Everyday Political Constraint among Palestinian Citizens of Israel <i>Shihab Idrees</i>	28
10.	Irah Kucerova The Geopolitical Trilemma of the Current EU: Defence Capability, Competitiveness, Democracy <i>Irah Kucerova</i>	30
11.	The Impact of Recent Waves of Migration on Italian Political Debates: Views from Civil Society <i>Domenico Maddaloni, Valentina D'Auria & Jessica Maglio</i>	32
12.	Why Has Nothing Happened? Explaining Cypriot Offshore Gas Development through Regional Geopolitics <i>Stefanos Manolis</i>	33

13.	The Normalization of Deviance: Contention and Ambiguity <i>Ludovica Marchi</i>	34
14.	Social Capital–Neighborhood Stress Pathways in Aging: A Conceptual Framework for Prostate Cancer Vulnerability in Middle- and Old-age Black Men in the USA <i>James Muruthi</i>	35
15.	Voter Turnout and Support for Greece's Leading Parties: PASOK and New Democracy <i>Gregory T. Papanikos</i>	37
16.	A Retrospective Content Analysis of Elder Adults who were Abused as Children in Institutions <i>Sonia Salari</i>	38
17.	Political Enemy Narratives as Interpretive Frames in Digital Political Communication <i>Orsolya Szabo Palocz</i>	40
18.	Three Conflicts between Nuclear Powers in 2025 <i>Adrian Szumowski</i>	41
19.	Life Course, Sexuality, and Religion: LGBTQIA+ Experiences in Inclusive Christian Churches in Brazil <i>Abraao Tavares & Paula Miranda-Ribeiro</i>	43
20.	Digital Negotiations of Political Trust: How European Leaders Claim, Perform, and Contest Trustworthiness on Social Media <i>Aneta Vilagi</i>	45
21.	Confucian Constitutionalism and the Oppressive Marginalization of Non/Anti-Confucians <i>Daniel Weissglass</i>	46
22.	The EU Farmers' Discontent as a Social Movement <i>Mehmet Cevat Yildirim</i>	48
References		49

Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 24th Annual International Conference on Politics & International Studies (15-19 June 2026), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with Athens Institute’s Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of the Athens 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. 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 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 the Athens 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, 2010-2026*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2026	22	16	Cerny and Gkounta (2026)
2025	35	22	Christie and Papanikou (2025)
2024	37	20	Christie and Gkounta (2024)
2023	42	21	Christie and Gkounta (2023)
2022	28	14	Stivachtis and Gkounta (2022)
2021	16	11	Papanikos (2021)
2020	14	12	Papanikos (2020)
2019	27	16	Papanikos (2019)
2018	27	15	Papanikos (2018)
2017	40	24	Papanikos (2017)
2016	51	21	Papanikos (2016)
2015	30	22	Papanikos (2015)
2014	26	17	Papanikos (2014)
2013	50	23	Papanikos (2013)
2012	31	16	Papanikos (2012)
2011	34	12	Papanikos (2011)
2010	33	11	Papanikos (2010)

It is our hope that through Athens 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, 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 Politics & International 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 *24th Annual International Conference on Politics & International Studies*, accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 16 different countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Türkiye, UK, USA), which 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.

Philip G. Cerny & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**24th Annual International Conference on Politics &
International Studies, 15-19 June 2026, 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 Athens Institute.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

Dr. Philip G. Cerny, Director, Social Sciences Division, Athens Institute & Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester (UK) and Rutgers University (USA).

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

Dr. Orna Almog, Deputy Head, Politics & International Affairs Unit, Athens Institute & Senior Lecturer (Retired), Kingston University, UK.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM
24th Annual International Conference on Politics & International Studies,
15-19 June 2026, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 15 June 2026

08:30-09:15

Registration

09:15-10:00 Opening Speech and Welcoming Remarks

Speaker: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

10:00-11:30 Session 1

Moderator: Domenico Maddaloni, Head, Sociology Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, University of Salerno, Italy.

1. **Mehmet Cevat Yildirim**, Associate Professor, Gaziantep University, Türkiye.
Title: The EU Farmers' Discontent as a Social Movement.
2. **Daniel Weissglass**, Assistant Professor, Duke Kunshan University, China.
Title: Confucian Constitutionalism and the Oppressive Marginalization of Non/Anti-Confucians.
3. **Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.
Title: Voter Turnout and Support for Greece's Leading Parties: PASOK and New Democracy.

11:30-13:30 Session 2

Moderator: Philip G. Cerny, Director, Social Sciences Division, Athens Institute & Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester (UK) and Rutgers University (USA).

1. **Adrian Szumowski**, Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland.
Title: Three Conflicts between Nuclear Powers in 2025.
2. **Rachel Nefertari Boveja**, Faculty Member, Indiana University – Political Advocacy and Civic Engagement Program, USA.
Title: Space Diplomacy: Collaborative Policies for the Future of Space Governance and Law.
3. **Ludovica Marchi**, Former Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.
Title: The Normalisation of Deviance in the Liberal International Order: Contention and Ambiguity.
4. **Stefanos Manolis**, Collaborating Teaching Staff, Neapolis University Pafos (NUP), Cyprus.
Title: Why Has Nothing Happened? Explaining Cypriot Offshore Gas Development through Regional Geopolitics.
5. **Ratih D. Adiputri**, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Lapland, Finland.
Title: Geopolitics of Energy Security and Green Transition: How may Middle-Income Countries Contribute?

13:30-14:30 Session 3 – A Symposium on “The World at a Crossroads: Power, Order, and Uncertainty”

Moderator: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

Speakers:

1. **Philip G. Cerny**, Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester (UK) and Rutgers University (USA).
Title: Heterarchy, Multipolarity, Asymmetry, and the New Anarchy.

2. **Domenico Maddaloni**, Professor, University of Salerno, Italy.
Title: Disillusioning Democracies: Hegemonic Crisis, European Decline, and Citizens' Distrust in an Era of Chaos.
 3. **Mehmet Cevat Yildirim**, Associate Professor, Gaziantep University, Türkiye.
Title: Ways of Constitutional Law to Deal with Political Uncertainty in the 21st
 4. **Ludovica Marchi**, Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.
Title: Russophobia: A 'new beginning' for Europe.
 5. **George Zahariadis**, Associate Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada.
Title: Health Care in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.
- Interventions:**
1. **Hemmat Safwat**, Director, Energy Development Services, Greece.
 2. **Eliza Gardiner**, Professor, Vancouver Island University, Canada.
 3. **Aykush Avanesyan**, Senior Lecturer, Kuban State University, Russia.

14:30-15:30 Lunch

18:00-20:00 Session 4 – Visit Aristotle's Lyceum

It requires pre-booking

20:30-22:30 Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance)

Tuesday 16 June 2026

09:30-11:00 Session 5 – Special Microsymposium on Gerontology

Moderator: Adrian Szumowski, Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland.

1. **Sonia Salari**, Professor, University of Utah, USA.
Title: A Retrospective Content Analysis of Elder Adults who were Abused as Children in Institutions.
2. **Yasar Selman Gultekin**, Associate Professor, Düzce University, Türkiye.
Pinar Gültekin, Professor, Düzce University, Türkiye.
Serap Bayram, Professor, Düzce University, Türkiye.
Title: Participation and Care Relationships of Older Adults in Rural Areas: An Examination of How Older Adults Participate in Social Life in Forest Villages in Düzce.
3. **Meifang Chen**, Assistant Professor, Duke Kunshan University, China.
Title: Strengthening Sustainable Long-Term Care Workforce Systems in Ageing Societies: Multisectoral Collaboration and Policy Gaps in China and Lessons for LMICs.
4. **James Muruthi**, Assistant Professor, Drexel University, USA.
Title: Social Capital-Neighborhood Stress Pathways in Aging: A Conceptual Framework for Prostate Cancer Vulnerability in Middle- and Old-age Black Men in the USA.

11:00-12:30 Session 6

Moderator: Orna Almog, Deputy Head, Politics & International Affairs Unit, Athens Institute & Senior Lecturer (Retired), Kingston University, UK.

1. **Aneta Vilagi**, Assistant Professor, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia.
Title: Digital Negotiations of Political Trust: How European Leaders Claim, Perform, and Contest Trustworthiness on Social Media.
2. **Aykush Avanesyan**, Senior Lecturer, Kuban State University, Russia.
Title: Transformation of International Negotiations Under the Influence of Digital Technologies.

3. **Irah Kucerova**, Senior Lecturer, Charles University, Czech Republic.
Title: The Geopolitical Trilemma of the Current EU: Defence Capability, Competitiveness, Democracy.
4. **Orsolya Szabo Palocz**, Assistant Lecturer, University of Szeged, Hungary.
Title: Political Enemy Narratives as Interpretive Frames in Digital Political Communication.

12:30-14:30 Session 7

Moderator: Utku Özer, Research Fellow, Athens Institute.

1. **Domenico Maddaloni**, Full Professor, University of Salerno, Italy.
Valentina D'Auria, Researcher, University of Salerno, Italy.
Jessica Maglio, PhD Student, University of Salerno, Italy.
Title: The Impact of Recent Waves of Migration on Italian Political Debates: Views from Civil Society.
2. **Cristina Catalo**, Associate Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada.
Title: Migrant Older Adults' Use of Digital Technology for Transnational Health Care Practices: Policy Implications.
3. **Shihab Idrees**, Postdoctoral Researcher, CNRS – French Research Center in Jerusalem (CRF), Israel.
Title: Love Made Material: Parenting, Consumption, and Everyday Political Constraint among Palestinian Citizens of Israel.
4. **Abraao Tavares**, PhD Student, CEDEPLAR, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.
Paula Miranda-Ribeiro, Professor, CEDEPLAR, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.
Title: Life Course, Sexuality, and Religion: LGBTQIA+ Experiences in Inclusive Christian Churches in Brazil.
5. **Giada Cascino**, Researcher, Kore University of Enna, Italy.
Sergio Severino, Full Professor, Kore University of Enna, Italy.
Title: Social Capital and Social Distance in Multi-ethnic Contexts.
6. **Michael Dzator**, Lecturer, CQUniversity, Australia.
Portia Simelane, Lecturer, CQUniversity, Australia.
Title: Unpacking Gender-Based Violence in Australian Universities: A Demographic Approach.

14:30-15:30 Lunch

15:45-19:30 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 the Athens Institute exclusively for the conference participants.

20:30-22:30

Closing Remarks by Gregory T. Papanikos: "Wine, Words, and Wisdom: An Ancient Athenian Dinner Symposium" followed by an Ancient Athenian Dinner

Wednesday 17 June 2026
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

Thursday 18 June 2026
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 19 June 2026
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Saturday 20 June 2026
09:00-10:00 - The Academic Discussion continues in the downtown open agora (close to the
Aristotelian Lyceum)

Ratih D. Adiputri

Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Lapland, Finland

Geopolitics of Energy Security and Green Transition: How May Middle-Income Countries Contribute?

Global demands for critical minerals and rare earth elements have forecasted to exceed for own capacity by 2035 (The Economist 26th Feb 2025). Not only these elements contribute to efforts for tackling the climate crisis towards green transitions, but they also are significant for technology in acquiring energy security through electricity power grids and digitalization. This creates energy geopolitics especially for green transitions.

So far, China controls the critical minerals processing and the US tried to block it with trade tariffs. Meanwhile, the EU is known for its sustainability commitment through its legal framework imposing environmental, social and governance (ESG) from mineral products. The middle-income countries such Indonesia (rich with nickel), Chile (lithium), DRC (cobalt), PNG (bauxite) and South Africa (manganese) possess critical mineral resources --they need support for ESG requirement-- and they are sitting between interests of high-income countries. How could do these countries contribute better to sustainability issue and green transitions, while utilizing their mineral resources?

The paper assesses the complexity of green energy geopolitics through the lens of energy security and critical minerals, notably from the perspectives of middle-income countries. It proposes that multilateral forums such as APECS, BRICS, and G20 may have chances to discuss energy security and sustainability, with the aim also to tackle climate crisis and environmental impacts, e.g., from mineral mining. Power and strategy are at stake, but it is important to address sustainable issues in a multilateral way as we live in one same world.

Aykush Avanesyan

Senior Lecturer, Kuban State University, Russia

Transformation of International Negotiations Under the Influence of Digital Technologies

The rapid development of digital technologies is reshaping modern diplomacy and international negotiations. Diplomatic activity is increasingly conducted in a digital environment where online platforms, communication technologies, and data play a central role. Heads of state, foreign ministers, and diplomats use social media for official communication and public diplomacy, while videoconferencing has become a common format for bilateral and multilateral negotiations, including at the highest political level.

Digitalization affects not only the technical aspects of diplomacy but also its substance. Public opinion formed online now influences negotiation positions and diplomatic messaging more directly than before. Diplomatic language has become more public and media-oriented, increasing transparency but also political pressure. These changes raise legal and institutional issues, requiring the adaptation of international law, diplomatic protocol, and established practices to digital forms of interaction.

Diplomatic services increasingly rely on artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and machine learning. These tools are used for monitoring international developments, crisis management, consular services, and analytical support for negotiations. At the same time, digitalization has created new topics for international negotiations, including Internet governance, international information security, data protection, and cyber threats.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the shift to online diplomacy. Although digital tools were available earlier, traditional face-to-face meetings were preferred due to concerns about trust, informal communication, and technical reliability. During the pandemic, online negotiations became widespread, highlighting both their effectiveness and their limitations. Many international organizations lacked clear rules for remote meetings and decision-making, raising questions about confidentiality, cybersecurity, and the legitimacy of online voting.

Despite these challenges, online negotiations offer important advantages. They reduce costs and save time, allow rapid consultations with national capitals, avoid disputes over meeting locations, and lower psychological pressure associated with formal protocol, especially in conflict situations. The online signing of the ceasefire agreement between

Azerbaijan and Armenia, mediated by Russia, demonstrated the practical value of this format.

Overall, digital transformation has fundamentally changed diplomatic negotiations. It creates new opportunities for flexibility and efficiency but also introduces new risks and professional challenges. Addressing them requires updated legal frameworks, institutional reforms, and systematic training of diplomats in digital skills.

Rachel Nefertari Boveja

Faculty Member, Indiana University - Political Advocacy and Civic
Engagement Program, USA

Space Diplomacy: Collaborative Policies for the Future of Space Governance and Law

Space Diplomacy is no longer the topic of science fiction, it is a firm reality that nations are not only taking seriously, but have been implementing steps to oversee, for decades. Managing national borders seated on the earth's crusts is one way to exact sovereignty on a planet. Defending those borders has caused world leaders to enact many laws and regulations which protect their interests, citizens, and quality of life. Borders on earth have been drawn on maps, divided up by walls and given symbolic names so that everyone knows where they are at any given time and exactly who rules that space. Yet, what happens when world leaders must make the case for who has the right to govern *fluid* space, more specifically, the space above the divided earth we all live on? And to whom, does the responsibility go to protect the earth and what needs to happen for all to feel protected? The ongoing battle for space governance and space diplomacy seeks to answer this question for those living on earth as well as those who seek to explore the borders beyond this planet. For now, those rights fall to those nations of which that air space sits directly above. This paper outlines diplomacy research involving productive strategies for space governance and successful collaboration. It will demonstrate how currently working together across the globe can aid in the future of the space race, cohesively rather than competitively. Space Diplomacy, after all, gives humans another chance to create something together, for the benefit of all.

Giada Cascino

Researcher, Kore University of Enna, Italy

Fabio Aiello

Associate Professor, Kore University of Enna, Italy

&

Sergio Severino

Full Professor, Kore University of Enna, Italy

Multi-Ethnic Social Integration: A Nominal and Operational Definition

In the Mediterranean Sea, “there are [...] different humanities that come into conflict, claiming aspects of differentiation” (Giovannini, 2010). In the Italian context, the growing stabilisation and tendency towards the establishment of foreign presence represents a transformation “that has led to a rethinking [...] of the very modes of social coexistence in our country” (Cesareo, 2020, p. 28). This contribution aims to provide food for thought on the analysis of the formation of social bonds in a multi-ethnic society.

The contribution aims to present a perspective for the conceptualisation and analysis of multi-ethnic social bonds, which has seen the development of a quantitative methodology for measuring multi-ethnic social integration.

The conceptualisation perspective presented is based on the definition of integration proposed by Cesareo and Blangiardo (2009), which identifies peaceful coexistence as the optimal configuration of multi-ethnic integration and highlights its multidimensional, bidirectional and processual nature. However, the perspective presented exploits the possible margins for redefining the social dimension proposed by the authors and focuses on the possibility of empirically analysing the bidirectionality of the integration process.

The conceptual and analytical approach proposed to the social dimension goes beyond the presence or absence of contact with non-native people, also considering the unavailability and relational closure between ethnically diverse individuals. In this direction, two classic concepts of sociology have been recovered that lend themselves well to being adapted in a multi-ethnic key and used as criterion variables in the process of social integration: social capital and social distance. In particular, the proposal draws on Putnam's (2000/2004) conceptualisation of bridging social capital and, with regard to social distance, the theoretical and methodological approach of Cesareo (2007) and Bichi (2008). According to this proposal, the two concepts are

suitable for representing a descriptive element (the first) and an explanatory element (the second) of the possible configurations of coexistence in a given community.

The proposed perspective of analysis and interpretation outlines possible configurations of multi-ethnic social integration through the combination of the chosen dimensions of study. Therefore, this perspective places at the basis of the peaceful coexistence described by Cesareo (2009) an inverse relationship between bridging social capital (presence) and social distance (absence). Furthermore, considering other possible combinations between the two dimensions of study, the conceptual and analytical approach arrives at the definition of three other types of multi-ethnic social integration, which it defines in terms of conflictual coexistence, ambivalent coexistence and indifferent (or silent) coexistence.

The proposed analysis and interpretation are applied in an empirical study, which aimed to measure the level of multi-ethnic social integration, in school and extracurricular contexts, of Italian students and students with non-Italian citizenship attending secondary schools in an Italian region, Sicily.

The development of a quantitative methodology to measure multi-ethnic social integration involved the preparation of a questionnaire, based on the adaptation of existing measurement tools and the construction of ad hoc batteries. The analysis process used Item Response Theory (IRT) models, estimated for the uni- and bi-dimensional measurement of multi-ethnic social integration.

Cristina Catallo

Associate Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

Sepali Guruge

Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada,

Alanna De Fry

PhD student, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada,

Kateryna Metersky

Associate Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

Hasina Amanzai

Assistant Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada,

Lixia Yang

Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

Zhixi C. Zhuang

Associate Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

Lu Wang

Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

Areej Al-Hamad

Assistant Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

&

Yasin M. Yasin

Assistant Professor, University of New Brunswick, Canada

Migrant Older Adults' Use of Digital Technology for Transnational Health Care Practices: Policy Implications

Background: Canada's healthcare system faces several limitations, including long wait times, workforce shortages, and a growing need to distribute limited healthcare resources more equitably. To address these challenges, the use of digital technology offers an efficient way to support patient access, provide timely care, and reduce healthcare costs.

A growing population of migrant older adults is engaging with digital technology for virtual healthcare. These older adults also used digital health for transnational healthcare practices from seeking linguistically accessible health information to accessing culturally-informed care to manage illnesses. Digital technology use for transnational healthcare may help bridge the existing gaps in the Canadian healthcare system, and may have local and national policy implications.

Study purpose and methods: A qualitative interpretive descriptive study was conducted to understand migrant older adults' use of digital technology to access transnational healthcare practices. With institutional research ethics approval, this in-depth individual interview

study was conducted with 29 Afghan, 20 Syrian and 26 Ukrainian migrant older adults in the Greater Toronto Area - one of the largest migrant receiving urban centres in the world.

Results: Migrant older adults face multiple barriers accessing and using the Canadian healthcare system. There is a mismatch between migrant older adults' perceptions about what health services should be covered while residing in Canada and the reality of out-of-pocket health related expenses while residing in Ontario - a reflection of provincial-level differences in health insurance coverage across Canada. The historical and current disparities involving discrimination and racism created a mistrust in healthcare providers and the healthcare system. Digital technology is used by migrant older adults to access various forms of transnational healthcare practices such as verifying treatment plans provided by Canadian healthcare providers, obtaining culturally specific information about various illnesses, and seeking alternative care options.

Conclusions and implications: Digital technology may help migrant older adults obtain information, advice, and treatment from their country of origin, to support or enhance the local healthcare they received. These results have policy implications for bridging the gap between the services provided by the Canadian healthcare system and the needs from the migrant older adults. Local and national level policies are needed to guide the use of digital technology for healthcare to ensure standardized, consistent delivery of care.

Meifang Chen

Assistant Professor, Duke Kunshan University, China

Strengthening Sustainable Long-Term Care Workforce Systems in Ageing Societies: Multisectoral Collaboration and Policy Gaps in China and Lessons for LMICs

Background: Rapid population ageing across the Asia-Pacific region has intensified demand for long-term care (LTC) services and highlighted the critical need for a sustainable and well-coordinated LTC workforce. Global frameworks emphasize multisectoral collaboration (MSC) as essential for addressing complex care needs in ageing societies. However, there remains limited comparative evidence on how MSC is operationalized within national LTC workforce policies and how governance structures shape workforce development.

Methods: This study systematically reviews and analyzes national LTC workforce policies across 37 Asia-Pacific countries and territories (N = 71 policy documents, 2011–2024). Policies were identified through government sources, international databases, and targeted searches. A structured assessment framework, informed by WHO health systems building blocks, the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing, and ILO decent work principles, was used to evaluate policy quality across seven domains, including governance, implementation, and financing. Qualitative thematic synthesis examined patterns of multisectoral collaboration, stakeholder roles, and coordination mechanisms.

Results: Policy quality varied substantially across countries (score range: 4–31/32; mean = 19.66), indicating uneven development of LTC workforce systems. Key weaknesses were observed in coordination mechanisms, implementation capacity, and financing sustainability. While policies frequently referenced multiple sectors – including public, private, and civil society actors – only a small proportion (8/71) demonstrated fully integrated multisectoral collaboration. Most policies relied on dual-sector arrangements, typically dominated by the public sector. Sectoral roles were differentiated but imbalanced: governments led regulation, financing, and planning; private actors focused on service delivery and employment; and civil society organizations contributed to community-based care and advocacy. Where present, collaboration mechanisms included inter-ministerial coordination bodies, service delivery partnerships, workforce training systems, and regulatory or financing instruments. However, these mechanisms were often fragmented or weakly institutionalized.

Conclusions: Findings highlight critical gaps in translating multisectoral collaboration from policy rhetoric into practice. Strengthening LTC workforce systems in ageing societies requires more integrated governance structures, clearer role alignment across sectors, and sustained investment in implementation and financing. Enhancing coordination and inclusive stakeholder engagement will be essential to building resilient, equitable, and effective LTC systems in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Michael Dzator

Lecturer, CQUniversity, Australia

&

Portia Simelane

Lecturer, CQUniversity, Australia

Unpacking Gender-Based Violence in Australian Universities: A Demographic Approach

Gender-based violence (GBV) within Australian universities constitutes a pervasive public health and social challenge, deeply intertwined with demographic factors and population dynamics. This study applies a demographic and population studies framework to investigate the prevalence, patterns, and correlates of GBV among university students across Australia, aiming to illuminate the hidden epidemic and inform evidence-based policy and institutional responses.

Drawing on the 2021 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS), which sampled over 1,000 students from each of Australia's 39 universities, the research provides a comprehensive, disaggregated analysis of sexual harassment (SH) and sexual assault (SAslt) by gender and geographic location. The study employs both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including chi-square tests, to examine the association between gender and GBV experiences, as well as differences across states and territories. Institutional data incorporating university-specific infographics and demographic breakdowns enable a granular exploration of risk factors and campus environments.

Findings reveal a high and uneven prevalence of GBV, with the Australian Capital Territory recording the highest rates of SH (21.8%) and SAslt (8.6%). Females are disproportionately affected, with statistically significant gender differences detected for both harassment and assault (harassment: $\chi^2 = 152.415$, $p < 0.001$; assault: $p < 0.05$ in most institutions). Risk exposure is concentrated in general campus areas, lecture theatres, and libraries, highlighting critical spatial dimensions of vulnerability within university settings. These spatial patterns underscore the importance of environmental and situational factors in population risk assessment.

From a demographic perspective, the study underscores the role of gender as a primary axis of vulnerability within the university population, while also highlighting the influence of location, institutional culture, and reporting mechanisms. Over half of surveyed students' express uncertainty or lack of awareness regarding available reporting channels and support services. Despite the relatively high

levels of victimization, formal complaints remain low, pointing to persistent cultural, psychological, and systemic barriers to disclosure and help-seeking.

The research's demographic approach provides crucial insights for targeted interventions. Recommendations include embedding GBV awareness and prevention into university curricula, reforming reporting systems to enhance accessibility and transparency, and tailoring prevention programs to account for gendered and spatial disparities in risk. Policymakers and institutional leaders are urged to leverage population-based data to drive reforms, allocate resources, and monitor progress in GBV reduction.

Limitations of the study include its reliance on self-reported data, potential recall bias, and exclusion of non-university tertiary institutions. Nevertheless, the findings offer a robust empirical foundation for demographic and population studies approaches to GBV, emphasizing the need for ongoing surveillance, research, and culturally sensitive interventions.

In conclusion, GBV represents a persistent and gendered threat to student well-being and institutional equity in Australian universities. Through a demographic lens, this study advances understanding of GBV's scope, determinants, and solutions, contributing to safer and more inclusive educational environments nationwide.

Yasar Selman Gultekin

Associate Professor, Düzce University, Türkiye

Pinar Gültekin

Professor, Düzce University, Türkiye

&

Serap Bayram

Professor, Düzce University, Türkiye

Participation and Care Relationships of Older Adults in Rural Areas: An Examination of How Older Adults Participate in Social Life in Forest Villages in Düzce

Across Europe, the growing older population necessitates a rethinking of care and participation relations. In this context, the participation of older adults living in rural areas remains limited due to both spatial and social constraints. This study examines the forms of social participation, care relations, and community engagement among older adults residing in the forest villages of Düzce, through the lens of forestry engineering and rural development. In rural contexts, the relationships that older people establish with family members or external (often migrant) care workers represent not only modes of care but also expressions of social participation. Using participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and village-based mapping methods, the research explores how older adults interact with nature, production, and their local communities. Findings indicate that the traditional connections of older residents with forest resources contribute significantly to their psychosocial well-being, beyond physical care. However, factors such as increasing migration, the informal nature of care services, and social isolation limit the participation of both older adults and care providers. The study argues for viewing elder care in forest villages not merely as an individual or familial responsibility, but as an ecological and community-based issue. It highlights the need to develop participatory methods that strengthen the active involvement of both older adults and live-in care workers in local community life.

Shihab Idrees

Postdoctoral Researcher, CNRS – French Research Center in Jerusalem
(CRFJ), Israel

Love Made Material: Parenting, Consumption, and Everyday Political Constraint among Palestinian Citizens of Israel

This paper explores how parental love among Palestinian citizens of Israel is increasingly expressed through material and consumer practices – a process I conceptualize as materialized love. Based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in the Triangle region, a predominantly Palestinian area in central Israel, the study investigates how parents strive to provide care, dignity, and a sense of belonging under the overlapping pressures of neoliberal restructuring, consumer capitalism, and political marginalization.

Within this context, everyday parenting becomes a field where emotional aspirations and material realities collide. Parents invest heavily in children's goods, educational programs, enrichment activities, and domestic aesthetics as visible signs of good parenthood and upward mobility. These practices are not merely individual choices but social acts through which families negotiate their moral standing and sense of worth in a stratified society. Drawing on in-depth interviews and participant observation, I show how consumer competence becomes a moral language of love, while also revealing how structural inequalities—limited resources, segregated spaces, and restricted mobility—shape what is materially possible.

The article argues that these consumer practices create what I term the subjectivity paradox: parents develop sophisticated strategies of economic participation and emotional investment while remaining trapped in systems that reproduce their marginalization. The Arabic term *madhāhir* (conspicuous display) becomes central to understanding how Palestinian families navigate public visibility and moral critique. Displays of consumption are at once acts of self-assertion and sites of vulnerability, as families seek recognition without appearing 'wasteful' or detached from collective hardship.

By linking intimate practices of love and care to broader structures of power, the paper contributes to anthropological debates on neoliberal subjectivities, affective economies, and moral economies. It also offers insight into how consumer capitalism intersects with settler-colonial governance, shaping both the possibilities and limits of contemporary Palestinian family life. Ultimately, this study invites reflection on how love itself—mediated through goods, spaces, and aspirations—becomes

a means of surviving constraint and imagining dignity under conditions
of structural inequality.

Irah Kucerova

Senior Lecturer, Charles University, Czech Republic

The Geopolitical Trilemma of the Current EU: Defence Capability, Competitiveness, Democracy

The international order has in recent years been shaken by fundamental crises for which it was not designed in the post-war period, i.e. after 1945. Although Europe became politically, militarily, and above all economically stabilized over the seventy years following WWII, only a few—mostly external—shocks were enough for the EU to face complications so serious that they potentially threaten its collapse. From the global financial crisis of 2008–2010, through the migration crisis of 2015, Brexit in 2016–2020, the pandemic, and finally Russia's aggression against Ukraine. For the first time in eighty years, Europe is dealing with a real military conflict on the continent. It is also grappling with energy security and with the arrival of a new U.S. administration whose unpredictable foreign policy manifests both protectionist and expansionist tendencies.

The original global trilemma describes the impossibility of simultaneously achieving deep integration, national sovereignty, and democracy. Adapted to contemporary Europe, the EU's trilemma is defined by the pillars of democracy, defense capability, and competitiveness. The degree of integration is unprecedented, as is its scope. Democracy remains a fundamental European characteristic, although rising populism is leading to the radicalization of parts of the electoral spectrum. Yet there are two dimensions of the trilemma that the EU has neglected to address in a timely and effective manner. Defense capability is clearly insufficient, making the EU vulnerable to coercion by more aggressive actors in the international system. Defense capability must fulfil several levels, namely military capacity, readiness, strategic planning and resistance to threats not only of a military nature. Decades of the EU's self-presentation as a civilian power—whose comparative advantages lie in the realm of soft security—were reinforced by the fall of the Iron Curtain and the belief in the victory of capitalism over socialism, or democracy over totalitarianism. This naivety remained mainstream until Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Technological, productive, and commercial competitiveness continues to lag behind the United States and East Asia. The so-called technological gap between Europe and the U.S. has been widening since the 1960s.

What solutions to the European trilemma are available? How can democracy and the achievements of integration be preserved? Europe must rely more on its own capabilities, assume greater responsibility for its defense, and above all diversify its trade relations. Diversification of any portfolio is a basic condition for security in any domain. Yet in doing so, the EU may face increasing pressure from member states at the expense of the Union as a whole, since it is the member states that seek to retain sovereignty in foreign and security policy. The eternal dispute between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism is therefore far from resolved.

Domenico Maddaloni

Full Professor, University of Salerno, Italy

Valentina D'Auria

Researcher, University of Salerno, Italy

&

Jessica Maglio

PhD Student, University of Salerno, Italy

The Impact of Recent Waves of Migration on Italian Political Debates: Views from Civil Society

It is well known that immigration and multi-ethnicity have become very hot topics for public opinion and politics in Western countries. Italy, in particular, has been affected by this phenomenon since the 1990s. During this same period, the country underwent structural adjustment programs that led to economic stagnation and a resurgence of emigration. To what extent have these critical demographic, economic, social, and cultural changes influenced Italians' opinions and their relationships with institutions and political actors? In what direction, or directions, have they pushed civil society? To answer these questions, we use qualitative data collected in the Horizon TRUEDEM-Trust in European Democracies research in the spring of 2024. More specifically, we conducted interviews with politicians, officers, and CSOs leaders. In addition, we conducted four focus group debates with specific target groups of citizens living in the Salerno area (Southern Italy). The results of our analysis show that, although isolationist tendencies and views rejecting multiculturalism are evident in the Italian population, other perspectives point toward the opposite direction. It is up to Italian (and European) politics to steer change in a positive direction.

Stefanos Manolis

Collaborating Teaching Staff, Neapolis University Pafos (NUP), Cyprus

Why Has Nothing Happened? Explaining Cypriot Offshore Gas Development through Regional Geopolitics

This article examines the conditions under which Cyprus pursues offshore natural gas (ONG) development in the Eastern Mediterranean, emphasising Turkey's opposition and aggressive stance against such endeavour and the Cypriot response to it. The period under study is roughly the last two decades, ending in 2020. In a novel analysis, I employ the theoretical approaches of Neoliberal Institutionalism (NLI) and Structural Realism (SR), utilising institutions, gains, and interdependence as core theoretical concepts to explore Cyprus' gas development. Semi-structured interviews, official reports, statements and speeches are the primary methodological tools of this study. Evidence suggests that Cyprus is inclined towards NLI expectations, related to established institutions or newly formed ones, as well as to relations of interdependence with regional and global powers. Cyprus, via NLI paths, seeks to develop its ONG on the one hand and to create the conditions for its safe execution on the other. Under SR expectations, Cyprus' authorities have not oriented the state towards a self-help system, based on its own defence means, when Turkey, a neighbouring and powerful regional state, disputes Cyprus' maritime and sovereignty rights, including via military might. This article highlights a relatively understudied topic, particularly the political aspects of energy development in the Eastern Mediterranean and the unique role that a small state, such as Cyprus, might play in a geopolitically tense region that discovers it has notable gas resources. This paper also aims to contribute insights to current and future Cypriot governments, thereby informing energy and political decisions.

Ludovica Marchi

Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

The Normalization of Deviance: Contention and Ambiguity

Bureaucracies, and their bureaucrats, develop expertise as they act upon the world and create a cultural disposition towards behaviour. They are increasingly contesting international obligations and perform this in a subtle way. It is not a question of developing new norms, but how new behaviours, that are slight deviations from the normal course, progressively convert into an ordinary action. From the inside, the drifting away from standards might become invisible, and deviations become compliant behaviour. Keys to this process are the signals **through which the 'potential danger' is rationalised**. This 'normalisation of deviance' is an interesting matter that asks an insight. Contradictions in the liberal international order were pointed out by scholars early on. Less was provided on how bureaucrats' contention defends their deviations. Drawing from Adler-Nissen's sociology of knowledge, this paper questions how bureaucrats' inconsistency with international obligations is normalised. Recent cases of contestation of the International Criminal Court issuing arrest warrants help answering the question. The paper leads to three major findings: first, bureaucrats promote understandings of situations as normal when they are faced with increasing evidence that something is going wrong; second, transgression has the power of attraction; and third, contention and ambiguity are instruments leading to the normalisation of deviance.

James Muruthi

Assistant Professor, Drexel University, USA

Social Capital–Neighborhood Stress Pathways in Aging: A Conceptual Framework for Prostate Cancer Vulnerability in Middle- and Old-age Black Men in the USA

Prostate cancer (PCa) disparities among Black men in the United States persist as a major public health challenge, with midlife and older adults experiencing disproportionate incidence and mortality compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Existing PCa disparity models overemphasize individual and discriminatory risk factors, leaving neighborhood structural exposures, social relational processes, and recovery mechanisms under-theorized. This study proposes a multilevel conceptual framework situating PCa vulnerability within distal, intermediate, and proximal determinants, integrating neighborhood stressors, social capital, and recovery processes as central, but underexplored, pathways shaping aging-related physiological vulnerability. While the framework is broadly applicable to other chronic diseases sensitive to environmental and social stressors, PCa serves as a high-priority exemplar.

At the distal level, chronic exposure to neighborhood structural stressors in US urban contexts (including concentrated poverty, residential segregation, environmental disorder, and community violence) establishes persistent psychosocial strain over the life course. Structural disadvantage constrains material and social resources, heightens vigilance, and conditions the environment in which aging processes unfold. By explicitly linking US neighborhood adversity to cumulative physiological burden, the framework operationalizes structural determinants as crucial drivers of Black aging and PCa vulnerability.

At the intermediate level, neighborhood stressors shape the quality and distribution of social capital, including bonding ties (family and close networks), bridging connections (community cohesion and collective efficacy), and linking capital (trust in institutions and access to formal resources). In US neighborhoods with concentrated disadvantage, erosion of social capital amplifies chronic vigilance, threat appraisal, and psychosocial strain, whereas robust social networks buffer stress effects. Hence, social capital is an active mediator between structural exposures and biobehavioral outcomes, addressing a gap in existing US health disparities frameworks that often underrepresent capital indicators as key mechanisms explaining disparities.

At the proximal level, impaired recovery processes translate environmental and social exposures into biological aging. Sleep regulation, circadian stability, and restorative behaviors provide a primary mechanism linking psychosocial strain to cardiometabolic dysregulation, systemic inflammation, and accelerated physiological aging. These proximal processes are measurable, modifiable, and sensitive to both neighborhood conditions and social capital, offering modifiable targets for health disparities intervention in this population.

This framework adds to existing US disparity models in three unique ways: (1) it integrates multilevel neighborhood, social, and recovery determinants within a life-course-informed aging framework; (2) it explicitly operationalizes social capital as a mechanistic mediator, rather than a descriptive correlate; and (3) it emphasizes recovery processes, particularly sleep, as proximal biobehavioral mechanisms linking social exposures to physiological vulnerability. By situating prostate cancer disparities using this approach we outline how structural disadvantage and relational resources jointly shape aging-related physiological vulnerability. This conceptualization provides a rigorous platform for future research and interventions that aim to strengthen social capital and enhance recovery processes, ultimately promoting equitable healthy aging in Black men and other populations experiencing concentrated disadvantage.

Gregory T. Papanikos

President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of
Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

Voter Turnout and Support for Greece's Leading Parties: PASOK and New Democracy

This paper examines the relationship between voter turnout and electoral support for Greece's two dominant parties – PASOK and New Democracy – across twenty national elections spanning the period 1974–2023. Using a series of regression specifications on election-ordered data, the analysis documents a strong and robust positive association between overall participation and the total votes received by both parties. In the preferred log–log models, a 1% increase in turnout is associated with an approximate 4.7% increase in PASOK votes and a 3.5% increase in New Democracy votes. These findings challenge the conventional assumption that electoral competition between major parties is strictly zero-sum. Instead, the results suggest that higher turnout is associated with simultaneous gains for both parties, particularly during periods when their vote shares are below historically high thresholds. The paper also traces the divergent trajectories of the two parties, highlighting PASOK's dramatic post-2009 electoral decline and New Democracy's comparatively more stable performance. Given the small sample size, irregular timing of elections, and the potential for joint determination between turnout and party support, the estimates are interpreted as descriptive associations rather than causal effects. Nonetheless, the results point to the importance of voter participation as a central feature of electoral dynamics in Greece and contribute to broader debates on turnout, party competition, and the evolution of two-party systems in advanced democracies.

Sonia Salari

Professor, University of Utah, USA

A Retrospective Content Analysis of Elder Adults who were Abused as Children in Institutions

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are measured by a survey of hardships prior to age 18. Accumulations of ACEs may cause post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD and survivors can go on to have potentially poor physical and mental health outcomes in later life. Abandonment, parental death, divorce and incarceration are considered indicators of ACEs. Direct child abuse, neglect and exploitation add to the list of these traumatic life stressors. Witnessing the abuse of others can also be psychologically detrimental. Some survive, others do not. With survival comes the potential for resilience, but this does not mean victims have an easy recovery. This presentation will examine adverse childhood experiences from the perspective of known elder adults who have come forward with their accounts of abuse as children confined to institutional settings.

One of the main vulnerabilities for abuse is among children who are without their parents. This is an issue in modern society because estimates suggest between 7.5 and 11 million children lost caregivers or were left parentless during the recent global pandemic. Modern American children in this situation would typically be cared for by relatives or foster families. Just a few decades ago, the unaccompanied children would have experienced institutions, such as orphanages, boarding (for Indigenous) and state “schools” for people with disabilities. Native American children were victims of human trafficking – taken from their parents and tribal lands to be re-socialized in boarding schools of their colonizers. Some children encountered caregivers who were empathetic and positive influences. However, these institutions have historically been magnets for those who wish to exert power and control over others. Being separated from or having no parents, these children were particularly vulnerable to mistreatment.

Content analysis from news, historical documents and film surveillance methods are utilized to obtain narratives and quotes of now older adults who were abused, neglected or exploited in these group quarters with an eye toward the impact on the outcomes of the elder adult. Many of these people were silenced or ignored throughout their lives. Others were found buried or were never heard from again. Without family, there may have been no one searching for them in their absence. Predatory abusers were aware of this vulnerability and took advantage

of the situation. These perpetrators were rarely held accountable for horrific treatment of institutionalized children.

Trauma-informed and realistic responses are necessary to situate these survivors in safe environments. Primary prevention, keeping this from happening in the first place, is the most ideal way to approach children without parents available. The troubled teen industry has been a modern example of this type of devastation. There are those in the United States who have recently advocated for orphanages, concentration camps and bringing back institutions for persons with disabilities. So, it is important to bring to light the negative side of these abusive 'snake pits' based upon the too often hidden testimony of those who survived in their youth and were impacted across their lives.

Orsolya Szabo Palocz

Assistant Lecturer, University of Szeged, Hungary

Political Enemy Narratives as Interpretive Frames in Digital Political Communication

This paper examines how political enemy narratives operate in the digital public sphere as mechanisms of interpretation and legitimacy-making. It argues that enemy construction is not only a rhetorical strategy of attack, but a broader narrative practice through which political actors define who belongs to the political community, who threatens it, and what counts as a legitimate political position.

The paper focuses on the Hungarian context, where conflict-centered political communication has long played a central role in public discourse, and where digital platforms have intensified the speed, reach, and repetition of adversarial framing. Rather than offering a single-case description, the analysis uses Hungarian examples to explore a more general question: how do enemy narratives become socially effective in online political communication?

The paper suggests that this effectiveness is linked to the capacity of such narratives to provide simplified and emotionally resonant interpretations of political conflict, while also structuring how actors, positions, and stakes are publicly perceived. In this sense, enemy narratives may function as interpretive frames that help organize political meaning in conditions of uncertainty, and, at times, shape the boundaries of legitimate disagreement.

Methodologically, the paper is conceptual and interpretive, drawing on political communication and discourse-oriented approaches, while illustrating the argument through examples from Hungarian digital political discourse. As one recurring type of issue, migration is briefly considered as a case in which security, sovereignty, and identity frames can be fused into a durable enemy narrative that exceeds the immediate policy debate itself.

By discussing a Central and Eastern European case in a comparative setting, the paper aims to contribute to broader debates on digital polarization and democratic legitimacy. The Hungarian material is used not to claim exceptionalism, but to show how platform dynamics and political narrative strategies interact in ways that may be recognizable across different national contexts, including those shaped by strong contestation over identity, borders, and political authority.

Adrian Szumowski

Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland

Three Conflicts between Nuclear Powers in 2025

Year 2025 brought an interesting shift in the international community. For the first time in numerous years, nuclear-armed powers and allegedly nuclear-armed powers were attacked directly on their own turf. Although the results of those attacks may not be lasting and damaging to the power base of those nations, there is a need to raise one important question: Is the role and meaning of nuclear weapons not changing? Unfortunately, more and more evidence points to a positive answer, suggesting that the international system as a whole may enter the so-called Second Nuclear Age.

The operation in question are: Operation Sindoor, conducted between May 7th and 10th, which Indian Air Forces conducted against air defenses and air bases of Pakistan, which at least two were allegedly hosted storage and mating facilities for nuclear devices, intertwined with Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, Pakistan retaliation; Operation Spiderweb, which on June 1st caused significant damages to Russian strategic bomber fleet (planes capable of carrying nuclear payload), conducted by Ukrainian special forces; and Operation Rising Lion, conducted between June 13th and 25th, which were codenamed for air strikes and covert ops aimed at Iranian air forces and air defenses and uranium enrichment facilities, intertwined with Iranian reprisals codenamed operation True Promise and US intervention: Operation Midnight Hammer.

The primary objective of this paper is to analyze the consequences of a direct attack on elements of nuclear power's nuclear arsenal, without proper preparation and engagement with the UN Security Council, which is responsible for issuing sanctions within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime. A process of demystification of nuclear weapons was observed, which stopped being a deterrent and started to be an attractor of hostilities. In turn, nuclear powers will face a temptation to use those weapons before the capacity to deploy them is denied. Within this paper, three hypotheses will be tested. First, the psychological effect of nuclear weapons wears off. Therefore, the capability to deter potential hostile powers will be vastly diminished. Second, the effectiveness of nuclear weapons, particularly delivery capabilities, will be crucial to establishing an internal hierarchy among nuclear powers. And thirdly, the security of the nuclear arsenal, with

atomic warheads at the top of the list for each government. It became particularly evident during the Wagner coup.

To simplify further consideration, the paper will be subdivided into five parts. First, it will investigate contemporary position and function within the contemporary international environment. The second, third, and fourth will be dedicated to analyzing three case studies: the causes, conduct, and consequences of each operation, with particular emphasis on the role and function of their respective nuclear arsenals. The final part will be dedicated to possible scenarios, the changing functions of nuclear weapons, and the redrawing of the NPT regime, as fewer nations are interested in maintaining it. Furthermore, what is more important: whether the world will enter a dreadful Second Nuclear Age?

Abraao Tavares

PhD Student, CEDEPLAR, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

&

Paula Miranda-Ribeiro

Professor, CEDEPLAR, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Life Course, Sexuality, and Religion: LGBTQIA+ Experiences in Inclusive Christian Churches in Brazil

One of the most significant transformations in the Brazilian religious landscape throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries concerns changes in the population's religious composition, marked by a decline in the proportion of Catholics and a sustained growth of Evangelicals and individuals with no religious affiliation, as documented by recent Demographic Censuses. Although religious freedom was formally established with the 1891 Constitution, it is especially through the last four censuses that these shifts have become evident. These changes have unfolded alongside major demographic transformations, particularly fertility decline, with implications for family arrangements, private life, and the public sphere.

The expansion of Evangelical Christianity in Brazil has been driven mainly by Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches, historically rooted in socially vulnerable populations and grounded in theologies offering practical responses to everyday economic, physical, and emotional challenges. In matters of sexual morality, these traditions tend to reinforce a normative heterosexual and conjugal model. Data from the 2022 Demographic Census underscore the institutional weight of religion: for the first time, the census mapped types of buildings and identified 286 religious establishments per 100,000 inhabitants, exceeding both educational and health facilities. These figures highlight the relevance of religion for understanding contemporary sociodemographic dynamics in Brazil.

Within this context, a still incipient but growing phenomenon can be observed: Christian churches that self-identify as inclusive and explicitly support LGBT+ populations. These churches propose reinterpretations of prohibitive dogmas concerning sexuality and same-sex relationships, often grounded in human rights discourses. Despite increasing visibility, little is known about how these institutions operate and how members experience sexuality, conjugality, and faith from a demographic perspective. Addressing this gap contributes to the Demography of Religion and the Demography of Sexual Minorities, while dialoguing

with population agendas advanced since the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994).

Against this backdrop, this research analyzes how demographic events – especially sexual initiation and conjugal union – are mobilized, regulated, and resignified within inclusive Evangelical churches. The article presents preliminary results from ongoing fieldwork, drawing on a mixed-methods approach and a life-course perspective focused on transitions into adulthood.

The methodological design combines three strategies. First, in-depth interviews are conducted with LGBT individuals affiliated with inclusive Evangelical churches from different denominations, emphasizing life trajectories, religious socialization, experiences of acceptance or exclusion, and negotiations between faith, sexuality, and future projects. Second, participant observation in religious services and community activities enables the analysis of everyday practices, discourses, and moral expectations shaping religious and sexual experiences. Third, a survey applied to LGBTQIA+ individuals with histories of participation in Christian institutions offers a broader view of sociodemographic profiles, religious trajectories, experiences of discrimination, and affective-sexual partnerships, situating qualitative findings within a wider panorama.

Although the research remains in the fieldwork phase, preliminary findings indicate non-linear religious trajectories marked by distancing, return, and reconfiguration of institutional ties across the life course. Even in inclusive contexts, acceptance of sexual diversity often coexists with normative expectations regarding moral discipline and affective-sexual regulation, highlighting ongoing disputes between religiosity, sexuality, and human rights in contemporary Brazil.

Aneta Vilagi

Assistant Professor, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

**Digital Negotiations of Political Trust:
How European Leaders Claim, Perform, and Contest
Trustworthiness on Social Media**

Social media is not just a platform for communication but a stage where political trust is claimed, challenged, and co-constructed between elites and citizens. This paper examines how political trustworthiness is claimed, performed, and negotiated in the social media communication of European political leaders. Drawing on 52 interviews with politicians from twelve countries and a framing analysis of 408 Facebook posts by 34 leaders, it explores how digital communication mediates the relational fabric of political trust. In the first part of the paper, the interviews with politicians reveal an ambivalent perception of social media's role in trust-building: while many regard it as a polarizing space that undermines trustworthiness, others view it as a rare channel for direct, democratic engagement with citizens. This tension underscores how leaders navigate a communicative environment they simultaneously distrust and depend on. In digital politics, trust is not a stable attribute anymore but rather a relational performance shaped by competing pressures of visibility and responsiveness. A second part of the paper on politicians' online communication offers a lens into how trustworthiness is performed. Competence and authenticity emerge as key trust frames, while integrity and impartiality are marginal. Engagement patterns suggest that authenticity fosters emotional connection, whereas negative and policy-oriented content mobilizes sharing. By combining elites' perceptions with their online performances, the paper reveals trust as a negotiated, dynamic relationship—continuously enacted at the intersection of institutional expectations, communicative strategy, and citizen response across contemporary European democracies.

Daniel Weissglass

Assistant Professor, Duke Kunshan University, China

Confucian Constitutionalism and the Oppressive Marginalization of Non/Anti-Confucians

In the book *Confucian Constitutionalism: Dignity, Rights, and Democracy* (Kim 2023), and elsewhere throughout their work, Kim argues that public discourse governed by Confucian values can provide a viable alternative to Liberal conceptions of public reason which demand we not depend on particular conceptions of the good life in contributing to public discourse - without bringing about the oppressive harms of ideological that motivates the Liberal model. In Kim's own words: "Even if [some citizens] may find all or some of these values (as traditionally understood and practiced) offensive, how would this fundamentally invalidate the political legitimacy of Confucian democracy if, first, these values are accommodated to and modified by democratic institutions, values, and practices and, second, all citizens enjoy political equality, and their basic rights and liberties, including the right to form a voluntary association based on their own comprehensive doctrines, are fully protected by the constitution? The state in question might not be a liberal state, but what makes this Confucian "democratic" state oppressive?" (Kim, 2023, p. 86).

In response, I answer this question by highlighting two significant harms for non-Confucians which arise from Kim's model of Confucian public reason for non- or anti-Confucian citizens:

1. Hermeneutic injustice in light of the forced adoption of a hermeneutic framework for public discourse which may impair their ability to make public meaning from their values and experience.
2. Expressive marginalization in which they and their values are explicitly identified as relatively less important than others.

I argue that these are significant oppressive harms which fall on paradigmatic citizens (i.e., roughly those we would expect to be citizens prior to any deep theorizing), and are therefore objectionable. I then examine three possible responses that Kim might make: that such harm occurs with equal severity in Liberal systems (they don't), whether Kim's arguments successfully show that such harms will be rare (they don't), and whether non-/anti-Confucian's may simply deserve such treatment (they don't). I then flag some potential paths for further efforts to respond

to these threats while retaining Kim's general approach to Confucian public reason.

Mehmet Cevat Yildirim

Associate Professor, Gaziantep University, Türkiye

The EU Farmers' Discontent as a Social Movement

The 2024 farmers' protests across the EU mark a new stage in farmers' discontent, not only due to their unprecedented scale but also their outcomes. Social movements are defined by collective organization, a powerful opponent, identity, and protest. This study applies these criteria to EU farmers' discontent, arguing it is becoming an autonomous political force. Qualitative methods are adopted in the study and relevant literature, newspaper articles, EU documents and reports of relevant organizations have been consulted.

Protests took place in nearly all EU states, enabled by the Europeanization of farmers' organizations. While concerns differed, the common opponent was the European Green Deal, and NATO's recent 5% defense spending target adds another. Farmers' collective identity rests on shared grievances and solutions. Protests before EU elections helped sympathetic parties block key green transition legislation, showing the movement's capacity to shape agendas. Rooted in long experience, it retains the ability to mobilize, for example to influence 2028-2034 EU budget debates.

References

- Cerny PG, Gkounta O (2026) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 24th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Christie K, Papanikou A (2025) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 23rd Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Christie K, Gkounta O (2024) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 22nd Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Christie K, Gkounta O (2023) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 21st Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Stivachtis Y, Gkounta O (2022) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 20th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2021) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 19th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2020) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 18th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2019) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 17th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2018) *Politics & International Studies. Abstract Proceedings of the 16th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2017) *Politics. Abstract Proceedings of the 15th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2016) *Politics. Abstract Proceedings of the 14th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2015) *Politics. Abstract Proceedings of the 13th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2014) *Politics. Abstract Proceedings of the 12th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2013) *Politics. Abstract Proceedings of the 11th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2012) *Politics & International Affairs. Abstract Proceedings of the 10th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2011) *Politics & International Affairs. Abstract Proceedings of the 9th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2010) *Politics & International Affairs. Abstract Proceedings of the 8th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.