

IOCSS
2026
Conference

The 1st International Online Conference on Social Sciences

28–29 May 2026 | Online



Program and Abstract Book

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The 1st International Online Conference on Social Sciences

28–29 May 2026| Online



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Table of Contents

Welcome from the Chair	1
Keynote Speakers	3
Invited Speakers	4
Program at a Glance.....	5
IOCSS 2026 Program.....	6
Session 1. Crime, Policing and Justice.....	9
Session 2. Aging, Childhood and Youth Studies	36
Session 3. Gender Studies	68
Session 4. Family Studies	116
Session 5. Society and Technology	136

Welcome from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to welcome you to an upcoming online conference, the **1st International Online Conference on Social Sciences**, proudly sponsored by the MDPI open access journal *Social Sciences* (ISSN 2076-0760; IF: 1.7). The conference is scheduled to take place virtually on the **28 and 29 May 2026**. The fourth conference will be organized around the following topics and related themes:

This conference will offer a platform for scholars, researchers and experts from across the social science community to exchange innovative and impactful research. The conference is oriented around general themes across the social sciences, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Crime, policing and justice;
- Aging, childhood and youth studies;
- Gender studies;
- Family studies;
- Society and technology.

We are particularly keen to hear about research involving the developments and implications of technological change and the use of artificial intelligence across dimensions of society and social institutions. A focus on cross-national comparison and research emanating from Global South will also be warmly received.

We anticipate submissions encompassing individual paper presentations and pre-arranged panels on specific thematic topics, as well as plenary sessions involving invited world-leading speakers.

The event will take place via Sciform.net, a platform developed and sponsored by MDPI to organize and provide technical support for electronic conferences. The conference's virtual format offers the distinct advantage of eliminating the need for travel and its associated expenses, allowing you to engage in quick and direct exchanges of the latest research findings and innovative ideas.

We look forward to welcoming you to this exciting event and providing an opportunity to hear about your research.



Dr. Lawrence Ho
Conference Chair

Department of Sociology, University
of Surrey, Guildford, UK



Prof. Daniel McCarthy
Conference Chair

National Taiwan Normal University,
Taipei City, Taiwan



social sciences

an Open Access Journal by MDPI

Social Sciences is an international, open access journal with rapid **peer-review**, which publishes works from a wide range of fields, including anthropology, criminology, economics, education, geography, history, law, linguistics, political science, psychology, social policy, social work, sociology and so on. *Social Sciences* is published monthly online by MDPI.

Impact Factor: 1.7 (2024); 5-Year Impact Factor: 1.9 (2024)

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Lynne Kiesling

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA

Lynne Kiesling is an economist focusing on regulation, market design, and the economics of digitization and smart grid technologies in the electricity industry. She is Director of the Institute for Regulatory Law & Economics in the Center on Law, Business, and Economics, and is an Adjunct Professor in the Master of Science in Energy and Sustainability program, both at Northwestern University. She is also a Research Professor at University of Colorado Denver, a member of the External Faculty of the Santa Fe Institute, and a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. In addition to her academic research, she is currently a member of the U.S. Department of Energy's Electricity Advisory Committee, has served as a member of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Smart Grid Advisory Committee, and is an emerita member of the GridWise Architecture Council. Her academic background includes a B.S. in Economics from Miami University (Ohio) and a Ph.D. in Economics from Northwestern University. Outside of work, Lynne rides her bikes, skis downhill and Nordic, knits, and reads a lot of books



Prof. Dr. Faye S. Taxman

University Professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA

Faye S. Taxman, Ph.D., is a University Professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University and a leading health services criminologist. She is internationally recognized for developing seamless systems-of-care models that connect the criminal justice system with healthcare and social services, as well as for reengineering probation and parole supervision. Over her career, she has secured more than \$100 million in external grant funding to conduct experiments on improving treatment access and retention, testing new probation models aligned with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) framework, and designing interventions to enhance both individual and organizational outcomes, including procedural justice. Dr. Taxman is a pioneer in creating translational tools that facilitate the implementation of research into practice, including the RNR Simulation Tool (www.gmuace.org/tools) which enhances assessment use and treatment matching, and the Cascade of Care toolkit (<https://www.jcoinctc.org/cascade-of-care>) which supports system-level planning and measurement. She has published over 230 scholarly articles and authored several influential books, such as *Implementing Evidence-Based Community Corrections and Addiction Treatment* (Springer, 2012, with Steven Belenko) and *Handbook on Moving Corrections and Sentencing Forward* (Routledge, 2020, with Pamela Lattimore and Beth Huebner). Currently, Dr. Taxman serves as Principal Investigator for the Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network (JCOIN) Coordination and Translation Center, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Her extensive contributions have earned her numerous prestigious awards, including the Joan McCord Award (2017), the Lifetime Achievement Award (2019), and the August Vollmer Award (2023) from the American Society of Criminology. She is also a Fellow of the American Society of Criminology and recipient of the SIRC Mission Award (2022). Dr. Taxman earned her Ph.D. from Rutgers University's School of Criminal Justice.

Invited Speakers



Prof. Francesco Arcidiacono

University of Teacher Education
BEJUNE, Delemont, Switzerland,
Mercatorum University, Rome,
Italy



Prof. Mina Roces

University of New South Wales,
Sydney, Australia



Prof. Song Geng

The University of Hong Kong,
Hong Kong, China

Program at a Glance

	Day 1	Day 2
Morning	Session 3. Gender Studies	Session 4. Family Studies FLASH POSTER SESSION
Afternoon	Session 2. Aging, Childhood and Youth Studies Session 5. Society and Technology	Session 1. Crime, Policing and Justice

IOCSS 2026 Program

28th May 2026 (Thursday)

Session 3. Gender Studies

Time: 9:00 (CEST, Basel) | 03:00 (EDT, New York) | 15:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)

CEST Time	Speaker	Title
9:00–9:05	Opening Remarks Prof. Daniel McCarthy Dr. Lawrence Ka-Ki Ho	
9:05–9:10	Welcome from the Session Chair Dr. Pan Wang	
9:10–9:30	Invited Speaker Prof. Mina Roces	Dress as Symbolic Resistance: Fashion and the Self-Transformation of Filipino Domestic Workers in Singapore, 1990s-2016
9:30–9:50	Invited Speaker Prof. Song Geng	Making the Past Serve the Present: Fantasy and Digital Masculinities in Contemporary China
9:50–10:05	Selected Speaker Michael ay Osagie	Mapping Gendered Vulnerability and Community Resilience: A Geospatial Approach to Social Justice in Nigeria
10:05–10:20	Selected Speaker Carmen Maria Leon	Pornography Through a Gender Lens: Divergent Attitudes toward Sexual Media and Its Social Consequences
10:20–10:35	Selected Speaker Aanchal Seth	Mothers of the Mountains: Women, Ecology, and Voices from the Western Himalayas
10:35–10:50	Selected Speaker Julie Ann Thomas	Taking 'Pinterest' Seriously: Unpacking the Disciplinary Construction of Femininity in Digital Popular Culture
10:50–11:05	Selected Speaker Dipannita Saha	The Sunlight Tax and Brahminical Biopolitics: Everyday Spatial Resistance of Trans Homemaking in Delhi
11:05–11:20	Selected Speaker Hiqma Nur Agustina	Constructing Gender through Local Narratives: Storytelling in Thematic Villages
11:20–11:35	Selected Speaker Rao Muhammad Faisal Suleman	Protective Marginalisation: Governance, Kinship, and Everyday Exclusion in Transgender Dera Households in Pakistan
11:35–11:50	Selected Speaker Robin Throne	A Postcolonial Critical Inquiry of Sámi Women, Assimilation, and Scientific Racism
11:50–14:00	Break	

Session 2. Aging, Childhood and Youth Studies

Session 5. Society and Technology

Time: 14:00 (CEST, Basel) | 08:00 (EDT, New York) | 20:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)

CEST Time	Speaker	Title
14:00–14:05	Welcome from the Session Chair Prof. McCarthy Or Kakiko	
14:05–14:20	Selected Speaker Tongtong Hao	Mobile Phone Dependence, Self-Control, and Baduanjin Qigong Exercise among Sub-healthy Adolescents: A Latent Profile Analysis
14:20–14:35	Selected Speaker Ica Cahayani	Non-State Actors in Securing Children's Right to Education: A Human Security Perspective on Post-Disaster Learning Recovery in Rural Aceh, Indonesia
14:35–14:50	Selected Speaker Jose Benjamin Thomas	Vulnerabilities among Children in the context of Domestic Violence
14:50–15:05	Selected Speaker Waqas Ahmed	Child Protection Involvement and Youth Justice Among Emerging Adults: A Life Course Analysis
15:05–15:20	Selected Speaker Lara Nápoles	From Early to Late Adolescence: Developmental Patterns of Risk in Online Grooming Victimisation
15:20–15:25	Welcome from the Session Chair Dr. Pierre Desrochers	
15:25–15:55	Keynote Speaker Dr. Lynne Kiesling	The Slow Grid and the Fast Economy: The Pacing Problem and the Limits of Institutional Design
15:55–16:10	Selected Speaker Kebede Bekele Geleto	The impact of mobile broadband internet on literacy: Evidence from Nigeria
16:10–16:25	Selected Speaker TBA	TBA

16:25–16:40	Selected Speaker Emilia Romeo	Algorithms, Territory, and Inequality: Rethinking Spatial Discrimination
16:40–16:55	Selected Speaker Mohamed Arhal	The Digital Turn in Human Rights Paradigms
16:55–17:10	Selected Speaker Veronika László	Too human to resist: AI Anthropomorphism and manipulation vulnerability in Gen Z
17:10–17:25	Selected Speaker Neslihan Ademi	Addiction by Design? Behavioral Design, Persuasive Technology, and Their Societal Implications
17:25–17:40	Selected Speaker Md. Safir Ul Haque	Bridging Society, Development and Culture: Mother-Tongue Education for Empowering Minority Ethnic Communities in Bangladesh

29th May 2026 (Friday)

*Session 4. Family Studies
Flash Poster Session*

Time: 9:00 (CEST, Basel) | 03:00 (EDT, New York) | 15:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)

CEST Time	Speaker	Title
9:00–9:05	<i>Welcome from the Session Chair Prof. Antonio Bova</i>	
9:05–9:25	Invited Speaker Prof. Francesco Arcidiacono	Family Studies: Observing Everyday Lives as a Social Laboratory
09:25–09:40	Selected Speaker Ana Cristina Lima Mimoso Caramelo	Growing Within the Family: Adolescents' Views on Family Functioning and Psychological Well-Being
9:40–9:55	Selected Speaker Georgios Kontogiannis	Divorce Dynamics and Attitudes Toward Divorce in Southern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Greece, Italy, Spain, and France
9:55–10:10	Selected Speaker Rabia Mahmood	Family Responsibility as a Moral Process: Internalization, Self-Surveillance, and Role Strain
10:10–10:25	Selected Speaker Betul Turkum	From Mothers to Children: Intergenerational Returns to Education
10:25–10:40	Selected Speaker Sofija Georgievska	Intersecting Social Risks and Family Functioning: Empirical Evidence from North Macedonia
10:40–10:55	Selected Speaker Patrick Ho Lam Lai	Do Family Ties Matter for Volunteerism in Later Life? Evidence From Asian Midlife and Older Adults and Other Ethnoracial Groups
10:55–11:10	Selected Speaker Dandan Liang	Caregiver-Child Relational Play Interactions and the Emergence of Social-Emotional Learning in Community Learning Spaces
11:10–11:15	Poster presenter Patricia Castro López	The emotional burden on families supporting children with ADHD at school
11:15–11:20	Poster presenter Ekaterina Georgieva	The Importance of the Multidisciplinary Team in Social Work with Families
11:20–11:25	Poster presenter Lucia Mendoza Ruiz	"Operation Espasmo": Structural Homelessness and Criminal Labour Exploitation in the Rioja Wine Harvest
11:25–11:30	Poster presenter Zubair Hussain	Insecurity as a Stressor: Legal Uncertainty, Identity Disruption, and Coping Among Undocumented Pakistani Migrants in Italy
11:30–11:35	Poster presenter Vida Dabkienė	Benchmarking Gender Equality in Lithuanian Agriculture: From EU Commitments to Rural Reality
11:35–11:40	Poster presenter Muhammad Aizri Fadillah	AI-mediated learning: ChatGPT explanation quality as a predictor of students' confidence in physics learning
11:40–11:45	Poster presenter Helix Lo	Please Vote! Exploring Celebrity Effect on Mobilising Young Voters in Japan
11:45–11:50	Poster presenter Diego Vergara	Teachers' Perspectives on Bullying in Early Childhood Education
11:50–11:55	Poster presenter Edite Felgueiras	Scrolling Science: Understanding how Audiences Engage with Short Science Videos on Social Media
11:55–12:00	Poster presenter Aneesa Baboolal	Gendered Islamophobia: Intersectional Racialized Violence against Women

Session 1. Crime, Policing and Justice

Time: 14:00 (CEST, Basel) | 08:00 (EDT, New York) | 20:00 (CST Asia, Beijing)

CEST Time	Speaker	Title
14:00–14:05	<i>Welcome from the Session Chair Prof. Dr. James O Finckenaue</i>	
14:05–14:35	Keynote Speaker Prof. Dr. Faye S. Taxman	TBA
14:35–14:50	Selected Speaker Azahah Abu Hassan Shaari	Illicit Cigarette Smuggling in Kuala Selangor, Malaysia: Policing Challenges and Crime Prevention in Digitally Mediated Contraband Markets
14:50–15:05	Selected Speaker Shefali Vinod Ramteke	Algorithmic Policing and Constitutional Justice in India: A Socio-Legal Examination of Emerging Jurisprudence
15:05–15:20	Selected Speaker Stalin S	Cross-Border Criminal Responsibility in the Age of AI: Addressing AI-Enabled Offences within Social Institutions
15:20–15:35	Selected Speaker Chinonso Chiamaka Iwuagwu	African strategic intelligence verse orthodox security measures: investigating African perspectives for crime detection in Nigeria
15:35–15:50	Selected Speaker Wasiu Olaitan Akinleke	Informal Power Dynamics and Grassroots Policing: Assessing the Role of Traditional Authorities in the Security Architecture of Yewa North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria
15:50–16:05	Selected Speakers Usman Ojedokun	Police Auxiliaries in the Policing Protocol of the Nigeria Police Force: Key Contributions and Operational Gaps in Practice
16:05–16:20	Selected Speaker Wemimo Virtue Davies	Watching or Protecting? How AI Policing Rules Create Either Fear or Safety
16:20–16:35	Selected Speaker Rahma Aloui	Gender-Sensitive Judicial Responses in Transitional Societies: Bridging Legal Gaps and Social Equity
16:35–06:50	Selected Speaker Diah Ayu Wulandari	Strengthening Legal Protection for Indonesian Migrant Workers in Japan through Multi-Actor Cooperation
16:50–17:05	Selected Speaker Kavya Shukla	Ontic Injustice and Media Trials of Female Offenders: A Critical Reflection on Social and Institutional Barriers
17:05–17:10	<i>Closing Remarks Prof. Daniel McCarthy Dr. Lawrence Ka-Ki Ho</i>	

Session 1. Crime, Policing and Justice

sciforum-153633: Understanding Public Perception of Criminal Profiling: A Study Among Urban College Students in India

Bhavana Kumar

Criminology, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, India

Introduction:

Criminal profiling has long been a cornerstone of investigative psychology, yet its effectiveness is often debated, particularly in contexts with limited public awareness. Understanding how communities perceive profiling can illuminate gaps between law enforcement practices and societal expectations. This study explores urban Indian college students' understanding and perception of criminal profiling, aiming to identify knowledge levels, perceived effectiveness, and potential societal biases.

Methods:

A cross-sectional survey was conducted with **120 college students aged 18–24** in Coimbatore, India. A structured questionnaire assessed participants' knowledge of criminal profiling, trust in its application by law enforcement, perceived fairness, and ethical concerns. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic coding for open-ended responses.

Results:

Findings reveal that 62% of respondents were moderately aware of criminal profiling, primarily through media exposure rather than formal education. While 74% expressed trust in police using profiling responsibly, 53% voiced concerns about ethical misuse and potential bias against marginalized groups. Notably, students with prior criminology coursework demonstrated significantly higher awareness and critical understanding compared to others. Qualitative insights indicated a desire for greater transparency and public education on profiling methods.

Conclusion:

This study highlights a critical gap between **public understanding and law enforcement practices** in criminal profiling. Enhancing awareness through educational initiatives could improve societal trust and the perceived legitimacy of profiling in criminal investigations. The findings underscore the importance of integrating psychological insights with policing strategies to foster community-informed, ethical investigative practices.



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sciforum-164512: "Operation Espasmo": Structural Homelessness and Criminal Labour Exploitation in the Rioja Wine Harvest

Lucia Mendoza Ruiz

Department of Sociology, National Distance Education University (UNED), Madrid, Spain

Introduction: Seasonal migrant labour sustains much of Southern European agriculture, yet harvest campaigns often depend on severe housing exclusion. In DOCa Rioja (Spain), the 2024 grape harvest exposed the intersection of homelessness, irregular status and criminal labour exploitation. This study analyses "*Operation Espasmo*" (Villamediana de Iregua, October 2024) to examine how coercive accommodation arrangements can enable exploitation in seasonal labour markets.

Methods: We conducted a qualitative case study combining documentary analysis of publicly available sources (official communications regarding the police operation, third-sector materials and press reporting) with three informal first-hand testimonies collected from Villamediana residents to contextualise local patterns of overcrowded housing during harvest seasons. The analysis is framed by the FEANTSA/ETHOS typology of housing exclusion and by Loic Wacquant's account of the punitive management of poverty, focusing on how legal vulnerability and residential insecurity increase dependence and reduce effective access to protection mechanisms.

Results: The operation uncovered around 60 male workers (at least 15 in an irregular administrative situation) living in an illegally occupied property lacking basic habitability conditions. Housing functioned as a control device: workers reportedly paid EUR 120-140 per month for mattress space and additional charges (e.g., transport to vineyards), while working long days and facing wage deductions by intermediaries. The case also involved intimidation and severe violence, including the reported assault and running over of a worker who resisted a pay cut.

Conclusions: The Villamediana case suggests that homelessness in seasonal agriculture is not merely incidental but can become functional to exploitation. Prevention requires complementing reactive raids with coordinated labour inspection, enforceable accommodation standards and rights-based protection for workers regardless of administrative status.



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sciforum-176563: Cross-Border Criminal Responsibility in the Age of AI: Addressing AI-Enabled Offences within Social Institutions

Stalin S

School of Law, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr.Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, 600062, India

This rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has changed the social institutions, introducing new opportunities, as well as new threats in the field of criminal responsibility that has never been previously witnessed. The more AI systems work beyond national borders, be it in financial, healthcare, educational, or governmental fields, the more they allow offences that are difficult to conceptualize in terms of liability, jurisdiction, and accountability. In this paper, the dynamics of the cross-border criminal responsibility during the era of AI are viewed through the lens of how the law and the institutions of society have to evolve to accommodate AI-assisted crimes. The study employs a **theoretical, normative, and interdisciplinary methodology**, combining jurisprudence with social science perspectives to analyze institutional trust, human behavior, and global governance. It is proposed to start the analysis by placing AI in transnational contexts where crimes like online fraud, deepfaking, and algorithmic bias are not limited by national borders and destroy the integrity of institutions. The legal principles cannot be used to reflect the socio-political aspects of such offences, and therefore, social science perspectives should be integrated. Social institutions such as courts, regulatory authorities, education systems and community organizations are the places of vulnerability and sources of resilience. Their role needs interdisciplinary studies that involve combining jurisprudence with knowledge about human behaviors, institutional trust and global governance. Three dimensions are examined, namely, the attribution of criminal responsibility in cases where AI systems behave autonomously or in a manner that cannot be predicted by their designers; second, conflicts of jurisdiction and enforcing cross-border, diffuse, and decentralized offences; and third, the part played by social institutions in setting ethical standards, building accountability, and enforcing justice. Finally, the paper proceeds to advance the position that the AI need to engage in transnational collaboration, interdisciplinary dialogue, and rights-oriented approaches. Societies can only address the disruptive potential of AI by introducing justice and accountability into social institutions and protecting cross-border resilience and trust.



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sciforum-175612: Forest Waqf and Environmental Justice in Indonesia: Community Protection in Foothill Areas amid Weak Environmental Enforcement in Aceh

Iskandar Iskandar ^{1,*}, Fauziah Fauziah ¹ and Annisa Nur Salam ²

¹ Research Center for Religion and Belief, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, 10340, Indonesia

² Department of Islamic Economics and Business, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Bandung, 40614, Indonesia

Environmental damage in Indonesia is often felt most acutely by communities living in foothill areas. Deforestation, land conversion, and extractive activities increase the risks of floods, landslides, and the gradual loss of local livelihoods. In Aceh, these problems persist despite the existence of formal environmental regulations, highlighting weak enforcement and limited state capacity to protect vulnerable populations. This paper examines forest waqf as a form of environmental justice, inquiring into how it helps protect foothill communities when formal environmental governance falls short.

Drawing on a qualitative case study of forest waqf initiatives in Aceh, the study uses document analysis and interviews with waqf managers and community members. The findings show that forest waqf works not only as a conservation effort but also as a community-based system of environmental governance. By placing forest land under perpetual waqf ownership, these initiatives remove land from commercial exploitation and reduce activities that often escape effective monitoring and control. For communities living near forested slopes, this has practical consequences: reduced exposure to environmental hazards, better protection of water sources, and more stable conditions for everyday livelihoods.

The paper argues that forest waqf offers a preventive approach to environmental harm, addressing injustice before it turns into disaster or conflict. Rather than relying on policing and punishment, the forest waqf operates through long-term protection, shared responsibility, and local stewardship. This process demonstrates how Islamic social finance can serve as an alternative to traditional justice systems, particularly in Indonesia, where environmental regulations are not uniformly enforced.



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sciforum-177197: Illicit Cigarette Smuggling in Kuala Selangor, Malaysia: Policing Challenges and Crime Prevention in Digitally Mediated Contraband Markets

Azahah Abu Hassan Shaari * and Che Ashru Nizam Che Abdul Rahman

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, The National University of Malaysia, Bangi, 43600, Malaysia

Illicit cigarette smuggling remains a persistent challenge for crime control and justice systems due to its economic profitability, organised networks, and evolving operational methods. In Malaysia, the smuggling of untaxed cigarettes contributes to substantial revenue losses while also raising concerns about organised crime, regulatory enforcement, and public health. Responding to ongoing debates within criminology about “what works” in crime prevention and policing, this study examines how illicit cigarette smuggling operates at the local level and how enforcement actors perceive the effectiveness and limitations of current responses. This research adopts a qualitative case-study approach, focusing on Kuala Selangor, a coastal district identified as vulnerable to contraband activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten informants, including enforcement officers and community members with knowledge of local smuggling activities. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to explore drivers of smuggling, the role of digital technologies in facilitating illicit trade, and challenges faced by policing and enforcement agencies. Findings suggest that illicit cigarette smuggling is sustained by economic incentives, strong consumer demand for low-cost tobacco products, and logistical opportunities in semi-rural coastal areas. Participants also highlighted the increasing use of digital communication platforms to coordinate distribution and sales. Enforcement challenges reported include limited manpower, technological constraints, and inter-agency coordination issues. These findings provide qualitative insights into the dynamics of illicit trade and highlight considerations for improving policing and crime-prevention strategies in digitally mediated contraband markets.



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sciforum-160333: Mitigating the CSI effect in learning about technological innovations in crime investigation

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² Technologies for Criminal Investigations, Saxion University of Applied Sciences, 7513 AB Enschede, The Netherlands

Introduction – The dissemination of fictional content about criminal investigations across various platforms have led to the creation of the “CSI effect,” inflating public expectations and shaping misconceptions about forensic science. This study investigates whether targeted, narrative-driven workshops demonstrating the role of technologies in criminal investigations can counteract these unrealistic expectations and foster accurate technological literacy.

Methods – Two sequential workshops were delivered to adult learners. Workshop 1 focused on the application of data-science techniques such as web-scraping and data visualization in criminal investigations alongside their ethical implications. Similarly, workshop 2 introduced artificial-intelligence techniques and three-dimensional crime-scene reconstruction within an immersive virtual environment. Both sessions employed interactive, scenario-based activities and encouraged participants to apply concepts to simulated investigative cases. Pre- and post-workshop surveys measured changes in participants' perceived understanding of forensic technologies, critical-thinking confidence, and attitudes toward forensic realism. Feedback was collected through question-answer sessions and open-ended questionnaire items.

Results – Post-workshop responses indicated significant increase in accurate knowledge of demonstrated AI-driven technologies and a reduction in exaggerated expectations of forensic speed and certainty. Participants highlighted the value of customized content, hands-on interaction, and narrative framing. The format aligned with andragogical principles, leveraging prior experience and promoting self-directed learning, which participants reported as enhancing relevance and retention.

Conclusions – Narrative-centric, interactive workshops effectively mitigate the CSI effect by improving technological literacy, ethical awareness, and realistic expectations among adult learners. Integrating these pedagogical strategies into forensic education and public outreach can strengthen science communication and promote informed discourse on the capabilities and limits of modern crime-investigation technologies.



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sciforum-172869: The Digital Construction of Artificial Intelligence as a Crime Threat: YouTube Comments within the Framework of Moral Panic

Cansel Arslan

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This study aims to reveal how artificial intelligence is constructed as a societal threat, how fear discourse is produced, and how this situation spreads in digital environments. Accordingly, the comments made on the YouTube video titled “Can Artificial Intelligence Commit Crimes?” were analyzed within the framework of Moral Panic. The study examines which elements of moral panic are reproduced in audience comments. Out of 229 comments, 56 consisted of feedback about the channel, video requests, or only emojis. Therefore, these 56 comments were excluded, and the analysis was conducted on the remaining 173 comments. The comments were coded according to the five stages of Moral Panic Theory: (1) threat perception, (2) folk devil, (3) concern, (4) solution development, and (5) subsidence. Furthermore, sub-dimensions were created under each category for a more detailed analysis. Folk devil (n=45) and subsidence (n=50) were the most frequently observed categories. In 29% of the comments, artificial intelligence is perceived as a threat (n=30). It is observed that future-oriented anxiety (n=12) and dystopian Framing (n=12) emerged at equal levels. In the comments, those most frequently held responsible for AI committing crimes are programmers, designers, developers, users, and technology companies (n=33). The most common solution proposed to prevent AI from committing crimes is the restriction of artificial intelligence (n=16). However, it is also seen that there is a significant subsidence discourse opposing the panic discourse (n=50). Yet, this attenuation is constructed more through humor (n=28) rather than rationalization (n=3). In conclusion, the study shows that moral panic dynamics are reproduced in the YouTube comment section; however, these processes are not one-dimensional and homogeneous, but rather are shaped in a conflictual and multilayered way in digital environments.



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sciforum-177277: African strategic intelligence verse orthodox security measures: investigating African perspectives for crime detection in Nigeria

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Introduction: Crime investigation and detection has been an age long practice in society. African communities have an enriching strategic intelligence in crime management rooted in their indigenous knowledge system. This traditional method of crime apprehension was prevalent in the pre-colonial era. The efficacy of this method finds its root in African religious system. With colonial administration came the orthodox security agencies and measures. Thus, in this modern era, the prevailing usage of the orthodox security measures deeply rooted in Western security intelligence has not been able to eradicate crime in the society. Nigeria is rather rated as one of the most insecure countries in the globe. This raises the question on the efficacy of modern or orthodox security measures in apprehending or combating criminal activities in the country. Against this background, the study is set to explore the relevance of engaging ASSI and OSM in mitigating criminal activities in Nigeria.

Methods: Purposive sampling was employed in selecting participants from African custodians of indigenous knowledge, popularly called babalawos in south west, Nigeria, and selected members of Nigerian Police force using the instrumentality of in-depth interview and focused group discussions. Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data from interview and focus group discussion.

Results: The findings of the study reveal that the peculiarities of criminal activities in Nigeria require both methods as each proved inadequate without the other. It was also revealed that these criminals evade modern security detection by using traditional fortification mechanism.

Conclusion: The study concludes that for effective and successful crime investigation and criminals' apprehension, there's need for a blend of both ASSI and orthodox methods.



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sciforum-158016: Algorithmic Policing and Constitutional Justice in India: A Socio-Legal Examination of Emerging Jurisprudence

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The increasing adoption of algorithmic and data-driven technologies by law enforcement agencies is reshaping the contours of justice and accountability in India. This paper investigates the intersection of artificial intelligence, predictive policing, and constitutional morality, focusing on how automation in surveillance and crime prevention interacts with fundamental rights under the Indian Constitution. Drawing from landmark judgments such as *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017) 10 SCC 1 and *People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India* (1997) 1 SCC 301, the study critically examines privacy, proportionality, and due process as evolving principles of digital-age jurisprudence. Through doctrinal and comparative analysis, it evaluates the risks of bias, opacity, and overreach in predictive policing systems, particularly in contexts of marginalized and minority populations. The paper situates India's experience within global debates on AI governance, digital constitutionalism, and human rights, highlighting the challenges of embedding ethics and transparency within technologically mediated state functions. It concludes by proposing a policy framework rooted in constitutional accountability, algorithmic explainability, and human oversight, ensuring that the modernization of law enforcement does not erode the democratic promise of justice. This work underscores that true technological progress in policing must remain subordinate to constitutional ideals of liberty, equality, and dignity. It further calls for capacity-building and judicial training to ensure that the legal system evolves in tandem with emerging technologies and ethical standards.



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sciforum-166683: Do Men and Women Misbehave for the Same Reasons? A Gender-Sensitive Analysis of Predictors of Prison Misconduct

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Prison misconduct remains a central challenge for correctional systems, with important implications for institutional order, safety, and social reintegration. Although a growing body of research has examined the factors associated with disciplinary infractions in prison, empirical studies have largely relied on male samples, single data sources, and gender-neutral analytical frameworks, limiting our understanding of how misconduct may emerge differently for men and women.

This study adopts a gender-sensitive approach to examine whether the predictors of prison misconduct differ between male and female incarcerated populations. Drawing on data collected in four Portuguese correctional institutions, the research combines official disciplinary records and self-reported misconduct measures within a longitudinal design. A broad set of predictors is considered, including sociodemographic and juridico-penal characteristics, emotional processes, personality traits, self-control, criminal attitudes, and multiple dimensions of perceived prison climate.

Given the limited number of institutions, multivariate fixed-effects models were employed rather than multilevel modeling, in line with methodological recommendations for small numbers of clusters. Analyses were conducted separately for men and women to avoid assuming homogeneous explanatory processes across genders and to account for distinct institutional contexts.

Results indicate that the predictors of prison misconduct are not gender-invariant. Individual and contextual factors show different patterns of association depending on gender, the source of misconduct measurement, and the temporal window considered. These findings highlight the importance of gender-sensitive analytical strategies and multimodal measurement approaches in social research on institutional behavior. The study contributes to broader discussions on inequality, institutional justice, and evidence-based policies aimed at promoting safer and more equitable correctional environments.



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sciforum-173722: Exploring Informal Healthcare Payments in Greece: Patient Perceptions and Anti-Corruption Strategies

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Introduction:

Health is a fundamental social good and a key pillar of social cohesion and sustainable development. In Greece, successive crises—particularly the prolonged economic recession and the COVID-19 have exposed and intensified longstanding structural weaknesses in the public healthcare system. Fiscal constraints, understaffing, and increased demand for services have placed significant pressure on public provision. Within this environment, informal payments, widely known as “fakelaki,” remain an entrenched form of corruption. This practice undermines equitable access to healthcare, disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, and reinforces social inequalities. It also erodes trust in public institutions and weakens confidence in the state’s capacity to ensure fairness and transparency. The present study explores patient perceptions of informal payments and examines the broader socio-institutional factors that contribute to the persistence of this phenomenon.

Methods:

The study draws on primary survey data collected between March and May 2023 from 2,072 participants selected through a screening sampling method. Descriptive statistics and non-parametric inferential analyses were conducted to assess preferences between public and private healthcare providers, perceptions of deficiencies in public healthcare services, attitudes toward informal payments, and levels of trust in public institutions. The analysis further sought to identify relationships between healthcare choices, financial pressures, perceived service quality.

Results:

Findings indicate an almost equal preference for public and private providers. However, a shift toward private services is linked to perceived inefficiencies in the public sector, including long waiting times, bureaucratic barriers, understaffing, and limited access to specialized care. Although most respondents morally oppose “fakelaki,” a notable minority express willingness to offer informal payments to secure faster or better-quality treatment. Several participants justify such payments as supplementary income for underpaid medical staff.

Conclusions:

Informal payments reflect systemic inefficiencies and low institutional trust. Addressing the issue requires transparency, accountability, and comprehensive reforms to strengthen equity and restore public confidence in healthcare provision.



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sciforum-173057: Forest Waqf and Environmental Justice in Indonesia: Community Protection in Foothill Areas amid Weak Environmental Enforcement in Aceh

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Environmental degradation in Indonesia often affects foothill communities most severely. Deforestation, land conversion, and extractive activities increase the risks of floods, landslides, and the gradual loss of local livelihoods. In Aceh, these problems continue despite the presence of environmental regulations. Weak enforcement and limited monitoring allow activities such as illegal logging and land encroachment to persist. As a result, environmental damage is not only an ecological issue but also a matter of justice, since vulnerable communities bear the consequences of violations that are rarely addressed through effective policing or legal action.

This paper examines forest waqf as a community-based response to these challenges. *Waqf* is an Islamic endowment in which property or assets are permanently dedicated for public benefit. Once designated as waqf, the asset cannot be sold or transferred and must be used for social or charitable purposes. When applied to forest land, waqf creates a long-term protection mechanism that prevents commercial exploitation and preserves environmental resources for the wider community. The study uses a qualitative case study of forest waqf initiatives in Aceh, drawing on document analysis.

The findings show that forest waqf functions not only as a conservation effort but also as a form of local environmental governance. By placing forest areas under perpetual waqf ownership, communities limit activities such as illegal logging and uncontrolled land conversion, which often occur beyond the reach of formal monitoring. For communities living near forested slopes, these initiatives have practical benefits. Protected forests help maintain water sources, stabilize land, and reduce exposure to environmental hazards. In this sense, forest waqf contributes to environmental protection while also addressing the social impacts of environmental harm. The study argues that forest waqf represents a preventive approach to environmental justice. Instead of relying mainly on policing and punishment, it focuses on long-term stewardship, collective responsibility, and ethical land management.



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sciforum-177223: From Hustle to Hacking: Income – Tech Interactions and Youth Pathways into Cybercrime in Lagos State, Nigeria

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The rapid expansion of digital technologies has created new opportunities for income generation among young people. Many youths now rely on digital platforms, freelance tools, and online services as alternative means of economic survival. However, growing evidence suggests that exposure to digital income tools may also create pathways into cybercrime. This study investigates how legitimate digital hustle gradually transitions into cyber-related crimes among youths in Lagos State, Nigeria. A quantitative research design was adopted, and data were collected from 275 respondents selected from three local government areas in Lagos State using a multistage sampling technique. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data, and the results were analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study reveals three major findings. First, exposure to digital income tools significantly increases youths' technical confidence and knowledge of digital systems. Second, persistent income pressure encourages the shift from legitimate digital activities to illegitimate cyber practices such as account hacking and online fraud. Third, peer learning networks within digital communities accelerate the transition from online hustle to cybercrime participation. The study concludes that cybercrime among youths is not simply a criminal choice but often an unintended outcome of economic survival strategies in digitally mediated environments. The study recommends youth-focused digital entrepreneurship programs, ethical technology training, and stronger cyber awareness initiatives to redirect youth digital skills toward legitimate economic opportunities.



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sciforum-170302: Gender-Sensitive Judicial Responses in Transitional Societies: Bridging Legal Gaps and Social Equity

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Introduction:

In transitional societies, formal judicial systems often struggle to address crimes with gendered dimensions, particularly in contexts of institutional fragility and social bias. Women and marginalized groups frequently face barriers to justice, reflecting broader social inequalities. This study explores how gender dynamics shape judicial responses and influence access to justice in transitional legal environments.

Methods:

A qualitative legal analysis was conducted, combining case studies of gender-related crimes, comparative review of transitional judicial systems, and document analysis of policies, court rulings, and civil society initiatives. A normative approach was employed to assess how informal community mechanisms complement formal legal processes, and how social norms and systemic biases influence legal outcomes.

Results:

Findings reveal persistent gaps in formal judicial responses, including underreporting of sexual and domestic offenses, procedural delays, and inconsistent application of protective measures. Community-based interventions, restorative justice programs, and gender-sensitive advocacy demonstrate measurable improvements in access, victim protection, and societal recognition of human rights. These mechanisms serve as **effective complements to formal law**, bridging legal and social gaps in transitional contexts.

Conclusions:

Achieving equitable justice requires integrating formal judicial procedures with community-driven initiatives, emphasizing gender sensitivity and social equity. Recognizing and institutionalizing these complementary mechanisms can enhance rule of law, strengthen transitional justice frameworks, and ensure protection for vulnerable populations. Transitional societies benefit from a pluralistic legal ecosystem where law, society, and gender dynamics interact to produce more inclusive and effective justice outcomes.



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sciforum-167882: Gendered Cyber Insecurities: Risk Perception, Protective Behaviors, and Victimization in Digital Environments

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Growing reliance on digital infrastructures has intensified exposure to cyber threats, yet such risks are not evenly distributed across social groups. Drawing on feminist criminology and digital safety scholarship, this study examines gendered patterns of cyber (in)security in Türkiye by focusing on four dimensions: (1) cyber risk perception, (2) protective behaviors (“cyber hygiene”), (3) cyber-technical literacy, and (4) cyber victimization. The analysis distinguishes harassment-based harms (e.g., cyberbullying, leaking, stalking) from financially motivated attacks (e.g., phishing, ransomware, fraud), in line with research documenting gendered threat landscapes online. Data were collected via an online survey (N=387) administered to adult internet users in Türkiye. Key measures included a cyber risk perception index (endişe_), protective behavior index (onlem_), cyber-technical literacy index (bilgi_*), and a victimization score (scvic). Independent-samples t-tests and MANOVA were applied to assess gender effects. Results revealed significant multivariate differences (Wilks' $\Lambda=.916$, $p=.001$). Univariate tests indicated that women scored higher on risk perception ($p=.030$) and slightly higher on protective behaviors, while men reported higher cyber-technical literacy ($p=.061$, marginal) and significantly higher victimization ($p=.018$). These asymmetries illustrate how gendered socialization and differential threat exposure shape online safety practices. Findings demonstrate that cyber insecurities are not merely technical phenomena but are embedded in broader socio-cultural structures.



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sciforum-176935: Gravity of Policing: A Computational Framework for Measuring Force Intensity in News Coverage

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Introduction: The portrayal of police force in news media shapes public perceptions of legitimacy and influences policy debates. Yet existing computational measures focus on sentiment or event categories, leaving a critical dimension unmeasured: the linguistic intensity of force with which police actions are described. This study introduces a "gravity of policing" framework—a continuous measure of how forcefully police action is represented in journalistic text, independent of crime seriousness or narrative stance.

Methods: We adapt valence-arousal-dominance (VAD) lexicons to construct a policing-specific gravity lexicon, weighting verbs and adjectives by dominance (power/control) and arousal (activation). A minimally supervised pipeline identifies police-focused sentences and computes article-level gravity profiles including mean, maximum, and proportion of tokens in low, medium, and high gravity bands. Eight benchmark incident types (petty arrest, protest policing, terror alert, terror incident, robbery, arson, attempted murder/murder, manslaughter) anchor interpretation, enabling translation of raw scores into relatable narratives. Validation will employ human-coder ratings and large language model assessments on diverse English-language news corpora to establish convergent validity and distinguish gravity from generic sentiment.

Results: We present a measurement framework and algorithmic approach currently under development. We describe the lexicon construction process, feature extraction pipeline, and benchmarking strategy. Preliminary illustrations using example articles demonstrate how the method distinguishes between low-gravity ("police asked demonstrators to leave") and high-gravity ("police stormed the building and fired") portrayals of police action. Full validation results will be reported in subsequent work.

Conclusions: The gravity framework offers a theoretically grounded, transparent metric for policing-media analysis. It captures a force-intensity dimension orthogonal to sentiment, enables cross-context comparison, and provides an open-source tool for studying how police force is linguistically portrayed across diverse media settings. This advances computational social science by operationalizing a previously unmeasured framing dimension with broad applicability to research on policing, media effects, and institutional legitimacy.



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sciforum-176857: Informal Power Dynamics and Grassroots Policing: Assessing The Role of Traditional Authorities in the Security Architecture of YEWA North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria

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Clearly, Nigeria is currently facing rising security challenges that include community conflicts, kidnapping, farmer-herder clashes, terrorism, banditry, ritual killings, and so on. One of the established institutions tasked with curbing such vices, managing conflicts among or between members of a community, and preserving the customs and traditions of the people through established laws and customs is the traditional rulership. This study assessed the role of traditional rulers in tackling security challenges, with a focus on Yewa North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine the role of traditional rulers in security management, evaluate their effectiveness in addressing security challenges, and identify the challenges they face in maintaining security. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and a purposive sampling technique was used to select 400 respondents. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that traditional rulers play significant roles in intelligence gathering, conflict resolution, community policing, and mediation in security matters. However, their efforts are constrained by a lack of constitutional recognition, inadequate resources, political interference, and poor collaboration with formal security agencies. The study concludes that traditional rulers remain vital actors in grassroots security governance. It recommends that the government should formally integrate them into the national security framework, provide adequate resources for community-based security initiatives, and enhance collaboration with security agencies to improve effectiveness.



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sciforum-176741: Insecurity as a Stressor: Legal Uncertainty, Identity Disruption, and Coping Among Undocumented Pakistani Migrants in Italy

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The illegal alien's migration has been debated in both legal and economic contexts, but the daily psychological and social impacts of life without the safe status is slightly studied especially among Pakistani labor migrants in Southern Europe. The qualitative research design examines the sense-making process of undocumented Pakistani migrants in Bari, Italy to determine how undocumented migrants experience mental health strain and social dislocation in the context of the chronic legal uncertainty. The participants who participated in the semi-structured interviews which were in-depth and took place in Urdu and Punjabi were 25. Transcripts of audio tape were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, which was informed by the perspectives of trauma, acculturation stress, minority stress, and social capital. There were four themes that were inter-related. To start with, the participants recounted the trauma and continuing insecurity associated with the dangerous travels, fear of law enforcement, detention, or deportation, and the prolonged inability to ascertain the future. Second, a significant proportion of those who reported psychological distress and anxiety of identity disruption, despondency, loneliness, sleep disturbance, and perceived loss of dignity and cherished social roles. Third, irregular status predetermined material and relational hardship with the help of precarious labor and exploitation, racism, and the lack of linguistic acquisition, medical care, and social benefits. Lastly, resilience and coping based on religious faith, transnational family and co-ethnic networks, and support of local organizations were also noted among the participants. In general, the results indicate that irregular legal status is encountered as an enduring structuring stressor that increases vulnerability but also defines the shapes of coping options that can be made. The work highlights the necessity of trauma-affected, culturally responsive services, enhanced language and integration resources, and policies that enhance legal ambiguity and offer more avenues to social inclusion.



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sciforum-176662: Legal Framework on Protection of Men from Domestic Violence and Human Rights in India: A Critical Study

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Domestic violence is usually viewed as a crime and a civil cause of action committed against a woman, but men are also victims of violence in the domestic and marriage relations. Violence against men, physical, psychological, emotional and economic is a subject that has been largely ignored in Indian society. The current law system in India is mainly aimed for the protection of women in the form of legislations as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 that have laid out the remedies to the female victims. As a result, male victims of domestic violence are usually impeded in accessing justice and protection by legal, social, and psychological means. Many fundamental rights in the Constitution of India include equality before the law, protection of life and personal liberty, and the right to life with dignity. Such constitutional guarantees are supposed to be offered equally to all persons irrespective of gender. Nevertheless, the lack of gender-neutral legislation on domestic violence is a cause of the concern about the safeguarding of human rights of men in India. This study critically focuses the legal context of domestic violence in India and determine whether it provides sufficient protection of the human rights of male victims. The research also emphasizes the social stigma, culture, and institutional issues that deny men the chance to report domestic abuse. The methodology of the research is the doctrinal and analytical approach. The research provides the legal challenges and human rights considerations of domestic violence against men and contributes in advancing the current and new perspective of gender-neutral laws.



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sciforum-169578: Occupational Deviance and Commuter Victimization in Sri Lankan Bus Transportation: Lessons from Galle Road (A2)

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With the world becoming modernized, sustainable transport systems with an emphasis on public transport are being implemented. Despite the right to movement and freedom from degrading treatment being considered fundamental rights in Sri Lanka, incidents of occupational deviance among bus workers are common in Sri Lanka. These include selective boarding, balance fraud in ticket issuance, aggressive driving, verbal disputes, and physical assaults against commuters. Since this behavior threatens the safe, accessible, and sustainable transport systems, this study was conducted to identify the relationships between occupational deviance and commuter rights, gender, and institutional response. Conducted between October and December 2025, this employed a quantitative research design, with a stratified sample of 384 passengers from Galle Road (A2). After obtaining informed consent from the respondents, data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. Multiple regression analysis revealed that balance fraud and commuter demanding rights are significant predictors of verbal aggression ($R^2 = 0.64$, $p = 0.001$). Moreover, selective boarding between 22:00 – 04:00 and the presence of male young adult commuters served as a significant cause for physical assaults ($F(2, 381) = 18.42$, $p = 0.001$). Finally, a systematic accountability deficit was identified, with 84% of respondents reporting complaints being redirected, while the binary logistic regression revealed the probability of taking an action was statistically negligible ($p > 0.05$). Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that Galle road bus transportation operates with normalization of deviance, violation of commuter rights, and inefficient redress mechanisms. Therefore, a systematic change with occupational liability to pick up passengers, introducing a demerit system, and a centralized digital complaint system will be working solutions. Further research should examine the condition in other corridors, including roads, with comparative studies to identify international best practices.



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sciforum-173971: Ontic Injustice and Media Trials of Female Offenders: A Critical Reflection on Social and Institutional Barriers

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This paper presents a critical inquiry into the intersection of Katharine Jenkins' theory of ontic injustice and the phenomenon of media trials involving female offenders within the socio-legal landscape. While conventional legal critiques of trial by media largely concentrate on erosion of presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial, this research adopts a feminist ontological lens to argue that women in high-profile criminal cases suffer a deeper harm: the wrongful social reconstruction of their identity.

Through a qualitative analysis of contemporary cases, the paper demonstrates how media narratives operate as mechanisms that distort facts and shape public perception. By invoking gendered stereotypes and culturally entrenched notions of femininity, the media does not merely report alleged conduct; it recategorizes the accused into a stigmatized social kind. The paper contends that such ontic injustice functions as both an institutional and social barrier, pre-empting legal outcomes by securing a moral conviction in the court of public opinion through reinforcement of gendered expectations. Consequently, the female accused is subjected to a dual trial – one before a court of law and another before society.

The paper further examines the institutional limitations in addressing ontic injustice. It scrutinizes the capacity of the judicial system to mitigate the prejudicial impact of sensationalist reporting, particularly where such narratives resonate with deeply embedded socio-cultural misogynistic beliefs. The analysis reveals a systemic tension: although the accused is formally recognized as a legal subject entitled to procedural safeguards, she is simultaneously reduced by media discourse to a deviant entity. This dissonance has implications for her prospects of reformation and social reintegration.

Ultimately, the paper argues that meaningful reform requires moving beyond procedural protections alone and confronting the underlying social constructs that enable the media to transform a female accused into a 'social convict' prior to judicial determination.



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sciforum-175233: Police Auxiliaries in the Policing Protocol of the Nigeria Police Force: Key Contributions and Operational Gaps in Practice

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In October 2020, police auxiliaries, locally known as the Special Constabularies, were formally introduced into the Nigerian policing landscape to assist regular police officers in performing some law enforcement duties. Therefore, guided by the tenets of contingency theory, this paper critically discusses the status of police auxiliaries in Nigeria, focusing on the recorded gains and the gaps in practice associated with their emergence. The paper argued that although the use of police auxiliaries for police work in Nigeria has proven to be beneficial in certain respects, such as the alleviation of human resources deficit of the police workforce, the promotion of the entrenchment of community policing, the strengthening of police intelligence gathering, and the enhancement of public compliance policing. However, the recruitment of this category of officers has also had some far-reaching consequences for policing and the public image of the Nigeria Police Force as a law enforcement agency due to some operational gaps in practice such as remuneration issue, the recruitment of individuals with questionable character, the involvement of some auxiliaries in unethical conducts, and the exposure of auxiliary officers to hazardous situations in the line of duty. Therefore, to fully reap the potential that is embedded in the recruitment of auxiliary officers for policing in Nigeria, the problems that have manifested as a result of the identified operational gaps in practice need to be holistically addressed.



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sciforum-173698: Strengthening Legal Protection for Indonesian Migrant Workers in Japan through Multi-Actor Cooperation

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Japan ranked as the fourth largest destination for Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs), with a total of 14,543 workers in 2025. Despite the existence of bilateral agreements and legal frameworks, protection challenges persist, demonstrating that regulatory compliance alone is insufficient to ensure migrant worker protection. This research uses qualitative methods on literature analysis to analyze how multi-actor cooperation can strengthen the legal protection framework for IMWs in Japan. Reports from Indonesian law enforcement authorities and U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Indonesia highlight trafficking and exploitation cases involving IMWs in Japan, indicating misuse of formal migration schemes and gaps in enforcement and protection. Besides, Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia (SBMI) recorded 68 complaints involving IMWs in Japan, including certification gaps, weak legal implementation, and wage disparities, which increase vulnerability to labor exploitation. The Indonesian government enacted Law No. 18/2017 concerning the protection of IMWs. The government is also taking legal action against two former directors of a polytechnic in Indonesia in connection with facilitating the exploitation of human trafficking victims in Japan. Conversely, the Japanese government enacted the Labor Standards Act and the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. Beyond state initiatives, this study underscores the importance of non-state actors in bridging the protection gap. SBMI plays a central role through policy advocacy with the Indonesian Ministry of Migrant Worker Protection (KP2MI) and international organizations, providing case assistance and campaigning IMWs protection. Professional legal organizations such as DePA-RI have provided pro bono legal assistance to IMWs in Japan, including legal coordination with Japanese lawyers in collaboration with Indonesian diplomatic missions. This study concludes that the protection of IMWs in Japan increasingly reflects a multi-track diplomacy model, in which state and non-state actors collaboratively seek protection for IMWs in Japan alongside legal protection from both the Japanese and Indonesian governments.



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sciforum-155824: The Zara Qairina Case: Legal Considerations Regarding Expedited Burial, Exhumation, and Procedural Deficiencies in Malaysian Criminal Investigations

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The Zara Qairina case critically examines procedural inadequacies in Malaysian criminal investigations, especially regarding accelerated burial and eventual exhumation. Zara Qairina, a 13-year-old pupil of SMKA Tun Datu Mustapha in Limauan, Sipitang, died on 16 July 2025. Her remains were initially interred on 18 July 2025, unearthed on 10 August 2025 at the directive of the Attorney General's Chambers for autopsy procedures done by Dr Jassie Hiu and Dr Khairul Anuar Zainun, and reinterred on 11 August 2025 at 01:15 a.m. The autopsy disclosed significant bodily injuries, challenging initial assumptions of suicide and prompting worries regarding possible police oversight in the preliminary investigation. This study analyses the legal ramifications of investigative deficiencies, citing relevant statutory provisions such as the Penal Code (Sections 302, 305–306, 323, 506, and 107–109), the Child Act 2001, the Education Act 1996, and pertinent tort law principles regarding the duty of care. Critical evidential materials, including medical and forensic reports, school incident records, police investigation findings, witness statements, and any surveillance footage, are examined to evaluate procedural adherence. The Attorney General's involvement underscores the remedial function of prosecutorial supervision in rectifying investigative deficiencies, while the Education Minister's pledge of "no cover-up" affirms the tenets of transparency and procedural justice. This article contextualises the Zara Qairina case within broader discourses on institutional accountability, evidential integrity, and the protection of minors in educational environments. The research seeks to combine statutory interpretation with factual analysis to recommend legal and procedural improvements that enhance investigative thoroughness, safeguard victims' rights, and restore public confidence in Malaysia's criminal justice system.



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sciforum-159678: Watching or Protecting? How AI Policing Rules Create Either Fear or Safety

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The growing interest in artificial intelligence (AI) in policing is reshaping discussions on crime prevention and public safety, particularly in emerging digital governance contexts such as Nigeria. While AI-driven tools such as predictive analytics and facial recognition are often promoted as solutions for improving efficiency in law enforcement, their potential social implications for public trust and community relations remain underexplored.

This study adopts a **qualitative approach**, drawing on policy documents, media reports, and secondary literature on digital surveillance and policing practices in Nigeria. Through document analysis, the paper examines how the introduction and prospective use of AI-enabled policing tools may influence public perceptions of safety, surveillance, and institutional trust.

Findings suggest that in contexts where governance frameworks are weak or insufficiently transparent, the adoption of AI in policing is likely to heighten perceptions of surveillance and social control, particularly among already vulnerable populations. This may reduce public trust and weaken community cooperation with law enforcement institutions. However, the analysis also indicates that where policies emphasize transparency, accountability, and community engagement, the risks associated with AI-driven policing can be mitigated, thereby improving public confidence.

The paper argues that the effectiveness of AI in policing within Nigeria will depend less on technological capability and more on the strength of institutional safeguards and participatory governance structures. It highlights the need for inclusive policy frameworks that integrate public input into the design and oversight of such technologies.

By situating AI policing within broader debates on governance, trust, and digital justice, this study challenges the assumption that technological innovation inherently enhances security. It concludes that sustainable public safety in Nigeria will depend on balancing innovation with legitimacy, accountability, and respect for civil liberties.



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sciforum-176275: When Fear Becomes Structure: The Hidden Cycle of Patriarchy and Protection in Urban Spaces

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Fear of crime is often treated as an emotional reaction to perceived danger. However, in many urban contexts, fear functions as something deeper, an invisible social structure that shapes everyday behaviour and reinforces existing power relations. This study explores how fear of crime operates as a socio-psychological mechanism that reproduces patriarchal expectations within the urban environment of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Drawing on qualitative research conducted with urban residents, the study examines how gender norms, cultural narratives, and spatial dynamics shape experiences of fear in the city. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 56 participants across diverse neighbourhoods in Colombo and analyzed using qualitative and discourse-oriented analytical approaches to capture both lived experiences and the language through which fear is expressed and normalized. The findings reveal that fear does not merely restrict mobility but also structures social relationships. Women often internalize fear through cultural expectations of vulnerability, while men are positioned as protectors within familial and social settings. This dynamic creates a dependency on male protection that unintentionally reinforces patriarchal authority. The research conceptualizes this process as a cyclical relationship in which patriarchal social structures amplify fear, fear encourages reliance on male protection, and this reliance ultimately reproduces patriarchal systems. By framing fear of crime as a socially embedded mechanism rather than an individual emotion, the study highlights how urban insecurity can sustain broader systems of gender inequality. The findings contribute to criminological and gender studies by offering a Global South perspective on the structural role of fear and by proposing a conceptual model explaining the cycle between fear, protection, and patriarchy in urban life.



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Session 2. Aging, Childhood and Youth Studies

sciforum-173896: “Nope, I’m Out”: Emotional Detachment as a Coping Strategy in Generation Z

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Introduction:

In the current era of late modernity, generation z is subject to strong forces of individualization, as well as fluid social processes and high levels of uncertainty. The process of identity formation is becoming more self-directed and is being constructed in a reflexive manner, which is subjecting this generation to much higher levels of emotional demands. We explore the role of structural conditions as such on emotional regulation and attachment patterns.

Methods:

This study uses a narrative approach to combine sociological and psychological theories of liquid modernity, individualization, risk, emotional capitalism, attachment, and regulation into a coherent story. By means of an integrative conceptual analysis, it constructs a cross-level model that links macro-social circumstances with the internal processes of self-regulation and relationship dynamics among Generation Z individuals.

Results:

There is a definite contradiction throughout the study: while individuals are attempting to form their own identities, they are left with even more on their shoulder, as they are constantly observing their emotional equilibrium. In a “liquid modern society,” as it is described, the nature of relationships is precarious and conditional, making vulnerability a danger in relationship with others. When the value of intimacy is measured against the risk factor and becomes more of a quasi-market assessment, individuals are likely to find themselves moving away from emotional relationships and binding ties as a form of coping strategy.

Conclusions:

Lack of emotional attachment or emotional detachment is not only a dispositional weakness but also a coping strategy developed by the social structures of today. Nevertheless, humans need social attachment for psychological regulation. Avoidance can lead to an escalation of self-criticism, anxiety, and rumination. The study offers an interdisciplinary sociopsychological framework to understand the avoidance of relationships by Generation Z within larger socio-structural changes.



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sciforum-174150: “Seeing like a child”: How an NGO operationalises child-centred social-work practice in urban poverty

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Historically, children have been recognised as central to social work practice: vulnerable yet powerful levers of social change. Yet adult, institutional, and policy lenses often silence their experiences. Globally, child-centred practice has shifted from charity and welfare models toward rights- and strengths-based frameworks that recognise children as capable social actors who bear agency and voice. Despite this evolution, many children in contexts of poverty, migration, and informal urban settlements remain excluded from state protections and basic services.

This study examines how a non-state actor, Children of the World India Trust (CWIT), operationalises child-centred practice in the Sai Nagar and Sambhaji Nagar settlements of Navi Mumbai. Adopting a bottom-up qualitative case-study design, the research draws on a year-long field immersion: participant observation, reflective field notes, and informal interviews with children, parents, and staff. Data were thematically analysed across education, nutrition, and holistic development, and framed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ecological perspectives on development.

Findings show CWIT functioning as a stabilising microsystem within children’s everyday ecologies, proving crucial and transformative in children’s lives through consistent care, participation-based learning, and resilience-building engagement. Interventions based on building literacy and education for all emerged as empowering, nutrition catering to children’s basic needs of hunger, and structured recreation and co-curricular activities as fostering a sense of self-expression. These actions create a ripple effect, extending beyond the child to their families and communities, promoting overall changes in parental mindsets and the community’s approach.

The study argues for reframing child-centred social work from an abstract ideal to a practice of everyday relationships and systems-level scaffolding. To strengthen child welfare in underserved urban contexts, policy and practice must centre children’s voices, enable participation, and support NGOs that translate rights-based theory into sustained, context-responsive action, positioning children as co-authors of their development.



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sciforum-176940: 'Pelebe' Culture: Sachet Alcohol Consumption and Its Social and Health Implications for Nigerian Youth

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Introduction:

The increasing availability of inexpensive sachet-packaged alcohol, commonly referred to as "*pelebe*" in many Nigerian communities, has generated growing public health and social concerns. Its low cost, portability, and widespread street-level distribution make it easily accessible to adolescents and young people in contemporary Nigerian society. This accessibility raises concerns about early initiation into alcohol consumption and associated risky behaviours among youth. Despite regulatory efforts by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) to control the production and sale of sachet alcohol, its use remains widespread. This study examines patterns of sachet alcohol consumption among Nigerian youth and explores its social and health implications.

Methods:

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design among youth in southwestern Nigeria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to assess patterns of sachet alcohol consumption, motivations for use, and perceived consequences associated with its intake. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyse the data.

Results:

The findings indicate that sachet alcohol consumption is relatively common among youth, largely due to its affordability, ease of access, and peer influence. Participants also associated its use with several negative outcomes, including engagement in risky behaviours, reduced academic concentration, and potential health complications.

Conclusion:

The study highlights the potential public health risks associated with the widespread availability of sachet alcohol among young people. Strengthening regulatory enforcement, public health education, and youth-focused intervention programmes is essential to mitigate the harmful effects of sachet alcohol consumption among Nigerian youth.



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sciforum-164514: Selective Ageing and Youth Displacement in the Touristification of Historic Centres: Evidence from Logroño (Spain) and the Role of Housing Pressure

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Introduction: Historic-centre regeneration can generate uneven demographic outcomes. While these dynamics have been widely documented in major Southern European cities, less attention has been paid to medium-sized urban contexts. In Logroño (Spain), the Casco Antiguo combines heritage-led investment and a growing visitor economy with concerns about habitability, housing access, and intergenerational decline. This study examines *selective ageing*—the concentration of older residents, often living alone, alongside the outward movement of younger households—within the context of touristification and local urban governance.

Methods: A mixed-method documentary case study (2010–2025) was conducted. Quantitative trends were analysed using municipal register data and official statistics on population structure. Qualitative analysis examined planning and regeneration instruments (e.g., URBAN, EDUSI, PERI), policy frameworks, and civil-society and media discourses. A triangulation strategy linked demographic change with policy priorities and contested narratives of urban transformation.

Results: The Casco Antiguo has experienced marked demographic contraction, declining from 3,978 residents in 2019 to approximately 3,000–3,100 in 2023. The area displays a pronounced ageing profile, with nearly 40% of residents aged 60+. At the same time, registered tourist apartments more than doubled between 2018 and 2023. These patterns are consistent with broader processes of touristification observed in other European urban contexts. Qualitative evidence frames these dynamics as “expulsive”, linking short-term accommodation growth to housing pressure, reduced residential stability, and the displacement of younger households.

Conclusions: Touristification in Logroño’s historic centre is associated with selective ageing and growing intergenerational imbalance. The case highlights how dynamics commonly identified in larger cities are also reshaping demographic structures in medium-sized urban contexts. A right to the city perspective underscores the need for policies that prioritise housing rights and liveability, protecting vulnerable older residents while supporting the retention of younger populations.



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sciforum-173849: Teachers' Perspectives on Bullying in Early Childhood Education

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Introduction

The study analyses how early childhood education teachers in Spain perceive bullying in children aged 3 to 6, taking into account their training, assessment of the school environment and possible risk factors that trigger aggressive behaviour. Although there is uncertainty about how to address bullying at this stage of education (3-6 years), it is clear that this problem exists and that many children are affected by the way their peers treat them at this age. This study aims to shed light on this issue.

Methods

The research was carried out with 70 early childhood education teachers between the ages of 39 and 40. It should be noted that, in Spain, this profession is almost exclusively practised by women at this stage of education. Variables related to the training received, the perception of coexistence in the educational centre, the influence of risk factors and knowledge of cases of bullying in their own centre or in others were analysed. To this end, non-parametric statistical tests were applied to identify differences according to the ownership of the centre and the existence of specific plans against bullying.

Results

The results indicate that participants consider themselves insufficiently prepared to deal with bullying (2.66/5), while they rate coexistence in their schools very positively (4.29/5). They mainly attribute aggressive behaviour to technology and television, giving less importance to the family and almost none to the responsibility of teachers. Furthermore, teachers detect bullying more frequently in other schools than in their own. In addition, the presence of anti-bullying plans is associated with a better perception of the phenomenon and the school climate.

Conclusions

The lack of training and the externalisation of the causes of bullying highlight the need to strengthen teacher training and implement prevention protocols from an early age.



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sciforum-175933: Empirical Feasibility Assessment of the Proposed Basak Teen Center: A Survey-Based Evaluation of Youth Demand, Functionality, and Operational Viability

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This study assessed the feasibility, functionality, and community demand for the proposed Basak Teen Center in Barangay Basak, Lapu-Lapu City, using empirical survey data as the primary basis for planning and validation. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed through a structured survey administered to 378 youth respondents aged 15–30. A 7-point Likert scale measured perceived need, service importance, willingness to participate, and overall feasibility. Weighted means, frequency distributions, and percentage analyses were computed to determine demand intensity and service prioritization.

Findings reveal exceptionally strong community endorsement. The perceived need for a Teen Center obtained a weighted mean of 6.58 (Strongly Agree), while the overall feasibility index reached 6.34 (Highly Feasible). Functionality indicators yielded an average weighted mean of 6.41 (Very Important). Counseling and psychosocial support ranked highest ($M = 6.72$), followed by information and education services ($M = 6.60$) and referral linkages ($M = 6.51$). Willingness to participate recorded a mean of 6.22 (Agree), with 72% of respondents expressing intention to visit the facility. Additionally, 75% demonstrated willingness to use the study area—classified as a Must-Be feature—while 77% indicated willingness to recommend the center to peers. Notably, 61% expressed willingness to volunteer as peer educators.

Survey data confirm high social acceptability, strong projected utilization, and functional alignment between proposed services and documented youth priorities. The Must-Be classification of the air-conditioned study area with Wi-Fi establishes it as a baseline requirement for sustained engagement. Consistently elevated scores across need, functionality, and participation dimensions substantiate operational viability and anticipated developmental impact. Empirical evidence demonstrates that the proposed Teen Center is both strategically necessary and community-endorsed, warranting immediate implementation.



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sciforum-157039: From Early to Late Adolescence: Developmental Patterns of Risk in Online Grooming Victimisation

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The victimisation of adolescents in digital contexts represents an increasing social and scientific concern. Among the most severe risks is online grooming, a manipulative process through which adults establish deceptive emotional connections with minors to facilitate sexual exploitation (Craven et al., 2006; De Santisteban et al., 2017). Adolescence is a critical period for understanding this phenomenon, as it encompasses psychosocial characteristics such as heightened emotionality, impulsivity, and identity exploration (Salmela-Aro, 2011; Baumgartner et al., 2010), which may amplify exposure to online risks.

Adopting a developmental victimology perspective (Finkelhor, 1995; Piquero, 2015), this study examined how risk factors for online grooming vary across adolescence. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were collected from 240 adolescents aged 12–19, divided into early-to-mid (12–15) and mid-to-late (16–19) adolescence. Individual (self-esteem, impulsivity, negative emotionality), relational (parental supervision, family relationships), behavioural (risky online behaviours), and prior victimisation factors (cyberbullying) were analysed.

Results identified three main predictors of online grooming victimisation: engagement in risky online Behaviours (OR=1.21; SE=0.05; p=.001), gender (OR=2.49; SE=0.36; p=.012), and previous (cyber)bullying victimisation (OR=2.21; SE=0.32; p=.012). Developmental comparisons revealed that while these predictors were still significant among younger adolescents, only risky behaviours retained predictive power among older participants.

The findings highlight that vulnerability to grooming is developmentally dynamic, shaped by both psychosocial maturation and contextual autonomy. These results underscore the importance of age-specific prevention strategies that promote emotional regulation, digital literacy, and parental mediation to mitigate adolescents' susceptibility to online grooming.



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sciforum-173699: Please Vote! Exploring Celebrity Effect on Mobilising Young Voters in Japan

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Nowadays, it is increasingly common to see celebrities featured in political campaign materials, particularly in voter mobilisation campaigns. Through their fame and popularity, governments and campaign organisers aim to capture voters' – especially young voters – attention and encourage them to participate in elections. To what extent does it work and a political apathetic context? Does the gender of the celebrity affect its effectiveness? To answer these questions, two original surveys (around 200 respondents per survey), focusing on young voters (i.e., university students), were conducted in Tokyo, Japan, right before the 2022 and 2024 national-level elections. Young people in Japan have long been portrayed as politically uninterested, apathetic, or disengaged, reflected in their consistently low turnout rates across elections over the decades. Consequently, multiple measures have been implemented, one of which is the employment of celebrities as “characters” on election campaign materials to encourage young voter participation. Cross tabulations and chi-square tests were conducted. Despite being in place for several years, findings suggest that neither familiarity with the celebrities nor recognition of their appearance in campaign materials significantly motivates young people to vote or to learn more about the elections. However, young people who are familiar with the male celebrity featured on the materials report a higher tendency to express interest in learning more about the election and the campaign materials. This study is one of the first that provides evidences on gender-based celebrity effects in mobilising young voters in Japan. It highlights the need for future research and policymakers to consider how celebrities of different genders may have varying impacts on voter mobilisation and on different age groups. Given the study's small sample size and its focus solely on Tokyo, future research should undertake national surveys with larger respondent numbers to examine these relationships in greater depth.



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sciforum-177081: Social Networking in marginality: Eco-Mapping the associations of Homeless Elderly People of Multan, Pakistan

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Homelessness among elderly individuals is an emerging social issue in Punjab, particularly in the urban areas of Multan where limited family support and inadequate social protection increase vulnerability in old age. Despite their marginalization, homeless elderly people often develop informal social networks that help them manage daily survival. This study explores the nature of social connections and associations in the everyday lives of homeless elderly individuals using eco-mapping as an analytical tool. A qualitative research design was adopted to understand participants' lived experiences. Data were collected from 17 homeless elderly individuals through in-depth interviews and eco-mapping exercises, which enabled participants to visually represent their relationships with individuals, groups, and institutions in their daily environment. These maps helped identify both supportive and strained connections within their social networks. The findings reveal that homeless elderly individuals rely heavily on informal relationships with fellow homeless persons, local shopkeepers, religious institutions, and charity groups for food, emotional support, and temporary shelter. However, these networks remain fragile due to social stigma, unstable living conditions, and limited institutional assistance. The study highlights the significance of social networks as informal support systems and suggests strengthening community-based and institutional interventions to improve the well-being and social inclusion of homeless elderly populations.



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sciforum-169506: Assessing the Best Interests of the Child in Social Work Practice in Lithuania and Latvia

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Background: The principle of the best interests of the child, enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), is a cornerstone of child protection systems. However, translating this principle into everyday practice remains challenging, particularly in contexts with different institutional structures and cultural values. This study builds on research conducted in Lithuania and Latvia during an Erasmus placement, which established partnerships with practitioners and provided direct, context-embedded access to both systems.

Objective: This study examines how social workers in Lithuania and Latvia assess and operationalize the best interests principle in child protection, with a focus on assessment processes, frameworks, and systemic factors that shape child-centered practice.

Methods: This study employed a qualitative, theory-informed design, collecting data through semi-structured interviews with 10 practitioners (micro and macro-level roles) and a document analysis of national legal frameworks and methodological guides. Fieldwork was enabled by the author's Erasmus-based residency in both countries and was conducted in collaboration with Baltic social work researchers to ensure contextual grounding. Guided by Reflexive thematic analysis, Ecological Systems Theory, and the Planned Change process, patterns were identified across micro, meso, exo, and macro layers.

Results: Three themes emerged: (1) Defining and assessing the best interests of the child as a multidimensional, situational process; (2) Decision authority and exosystem hierarchies that constrain social workers' discretion; and (3) Persistent policy–practice gaps driven by resource shortages, fragmented coordination, and cultural norms. Comparative analysis revealed Lithuania's centralized, algorithmic approach promotes uniformity but limits flexibility, while Latvia's family-centered model prioritizes preservation but relies heavily on Orphans' Courts.

Conclusions: Assessment in child protection is a practice-in-context phenomenon shaped by systemic structures and cultural attitudes. To make UNCRC Articles 3 and 12 actionable, reforms should institutionalize child participation, strengthen multi-agency coordination, and align decision-making with assessment evidence. Workforce investment and community-level advocacy are critical to narrowing policy–practice gaps.



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sciforum-177042: Beyond Internet Access: Functional Difficulty and Patterns of Digital Connectivity Among Americans in Later Life

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Introduction. Digital inequality research has increasingly shown that internet access is not simply a matter of being online or offline, but additionally reflects differences in where and how people connect across daily environments. Drawing from later-life digital inclusion perspectives, access can be understood as a patterned resource shaped by mobility, functional capacity, and opportunities for engagement across settings. This distinction may be particularly important in later life, when functional limitations can shape mobility and the flexibility of digital engagement. **Methods.** Using a nationally representative sample of 32,837 adults aged 50 and older in the U.S. from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a federal household survey, this study examined whether functional difficulty was associated with three internet access patterns: access limited to home, access across home and outside settings, and access limited to outside settings (e.g., library). Multinomial logistic regression models were estimated using internet-use supplement weights, adjusting for sociodemographic factors. **Results.** Functional difficulty was associated with a significantly higher likelihood of access limited to home rather than access limited to outside settings (RRR = 1.596, 95% CI [1.353, 1.883], $p = .001$). Functional difficulty was not significantly associated with access across home and outside settings compared to access limited to outside settings (RRR = 0.906, 95% CI [0.771, 1.065], $p = .233$). Older age and female gender were also associated with a greater likelihood of access limited to home, while a bachelor's degree or above was linked to higher likelihood of access across home and outside settings. **Conclusion.** These data suggest that functional limitations may not always prevent internet access altogether, but may instead shape more constrained forms of connectivity centered at home. Moving beyond a binary view of access, this study highlights the importance of understanding digital inclusion in later life as patterned, location-dependent, and shaped by functional capacity.



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sciforum-176100: Bridging the AI Divide: Intergenerational AI Literacy for Older Adults

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Generative AI adoption in Poland remains below the EU average, with particularly low use among older adults (a few per cent in Poland according OECD), which may deepen digital inequalities. This paper explores how future educators conceptualize the opportunities and risks of introducing AI literacy to older adults within an intergenerational geragogical framework. Particular attention is given to the ways in which AI literacy can support older adults' everyday functioning, social participation, autonomy, and access to information, while also raising concerns related to exclusion, dependency, misinformation, and ethical use. To analyse these issues, the study draws on the relational model of digital competence, linking seniors' life needs with the digital competences required to respond to them.

The study used an exploratory qualitative design. Written statements from pedagogy students - pre-service teachers (phase I of the PRODIGI project; January 2026) were analyzed using thematic analysis. In the analysis of qualitative data, categories were identified in accordance with the thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke. The process involved identifying recurring themes in the participants' statements, coding the material, and gradually grouping the codes into broader thematic categories. The analytical framework organized meaning into two overarching areas: opportunities and risks while preserving methodological transparency and an inclusive, non-stereotyping perspective on later-life learning.

Students consistently framed AI education for older adults as a pathway to digital inclusion: reducing technological barriers, increasing autonomy in everyday online activities, improving access to information, supporting communication, and offering cognitive stimulation. Simultaneously, they highlighted key risks: technostress and cognitive overload, vulnerability to misinformation and "hallucinated" content, excessive trust/anthropomorphization of AI, privacy and data-security threats, and the potential for problematic overuse. Importantly, respondents emphasized that effective courses should go beyond tool operation and integrate content verification, critical thinking, and digital hygiene, with teaching paced and contextualized to older adults' lived experiences.

Findings suggest that AI literacy interventions for older adults should be designed as technologically responsible education combining operational skills with epistemic and protective competences. The results also underline the strategic role of younger adults (future educators) in intergenerational support models aimed at reducing the emerging AI-related digital divide. The presentation also showcased the effects of intergenerational training conducted by education students among older adults.



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sciforum-173542: Can Early Childhood Investment Reduce Economic Vulnerability in Old Age?

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Debates on aging populations often focus on pension systems and elderly care, while discussions on childhood policy center on education access and human capital formation. However, these conversations are rarely connected. This paper asks: *Can early childhood investment reduce economic vulnerability in old age?* By linking childhood development policies to long-term aging outcomes, the study challenges the tendency to treat childhood and aging as separate policy domains.

Drawing on human capital theory and life-course economics, the paper argues that investments in early childhood such as nutrition, basic education, and cognitive development have cumulative effects that shape employment stability, earnings trajectories, savings capacity, and health outcomes across the lifespan. Weak childhood foundations in many developing economies contribute not only to youth unemployment but also to insecure and informal labor patterns that extend into later life, increasing the risk of elderly poverty.

Using demographic and labor market trends from emerging economies, the study explores how insufficient childhood investment can create long-term fiscal pressure on social protection systems. It further examines whether strengthening early-life policy interventions may serve as a preventative strategy against old-age vulnerability, reducing reliance on reactive pension reforms.

By integrating childhood, youth labor transitions, and aging outcomes into a single analytical framework, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions in Aging, Childhood and Youth Studies. It proposes that sustainable aging policy must begin not in retirement planning, but in early childhood development, reframing intergenerational policy design as a long-term economic strategy rather than a short-term social response.



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sciforum-170284: Child Protection Involvement and Youth Justice Among Emerging Adults: A Life Course Analysis

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Introduction: Individuals with histories of child protection involvement (CPI) are disproportionately represented in justice systems, yet the institutional mechanisms linking welfare contact to later justice involvement remain underexamined, particularly in Global South contexts. Drawing on life course theory and situating outcomes within the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, this study examines whether CPI is associated with youth justice involvement (YJI) among emerging adults, and whether educational disruption (ED) and psychological distress (PD) operate as parallel pathways.

Methods: The sample comprised justice involved individuals aged 18 to 25 years in Punjab, Pakistan, recruited from community based supervision programs following court involvement or institutional release. Partial least squares structural equation modelling was employed to test direct and indirect associations among CPI, ED, PD, and YJI.

Results: CPI was positively associated with ED and PD. Both ED and PD were significantly associated with YJI and functioned as parallel mediating mechanisms. CPI also demonstrated a direct association with YJI, indicating cumulative institutional exposure across the life course.

Conclusion: Fragmented child protection responses in childhood appear to contribute to justice system involvement during emerging adulthood through educational and psychological pathways. The study advances crossover research in a Global South context and highlights the need for integrated educational and mental health services within child protection systems to reduce subsequent justice contact.



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sciforum-158018: Childhood in Transition: Judicial Approaches to Juvenile Justice and Digital Vulnerability in India

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The notion of childhood in India is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by digitization, social media exposure, and evolving socio-economic structures. This paper explores how the Indian judiciary has navigated these changes through the interpretation of child rights and juvenile justice principles. Grounded in landmark judgments such as *Pratap Singh v. State of Jharkhand* (2005) 3 SCC 551, *Shilpa Mittal v. State (NCT of Delhi)* (2020) 2 SCC 787, and *Bachpan Bachao Andolan v. Union of India* (2013) 3 SCC 598, the study analyzes how courts have balanced culpability, rehabilitation, and protection under the *Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015*. It highlights how legal discourse around “childhood” now extends into digital spaces—covering issues of cyber exploitation, online grooming, and data privacy of minors. By integrating sociological insights with jurisprudential analysis, the research proposes a conceptual model of “Digital Childhood Justice,” emphasizing restorative justice, digital literacy, and psychosocial rehabilitation as key pillars of youth protection. The study further examines the ethical challenges of AI-driven surveillance in educational and juvenile reform institutions, urging policy alignment between child protection law, technology regulation, and education reform. Ultimately, it argues that safeguarding childhood in the 21st century requires not only compassionate legal interpretation but also proactive digital governance rooted in equity and human dignity. It concludes with a call for a national framework on digital childhood rights integrating education, justice, and cyber ethics.



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sciforum-174066: Employability of NEET Youth through Vocational Training: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Introduction

Youth unemployment and the growing number of young people classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) represent a major socio-economic challenge worldwide. In countries such as Morocco, this issue is particularly concerning due to persistent difficulties in the transition from education and training systems to the labour market. Although the employability of NEET youth has received increasing scholarly attention, the existing literature remains fragmented and unevenly distributed across research themes and geographical contexts. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of research trends and gaps is still lacking. This study therefore addresses the following research question: what are the main trends, thematic orientations, and geographical gaps in the scientific literature on NEET youth employability and vocational training?

Methods

To answer this question, a bibliometric analysis was conducted using data retrieved from the Scopus database. The search strategy combined the keywords “NEET”, “employability”, and “vocational training”. The dataset was analysed using the Bibliometrix package in R to explore publication trends, influential journals and authors, international collaboration networks, and thematic structures.

Results

The results reveal a significant increase in publications over the past decade, with research primarily conducted in European contexts. Thematic analysis highlights key research areas related to youth labour market integration, skills development, social inclusion, and employment policies.

Conclusion

The study identifies important thematic and geographical gaps, emphasizing the need for further research in developing regions such as North Africa.



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sciforum-162743: Enhancing Quality of Life in Institutionalized Older Adults through Immersive Virtual Reality: A Feasibility and Acceptance Pilot Study based on Ryff's Model

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Introduction: Older adults residing in long-term care facilities often face challenges such as reduced autonomy and limited opportunities for personal growth. While Immersive Virtual Reality (IVR) offers potential for psychological support, evidence regarding its acceptance and feasibility among this population, particularly those without cognitive impairment, is limited. This study aims to evaluate the feasibility, user engagement, and safety of an IVR intervention designed around Ryff's Psychological Well-Being dimensions, contrasting active versus passive participation.

Method: An exploratory pilot study was conducted with 12 residents of a long-term care facility (aged 67–95) without cognitive impairment. Participants were assigned to three groups: Active IVR (interactive tasks within WebXR environments), Passive IVR (observational experience of the same environments), and Control. The intervention comprised eight sessions. Assessment included the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale (pre-post), the NPT-ES scale (engagement/social interaction), and presence/satisfaction questionnaires.

Results: Although pre-post statistical analysis of the Ryff scale showed no significant changes—consistent with the pilot's exploratory sample size—feasibility indicators were highly positive. Both IVR groups reported high scores in presence and strong engagement (NPT-ES), with participants expressing enjoyment and positive social interaction. Crucially, rejection rates and adverse effects (cybersickness) were negligible, with most participants feeling safe and willing to repeat the experience, regardless of the active or passive modality.

Conclusions: Implementing IVR interventions for older adults in residential care is feasible and safe, generating high satisfaction and positive engagement. While the eight-session pilot did not yield statistical shifts in deep psychological constructs, the high acceptance suggests IVR is a promising tool for social enrichment and meaningful engagement. Future research should scale up the sample size to test clinical efficacy.

Keywords: Virtual Reality; Older Adults; Feasibility; Ryff's Well-Being; Long-Term Care; Quality of Life.



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sciforum-158649: From Climate Anxiety to Climate Agency: A Case Study of Earth Warriors Global and the Reimagination of Childhood Climate Education

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Childhood has emerged as a critical arena for cultivating resilience, empathy, and environmental responsibility in the face of the climate crisis. This paper presents an analytical case study of Earth Warriors Global, a social enterprise working at the intersection of climate change, sustainability, and education. The organization develops and delivers innovative climate education programs for children aged 3–11, integrating storytelling, play, and experiential learning to transform climate anxiety into climate courage. Through a synthesis of publicly available data, program documentation, and theoretical literature on childhood development and environmental learning, the study examines how Earth Warriors Global reframes climate education as a process of empowerment rather than fear.

The analysis highlights the organization's global impact—reaching over 100,000 students and 10,000 teachers across 15 countries—through climate education training, workshops, and advisory programs. The paper argues that by embedding emotional intelligence, collaboration, and creativity into climate learning, Earth Warriors Global models a transformative pedagogy that aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 13: Climate Action). The study also explores how such early interventions nurture critical thinking and social agency among children, laying the foundation for long-term behavioral change.

By situating climate education within the broader field of childhood and youth studies, this paper underscores the role of socially engaged learning in shaping future citizens capable of leading sustainability transitions. It concludes that initiatives like Earth Warriors Global illustrate how rethinking childhood education can serve as a cornerstone for intergenerational climate action and collective resilience.



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sciforum-176404: How Do We Feel at Different Ages? The Perspective of Subjective Well-Being and Health in Lithuania and Poland

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Understanding how people assess their subjective well-being (SWB) and health throughout their lives is important for evaluating their overall wellbeing and shaping social and health policy. Although SWB has been widely studied in Western Europe, research in Central and Eastern Europe remains less consistent and relatively limited. Existing studies often focus on individual countries, groups of countries, or specific population groups, there is a lack of comparative analyses examining how SWB and subjective health (SH) differ across age groups in neighbouring countries, such as Lithuania and Poland. *The aim of this study* is to analyse age-related differences in SWB and SH in Lithuania and Poland and to compare patterns between these two neighbouring countries using European Social Survey (ESS) data. The study uses data from the ESS according to selected survey rounds. SWB is measured according to respondents' self-reported happiness, and SH is assessed according to individuals' assessment of their general health. The analysis compares different age groups in order to identify trends in perceived well-being and health throughout life. In addition, the study examines possible changes over time. The study is based on a quantitative comparative research design, employing descriptive statistical methods and conducting a cross-national (Lithuania and Poland) and cross-age-group comparative analysis, while also assessing changes in the indicators under study over time. The results reveal clear differences in both SWB and SH, both when comparing age groups and countries. By examining the relationship between age, SWB and SH, this study contributes to the broader literature on well-being, aging, and subjective health in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, these results may also be important for policymakers seeking to improve the well-being and health indicators of different age groups.



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sciforum-164951: Integrating Ageing Across Higher Education Curriculum For Age-Friendly Communities

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Introduction

Population ageing has significant social and economic implications across sectors including health, urban planning, technology, education, and public policy. However, education on ageing remains largely concentrated within health and social care disciplines, limiting broader societal and workforce preparedness. Higher education institutions have a key role in shaping professional competencies and social responses to demographic change. This paper outlines a proposal for integrating ageing across higher education curricula as a foundation for developing age-friendly communities.

Methods

This paper adopts a conceptual and policy-informed approach. Drawing on demographic trends, international healthy ageing frameworks, and existing models of ageing education, the current status of ageing content within higher education was examined. A proposed framework for curriculum integration across faculties is presented, focusing on embedding ageing literacy within teaching, research, and service functions.

Results

Ageing education is commonly siloed, resulting in fragmented understanding among graduates in non-health disciplines. The proposed curriculum framework illustrates how ageing-related content can be integrated across faculties such as health sciences, social sciences, technology, and the built environment. This approach highlights potential advantages, including improved ageing literacy, reduced ageism, and better preparation of graduates to engage with ageing populations in diverse professional contexts.

Conclusions

Integrating ageing across higher education curricula represents a strategic and upstream response to population ageing. As universities are key contributors to ageing literacy and workforce preparedness, this approach offers a practical pathway towards more inclusive, age-friendly societies. Future work should focus on piloting and evaluating such curriculum models in different institutional and cultural contexts.



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sciforum-173756: Knowledge Regarding Reproductive Health Care Among Ethnic Minority Adolescents in Vietnam

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Background: Insufficient knowledge of reproductive health care increases the risk of reproductive health issues among ethnic minority adolescents in Vietnam.

Object: This study aimed to evaluate the level of knowledge of reproductive health care among ethnic minority adolescents and the effect of intrapersonal and interpersonal factors.

Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted on 305 ethnic minority adolescents who were Tay and Dao aged 15-19 living in the mountainous regions of Northern Vietnam. Descriptive and bivariate correlation techniques were used to describe the respondents' knowledge of reproductive health care and determine the gaps in this regard. The qualitative data consisted of 22 in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

Results: There were statistically significant differences in adolescents' knowledge of pregnancy according to gender and mother–child communication about reproductive health issues. Specifically, the percentage of girls who knew about the signs of pregnancy was nearly twice as high as that of male adolescents (72.1% and 37.1%, respectively), and the proportion who openly discussed with their mothers knew more about the signs of pregnancy and how to take care of the fetus.

The percentage of adolescents who answered the questions assessing knowledge of contraception at good and very good levels was only 39.3%. The adolescent girls who were Tay and those who had good communication with their mothers also had better knowledge of contraception.

Furthermore, research showed a strong correlation between knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases and adolescents' educational level, as well as the use of social media to access information about reproductive health. Accordingly, adolescents with higher educational attainment (college/university) and aged 18-19 had more comprehensive knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases and their prevention. Similarly, adolescents who received reproductive health care information from social media had a rate of knowing at least two sexually transmitted diseases that was 1.3 times higher than those who did not use social media to obtain reproductive health care information.

Conclusions: Our findings revealed a relatively good level of knowledge of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases among ethnic minority adolescents; however, there were gaps in contraceptive knowledge. Thus, it is necessary to enhance the dissemination of information about reproductive health care for boys, the Dao, and adolescents under 18 years, and to develop a culture of communication between parents and children on this topic.



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sciforum-165252: Mobile Phone Dependence, Self-Control, and Baduanjin Qigong Exercise among Sub-healthy Adolescents: A Latent Profile Analysis

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Background: This study aims to explore the latent categories of mobile phone dependence and self-control among sub-healthy urban adolescents and their association with Baduanjin practice. The findings seek to provide an empirical basis for preventing mobile phone addiction, enhancing self-control, and improving the sub-health status of urban youth.

Methods: Using a multi-stage cluster sampling method, 513 sub-healthy urban adolescents with regular Baduanjin exercise habits in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, were surveyed between September and October 2025. Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) was employed to identify subgroups of mobile phone dependence and self-control. Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between the two primary variables, while Chi-square tests analyzed demographic variations across the identified profiles. Finally, multivariate logistic regression was performed to evaluate the associations between these latent profiles and Baduanjin practice frequency.

Results: Four distinct latent profiles were identified: Low Dependence-Moderate Control (n=116, 22.6%), Moderate Dependence-Low Control (n=198, 38.6%), High Dependence-No Control (n=150, 29.2%), and No Dependence-High Control (n=49, 9.6%). Significant differences in profile distribution were observed across gender, age, ethnicity, household income, and academic achievement (P 0.05). After controlling for demographic variables, logistic regression (using Low Dependence-Moderate Control as the reference) showed that Baduanjin exercise was negatively associated with the Moderate Dependence-Low Control (OR = 1.932) and High Dependence-No Control (OR = 1.709) groups, while showing a strong positive association with the No Dependence-High Control group (OR = 109.721, P 0.01).

Conclusions: The impact of Baduanjin exercise varies across different latent profiles of mobile phone dependence and self-control in sub-healthy urban adolescents. Tailored Baduanjin intervention programs should be developed for different adolescent subgroups to effectively promote their physical and mental well-being.



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sciforum-173982: Narratives of Mobility: BRI and IPS Influence on Educational Migration Choices among Bangladeshi Youth

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The 21st-century educational migration patterns are an important matter of determination in light of geopolitical changes. The educational opportunities in Bangladesh are contrary to the Chinese and the U.S. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) paradigms. These are via programs sponsored by the state, in the form of special scholarship programs; language schools, such as Confucius Institutes and American Spaces; and institutional-level strategic linkages. The paper examines how Bangladeshi university students can transform these geopolitical tools into strategic thinking. The exploration of the relationship between career aspirations and gendered experiences and the destination choice of a student is based on the information received in the case of qualitative semi-structured interviews. The results represent that the issue of youth mobility is not personal; instead, students are going through the Great Power rivalry to realign their educational ambitions with the evolving world order. Ultimately, the paper shall demonstrate that global elite events have a direct influence on the drive and desire of Global South youth to participate in such events. Linking macro-level geopolitics with micro-level student decisions, the research demonstrates the changing character of human capital flight in the multipolar world. The implications of the findings suggest that the traditional Global North hegemony in education is being shaken by new geopolitical infrastructures, which offer a new vision of how geopolitical soft power is reshaping the life paths of people, especially by offering alternative educational opportunities and resources to empower the youth in the Global South.



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sciforum-164812: Navigating the digital divide : Technological Change and the Future of Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurship in Morocco

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Rapid technological integration is fundamentally reshaping global economies. The Moroccan context depicts an ambitious digital strategy aiming to modernize its productive economic sectors. This research investigates the implications of digital transformation on youth agricultural entrepreneurship, addressing both transformative opportunities and structural risks. Accordingly, the study aims to examine the impact of technology on the multidimensional construct of agricultural productivity, by analyzing both material yield optimization via precision tools, and strategic market positioning via data analytics and logistics.

Adopting a qualitative multiple-case study design, the research focuses on the impact of technology adoption in youth-led agricultural startups across three Moroccan regions : Béni Mellal-Khénifra, Fès-Meknès, and Souss-Massa. The authors conducted initially a systematic review of national policy documents. Subsequently, they administered 25 semi-structured interviews purposively sampled to ensure multi-stakeholder representation: 12 young agricultural entrepreneurs, 6 government officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, 4 private agritech firm executives, and 3 NGO representatives.

Findings indicate a positive correlation between the adoption of remote sensing and market analytics and enhanced business viability. However, the definition of productivity remains dichotomous; while young entrepreneurs prioritize market-entry strategies and value-added processing, institutional support remains focused on material production. Furthermore, significant barriers to equitable adoption persist, notably a lack of digital infrastructure, a misalignment between education and agritech requirements, and a paucity of funding mechanisms tailored to the high-risk nature of agricultural startups.

This research explores the role of technological adoption in supporting youth agricultural entrepreneurship based on the Resource-Based View framework and Value Chain Theory. Recommendations include pivoting toward an integrated digital ecosystem, investing in rural infrastructure, developing context-specific vocational training, and establishing regulatory frameworks for ethical data governance. Ultimately, revitalizing Moroccan agriculture requires a strategic reorientation from viewing technology as a mere production tool to treating it as a strategic catalyst for entrepreneurial growth and sustainability.



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sciforum-173690: Non-State Actors in Securing Children's Right to Education: A Human Security Perspective on Post-Disaster Learning Recovery in Rural Aceh, Indonesia

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This study to assess the role of non-state actors in protecting children's right to education within the framework of human security, focusing on post-disaster learning recovery in Aceh, Indonesia. The Aceh floods at the end of 2025 caused damage to infrastructure in a number of areas, including rural Aceh, which is difficult to reach. This condition significantly worsened the education infrastructure, threatening long-term human development. Through a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, this study analyzes how NGOs and the private sector collaborate to fill the governance gap left by formal state mechanisms. This study uses a human security perspective in which education is treated not only as a pedagogical obligation but also as a key component of protection against human vulnerability. The study aims to assess the development of non-state actors' efforts within formal and non-formal collaborative governance frameworks to build educational resilience in disaster-prone rural areas. The results of the study show that non-state actor diplomacy facilitates the rapid mobilization of emergency learning and psychosocial support, which is often delayed in top-down bureaucratic responses. This study demonstrates the contribution of non-state actors in promoting non-traditional security by repositioning educational sustainability as a fundamental element of human recovery after the disaster in rural Aceh, Indonesia.



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sciforum-166596: Population Aging in the Context of Global Modernization and China's Response

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Since the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, global modernization has rendered population aging an unavoidable demographic trend in both advanced and developing economies. Although this trend signals societal advancement, aging populations pose considerable challenges to economic vitality, welfare system sustainability, and intergenerational equity. Understanding how demographic aging structurally unfolds within modernization processes—and critically evaluating how different polities have responded—holds direct relevance for China's ongoing policy formulation. This study adopts a convergent mixed-methods approach. Quantitatively, it analyzes cross-national panel data (1960–2020) from World Bank and United Nations sources, applying growth curve models to examine associations between stages of modernization and aging trajectories across G20 countries. Qualitatively, guided by a most-similar/most-different case selection logic, it examines national policy documents from selected modernized states. Thematic analysis is used to extract institutional designs concerning pension reform, long-term care, and older workforce participation. The analysis draws on intergenerational justice theory and welfare state typology to interpret the drivers and consequences of distinct policy choices. By situating China's experience within global modernization patterns, the study identifies both universal aging challenges and China's particular institutional and cultural context. It concludes by proposing evidence-based, context-sensitive policy recommendations for fostering inclusive and sustainable responses to population aging in China.



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sciforum-175112: Precarity, Resilience, and Democracy: How Childhood and Youth Instability Predict Adult Voting Behaviours in Nigeria

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The study seeks to investigate how childhood and adolescent precarity shape adult voting behaviour in Nigeria using a life-course cohort methodology. Drawing on nationally representative datasets—including the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (2018), Afrobarometer Round 9 (2022), National Bureau of Statistics labour and poverty statistics (2000–2023), and Independent National Electoral Commission turnout data (1999–2023)—the study will construct a pseudo-longitudinal cohort model linking early-life instability to adult democratic participation. A multidimensional Early-Life Precarity Index (ELPI) will be developed to capture childhood poverty exposure, educational disruption, conflict intensity during formative years, and cohort-level youth unemployment rates. Methodologically, this will entail standardizing and consolidating these indicators into a composite ELPI score for each cohort (born 1979–2003), correlating it through age-period-cohort and matched to voting outcomes, and integrating geographical fixed effects to address regional disparities. Adult resilience will be measured through problem-solving capacity, social connectedness, and future-oriented optimism. Logistic regression and structural equation modelling will be employed to estimate direct effects, mediation pathways, and regional variations in voting participation during the 2019 and 2023 general elections.

It is expected that the findings will be extrapolated to explain other factors of declining voter turnout in Nigeria other than electoral administration challenges or institutional distrust. It is also expected to measure or give an indication of impact of cumulative developmental disadvantage that are embedded across life-course transitions.

It is expected to indicate the likelihood of Individuals in high-precarity cohorts exercise political participation through voting, and measure their perceived political efficacy.

The study is expected to inform policy decisions and framework regarding developmental-democratic policy approach that factors in youth stabilization, educational continuity, and employment generation.

Given the recurrent voters decline, it is expected that the study will contribute to informing priorities for addressing structural precarity vis a vis political participation.



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sciforum-173697: Promoting Global Citizenship among Youth in Asia: An Investigation of the Social Studies Curriculum in South Korea and Taiwan

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The cultivation of young people who actively participate in global affairs is one of the most important goals within contemporary liberal democratic societies. In the Eastern context, existing discourse suggests that the presence of Asian Values represents a unique challenge to the promotion of global citizenship. The values and qualities it promotes may stand in contrast to those required for global citizenship, such as obedience and harmony (in contrast to critical thinking and social change) and the primacy of the nation-state (in contrast to global orientation). This study examines what values and citizenship attributes are promoted in Social Studies in South Korea and Taiwan, two Asian-Confucian democracies that were formerly Japanese colonies and democratized in the late 1980s and 1990s. It seeks to understand (1) the extent to which globality, human rights, peace, and sustainability are promoted; (2) whether obligations are prioritised over rights; and (3) how these contents are framed or shaped by geopolitical contexts. This study employs discourse analysis of the latest national Social Studies curricula in Taiwan (2019) and South Korea (2022), comprising over 320,000 words, and integrates both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. Social Studies was chosen based on its central role in fostering future citizens in both countries. The findings indicate that both curricula emphasize global citizenship values and do not privilege Asian Values. However, clear differences remain between the countries: the Taiwanese curriculum foregrounds “rights” more frequently, whereas the Korean curriculum places greater emphasis on “peace” and “democracy”. Notably, while both curricula frequently mention “global”/“international”, the Taiwanese curriculum places greater emphasis on the “country” compared to Korea. This study contributes to the understanding of Asian values in contemporary contexts and in relation to global citizenship, and calls for further research on how geopolitics shape formal citizenship education in fostering young citizens.



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sciforum-177079: Religion, Immigration, and Volunteerism Among Asian Midlife and Older Adults Compared to Other Ethnoracial Groups

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Introduction. Volunteerism represents an important aspect of productive aging, yet existing research has not fully explained differences in later-life volunteerism between Asian midlife and older adults and other ethnoracial groups after accounting for socioeconomic resources. To address this gap, this study examined whether religious involvement and immigration status, conceptualized as traditional culture-related factors, help explain disparities in both formal and informal volunteerism among U.S. adults aged 50 to 75, centering Asian midlife and older adults in comparison with other ethnoracial groups. **Methods.** Data were obtained from pooled waves of the Health and Retirement Study (2004-2020), utilizing a cross-sectional sample of adults aged 50 to 75. Logistic regression models were used to estimate the odds of formal as well as informal volunteerism across ethnoracial groups, with Asians as the reference category. Models sequentially adjusted for demographic characteristics, health, work status, education, and income, followed by the inclusion of religion and immigration status. **Results.** Higher religious involvement was associated with increased odds of both formal (OR = 2.023, p .001) and informal volunteerism (OR = 1.219, p .001), while being an immigrant was associated with lower odds of formal (OR = .593, p .01) and informal volunteerism (OR = .432, p .001). After accounting for these factors, previously observed differences between Asians and Whites in both forms of volunteerism were no longer statistically significant, suggesting that religion and immigration status partially explain these disparities. However, differences between Asians and Hispanics persisted (formal: OR = .483, p .01; informal: OR = .551, p .05). **Conclusion.** These findings suggest that religion and immigration are especially important for understanding how patterns of volunteerism among Asian midlife and older adults compare with those of other ethnoracial groups in later life.



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sciforum-176483: School Experiences and Meaning-Making Among Youth from Bento Rodrigues After the Fundão Dam Collapse (Brazil)

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The Fundão Dam Collapse (FDC), which occurred in 2015 in the municipality of Mariana (Minas Gerais, Brazil), produced social and territorial transformations in the affected communities. Among its impacts were the destruction of schools, the displacement of students, and the reorganization of educational trajectories. In Bento Rodrigues, a district completely destroyed by the disaster, the school became part of the community's process of deterritorialization, operating in temporary spaces before the construction of the collective resettlement. This paper examines how young people from Bento Rodrigues interpret their school experiences in the aftermath of this territorial rupture. The study is part of an ongoing doctoral research project in the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). Adopting a qualitative approach, the research uses narrative interviews as the data collection method. The analysis is based on three interviews conducted in 2025 with 18-year-old youths who experienced the dam collapse during childhood. The results suggest a persistent tension between material reconstruction and symbolic belonging. Although the new school is recognized for its improved infrastructure, the school in the former Bento Rodrigues remains a central affective and community reference in the youths' memories. The narratives reveal that young people construct meanings about schooling by articulating memory, territory, and lived experience, showing that educational processes extend beyond formal institutions and are embedded in the territorial and social transformations that characterize the post-collapse context.



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sciforum-173866: Vulnerabilities Among Children in the context of Domestic Violence

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Domestic Violence is a widespread problem across the world. Unlike USA and UK, domestic violence in India, as defined in the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is not gender neutral. Even in the Indian criminal code, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, it is defined as cruelty committed against the woman by her husband or relatives. The historical patriarchal system still dominates the domestic violence discourses in India. According to the latest crime statistics (Crime in India, 2023), one-third (33%) of the cases of crimes against women involve domestic violence (1,49,165 cases of 4,48,211 cases). This indicates the extent to which domestic violence is deep rooted. The historical patriarchal system dominates the domestic violence discourses in India. In the recent years, domestic violence has started to be recognized as a social problem. This violence at home not only affects the victim (women), but also has consequences on other individuals, especially the children. The present research aimed to understand the children's experiences of domestic violence and identify the risks associated with exposure to domestic violence. A comprehensive interview schedule was prepared to collect data from the children. The self-esteem of the children was also assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The respondents of the research were children of age 16-18 years of age, who were directly or indirectly exposed to domestic violence between their parents, identified through a pre-survey conducted at their educational institutions. The findings revealed that more than half of the respondents witnessed their parents fighting for as long as they could remember. More than three-fourths of the respondents had only a moderate level of self-esteem. The other key findings of the research such as levels of physical abuse, involvement of children during violence, impact of violence on the well-being and self-esteem of children are discussed in detail in the paper.



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Session 3. Gender Studies

sciforum-157935: (Re)Engineering Gender Futures: Queer Aesthetics and Visual Resistance in Ali Sethi's Music Videos

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Introduction:

This study explores how Pakistani singer and author Ali Sethi's music videos *Pasoori* (2022) and *Rung* (2023) employ queer aesthetics to reimagine gender beyond binary logic. In a cultural landscape where queer and transgender lives are socially marginalised and legally endangered, Sethi's visual art becomes a site of resistance and conceptual transformation.

Methods:

Grounded in Matthew J. Cull's analytic trans philosophy—particularly his notions of “gender conceptual engineering” and “gender pluralism”—the research adopts an interdisciplinary qualitative framework combining conceptual analysis and visual semiotics. Through close reading of mise-en-scène, embodiment, sound, and colour, the study interprets how these videos function as forms of “ecumenical engineering,” modifying cultural representational devices to host plural meanings of gender.

Results:

Findings indicate that *Pasoori* and *Rung* challenge both heteronormative and homonormative frameworks by queering traditional South Asian motifs such as Sufi mysticism, truck art, and Mughal design. These works transform aesthetic codes—costume, choreography, and lighting—into political tools of visibility and epistemic repair. Sethi's visual language enacts what Cull terms “concepts for the transition,” creating conceptual and affective infrastructures for livable gender identities within restrictive sociocultural conditions.

Conclusions:

The study concludes that Sethi's videos operate as acts of conceptual and visual resistance. They exemplify how popular music can function as cultural philosophy—reengineering gender concepts toward inclusivity, affective justice, and queer futurity in Pakistan and beyond.



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sciforum-177112: “Discrete, no fem, masc4masc”: Decoding Hegemonic Masculinity on a Gay Dating App in Türkiye

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Hegemonic masculinity is a form of masculinity that serves to legitimize and protect men's dominant position in society by establishing superiority over women and other masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). It is defined by being heterosexual, anti-effeminate and anti-gay (Özbay, 2013). Therefore, for a man to possess an acceptable form of masculinity in a culture where same-sex desire is equated with femininity, he must be anti-homosexual. This pressure leads some gay men to engage in femiphobia (anti-effeminacy) and de-feminize themselves to avoid being seen as “less of a man”, or “like a woman”. (Esen-Ziya & Koç, 2016; Taywaditep, 2002). Hegemonic masculinity is not solely an individual or cultural concept, it is constructed on three levels which influence each other. Hofstede's cultural dimensions can be a valuable framework to understand how hegemonic masculinity is experienced and enforced in a culture. In Türkiye, specifically dimensions of power distance, motivation towards success, and uncertainty avoidance can be used to understand how hegemonic masculinity is experienced by queer men. This study examines construction and maintenance of hegemonic masculinity on the primarily used gay dating app (Hornet) in Türkiye through qualitative discourse analysis on 193 user profiles from 7 different cities. Emerging themes were “Ideal Masculinity”, “Sexual Role and Hierarchy” and “Secrecy and Respectability” which are interpreted through the lens of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. The findings demonstrate that hegemonic masculinity survives within queer spaces not by denying homosexuality but reshaping it into forms that remain compatible with patriarchal, heteronormative, and culturally sanctioned notions of masculinity.



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sciforum-164510: The "Substance" of Ageism: Female Ageing and the Imperative of Eternal Youth in Contemporary Cinema

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Introduction: Ageing is a biological process, but its meaning is socially constructed through cultural narratives that assign value and visibility. In contemporary societies, the "positive ageing" paradigm coexists with a coercive demand for eternal youth. This study examines *The Substance* (2024) as a cultural case study of gendered ageism and the social regulation of ageing female bodies.

Methods: A qualitative sociological analysis was conducted through a critical close reading of the film. The interpretation is guided by narrative gerontology, the notion of erotic capital (Hakim) to address the market value attached to female appearance, and the concept of abjection (Kristeva) to analyse the ageing body as a site of cultural anxiety. Analytical attention focused on four dimensions: (1) ageing as cultural construction, (2) the metanarrative of decline, (3) the individualisation of "positive ageing", and (4) gendered invisibility and aesthetic labour.

Results: The film depicts ageing not merely as a loss of status, but as the devaluation of the female body within appearance-centred cultural industries. It illustrates how "positive ageing" operates as a moralised form of self-management in which later life is framed as a personal failure to maintain desirability. A gendered double standard is intensified: while older men remain culturally legible, older women are rendered invisible unless they conform to restrictive youth norms through continuous bodily intervention.

Conclusions: *The Substance* foregrounds ageism as a structural form of gendered inequality. Challenging it requires deconstructing the narratives that equate ageing with a loss of value and expanding social spaces where growing older does not imply exclusion or the rendering of the ageing female body as monstrous.



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sciforum-172925: Negotiated Empowerment: Gender, Mobility, and System Design in Women's Workforce Transitions in South India

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Women's entry into paid work in India unfolds within dense social arrangements that regulate mobility, time, financial control, and moral legitimacy. Drawing on midline qualitative data from a three-year tracer study across urban Bengaluru and industrial Hosur, this paper examines how women in vocational skilling programmes transition from training into early employment, and how institutional systems interact with gendered household structures to shape that transition.

The study is based on three focus group discussions and 30 in-depth interviews conducted in Kannada, Tamil, and Malayalam with women aged 18–40 engaged in beauty therapy, tailoring, data entry, and factory manufacturing. Using an ethnographic lens, the paper centres women's narratives of negotiation rather than treating empowerment as a linear outcome.

Findings show clear psychosocial shifts between baseline and midline: stronger self-articulation, emerging entrepreneurial aspirations, and greater financial awareness. Peer networks function as informal infrastructure, enabling skill practice, emotional support, and shared mobility strategies. In industrial Hosur, structured systems such as company transport and buddy support significantly eased adaptation and reduced early dropout risk.

Yet structural constraints remain stable. Household permission hierarchies, gendered care burdens, mobility restrictions, and segmented financial authority continue to define the boundaries of participation. Digital financial tools are widely used but not fully understood, producing partial inclusion without autonomy. Empowerment therefore appears as a negotiated and relational process rather than a binary shift.

The paper argues that training acts as a first anchor of autonomy, but durable workforce participation depends on reducing everyday friction: predictable transport, structured workplace integration, and sustained financial handholding. Rather than asking whether skilling “works,” this study examines how empowerment unfolds under constraint and what institutional designs expand women's feasible choices in contemporary South India.



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sciforum-177118: Masculinities, Sexuality, and the Body: Differences in Sexual Functioning and Body Image among Heterosexual and Gay Men in Poland

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Psychology Department/The Maria Grzegorzewska University/Warsaw/Poland

Introduction:

Contemporary research on gender and sexuality highlights the role of sexual identity in shaping experiences of intimacy, body perception, and sexual well-being. Drawing on masculinity studies and minority stress theory, sexual orientation may influence how men internalize cultural norms regarding the body and sexual performance. Despite growing research on male sexual functioning, homosexual men remain underrepresented in studies examining the relationship between body image and sexual well-being. This study aimed to compare heterosexual and homosexual men in selected dimensions of sexual functioning and body image within the Polish cultural context.

Materials and Methods:

Data were collected between April and June 2025 via an online survey. The final sample consisted of 214 men (Mage = 22.20, SD = 2.11; 53% heterosexual). Measures included sexual satisfaction, sexual self-esteem, and body image. Group differences were analyzed using independent-samples t-tests and Mann–Whitney U tests.

Results:

Gay men reported a higher number of sexual partners and greater sexual consciousness. Heterosexual men rated their upper-body strength and physical condition more positively. No significant differences were found in overall sexual satisfaction or sexual self-esteem.

Conclusions:

Sexual orientation differentiates certain aspects of sexual behavior and body perception but not core evaluations of sexual functioning. These findings may reflect shared cultural standards of masculinity alongside minority-specific experiences influencing sexual self-reflection. The results highlight the importance of including sexual orientation in research on masculinity, body image, and sexual well-being, particularly in heteronormative contexts.



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sciforum-163140: Mathematical Modeling and Social Analysis of Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity in Thailand: From Traditional Values to Future Trajectories

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This study examines gender equality and sexual diversity in Thailand through an interdisciplinary framework that integrates mathematical modeling, social analysis, and gender studies. Focusing on male, female, and LGBTQ+ populations, the research explores how evolving social values, legal reforms, and educational practices shape gender relations from the past to the present, while projecting future trajectories.

The study employs analytical and conceptual modeling to represent relationships between key social variables, including gender norms, access to sex education, legal recognition of same-sex marriage, and public attitudes toward sexual diversity. Using Thailand as a case study, the model captures historical transitions from traditional family-centered and heteronormative values toward increasing recognition of gender equality and inclusivity. Particular attention is given to the social implications of marriage equality, changes in sex education policies, and shifting perceptions of masculinity, femininity, and non-binary identities.

Rather than relying solely on descriptive narratives, this research applies simplified mathematical structures—such as relational mappings and trend-based analytical models—to conceptualize how institutional reforms and cultural values interact over time. This approach allows for systematic comparison between past social configurations and emerging patterns, as well as scenario-based projections of future developments in gender equality.

The findings suggest that Thailand is undergoing a nonlinear transformation in gender norms, characterized by tensions between traditional social values and progressive legal and educational reforms. The study demonstrates that mathematical and analytical modeling can offer valuable insights into complex social processes, contributing to gender studies by providing a structured framework for understanding social change. The paper highlights the relevance of interdisciplinary approaches for analyzing gender equality and sexual diversity in contemporary societies, particularly in the Global South.

(269 words)



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sciforum-159041: A Postcolonial Critical Inquiry of Sámi Women, Assimilation, and Scientific Racism

Robin Throne

University of the Cumberland

This presentation explores the migration, assimilation, and enduring legacy of eugenics among the Sámi people, an indigenous ethnic group from Sápmi who span northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Previous scholarship has expanded analyses of indigenous land-based cultures; yet, a critical gap remains in understanding the displacement of the Sámi to North America during the 19th and 20th centuries, amid dominant narratives of Norwegian nationalism. Scholars have referred to the "hidden migration" of the Sámi, which encompassed a broader migration to the United States (U.S.) and Canada than the government-led Alaskan migration. Sámi populations now number approximately 30,000 immigrant descendants in North America who may have experienced generational trauma due to their position as a lesser group within the 19th- and 20th-century policies, theories, and ideologies of a dominant As some Sámi immigrants concealed their ethnic identity to evade systemic racism and forced assimilation, it was particularly Sámi women who endured the intersectional discrimination of eugenic ideologies, colonialism, nationalism, and gendered oppression. This critical inquiry examines how pseudoscientific and discriminatory practices, such as eugenics, reinforced Norwegianization policies aimed at homogeneity. From a postcolonial feminist lens, this critical inquiry situates Sámi women's experiences within the broader global context of scientific racism and assimilation, and argues these practices have produced generational trauma that has shaped diasporic Sámi identity in contemporary North America. The researcher's fidelity to their positionality was combined with feminist theoretical principles as a framework to guide this critical inquiry.



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sciforum-173538: A Study on the Role and Identity of Female Teachers in Bardhaman district, West Bengal, India

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Education is the parameter to measure societal change, economic progress and modernization. It is instrumental in assessing literacy, knowledge and skill of the population. Bardhaman district of West Bengal (India) is one of the most populous districts of the state, owing to its industries and urban development. The district has innumerable number of schools, colleges, training institutes, some even dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Several researches have been conducted on enrollment of students in different academic levels and literacy drive; however separate studies on female education and their engagement as teaching professionals in the area is untouched. Today's society is addressing the global issue of gender equality in pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable world. Against this backdrop, my research attempts to contribute to this discourse. The paper aims to examine the role and contribution of female teachers in the sphere of educational development, in the industrial belt of Asansol- Duragpur in Bardhaman district. The prime objective of this micro level initiative is to incorporate regional studies in the broader arena of macro studies with its discourses. The methodology used to carry out this research is quantitative analysis of statistical data obtained from several Government and Non- governmental records. These data have been corroborated with quantitative and qualitative data obtained from field surveys, interviews and informal conversations. The findings suggest that women literacy though found to be satisfactory, but their engagement as professionals remained a small entity. However emphasis has been given to women breaking gender stereotypes- from women taking initiative to setup girls' schools to those who worked together with their male staffs in educational institutions. Therefore the study on female educationists and academicians is a gendered one, where women's work and identity is being camouflaged.



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sciforum-174044: Artificial Intelligence and Gender Bias: A Critical Analytical Study in the Light of Islamic Principles of Justice and Human Dignity"

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) increasingly shapes contemporary human experience, influencing critical domains such as employment, healthcare, education, finance, and digital governance. Despite its promise of neutrality and efficiency, growing empirical research demonstrates that AI systems frequently reproduce and intensify existing gender inequalities embedded within historical data, algorithmic design, and socio-technical infrastructures. These algorithmic biases disproportionately marginalize women and other vulnerable groups, thereby raising profound ethical, social, and theological concerns. This study critically examines the phenomenon of gender bias in AI through the normative framework of Islamic principles of justice ('adl) and human dignity (karāmat al-insān).

Grounded in Qur'anic teachings and Prophetic traditions, Islam articulates a comprehensive moral vision rooted in equity, accountability, and the inherent dignity of every human being. The paper argues that these foundational principles provide a robust ethical paradigm for evaluating and regulating emerging technologies. By engaging contemporary case studies including discriminatory hiring algorithms, biased facial recognition systems, and gendered patterns of digital surveillance the research highlights how algorithmic systems can conflict with the Islamic commitment to fairness, non-harm (la darar wa la dirar), and social responsibility.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative analytical approach, synthesizing interdisciplinary scholarship from gender studies, AI ethics, and Islamic intellectual tradition. It proposes a faith-informed ethical framework that emphasizes transparency, inclusivity, accountability, and moral intentionality in AI development and governance.

The paper concludes that confronting gender bias in AI is not solely a technical correction but a moral and civilizational responsibility. Islamic ethical thought offers valuable normative resources capable of contributing to global AI governance debates, ensuring that technological advancement remains aligned with justice, dignity, and human flourishing.



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sciforum-173881: Benchmarking Gender Equality in Lithuanian Agriculture: From EU Commitments to Rural Reality

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Introduction

Gender equality has been embedded in the European Union's legal and policy framework for decades. The principle of equal pay was established in the 1957 Treaty of Rome. The 1996 European Commission Communication introduced gender mainstreaming across all EU policy areas. The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 further emphasises equal labour market participation, reduction of gender pay gaps, and improved work–life balance. In addition, the CAP 2023–2027 explicitly promotes gender equality and women's participation in farming. This paper benchmarks the situation of women in Lithuanian agriculture against these strategic commitments.

Methods

A policy benchmarking approach is applied, using EU strategic documents as normative reference points. Quantitative indicators from Eurostat and national statistics are analysed to assess Lithuania's alignment with EU objectives across three dimensions: economic equality, policy integration, and work–life balance.

Results

Lithuania represents a paradox within the EU: while it has one of the highest shares of women farm managers, structural inequalities remain pronounced. A persistent gender pay gap of around 6% in agriculture challenges the principle of equal pay. Women-managed farms are significantly smaller and generate substantially lower economic output, limiting economic parity. Although gender equality is recognised in CAP objectives, Lithuania's CAP Strategic Plan does not systematically address the structural constraints faced by women farmers. Furthermore, time-use data show that 60% of women versus 33% of men perform daily domestic work, indicating an unequal distribution of care responsibilities that constrains women's participation in innovation and leadership.

Conclusions

The Lithuanian case demonstrates a clear implementation gap between EU gender equality commitments and rural realities, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive agricultural policy and targeted structural support.



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sciforum-176944: Between Cultural Norms and Digital Expression: Moroccan Women's Self-Presentation on Social Media

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Introduction:

Social media platforms have become significant spaces for identity construction and self-presentation. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory of self-presentation, this study examines how Moroccan women strategically construct and negotiate their identities in digital spaces, where global digital culture intersects with local sociocultural values, including expectations related to modesty, reputation, and the notion of *hshouma* (social shame or taboo). This research specifically explores how women navigate the tension between cultural expectations and digital visibility.

Methods:

This research adopts a qualitative content analysis of publicly available posts shared by Moroccan female content creators on TikTok and Instagram. Guided by Goffman's dramaturgical framework, which views self-presentation as a performative act shaped by audience awareness, a purposive sample of posts was selected to identify recurring patterns in visual representation, lifestyle portrayal, and identity expression across both visual and textual elements.

Results:

Consistent with Goffman's notion of impression management, the analysis reveals that Moroccan women's self-presentation reflects a continuous negotiation between cultural expectations and the desire for digital visibility. Key themes include an emphasis on appearance, lifestyle representation, and aspirational femininity, alongside expressions of confidence and independence that challenge traditional gender expectations.

Conclusions:

The findings suggest that social media functions both as a space that reproduces existing gender norms and as a platform for exploring new forms of identity expression. This study contributes to the application of Goffman's framework in the Moroccan digital context, highlighting how women actively negotiate visibility and cultural expectations, and advancing broader discussions on gender representation, cultural norms, and digital identity.



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sciforum-173860: Bullying in Adolescence: Manifestations and Gender Differences

María Nieto-Sobrino, María-Luz Fernández-Alfaraz, Diego Vergara, Álvaro Antón-Sancho and Pablo Fernández-Árias

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Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial stage in the emergence and consolidation of fraudulent behaviours such as bullying, due to factors such as the need to belong to a peer group and the processes of constructing one's own identity. This study analyses how bullying behaviours manifest themselves among the adolescent population.

Methods

A sample of 129 adolescent students aged between 9 and 15 years old was used. The AVE test was used as a diagnostic tool to prevent, identify and treat this problem of bullying.

Results

The results show that around 24% of the sample was in a situation of victimisation or at risk of harassment, while the remaining 76% showed no signs of suffering from it. Analysis of the relationships between the different types of bullying indicated that some forms of violence appear independently: assaults, threats, social exclusion, coercion and exclusion. However, some specific associations were observed: bullying was related to assaults and threats; intimidation was linked to assaults, social exclusion and bullying; and manipulation was linked to social exclusion.

Although gender differences were not significant, it was observed that the percentage of girls who reported being victims of bullying was higher than that of boys in all types of bullying, especially in assaults, threats, intimidation, and manipulation.

Conclusions

The results reveal that bullying in adolescence is a phenomenon that can take different forms depending on gender. This highlights the need to design awareness-raising and prevention interventions against bullying during this stage of education. Furthermore, future research should delve deeper into other manifestations of peer violence, such as sexual harassment, given its relevance in the literature on adolescence.



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sciforum-173773: Child Marriage as a Human Rights Challenge to Achieving SDG 3, SDG 4, and SDG 5 in Bangladesh

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Child marriage remains a significant challenge in the socio-economic context of Bangladesh. It is hampering efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4 and 5, which aim to ensure good health and well-being, inclusive and equitable quality education and gender equality, respectively. This study examines the physical, psychological, educational and socio-economic impacts of child marriage from a human rights perspective, using data from government and non-governmental organization reports, research articles and publications. The findings show that poverty, low literacy rates, dowry practices, weak law enforcement, patriarchal norms and socio-cultural pressures drive child marriage. Bangladesh ranks seventh in the world and first in Asia in terms of child marriage rates. Child marriage affects both girls and boys, although girls are disproportionately affected. Child marriage is associated with poor health outcomes, increased risk of early pregnancy and maternal mortality, loneliness, psychological distress, disrupted education, limited economic opportunities, gender inequality and violations of fundamental human rights. While policy measures and awareness-raising campaigns have made progress, persistent socio-economic and cultural barriers, poverty, dowry practices, weak law enforcement and poor implementation of laws hinder meaningful change. The study highlights the need for comprehensive legal enforcement, expansion of health care, education, poverty eradication and economic empowerment, addressing socio-cultural and religious perspectives and community-based interventions to reduce child marriage by 2030 and support the achievement of SDGs 3, 4 and 5.



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sciforum-170151: Constructing Gender through Local Narratives: Storytelling in Thematic Villages

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This article examines how gender is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced through local narratives in the thematic villages of Malang City, Indonesia. Drawing on qualitative research within the framework of feminist theory and gender studies, the study explores storytelling as a gendered social practice embedded in everyday community life and local cultural production. Using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis of oral and visual narratives, the research investigates how stories told by community members articulate, legitimize, and sometimes contest gender roles, identities, and power relations within village spaces shaped by tourism and creative initiatives. The findings reveal that storytelling functions both as a site of gender reinforcement—where normative femininity and masculinity are reiterated and naturalized—and as a space of negotiation, particularly through women's narratives that subtly or explicitly challenge dominant representations. Thematic villages, while frequently promoted as sites of cultural creativity, economic empowerment, and participatory development, also operate as gendered spaces in which narrative authority is unevenly distributed and certain voices are selectively amplified or marginalized. By foregrounding local narratives as analytical entry points, this study highlights the role of storytelling in shaping gendered meanings of place, labor, belonging, and community identity. The article contributes to gender studies by demonstrating how localized narrative practices provide critical insights into the everyday production, regulation, and transformation of gender beyond formal institutions, emphasizing the importance of narrative and place-based approaches in feminist qualitative research and community studies.



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sciforum-173879: De-invisibility of female aging or comodifying of care? Menopause on Facebook and Instagram

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Western representations of menopause are marked by a disqualification rooted in the gender system (Martin, 1987; Kaufert, 1988; Arber and Ginn, 1991). The “double standard of aging” (Sontag, 1972) produces a hierarchy of legitimacy for female and male bodies: while male aging is synonymous with maturity, female aging is associated with loss (of fertility, of attractiveness). In contrast to the young and fertile body of “hegemonic femininity” (Schippers, 2007), the menopausal body appears minor and invisible. The biomedical perspective associates menopause with hormonal deficiency, symptoms, and risks (Lock, 1993), a narrative long echoed by traditional media. The 2000s, marked by a resurgence of feminist movements (Bard and Chaperon, 2017), provided the framework for a repoliticization of bodies and physiologies. Alternative discourses to the previously dominant challenged the invisibility of female aging. Online spaces (podcasts, websites, Instagram accounts, Facebook pages), created by “lay” women, bear witness to a movement of emancipation from the biomedical perspective. Based on online ethnography and a lexicometric analysis of a french corpus of Facebook and Instagram posts collected between 2018 and 2024, we propose to examine how these digital platforms are used in relation to menopause and the resulting effects on the social construction of the menopausal body. We will show that menopause-related content on Facebook and Instagram is structured around three themes that do not elicit the same levels of engagement: personal development, biomedicine and the legitimization of menopause. We will then demonstrate how the most visible publications advocate for a “discipline” of the body (Foucault, 1975), within a landscape of “online care” (Botero, Sedda, and Husson, 2023). Finally, we will see that, in these digital spaces, menopause becomes a prime arena for self-presentation, the renegotiation of “stigma” (Goffman, 1975), and its potential monetization by new figures emerging from online discussions on female aging.



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sciforum-169868: Democracy in the Shadow of Gender: A Case Study of Women's Leadership in the 2019 Indonesian Elections

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Although the Indonesian Reformation era initiated by the 1998 democratic transition was expected to open the floodgates of political inclusivity. The landscape of the 2024 General Election reveals that women's substantive participation still faces serious challenges. This study aims to investigate the dynamics of women's leadership in Indonesia, specifically focusing on female candidates and elected officials contesting in the 2024 executive and legislative elections. Despite decades of democratic consolidation, these female leaders remain under the "shadow of gender," a metaphor for deeply rooted structural and cultural patriarchal bias. Using qualitative methods with a case study approach of several female leaders at the regional and national levels, this study analyzes the dual barriers they face: internal barriers from masculine political parties and external barriers from socio-cultural stereotypes. The study's findings indicate that despite the implementation of affirmative action policies, women's leadership in the 2024 election cycle is often trapped in kinship politics (political dynasties) as a recruitment shortcut, rather than based on genuine meritocracy. Furthermore, media narratives and public expectations still place women within a moral double standard not applied to male leaders. This study concludes that democracy in Indonesia is not yet fully inclusive, and that perceived gender equity remains procedural rather than substantive. There is a need for electoral system reform that allows women to gain greater self-empowerment, alongside improvements within political parties through meritocracy and extensive political education to eliminate the shadow of gender bias, ultimately fostering an egalitarian democracy.



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sciforum-169628: Digital Piety and Satirical Resistance: How Pakistani Social Media Posts Reinterpret Islamic Discourses on Women's Modesty and Hijab

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Introduction:

In Pakistan, the patriarchal cultural values and male dominance in religious discourse have long shaped discussions on women's modesty, hijab, and piety. Pakistani youth are challenging these dominant narratives by rethinking Islamic discourse on social media, fueled by the rise of digital platforms. This study examines how social media is used for satirical resistance and the creation of alternative ways to express gendered piety.

Methods:

The study involves a qualitative thematic analysis of ten carefully chosen tweets on X (previously Twitter). The sample includes posts made by Pakistani users about women's modesty, hijab, morality, and gendered religious demands. Both visual and textual aspects were examined to determine reoccurring themes, symbols, and discursive techniques. The approach is guided by Heidi Campbell's Digital Religion theory, which views social media posts as hybrid religious objects that exist both online and offline.

Results:

The results show that satire and humor are employed as strategies to critique patriarchal readings of Islamic modesty and to highlight gender double standards in religious morality. The posts engage with religious authenticity by using Islamic references and, at the same time, challenging religious authority and cultural regulation of women's bodies. Youth use irony, image juxtaposition, and local language to contextualize hijab and religiosity as individual and context-dependent rather than fixed religious duties.

Conclusions:

This research proves that Pakistani social media content is a hybrid site where the meaning of religion, gender, and authority are contested. This research also adds to the existing body of knowledge on digital religion, Islamic feminism, and Muslim youth activism by bringing satire to the forefront as a form of digital religious expression.



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sciforum-173348: Discursive Construction of Gendered Hate Speech Against Men in Selected Social Media Platforms in Nigeria

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The emergence of social media as a dominant platform for communication and information sharing has profoundly influenced the ways individuals interact, express opinions, and construct social identities. However, these platforms have also become sites for the proliferation of hate speech, including gendered forms of verbal abuse that target both women and men. Historically, research on gendered hate speech has overwhelmingly focused on women as primary victims, often overlooking the experiences of men as targets of similar discursive attacks. This gap highlights the need for a critical discourse analysis that explores the discourse strategies underpinning gendered hate speech against men. The theoretical framework used in the analysis of this study is Teun A. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The analysis uses both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The data were collated from selected social media platforms in Nigeria, like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and TikTok, between January 2020 and December 2025. Using purposive sampling, a total of one hundred and fifty-five (155) posts, comments, and videos containing explicit hate speech against men were selected through keyword searches and manual browsing of content. The study identified 17 discourse strategies used in constructing gendered hate speech, and they include explicit hostility, blame shifting, dehumanization, evidentiality, victimization, positive self-representation, denial, etc. In conclusion, this study provides insights into how gendered hate speech against men is constructed, circulated, and legitimized on social media in Nigeria.



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sciforum-164272: Eating Gender Online: TikTok Mukbangs and the Performance of Appetite

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Introduction: Mukbang videos on TikTok have become a prominent form of digital food content, transforming eating into a public, mediated, and interactive practice. This paper examines how mukbangs function as a site for the performance of gendered norms related to appetite, bodily control, and visibility. Drawing on gender performativity theory and sociological studies of food consumption, the study explores how appetite itself is socially and gendered constructed within platform cultures. **Methods:** The research employs qualitative content analysis of a purposive sample of highly engaged TikTok mukbang videos produced by creators of different genders. In addition, an analysis of user comments was conducted to examine audience reactions and moral evaluations related to food consumption, body image, and self-discipline. Videos and comments were coded thematically with particular attention to gendered patterns of representation and interaction. **Results:** The findings indicate significant gender differences in both the performance and reception of mukbang content. Women and gender-diverse creators are more frequently subjected to moralizing, health-focused, and sexualized judgments, whereas male creators are more often associated with humor, excess, and spectacle. At the same time, some creators strategically use mukbangs to challenge dominant norms of restraint and thinness, framing visible appetite as pleasure and self-assertion. **Conclusions:** The study concludes that TikTok mukbangs simultaneously reproduce and contest gendered expectations surrounding eating and the body. By making appetite publicly visible, mukbangs reveal how digital consumption practices are deeply embedded in power relations shaped by gender and platform logics. This research contributes to gender studies and digital sociology by highlighting appetite as a key dimension of online identity performance.



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sciforum-175938: Ecofeminism: Green Feminist Movements, a theoretical and practical approach

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With my contribution, I aim to explore, in the light of a theoretical approach, several examples of ecofeminism, that is, the union of feminist emancipation efforts with those that seek to safeguard the endangered terrestrial ecosystem. I will first begin with a brief introductory note on the environmental sustainability issue, a dominant topic in today's society, followed by a theoretical exploration of the key concepts of this study - ecofeminism, based on the work of scholars like Tickner, J. and Sjoberg, L. (2016) and Evans, J. (1993). Next, I'll examine how and to what extent these theoretical concepts are applied to reality through the analysis of three ecofeminist movements – Dr. Shiva and the Indian 'Navdanya' movement; Green Belt Movement in Kenya and Germany's Green Party case - whose actions merge the feminist reality with the environmentalist, seeking to achieve both gender equality and the sustainability and protection of planet earth. In the final part, I will explore the various criticisms that ecofeminist theory and movements face, stemming from some of their theoretical and practical perspectives, and then reflect on whether ecofeminism is, in fact, a useful tool in the fight for women's rights and the survival of our planet's ecosystem as we need it.



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sciforum-173192: Engineering programs in rural Spain towards 2030: Enrollment trends and the gender gap

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Introduction

This article examines university engineering education in Spain's rural areas, with particular attention to depopulated regions such as Castile and León, and identifies the gender gap as the system's principal constraint. In addition to demographic decline, it assesses the extent to which limited female participation is constraining the development of human capital in comparison with the rest of the country.

Method

Official data on engineering enrollment and graduation rates are used, broken down by level (Bachelor's and Doctorate), region, and gender. The analysis prioritizes the evolution of female participation and projects trends up to 2030.

Results

The data show a decrease in enrollment and low participation at the doctoral level, but the most significant problem is the persistent underrepresentation of women. Women remain a minority at the undergraduate level and have not achieved parity at the doctoral level. This gap directly reduces the available talent pool and exacerbates the effects of demographic decline.

Conclusions

The gender gap is not only a matter of equity, but also the main obstacle to the system's sustainability. Without greater incorporation of women, Castile and León will continue to lose training and research capacity by 2030.



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sciforum-176813: Epistemic Power and Institutional Rationalities: Feminist Reflections on the Conditions of Possibility for Research in Contemporary Academia

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Introduction:

Modern academic scholarship is often presented as neutral, objective, and value-free. Feminist scholarship, however, has long challenged this assumption by demonstrating that knowledge production is embedded within relations of power, institutional norms, and epistemic hierarchies. This paper examines the conditions under which research becomes possible in contemporary academia by analysing how epistemic power and institutional rationalities shape what counts as legitimate knowledge, who is recognised as a legitimate knower, and which forms of research are enabled or marginalised.

Methods:

The study adopts a theoretical and conceptual approach grounded in feminist epistemology, critical theory, and the sociology of knowledge. It conceptualises academia as a cultural system structured by institutional rationalities such as productivity metrics, funding regimes, audit cultures, and the growing demand for measurable impact. Analytical insights are drawn from feminist concepts, including situated knowledge, standpoint theory, and epistemic injustice.

Results:

The analysis demonstrates that institutional rationalities do not merely regulate research administratively but actively shape epistemic values and research priorities. They privilege particular methodologies, disciplines, and research agendas while marginalising critical, reflexive, and interdisciplinary forms of inquiry. These dynamics disproportionately affect women, early-career scholars, and researchers engaged in critical, decolonial, or non-mainstream scholarship, particularly in the Global South. Furthermore, these institutional expectations become internalised through everyday academic practices such as grant writing, peer review, publication standards, and evaluation systems, thereby reproducing dominant knowledge traditions.

Conclusion:

By framing research as a cultural and political practice, this paper contributes to debates on the politics of knowledge production in contemporary academia. It argues that feminist critique provides both an analytical and ethical framework for rethinking research cultures and calls for more inclusive, reflexive, and socially responsible conditions for knowledge production.



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sciforum-176828: Exploring the Causes of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Against Women in District Kech: A Qualitative Research to Know Their Lived Experiences

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious social issue that affects many women and creates significant challenges in their married lives. Several factors contribute to IPV, including substance abuse, poverty, economic stress, gender inequality, patriarchal cultural norms, changing gender roles, a history of violence, aggressive behavior, and personality disorders. Among these factors, economic dependency plays a significant role in limiting women's ability to resist or escape abusive relationships. This study focuses on the economic factors—such as lack of job opportunities, unemployment, and financial instability—that contribute to women's economic dependency in Turbat, Balochistan. The research adopts a qualitative approach, using descriptive research design to explore women's lived experiences of intimate partner violence. Data were collected through in-depth interviews using open-ended questions with married women aged 18 years and above. The findings reveal that many women in Turbat experience IPV due to the patriarchal social structure that reinforces women's dependency on their husbands. Economic dependency, combined with limited social support systems, prevents many women from speaking out against abusive behavior. The study highlights that many Baloch women remain in abusive relationships because financial insecurity restricts their ability to leave. The findings emphasize the need for initiatives that promote women's economic independence, raise awareness through digital platforms, and provide confidential reporting mechanisms for victims of IPV. Additionally, there is a need for programs that challenge harmful gender norms and promote equal power dynamics in relationships.



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sciforum-163579: Gender Norms and Popular Culture: Feminism and Masculinity Perceptions in Türkiye

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Introduction

Gender norms fundamentally shape social identities, power dynamics, and daily interactions. Popular culture mirrors these norms while actively constructing and contesting gendered meanings. In Türkiye, television series and social media are pivotal arenas for feminist debates and masculinity representations. This study centers on how feminist discourses challenge masculine norms, alongside examining portrayals of masculinity and diverse female representations in popular culture, and their societal impact on gender perceptions.

Methods

A qualitative approach utilized content and thematic analysis. The dataset includes three popular Turkish TV series-*Masumlar Apartmanı*, *Kırmızı Oda*, and *Camdaki Kız*-focusing on 20+ episodes from 2019–2024 with gender-centric arcs (e.g., abuse, vulnerability, empowerment). It also covers 50+ social media posts from feminist influencers like @feministtarih and @kadinkultur on Instagram and X. A gender theory-informed coding framework addressed feminism (autonomy, resistance), masculinity norms (dominance, restraint), power relations (patriarchy), and female representations (agency vs. subjugation). Themes were coded via NVivo and interpreted against gender and media scholarship for validity.

Results

Female portrayals are ambivalent: some depict empowerment and feminist awareness (e.g., protagonists resisting abuse in *Camdaki Kız*), others uphold traditional domesticity (e.g., sacrificial mothers in *Masumlar Apartmanı*). Masculinity emphasizes dominance, emotional stoicism, authority, and provider roles, remaining rigid amid crises (e.g., stoic leads in *Kırmızı Oda*). Social media amplifies feminist critiques and diverse female images-intersectional identities, activism-yet hegemonic masculinity dominates TV, sustaining gender hierarchies.

Conclusions

Türkiye's popular culture is a contested space: feminist challenges erode masculine norms, but traditional portrayals reproduce them. Diverse female representations grow visible via social media, yet entrenched masculinity curbs transformation. This duality highlights media's role in cultural battles. Findings advance gender-media studies, offering insights for creators, scholars, and policymakers to promote equality through equitable narratives.



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sciforum-163193: Gendered Experiences of Job Insecurity and Trade Union Membership in a South African HEI

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This study investigates how perceived job insecurity shapes trade union membership within a South African Higher Education Institution (HEI), with a specific emphasis on the role of **gender**. Drawing on Psychological Contract Theory and Social Exchange Theory, the study examines how gendered experiences of work influence feelings of insecurity, perceptions of fairness, and employees' reasons for seeking union protection. A qualitative research design was adopted to explore employees' lived experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with **eight participants, four females and four males**, across both permanent and contract job categories. Data were analysed thematically to identify gendered patterns in job insecurity, psychological contract breach, and motivations for joining trade unions. The findings show that job insecurity is deeply gendered. Female participants consistently reported **greater vulnerability**, even when occupying permanent positions. They described higher levels of uncertainty, heightened awareness of organisational restructuring, and increased exposure to unfair or unilateral managerial decisions. These experiences intensified feelings of psychological contract breach and eroded trust in the employer. Consequently, women were more likely to view the trade union as an essential source of protection, advocacy, and stability. Male participants acknowledged insecurity but perceived it as less personally threatening, resulting in weaker pressure to join or rely on unions. The study concludes that **gender significantly shapes how job insecurity is experienced and how employees respond to it**. Women's heightened sense of vulnerability strengthens the pathway between job insecurity and trade union membership. These findings highlight the need for gender-responsive organisational practices and reinforce the vital role of unions in safeguarding those who feel disproportionately insecure in the workplace.



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sciforum-150742: Gendered Islamophobia: Intersectional Racialized Violence against Women

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After September 11, 2001 and in more recent years (the Trump Era), Muslim people and communities have been subject to unique threats of discrimination, surveillance, and violence, as a result of stigmatization. Muslim women encounter gender-based violence at the axes of multiple marginalizations which informs contemporary notions of Islamophobia. Gender-based violence and harassment of Muslim women in public spaces continue to be linked to hypervisibility (veiling), yet 'invisible' (non-veiled) Muslim women are also susceptible to gendered anti-Muslim assaults in the public sphere. Drawing from an exploratory qualitative study that examined the perceptions of Muslim women (n= 27) across racial, ethnic, and immigrant identity during the first Trump Administration in the US, findings indicate that Muslim women in the US navigate public spaces from a unique intersectional position where they encounter a spectrum of interpersonal violence including social surveillance, physical violence, and verbal assaults. Because these experiences are shaped by racialized gender norms and perceptions of Muslims as perpetual foreigners (immigrants), findings center how Muslim women resist normalized violence by embracing protective measures and increased participation in civic engagement. Thus, Muslim women negotiating their existence in society highlights the double bind they face that shapes experiences of invisible victimization and informs understandings of intragender interpersonal harassment.



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sciforum-176243: Gendered Time Burdens, Labour Market Inequality, and Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya

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This paper examines how gendered time burdens shape women's economic outcomes in Kenya, using a gender economics lens that links unpaid care work to labour-market inequality and constrained asset accumulation. Drawing on secondary data from the 2021 Kenya Time Use Survey, the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, and the World Bank Gender Data Portal, the study applies descriptive and comparative gender-gap analysis to assess disparities in unpaid care, labour-force participation, employment quality, land ownership, and financial inclusion. The results show persistent structural inequalities. Kenya's time-use data indicate that unpaid domestic and care work remains heavily feminized, with women contributing far more unpaid care hours than men; the national household satellite account estimates 25.8 billion hours for women compared with 4.8 billion hours for men in 2021. Labour-market indicators similarly reveal disadvantage: in 2024, female labour-force participation stood at 62.2% versus 71.4% for males, while women were more concentrated in vulnerable employment (73.6% versus 56.4%) and less represented in wage and salaried work (25.6% versus 42.6%). Asset gaps persist as well, with 75.2% of women aged 15–49 reporting no land ownership compared with 66.4% of men, although financial inclusion has improved, with account ownership reaching 86.5% for women and 93.9% for men in 2024. These findings suggest that gender inequality in Kenya is reproduced not only through wages and employment status but also through unequal time allocation and weaker command over productive assets. The study concludes that care-sensitive macro and labour policies, expanded access to decent work, and stronger women's property rights are central to inclusive growth and women's economic empowerment in Kenya.



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sciforum-173415: Impact of Statelessness on Gender Equality: Case of the Makonde Community in Kenya

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This study sought to investigate the impact that prolonged statelessness would have towards access to basic human rights and on the gender equality progress of women from minority communities, with a focus on the Makonde community, residing in Kwale County at the Coast of Kenya.

Statelessness has become a critical issue in international law, given how discriminatory nationality laws have long deprived stateless persons of citizenship and access to fundamental rights and services. This is also likely due to the effect that increased globalization has had on women and girls' accessibility to fundamental rights, in turn contributing to them being exposed to vulnerabilities like gender-based violence, sexual and labor exploitation, among others. However, even though attempts have been made to mitigate statelessness in Africa and Kenya through initiatives and legal interventions, those who were formerly stateless still continue to encounter challenges even after being granted citizenship.

Based on Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill's liberal feminist theory, derived from the classical liberalism school of thought, and John Rawls' theory of justice, the methods used in investigating the impact of statelessness on gender equality from the Makonde community were identified. Descriptive mixed-methods research approach, with concurrent triangulation research design were used to address the research objectives.

The findings pointed out that statelessness is a continuous hindrance in gender equality, social inclusion, and economic empowerment among minority women. The study concludes that years of statelessness undermine gender equality, social inclusion, and economic empowerment among minority women, due to difficulties with implementation, gaps in legal frameworks, bureaucratic obstacles, and weak political advocacy that limit full integration into society, which is allowing statelessness to continue.



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sciforum-173865: Intersectionality and Triple Marginalization: A Gendered Analysis of the Educational Migration of Indigenous Women Students in Bangladesh

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The study is grounded in an intersectional approach that examines the intersecting identities of gender, ethnicity, and class, producing triangular marginalization. To be more specific, it raises the question: How do these overlapping layers of exclusion contribute to establishing the higher education and social assimilation of Indigenous women in urban Bangladesh? While migration can be a source of empowerment and a learning process in the case of indigenous women of Bangladesh, it tends to cause institutional marginalization. This paper evaluates the situation of indigenous women students who have moved to urban areas, such as Chittagong and Dhaka. The data were collected qualitatively, and semi-structured interviews were used to examine structural exclusion at both the academic and social levels. Additionally, the study analyzes how structural inequalities shape the higher education of Indigenous women. The findings suggest that Indigenous women students have been struggling with the language barrier and cultural alienation from the mainstream culture of patriarchy. Colleges and universities are referred to as inclusive, yet in practice, they marginalize and generalize minority identities. The study reveals the current equity policies by comparing two cities. It concludes that the policy and its implementation should be more practically inclusive and overcome the various forms of barriers, including gender prejudice and ethnic and social segregation. The study advocates for inclusion over exclusion in the educational experiences of indigenous women and emphasizes programs to address their challenges and promote equality.



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sciforum-171035: Invisible Heroines: Gender Representation and the Absence of Female Protagonists in Indian Animated Television Series

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Children's animated television content functions as a powerful socio-cultural pedagogical site, playing a formative role in shaping gender perceptions during early socialization. In rapidly mediatized childhood environments such as India, where animated programming commands extensive viewership across television and digital platforms, representational patterns acquire heightened developmental significance. This study critically examines the systemic underrepresentation and narrative marginalization of female protagonists in popular Indian animated television series. Through qualitative content and discourse analysis of widely broadcast programs—including *Chhota Bheem*, *Little Krishna*, *Mighty Raju*, *Bal Ganesh*, and *Motu Patlu*—the research identifies recurring gendered tropes that position male characters as central agents of heroism: leaders, protectors, strategists, and problem-solvers. In contrast, female characters are frequently relegated to supportive, passive, decorative, or rescue-dependent roles, with limited narrative agency or decision-making authority.

To foreground the structural nature of this imbalance, the study juxtaposes these male-dominated narratives with the female-led animated series *Meena* (Doordarshan/UNICEF) as a counter-hegemonic case that demonstrates the creative, pedagogical, and developmental viability of girl-centric storytelling within the Indian cultural context. Anchored in Gender Schema Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Cultivation Theory, the paper argues that sustained exposure to masculinized hero narratives contributes to early internalization of patriarchal gender scripts, shaping children's perceptions of leadership, courage, and social power.

Findings reveal not merely numerical underrepresentation but a deeper symbolic annihilation of female heroism within mainstream Indian animation. The study concludes by advocating gender-inclusive content frameworks, urging media producers, educators, and policymakers to reimagine children's animation as an equitable representational space capable of fostering balanced gender socialization and transformative cultural pedagogy.



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sciforum-169587: Literacy and Menstrual Health Practices among Women in India: Evidence from NFHS-5

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Menstrual health is not just a biological concern; it is an understudied dimension of public health and human capital formation, shaped by education, sanitation infrastructure and prevailing social norms. Menstruation is a normal part of life for most women and girls, yet cultural taboos and a lack of information continue to influence how it is understood and managed.

This paper examines the role of literacy and structural factors on menstrual health practices among women in India. This study uses secondary data from NFHS-5 to focus on state-level variations in the use of hygienic menstrual methods and behavioural practices.

The research uses descriptive analysis to identify regional differences in menstrual health outcomes and determine the relationship between literacy levels of women, access to household sanitation amenities, adolescent childbearing, and menstrual hygiene behaviour. Regression analysis has been used to measure the effect of literacy and structural factors on menstrual health practices across states and union territories.

The paper aims to inform policy discussions on gender-responsive interventions in human capital and development by situating menstrual health within a broader context of human capital and development. Empowering literacy and enhancing access to basic sanitation become essential elements of inclusive developmental approaches to menstrual health inequities in India.



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sciforum-171097: Mapping Gendered Vulnerability and Community Resilience: A Geospatial Approach to Social Justice in Nigeria

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Gender inequality remains one of the most persistent barriers to sustainable social development and community resilience in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, environmental degradation, economic disparities, and institutional fragility interact to deepen gender-based vulnerability. This study integrates geospatial techniques with participatory research to analyse how spatial factors influence gendered experiences of risk and resilience. Multi-temporal satellite imagery and census datasets were processed in ArcGIS and QGIS to map vulnerability hotspots across selected states, while interviews and focus group discussions with local leaders, women's associations, and policy actors provided qualitative insights. Quantitative mapping revealed that areas undergoing rapid land-use change and weak environmental governance experience intensified gender disparities in access to resources and recovery capacity. Qualitative findings further highlighted the critical role of women's networks, traditional institutions, and grassroots governance in sustaining resilience through mutual support and adaptive innovation. The integration of spatial data and social evidence provides a nuanced understanding of how geography, governance, and gender intersect to produce unequal resilience outcomes. The study concludes that embedding gender-sensitive spatial analysis into national policy planning can enhance social equity, strengthen local governance, and improve adaptive capacity to socio-environmental challenges. This interdisciplinary approach contributes to feminist geography, governance studies, and resilience research by offering a replicable model for integrating spatial evidence into gender-responsive policy frameworks.



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sciforum-144821: Mothers of the Mountains: Women, Ecology, and Voices from the Western Himalayas

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In Himachal Pradesh, women are central to sustaining households, managing natural resources, and maintaining cultural practices, yet their voices are frequently underrepresented in environmental and social decision-making. They carry out essential labor in agriculture, water collection, forest use, and household management, while also preserving knowledge of local ecology and contributing to social cohesion. This paper uses an ecofeminist lens to examine how women navigate the intersections of ecological stewardship, daily labor, and community leadership, revealing both their vital contributions and the constraints they face in rural Himalayan societies.

Drawing on field interviews, oral histories, and participatory observation across multiple villages in Himachal Pradesh, the study foregrounds women's experiences in environmental management, resource use, and local governance. It explores how traditional knowledge, gendered labor, and care work shape community resilience and social organization, while also demonstrating the ways women negotiate influence in decision-making despite systemic inequalities.

The findings suggest that achieving inclusive and sustainable practices requires more than formal policies; it necessitates recognizing and integrating women's labor, knowledge, and agency into governance structures. By centering women's experiences, this paper highlights pathways for equitable and context-sensitive environmental management. It contributes to broader debates on ecofeminism, rural women's agency, and participatory governance, offering insights for designing policies that value and amplify the often-overlooked voices of women in mountainous communities.



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sciforum-173615: Navigating the Paradox of Progress: A Qualitative Study of Women's Entrepreneurship in Morocco

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Introduction

The contemporary Moroccan economic landscape positions gender functions as a dynamic force at the intersection of neoliberal aspirations and deep-seated patriarchal structures. While legislative milestones and digital initiatives have ostensibly paved the way for feminine economic participation, the entrepreneurial arena remains a contested site of power. This study examines how Moroccan women navigate the paradox of progress, where institutional visibility often conceals the persistence of traditional reproductive governance and socio-economic exclusion.

Methods

Adopting a qualitative relational framework, this research utilized semi-structured interviews with 17 women entrepreneurs across varied sectors in three Moroccan regions. The authors employed intersectional thematic analysis to explore how variables of financial autonomy, family obligations and digital literacy influence women's ability to bridge the gender divide and establish professional legitimacy.

Results

The findings indicated a progressive increase in Moroccan female-led startups and cooperatives. Entrepreneurship promoting programs have contributed to reinforce women's economic contribution and enhance their social status. Nevertheless, the study highlighted the persistence of several barriers that undermined the newly forged avenues for autonomy. These barriers included disproportionate burdens of domestic care, systematic skepticism from society, and a glass labyrinth of informal male-centric business networks that dictated and managed market access.

Conclusions

The study concludes that women's entrepreneurship in Morocco is not merely an economic activity but a form of social activism that challenges the gendered status quo. The Moroccan entrepreneurial ecosystem needs to reflect on means to operate a genuine social transformation that transcends mere inclusion mechanisms. Women's entrepreneurship requires a radical restructuring of their intersectional realities to dismantle the structural inequalities that remain embedded in the routines of their everyday economic life.



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sciforum-170064: Negotiating Gender Representation through Translation in Indonesian–English Bilingual Museum Texts

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This study explores how gender markers are translated in Indonesian–English bilingual museum texts and how these translation choices influence the representation of women in institutional narratives. In multilingual museums, translation is not only a matter of transferring meaning between languages. It also plays a role in shaping how gender is made visible or invisible. While gender issues have received attention in translation studies, research that closely examines gender markers in museum translation is still limited.

The study is based on 25 pairs of source and target language captions taken from permanent exhibition texts at the Sangiran Early Man Site, specifically the Krikilan Museum complex. Using a qualitative approach, the analysis focuses on translation shifts related to grammatical gender, pronoun use, and generic masculine forms. The study is based on feminist translation theory and critical discourse analysis (CDA), both of which view translation as an ideological practice rather than a neutral technical process.

Feminist translation theory is used to examine how specific strategies, such as neutralization, over-marking, addition, and compensation, affect the visibility of women in the target text. These strategies are assessed to determine whether translation choices maintain, weaken, or strengthen gender representation. CDA supports this analysis by connecting small-scale linguistic choices to broader institutional discourses on authority, knowledge, and gender hierarchy in museum narratives.

The findings are expected to show that limited attention to gender markers, especially the uncritical use of generic masculine forms or inappropriate gender neutralization, can contribute to the invisibilities of women. In contrast, **gender-aware translation strategies may improve representational accuracy and inclusivity**. By highlighting gender markers as a key aspect of translation quality, the study contributes to more inclusive practices in museum translation.



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sciforum-146015: Negotiating Minority Stress across Time and Space in Lesbian Partnerships: A Qualitative Systematic Review (2015-2025)

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Minority stress remains a significant challenge in lesbian relationships because it affects both individual wellbeing and relationship stability. Although previous studies have documented the harmful effects of stigma, discrimination, and concealment, limited attention has been given to how these stressors are negotiated across everyday temporal and spatial contexts. This study addresses that gap by examining how chronotopes of minority stress shape relationship stability in lesbian partnerships. In this study, chronotopes refer to recurring temporal and spatial contexts in which stress is experienced and managed. A qualitative systematic review was conducted following PRISMA 2020. The study analyzed 38 Scopus indexed journal articles published from 2015 to 2025, with article screening and organization supported by Watase Uake. The analysis identified four recurrent chronotopes: domestic, occupational, public or institutional, and digital. Relationship stability was more likely when partners used coordinated coping strategies, including aligning daily routines, managing disclosure, and accessing supportive communities and institutional protections. In contrast, instability was more likely when couples faced conflicting temporal demands, uneven visibility, and repeated exposure to hostile environments. These results indicate that resilience in lesbian relationships is shaped not only by exposure to minority stress but also by how couples negotiate time, space, and visibility under heteronormative and structurally unequal conditions.



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sciforum-176900: Pornography Through a Gender Lens: Divergent Attitudes toward Sexual Media and Its Social Consequences

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Pornography has become a pervasive component of contemporary sexual cultures, yet attitudes toward its social and interpersonal consequences remain highly contested. Existing research suggests that perceptions of pornography are strongly shaped by gender, reflecting broader inequalities in how sexual media represent bodies, power, and consent. From a theoretical standpoint, feminist approaches—particularly radical feminist critiques of pornography as a system of sexual objectification and male dominance—contrast with more liberal and sex-positive perspectives that emphasize agency, sexual expression, and potential benefits. Additionally, sexual script theory provides a useful framework for understanding how pornography may inform gendered expectations about sexuality, while objectification theory helps explain differential sensitivities to its potential harms. The current study examines gender differences in attitudes toward pornography and explores how men and women perceive harms and benefits. The analysis uses data from a sample of individuals aged 16 and older residing in Castilla-La Mancha, a region in central Spain ($N = 1,003$; 50.7% men). Attitudes toward pornography are measured using a set of 19 items adapted from the *Internet Pornography Questionnaire* developed by Noll et al. (2022) in the United States. These items capture beliefs about pornography's potential harms—such as fostering sexual objectification, unrealistic sexual expectations, or aggression—as well as perceived benefits, including sexual education, sexual satisfaction, or tension release. The study compares responses between men and women using descriptive statistics to identify gender differences across the different attitudinal dimensions. From a gender studies perspective, the analysis interprets these differences in light of feminist debates on pornography and the gendered dynamics of sexual media consumption. By examining how attitudes toward pornography vary across genders, this study contributes to understanding how sexual media are interpreted within broader structures of gendered power, inequality, and sexual norms in contemporary societies.



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sciforum-164965: Protective Marginalisation: Governance, Kinship, and Everyday Exclusion in Transgender Dera Households in Pakistan

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This study explored the paradoxical role of the dera (communal household) in shaping the everyday lives of transgender individuals in Pakistan. Drawing on in-depth qualitative interviews with 31 transgender participants selected through purposive sampling, the study explores how the guru–chela system simultaneously provides protection, belonging, and material survival while reproducing dependency, surveillance, and constrained autonomy. Guided by structural injustice theory and Foucauldian governmentality, the study conceptualizes the dera as a form of protective marginalisation. This informal governance structure emerges in response to state absence but reproduces hierarchical control over marginalized bodies. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke’s reflexive thematic analysis, allowing for a nuanced examination of how power, discipline, and care intersect in everyday life. Findings reveal that family rejection, educational exclusion, and labour market barriers channel transgender individuals into community-based living arrangements that provide safety yet limit long-term mobility and self-determination. While the dera mitigates extreme vulnerability, it also institutionalizes dependence through moral regulation and economic control. The study argues that legal recognition alone is insufficient to address transgender marginalisation and calls for structural interventions that confront the informal systems through which inequality is reproduced. By situating transgender experiences within broader governance and power structures, this study contributes to critical debates on gender, marginality, and social justice in the Global South.



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sciforum-176284: Public Sanitation and Women's Health Among the Urban Poor in Tamil Nadu

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Access to safe and adequate sanitation remains a critical public health challenge for women living in urban poor settlements in India. Despite national initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Mission aimed at improving sanitation infrastructure, many women in low-income urban communities continue to face difficulties in accessing safe, hygienic, and gender-sensitive sanitation facilities. This study examines the relationship between public sanitation facilities and women's health problems among the urban poor in Tamil Nadu.

The study adopts a mixed-method approach combining survey data and qualitative insights from women residing in selected urban low-income neighborhoods. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and focused discussions to understand patterns of public toilet usage, accessibility issues, safety concerns, hygiene conditions, and associated health outcomes. The findings indicate that inadequate sanitation infrastructure, overcrowded public toilets, poor maintenance, lack of privacy, and safety concerns significantly affect women's health and wellbeing. Many respondents reported health problems such as urinary tract infections, reproductive health issues, and psychological stress due to delayed or restricted toilet use.

The study further highlights the intersection of gender, poverty, and urban infrastructure inequalities in shaping sanitation experiences. It argues that sanitation policies must move beyond infrastructure provision to include gender-sensitive design, regular maintenance, safety measures, and community participation. Strengthening public sanitation systems is essential not only for improving women's health but also for advancing urban dignity, gender equity, and inclusive public health governance. The findings contribute to ongoing debates on urban sanitation policy and gender-responsive urban planning in the Global South.



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sciforum-169045: Re-mapping the Algerian Mind: A Conceptual Engineering Approach to Gendered Metaphors and Evaluative Discourse (2019–2026)

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This study addresses the "hermeneutical injustice" in Algeria, where evolving social realities for women are constrained by a stagnant linguistic repertoire. While legal frameworks have modernized, the conceptual "software," specifically gendered metaphors, remains tethered to 19th-century restrictive archetypes. This research applied Conceptual Engineering and Cognitive Metaphor Theory to develop an ameliorative program, aiming to redesign metaphors that stifle female agency. Utilizing a mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design, the study first analyzed a 500,000-word digital corpus of Algerian media and social discourse (2019-2025) using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP). Secondly, twenty purposively sampled "conceptual stakeholders" (lawyers and activists) were interviewed to identify points of linguistic friction. Finally, an experimental framing survey was conducted with 100 stratified Algerian participants to test the "Acceptability Quotient" (AQ) of newly "grafted metaphors" compared to traditional restrictive frames. Corpus findings revealed a dominant mapping of "Woman as a Closed Container," which correlated with high social resistance to female mobility. However, the experimental phase demonstrated that "Grafted Metaphors," which re-mapped cultural values like H'urma (Honor) from "Spatial Enclosure" to "Bodily Integrity", achieved a significantly higher AQ ($p < .05$). Participants exposed to engineered agentic frames showed a 40% increase in the social acceptance of women's autonomy in professional and public spheres compared to those exposed to traditional frames. The results confirm that the "Failure of Importation" of Western feminist terms can be bypassed through indigenous conceptual refinement. The study concludes that "software-level" linguistic intervention is a prerequisite for the efficacy of legal "hardware" reforms. This research provides a scalable framework for normative linguistics in post-colonial contexts, proving that re-engineering the conceptual lexicon can effectively expand the boundaries of social imagination.



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sciforum-176726: Rethinking the Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Sociological Study of the Gender and Familial Relations in Chinese Pentecostalism

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This study aims to explore the gender and familial relations in the power structure in Chinese Pentecostalism. Since its emergence in North America in the early twentieth century, Pentecostalism, a form of Christianity with a distinctive emphasis on the Spirit-filled/empowered religious experiences, has rapidly grown in the Global South. What surprises scholars is the formation and development of the interdisciplinary study of Pentecostalism worldwide, which is now known as Pentecostal studies. In particular, gender has long been a debated theme in global Pentecostal scholarship.

One of the dominant discourses is Bernice Martin's thesis of Pentecostal gender paradox, which points out an ambiguity of gender's role in shaping patriarchy, empowerment, and domestication in the Pentecostal ecclesiastical power relations, particularly evident in the Global South. However, the theoretical transferability of this thesis to the case of Chinese Pentecostalism remains doubtful. The question of how Chinese sociocultural contextuality shapes and reshapes the gender and familial relations in Chinese Pentecostalism remains ambiguous and thus needs to be addressed.

This study adopts a five-year ethnography of Chinese Pentecostal churches in Hong Kong through participant observation, formal interviews, casual conversations, and the collection and analysis of literature. The study is grounded on the interpretative sociological framework of social Confucianism, informed by Ambrose Yeo-Chi King. The author argues that this sociocultural contextuality plays a critical role in shaping the power relations in Chinese Pentecostal churches. This study also challenges the inherent interpretation of the Pentecostal ecclesiastical power structure through a gender lens and argues for a contextual interpretation of the Pentecostal ecclesiastical power relations that emphasizes symbolic paternalism through a symbolic familial lens. This study envisages contributing to the social scientific study of Pentecostalism by revisiting the existing Pentecostal theory and adopting the Chinese sociological theory that sheds light on the possibility of a new interpretation.



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sciforum-172629: Taking 'Pinterest' Seriously: Unpacking the Disciplinary Construction of Femininity in Digital Popular Culture

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This paper critically examines the pervasive influence of contemporary "aesthetic culture" within digital popular culture on social media in reshaping modern womanhood, where femininity is performed and disciplined. Specifically, the study investigates how three interconnected micro-trends: the "Clean Girl" aesthetic, "Matcha Girlie," and "Stanley Cup" culture construct a new form of femininity that frames rigorous self-regulation as empowering self-expression.

Drawing on critical feminist theory, including concepts of disciplinary power (Foucault and Bartky), postfeminist sensibility (Gill), neoliberal feminism (Rottenberg), and commodity feminism (Goldman), this research argues that this digital landscape constitutes a "Disciplined Aesthetic". This architecture regulates women's bodies by internalizing the social media gaze, turning self-surveillance into a pleasurable act of self-care. Through an empirical analysis of Instagram reels and TikTok content, the paper demonstrates how documented routines such as the "6 AM morning routine" and specific consumption habits are codified as moral virtues and markers of success.

The paper concludes that these trends function as a postfeminist and neoliberal disciplinary regime. By translating political needs into psychological imperatives for "confidence" and "wellness," they effectively depoliticize feminist discourse. Ultimately, these aesthetics redirect female ambition away from structural critique and toward individualised, profit-driven self-management, reinforcing the status quo of late-stage capitalism where identity is reduced to marketable products and women are defined by what they buy rather than who they are



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sciforum-171324: The Intersection of Environmental Crime and Human Trafficking: Issues of Gender and Corruption

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Introduction: This article describes the nexus of environmental crimes and human trafficking with particular emphasis on how these issues are interwoven, most notably through environmental migration, and serve to exacerbate each other. Two compounding threads woven throughout these issues are corrupt practices and issues of gender. In reference to gender, women and girls experience both trafficking and environmental destruction in different, and often more brutal ways than their male counterparts and thus any policy aimed to counter these crimes needs to be explicitly gender-based.

Methods: Derived from an extensive literature review, this article provides an overview of the crime of human trafficking, a discussion of the growing body of research examining the cyclical relationship between environmental crimes and human trafficking and how both issues of gender and corruption are embedded in this nexus. Included is a discussion of the policies and regulations that, as prior research has found, fail to address the feedback loop between environmental crime and trafficking, which only serves to compound both crimes.

Results: The primary findings highlight the cyclical nature of environmental degradation and human trafficking, the ways in which women and girls are disproportionate effected and the resulting policy implications.

Conclusions: The article concludes with policy implications highlighted in previous research that focus on recognizing and addressing the global issues of environmental degradation and human trafficking in tandem rather than in silos that are also gender-based and support the unique needs of women and girls who are most vulnerable to these crimes.



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sciforum-173981: The Sunlight Tax and Brahminical Biopolitics: Everyday Spatial Resistance of Trans Homemaking in Delhi

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“In Delhi, we pay extra for the privilege of not moldering.” This observation, offered by a transmasculine collaborator of my research, names what I theorize as the “sunlight tax”—a biopolitical calculus where access to light, air, and safe habitation is rationed by the intertwined logics of caste, capital, and cis-heteropatriarchy. Through this paper, I map how everyday spatial inequalities are not accidental by-products of a disorganized rental market, but engineered outcomes of what I term Brahminical biopolitic. I use this framework to employ Foucault’s analysis of state power alongside Ambedkar’s indictment of caste spatiality in revealing the colonial and Brahminical orders that converge to pathologize trans bodies. I argue that this renders trans lives perpetually on the margins of the habitable city.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, life histories, and participatory research with 12 transmasculine individuals in South Delhi’s margins, this paper traces how everyday inequalities accumulate across scales: the body, the rental room, the street, the city. State mechanisms of nominal inclusion, such as the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (2019) and the Garima Greh shelter homes, are shown to function as carceral rather than caring spaces, enforcing discretion, selective penalization, and temporal tolerability over permanence. These are not failures of policy but its logics: who is stopped, who is policed, whose informal dwelling is razed, and whose precarity is rendered invisible are all questions written by caste and produced through colonial continuities.

Yet against this violent cartography, trans individuals engineer improvised sovereignties: forging kinship networks that function as urban infrastructure, reclaiming otherwise “unruly” spaces as heterotopias of compensation, and transforming their cramped rentals into nodes of community care. This paper contends that these acts of queer homemaking constitute a living counter-cartography, which is a practice of spatial abundance that maps a right to the city from the discarded fragments.



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sciforum-158011: Tracking Gender Parity in Global Climate Governance: Evidence from the UNFCCC Gender Composition Report (2025)

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Achieving gender parity in global climate governance remains a crucial component of equitable and effective policymaking. Drawing on the *Gender Composition Report 2025* (FCCC/CP/2025/4) prepared by the UNFCCC Secretariat, this paper analyses official data from COP 29 (CMP 19/CMA 6) and the subsidiary body sessions (SB 62) to assess progress toward gender balance in climate decision-making. The findings reveal incremental but measurable improvement: women accounted for 37.8 per cent of Party delegates at COP 29—an increase of 1.8 percentage points compared with 2024—and 32.3 per cent of heads and deputy heads of delegation, representing a 4.8 percentage point gain. Notably, the SB 62 June sessions achieved full gender balance among Party delegates, with 53.2 per cent female representation. Across UNFCCC constituted bodies, 7 of 17 achieved gender balance, and overall female representation averaged 40 per cent—up from 39 per cent in 2024. Two case studies embedded in the report underscore a broader trend toward inclusivity: gender-balanced side-event panels rose from 20 per cent (COP 26) to 39 per cent (COP 29), while comparable subsidiary-body panels increased from 28 per cent (SB 56) to 53 per cent (SB 62). Together, these patterns indicate that institutional commitments—such as the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan—are translating into measurable gains. The paper situates these developments within social-science frameworks of gender equity, representation, and global policy learning, with particular emphasis on progress in the Global South.



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sciforum-176878: Who Names Women's *Chuzou* (departure)? Nora, Digital Media, and the Revival of a Cultural Keyword in China

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In recent years, the story of Su Min, a middle-aged Chinese woman who left an unhappy marriage and began documenting her solo road trips on social media, has circulated widely across Chinese digital platforms. Almost immediately, online commentators framed her action as an instance of “chuzou” (出走) which literally means “walking out,” but which also carries connotations of escape, breaking free, and refusal. This study argues that the rapid attachment of this label reveals the persistence of *chuzou* as a cultural keyword in contemporary Chinese discourse. Drawing on Raymond Williams' concept of “keywords”, this study examines how it condenses layered literary memories, feminist aspirations, and ongoing social anxieties surrounding gender, family, and mobility.

Historically, *chuzou* is deeply embedded in modern Chinese cultural history, most famously associated with debates over “Nora's departure” following the Chinese reception of *A Doll's House* early 20th century. Since then, this figure has served as a powerful symbol in discussions of women's emancipation. In contemporary digital culture, however, the term has been revived in new ways. *Chuzou* increasingly operates as a flexible interpretive label through which online users frame diverse acts of female mobility, from leaving marriages to rejecting filial expectations, including viral online discussions such as the so-called “unfilial daughter's departure” during the 2026 Spring Festival.

Based on a qualitative discourse analysis of social media posts, comment threads, and related online discussions, this study traces how *chuzou* travels across literary, cultural, and digital contexts. It shows how online publics rely on historically sedimented cultural vocabulary to interpret contemporary social events; how a historically rooted feminist term has become a shared interpretive frame through which internet users debate women's mobility, family obligations, and the legitimacy of leaving marriage in contemporary China.



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sciforum-168714: Women Day Labourers Menstrual Health Behavior in the Construction Sites Area of ‘Uposahar’, Sylhet

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The aim of this research is to determine the perceived susceptibility to health risks of the women day laborers, understand their perceived severity regarding menstrual health, and assess the coping strategies they use when facing menstrual problems. In construction sites, working women are at high risk of various health concerns due to hazardous working environments. Compared to general occupational risks, female construction workers face additional health and safety difficulties due to inadequate facilities, lack of clean toilets, and the high cost of menstrual products. This research used primary data gathered from informal interviews, in-depth interviews, case studies, a key-informant interview, and group discussions. The Uposahar B and C block construction sites were selected as the study area. The study population included 55 women workers; among them, 14 in-depth interviews were conducted purposively using a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire. Interviews were carried out face-to-face and audio recorded where possible, and later the data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis in line with research questions and literature review, where secondary data were collected from related literature, journals, and websites. Before menarche, women construction workers had no information about menstruation, and they had limited knowledge about menstruation and menstrual hygiene; they wore clothes during periods instead of sanitary napkins, which can lead to health problems. Moreover, they often use the same cloth throughout the day during their periods, which increases their susceptibility to illnesses. Menstrual cramps, itching, urinary problems, and skin infections were commonly regarded as normal during menstruation. The majority of the workers are unaware of the importance of hygienic menstrual practices. Additionally, there are many misunderstandings about menstruation among women workers even after menarche. These findings indicate that low perceived susceptibility and low perceived severity of menstrual health problems contribute to unhygienic practices and ineffective coping strategies among women day laborers.



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Session 4. Family Studies

sciforum-170001: Family Responsibility as a Moral Process: Internalization, Self-Surveillance, and Role Strain

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Introduction: In many societies, care and support responsibilities are primarily located within the family rather than formal welfare systems, rendering family responsibility a moralized and self-governing obligation. While prior research has examined normative expectations surrounding family responsibility, limited attention has been given to the internal moral processes through which such expectations become psychologically consequential. Drawing on theories of moral regulation and self-governance, this study conceptualizes family responsibility as a sequential moral process involving perceived family normative pressure, internalization of moral obligation, and moral self-surveillance.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among working-age adults in Pakistan (N = 370). Standardized measures were used to assess perceived family normative pressure, moral obligation internalization, moral self-surveillance, behavioral self-regulation, and moral role strain. Structural equation modeling was employed to test the hypothesized sequential relationships among these constructs and to examine both direct and indirect effects.

Results: Perceived family normative pressure was positively associated with moral obligation internalization, which in turn significantly predicted moral self-surveillance. Moral self-surveillance was positively related to both behavioral self-regulation and moral role strain, indicating a dual outcome of moral self-governance. Indirect effects supported the sequential mediation model.

Conclusion: The findings conceptualize family responsibility as a dynamic moral process rather than a simple normative influence. The study highlights the ambivalent consequences of moral self-governance, demonstrating that the same internal regulatory mechanism can simultaneously produce disciplined behavior and psychological strain.



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sciforum-177035: Caregiver-Child Relational Play Interactions and the Emergence of Social-Emotional Learning in Community Learning Spaces

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Introduction

Social-emotional learning (SEL) begins long before formal schooling and develops through children's dynamic exchanges with caregivers and their social contexts. However, less attention has been given to how caregivers support children's emerging SEL through play in informal community learning environments and how they understand their role in that process.

Methods

Guided by a relational developmental systems perspective and contemporary SEL frameworks, this qualitative study addresses this need by collecting data through structured naturalistic observations and semi-structured interviews with 32 caregiver–child dyads during visits to a children's museum in a large southern U.S. city. Observation and interview data were coded and analyzed thematically.

Results

Three themes were identified. First, caregivers frequently engaged in emotion coaching and co-regulation during play, acting as emotional supports and secure relational bases as children navigated challenges, frustration, and excitement. Second, museum exhibits functioned as social practice sites where caregivers scaffolded children's participation in peer interactions, including sharing, turn-taking, and collaborative play. Third, and notably, interviews revealed that caregivers seldom identified these moments as SEL opportunities, leaving untapped potential for more intentional SEL support.

Conclusion

This study contributes to informal learning and early childhood social-emotional development research by revealing the alignment and disconnect between caregivers' practices and their understanding of SEL. Findings suggest that museum exhibit design and family engagement initiatives can more intentionally activate caregivers as facilitators of children's social-emotional learning during everyday informal play.



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sciforum-177103: Demographic and Epidemiological Transitions and Their Implications for Family Support in Brunei Darussalam

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Introduction:

Brunei Darussalam has undergone a rapid demographic and epidemiological transition characterised by declining fertility, increased life expectancy, and a shift from infectious diseases to chronic non-communicable conditions. While these transitions are often examined through macro-level demographic and health indicators, their implications for family systems and intergenerational support structures remain less frequently explored. This study examines how these transitions impact family support systems in Brunei, drawing on a demographic transition and intergenerational support framework situated within the welfare diamond to examine shifts in the roles of family, state, market and community in caregiving.

Methods:

This study draws on secondary analysis and synthesis of national census data, mortality trends, population projections and local studies from Brunei to examine changes in demographic structure and disease patterns. The analysis focuses on their implications for family support and caregiving arrangements, and intergenerational dynamics within households.

Results:

The analysis highlights several intersecting dynamics affecting families. Sustained low fertility and shrinking household size reduce the number of adult children available to support ageing parents, contributing to a rising old-age dependency ratio. Increased longevity, combined with a growing burden of chronic disease extends the duration and complexity of caregiving, particularly for conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and dementia. Gendered patterns of widowhood and increased female workforce participation reshape traditional caregiving expectations within households. The presence of a large temporary migrant workforce further produces a demographic duality in which the overall population appears demographically younger, while citizen families age more rapidly.

Conclusions:

These demographic and epidemiological changes are transforming family roles, intergenerational reciprocity, and caregiving arrangements in Brunei. By integrating local demographic and epidemiological data with a family-centred analytic lens, this study highlights pressures on the family as the primary care provider within the welfare diamond. As families become smaller and chronic illness more prevalent, the sustainability of family-based care systems warrants further scrutiny. The experience of Brunei illustrates how rapid transitions can reshape family support structures in small, rapidly modernising societies, offering insights for other ageing populations undergoing similar social and demographic change.



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sciforum-173955: Divorce Dynamics and Attitudes Toward Divorce in Southern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Greece, Italy, Spain, and France

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Introduction:

Divorce has risen across Europe since the 1970s, yet Southern European countries have long exhibited lower levels than many Western settings. This study compares divortiality patterns and attitudes toward divorce in Greece, Italy, Spain, and France, examining how institutional context, cohort change, and values interact. France is included not as a normative benchmark nor as a proxy for “Western Europe,” but as a theoretically relevant contrast case with a distinct historical and institutional trajectory.

Methods:

We combine (i) official divorce and marriage statistics by marriage duration from the European Divorce Observatory (EDO), the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), Eurostat, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística – Spain (INE), the Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques – France (INSEE), and the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica – Italy (ISTAT) to compute the Total Divorce Rate (TDR) and median duration at divorce (France 1952–2016; Italy 1971–2022; Greece 1972–2023; Spain 1981–2022); and (ii) individual-level data from the European Values Study 2017, accessed via the Longitudinal and Demographic Survey (LADS, 2018) (pooled N=8,494). Unconditional acceptance is defined as reporting that divorce “always justifies” (10/10). Analyses include descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, binary logistic regression, and tree-based machine learning models (Random Forest, XGBoost, LightGBM, CatBoost) with feature-importance and SHAP diagnostics.

Results:

Since 2010, divorce affected about 46% of marriages in France and 49% in Spain, compared with 27% in Italy and 28% in Greece. Unconditional acceptance is highest in France (36.5%) and Spain (32.9%) and lower in Greece (25.5%) and Italy (23.4%). Acceptance declines with age ($\approx 1.1\%$ lower odds per year) and is lower among men, the religious, and the married or widowed, while higher among those viewing marriage as outdated. Random Forest achieved high recall (0.87), and both RF and XGBoost identify age and religiosity as dominant predictors.

Conclusions:

Divorce behaviour and attitudes are shaped by cohort dynamics and institutional change, supporting a reciprocal values–behaviour interpretation of family change across Southern Europe and the French contrast case.



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sciforum-177088: Do Family Ties Matter for Volunteerism in Later Life? Evidence From Asian Midlife and Older Adults and Other Ethnoracial Groups

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Introduction. Volunteerism in later life is often explained by socioeconomic resources, but family relationships may also shape whether and how older adults engage in unpaid helping activities. This study examined whether family-related factors help explain differences in formal and informal volunteerism between Asian midlife and older adults and other ethnoracial groups in the United States. **Methods.** Data were drawn from pooled 2004-2020 waves of the Health and Retirement Study, using a cross-sectional sample of adults aged 50 to 75. Logistic regression models estimated the odds of formal and informal volunteerism across ethnoracial groups, with Asians as the reference group. Models first adjusted for demographic characteristics (e.g., health, education), and then added family-related factors, including family network composition, household size, contact with family members, financial support, and positive and negative emotional support. **Results.** More frequent contact with family members was associated with higher odds of both formal (OR = 1.197, p .01) and informal volunteerism (OR = 1.342, p .001). In contrast, negative emotional support from family, such as criticism, excessive demands, or feeling let down by relatives, was associated with lower odds of both formal (OR = .294, p .05) and informal volunteerism (OR = .219, p .01). Larger household size was also associated with lower odds of informal volunteerism (OR = .686, p .01). However, even after accounting for these family-related factors, differences between Asians and Whites remained significant for both formal (OR = 1.635, p .05) and informal volunteerism (OR = 1.782, p .01). **Conclusion.** These findings suggest that family relationships are relevant to volunteerism in later life, but do not fully explain ethnoracial differences involving Asians. Policies aimed at promoting volunteer engagement should therefore take family context into account, particularly when designing outreach and support strategies for diverse ethnoracial groups.



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sciforum-168229: Exploring Bullying-Inducing Behaviors in Parenting: A Phenomenological Study in Virginia

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Introduction

Bullying remains a pervasive public health and social problem worthy of prevention at its core. While experts continually demonstrate the importance of microsystems in a child's life, primarily as models of appropriate social behavior, many prevention efforts focus instead on school-based interventions. Compared with other approaches, little attention has been given to parenting behaviors as a bullying prevention. This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of parents who exhibit characteristics of *bullying-inducing behaviors in parenting*. *Bullying-inducing behaviors*, a new term among bullying literature, refer to higher levels of authoritarian and/or permissive parenting behaviors. This study expands the definition of parenting using bullying-inducing behaviors as a parenting style characterized by excessively aggressive and less nurturing behaviors toward children, unclear rules, high expectations, and extreme punishments for mistakes (high-authoritarian), or minimal expectations for behavior, no guidelines for behaviors, and lack of boundaries (Broll & Reynolds, 2021; West & Yockey, 2024; Butts, 2024).

Methods

A purposeful sample of 15-20 parents or guardians from Virginia community service organizations will participate in a two-phase data collection process that includes the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) to select a high-authoritarian sample, as well as semi-structured interviews. Parents and guardians who score a mean of 2.4 in the PSDQ will be invited to participate in the interview process. Dates, times, locations, and/or video conferencing software will be at the discretion of the respondent. Data will be analyzed using Creswell and Poth's five-step phenomenological method to identify significant statements and emergent themes.

Results and Anticipated Conclusions

Results are pending the completion of respondent screening and semi-structured interviews. Projected findings include a deeper understanding of lived experiences of parents who use bullying-inducing parenting behaviors, as well as individual, familial, social, and cultural factors that contribute to childhood bullying, and informed prevention strategies.



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sciforum-168351: Family Dynamics in the United Kingdom and Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis of Structure, Roles, and Socio-Cultural Change

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Introduction

Family is a key social institution that shapes identity, socialization, emotional wellbeing, and economic stability. In different societies, family systems are affected by cultural traditions, religious norms, socio-economic structures, and policy frameworks.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative comparative research design based on a systematic review of secondary data. By analyzing academic literature, national policy documents, and demographic reports, the analysis highlights cross-national trends in family development. The methodology is rooted in structural-functionalism, feminist theory, and modernization theories, enabling a multi-layered interpretation of social change. This approach provides a thorough evaluation of how cultural and legislative factors shape evolving household structures, balancing broad statistical trends with detailed sociological insights.

Results

The findings show clear differences between family systems in the United Kingdom and Pakistan, with some areas gradually becoming more similar. The UK mainly features nuclear and diverse family types influenced by individualism and government welfare systems. In contrast, Pakistan still prioritizes extended family living, although middle-class urban families are increasingly adopting nuclear arrangements. Gender equality policies and participation in the workforce have changed traditional gender roles in the UK, encouraging shared caregiving duties. In Pakistan, gender roles remain more traditional and patriarchal, even though women's educational and economic involvement is growing.

Conclusions

Family systems in the UK and Pakistan reflect different historical paths, yet both are changing due to globalization, migration, and economic shifts.



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sciforum-157074: From Mothers to Children: Intergenerational Returns to Education

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Introduction

This study examines the intergenerational effects of maternal education on early childhood development in Turkey. The analysis is grounded in human capital theory and models of intergenerational transmission, which posit that parental education shapes child outcomes through investments, preferences, and resource allocation. In particular, the mechanism analysis is theoretically grounded by the human capital transmission framework of Currie and Moretti (2003), which highlights resource-based and preference-based channels. The 1997 Turkish Compulsory Schooling Law (CSL), which extended mandatory education from five to eight years, provides exogenous variation in maternal schooling to test these theoretical predictions.

Method

Using the 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS), the study implements a sharp regression discontinuity design (RDD) based on the January 1987 birth cutoff determining CSL exposure. The running variable is month–year of birth, and local linear regressions with optimal bandwidth selection estimate the causal impact of policy-induced maternal education on children's sociocognitive and physical outcomes. To explain the observed effects, the mechanism analysis operationalizes the resource and preference channels by examining: (i) maternal health behaviors and knowledge; (ii) parenting practices; (iii) household financial resources; and (iv) fertility behaviors.

Results

Increased maternal education improves children's sociocognitive skills and physical health, reducing stunting and increasing birth weight and better antropometric scores. Sociocognitive gains are concentrated among rural-origin mothers, while physical improvements are stronger among urban-origin mothers. Effects are amplified when maternal grandmothers are educated. The mechanisms appear to operate primarily through improvements in maternal health behaviors and knowledge—such as earlier and higher-quality prenatal care and greater exposure to informational resources—and through enhanced parenting practices, particularly substantial reductions in child neglect and more attentive supervision.

Conclusion

Policy-driven expansions in female education generate substantial intergenerational returns. By identifying the theoretical channels through which maternal schooling affects child development, the study highlights how educational reforms shape long-run human capital formation across generations.



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sciforum-167391: Growing Within the Family: Adolescents' Views on Family Functioning and Psychological Well-Being

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Introduction: Grounded in a family systems perspective, family functioning is considered a key determinant of adolescents' psychological well-being during this critical developmental stage. However, empirical evidence based on adolescents' own perceptions remains limited in primary health care settings. This study aimed to examine the association between perceived family functionality and psychological well-being among early adolescents.

Methods: A quantitative, descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional study was conducted in a Family Health Unit in northern Portugal using convenience sampling. The sample comprised 48 adolescents aged 11 to 13 years. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire including sociodemographic variables, the Smilkstein Family APGAR, and the reduced version of the Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire (QGBEP-R). Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to explore associations between variables.

Results: Most participants perceived their families as highly functional (77.1%), and psychological well-being scores were above the midpoint of the scale (mean = 20.3). Adolescents whose parents lived together and younger participants reported significantly higher perceived family functionality and psychological well-being. A positive and statistically significant association was identified between family functionality and psychological well-being.

Conclusions: The findings suggest that adolescents' perceptions of family functionality are positively associated with their psychological well-being. Although the small convenience sample limits generalizability, the results provide preliminary evidence supporting the relevance of assessing family dynamics from the adolescent's perspective and may inform family-centered nursing interventions in primary care settings.



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sciforum-172206: Intersecting Social Risks and Family Functioning: Empirical Evidence from North Macedonia

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Family structures and functioning are profoundly shaped by broader social conditions, particularly in contexts marked by economic instability and social transition. This paper examines the impact of social problems such as extreme poverty, addictions, migration, prostitution and violence on family organization, roles, and relational dynamics, with specific reference to North Macedonia. It draws on the results from a mixed methodology empirical research carried out in 2025 with an objective to analyse social risks faced by biological families in North Macedonia as reasons for child separation and placement into alternative care. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data from Centres for Social Work with qualitative data from focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Sampling was purposive and stratified by region and stakeholder group to ensure representation across all eight statistical regions in North Macedonia and key target populations. The total sample included 16 Centres for Social Work (53% coverage), 34 professionals, 79 children, and 59 parents and foster carers. The presentation of findings is based on individual and family narratives for more authentic and nuanced understanding of their lived experiences.

The study demonstrates how structural vulnerabilities shape family functioning in a post-socialist, economically stratified society. Unemployment, income inequality, and regional disparities—especially in rural and marginalized communities—produce chronic stress and poverty, leading to parental strain and disrupted caregiving. Addictions, including alcohol, gambling, and drug use, intensify conflict and financial instability. Labor migration reshapes family structures, affecting supervision, emotional bonds, and gender roles. Prostitution, trafficking, and domestic violence further undermine well-being and social inclusion. These risks interact cumulatively, increasing family fragility. The paper calls for integrated policies and services addressing poverty, addiction, and stronger protection mechanisms against violence.



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sciforum-170070: Needs of Children of Parents with Mental Illness—An Exploration of Adult Offspring's Perspectives

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Introduction: Living with a parent with mental illness can bring up unique challenges. Children living with parental mental illness are considered a high-risk group for developing mental illness. The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of adult offspring of a parent with severe mental illness (SMI) on the needs of children (0-18 years). **Methods:** We conducted 5 in-depth interviews with young caregivers aged between 19 and 25 years with a parent diagnosed with SMI, receiving treatment from a tertiary mental health institute in Assam, Northeast India. Based on their experience of growing up as a child of a parent with SMI, they were asked to reflect on the needs of children whose parent has been diagnosed with a mental illness. Atlas Ti software was used to generate codes and for thematic analysis. **Results:** Findings are discussed under the following five themes: (i) Support towards managing early responsibilities, (ii) Managing normal education and life trajectories, (iii) Stigma and its role in their lives, (iv) Enhancement of knowledge of parental mental illness, (v) Management of Distress. **Conclusion:** Findings underscore the need to include the perspectives of child/young adult caregivers in family interventions to address their needs and support comprehensive mental health service delivery.



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sciforum-174080: Predictive Child Protection: Can AI Justify State Intervention in “High-Risk” Families?

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Across multiple jurisdictions, governments are increasingly adopting artificial intelligence tools to predict child neglect, abuse, and family instability. While proponents argue that predictive analytics improves efficiency and protects vulnerable children, critics warn that such systems may reinforce structural inequalities and expand intrusive state surveillance of marginalized families. This paper critically examines the use of AI-driven risk assessment tools in child welfare policy, with particular attention to their implications for family autonomy, privacy, and social justice.

The study adopts a **qualitative comparative approach**, drawing on secondary data and policy documents from predictive child protection systems in the United States, while situating the analysis within broader debates on family policy and emerging digital governance contexts such as Nigeria. Through document analysis and case-based comparison, it examines how algorithmic risk models are designed, implemented, and integrated into decision-making processes within child welfare institutions.

Findings suggest that AI systems do not operate neutrally; rather, they reproduce existing socio-economic biases embedded in administrative data, particularly those related to poverty, race, and family structure. By categorizing families as “high-risk,” these systems tend to intensify monitoring of already disadvantaged communities, while diverting attention from structural drivers of vulnerability such as unemployment, housing insecurity, and weak social protection systems.

The paper addresses three central questions: (1) Does predictive AI enhance child welfare outcomes, or does it expand punitive surveillance under the guise of protection? (2) How does algorithmic risk scoring reshape the relationship between families and the state? (3) To what extent can regulatory frameworks mitigate discriminatory outcomes without constraining innovation?

By bridging family studies, public policy, and digital governance, this paper challenges the assumption that technological efficiency equates to ethical legitimacy. It concludes that the future of family policy will depend on how societies balance child protection objectives with data governance standards and the preservation of fundamental family rights, particularly in emerging policy environments such as Nigeria.



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sciforum-171186: Remote Work, Family Integration, and Employee Well-Being: Unpacking the Role of Work-Life Balance and Team Communication

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Technological changes have led to a new work and life integration dynamic due to the emergence of telework. This paper critically evaluates how telework has affected the work-life balance and the well-being of the employees with reference to supportive team communication. Using the Social Exchange Theory and Boundary Theory, the study examines how remote work affects the capacity of employees to achieve work and family balance and consequently the outcome of life satisfaction. Based on a sample size of 300 IT industry employees in Pakistan, the research design is cross-sectional, quantitative. The structured, self-administered online survey was used as the approach to gathering data on the basis of a convenience sampling method. In a bid to promote methodological rigor, SPSS Macros Process by Hayes was used to test the mediation and moderation models.

The results indicate the presence of a strong positive correlation between telework and work-life balance, and they result in an improved life satisfaction. Moreover, the beneficial effect of telework on life satisfaction is greatly moderated by team supportive communication, emphasizing the role of organizational support in teleworking. This is an indication that the well-being of employees is enhanced by telework when there is a good team support. The paper also focuses on the intermediary role of the work-life balance in the telework-life satisfaction relationship which highlights the value of promoting favorable work environments. The research can contribute to the discussion of work-life integration, as well as provide work implications to organizations, by implementing policies that lead to improved communication among the team that can optimally benefit telework in terms of employee well-being and performance.



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sciforum-173182: The emotional burden on families supporting children with ADHD at school

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Introduction: Supporting children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at school involves constant family supervision, which can affect the emotional well-being of caregivers. This study examines factors associated with this emotional burden in the context of school support, focusing on family experiences.

Method: A cross-sectional study was conducted using an online questionnaire administered to 205 caregivers of children with ADHD residing in Spain. Participants were recruited through a non-probabilistic convenience sampling procedure via family associations and online networks in Spain. Although this constitutes a limitation and the sample is not representative of the wider population, the participation of 205 caregivers provides a sufficiently robust basis to offer insights into the topic under study. Six indicators were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (1-5), focusing on (i) help with schoolwork, (ii) the emotional impact of the children's behavior, (iii) attributions concerning ADHD-related difficulties, (iv) frustration with tasks, (v) perceived teacher support, and (vi) extracurricular support. Given the ordinal nature of the variables, descriptive statistics were calculated using medians (Md) and quartile deviations (QD). Descriptive statistics and Spearman correlations with correction for multiple comparisons (FDR) were calculated.

Results: Findings showed high levels of family involvement in the children's schooling (Md= 4.33; QD= 0.33), accompanied by a school-related experience perceived as moderately demanding (Md= 3.33; QD= 0.50). Caregivers' emotional burden was associated with attributions concerning ADHD-related difficulties and with children's frustration regarding schoolwork. These results suggest that families' interpretations of children's academic difficulties play an important role in caregivers' emotional well-being.

Conclusions: Emotional burden among families is associated with the children's frustration and with attributions concerning ADHD-related difficulties, suggesting that how families interpret these experiences plays a fundamental role in their emotional well-being. These findings highlight the need for interventions that not only address the children's educational needs but also incorporate specific strategies aimed at supporting families' emotional well-being.



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sciforum-173768: The Importance of the Multidisciplinary Team in Social Work with Families

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Abstract

Social services in Bulgaria are increasingly oriented toward a family-centered and multidisciplinary approach. In this context, role clarity—defined as clarity of professional duties and responsibilities—is a key organizational prerequisite for effective collaboration within teams providing support to service users and their families.

This study aims to examine the level of clarity of professional responsibilities among specialists in multidisciplinary teams, according to their job position and target groups.

Materials and Methods

An online survey was conducted among 316 professionals from social services and Regional Directorates of the Social Assistance Agency in Central and Southeastern Bulgaria, in accordance with the principles of voluntariness and confidentiality. The questionnaire addressed role clarity, alignment between education and job duties, and preferred forms of additional training. Participants included social workers, psychologists, educators, therapists, nurses, and other specialists working with various user groups. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and ANOVA. Associations between categorical variables were examined through cross-tabulations in SPSS.

Results

Most participants (97%) report high role clarity, but distortions may arise from the self-assessment nature of the data and differing understandings of “clarity.” Simultaneously, a weak but statistically significant negative relationship exists between the need for training and the subjective clarity of responsibilities ($r = -0.238$, $p = 0.05$), as well as between intentions to change jobs and responsibility clarity ($r = -0.216$, $p = 0.05$). A statistically significant effect of the need for training ($F = 15.36$, $p = 0.05$) and the intention to change jobs ($F = 5.39$, $p = 0.05$) on the subjective clarity of responsibilities was also found. These results indicate that, despite the high reported level of clarity, factors emphasize the importance of professional development for improving service quality.

Conclusion

Clarity of roles is an important prerequisite for the effective distribution of tasks in multidisciplinary teams. The study shows a practical need to improve the qualifications of employees, which contributes to effective and high-quality support for service users and their families.



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sciforum-173980: The Invisible Burden, A Qualitative Study of Inflation's Impact on Children in Low-Income Families

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Introduction

Inflation is the biggest growing concern which not only make daily commodities expensive for people it also impacts their social and psychological well-being. Karachi is the biggest metropolitan city of Pakistan, that houses around 18.5 million. Nearly 70% of the city is troubled with inflation. This study aims to explore multifaceted effects of inflation and economic instability on emotional and psychological well-being and prospects of children in low-income families in urban slums of Karachi.

Methods

Using a **qualitative approach** rooted in **interpretive phenomenology**, case study interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of participants lived experiences across multiple urban slums of Karachi, Pakistan. Data is gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews of both parents and children of twenty-five different households to analyse a dyadic perspective on increased household stress due to inflation. The study focuses on the struggles of both parents and children in making up for everyday expenses with their limited wages and its effects on their mental and emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, it focuses on the assessment of children to trail down the effects of family dynamics. The data were analysed using **thematic analysis**, focusing on variables such as, household size and income, children working age, and domestic relational dynamics.

Results

Key findings of the study highlighted the problems children are facing in low-income groups. With parents hardly earning enough to make it past each day. Children are expected to contribute to the households from a very early age, which results in discontinuation of their education. Working does not only make them do hard work they are exposed to societal dangers too. Healthcare is negligible and illness becomes a financial burden. Multidimensional poverty in these families shakes the entire environment of the household; daily quarrels, distressed yelling and verbal and physical outburst of family members on children showed visible signs of stress, anxiety and social withdrawal.

Conclusion

The study concludes that inflation imposes a profound and visible burden on the lives of children in Karachi which extends beyond material deprivation to psychological wellbeing. The findings emphasize upon the need for targeted social protection policies, inflation indexed child support programs.



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sciforum-176306: The Overlooked Role of Fathers' Mental Health: Evidence from Feature Selection Using National Data

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Introduction

While the relationship between parental health and children's well-being has received increasing attention, the role of fathers' mental health in shaping young children's mental health remains underexplored. This study examines the association between fathers' perceived mental health status and the perceived mental health of children using nationally representative survey data.

Methods

Data were drawn from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS), a large-scale national survey of U.S. families and individuals. The sample included 7,685 children aged 2–7 years and their fathers. The outcome variable, children's perceived mental health status, was recoded into a binary variable representing optimal versus suboptimal mental health. Covariates included children's demographic characteristics, health conditions, and family socioeconomic factors, as well as fathers' health status, education level, employment status, and other family characteristics.

Feature selection was conducted using the Boruta algorithm with 10-fold cross-validation to identify the most relevant predictors of children's mental health. Based on the feature selection results, weighted binary logistic regression models were conducted to examine the relationships between selected variables and children's mental health outcomes.

Results

Results indicated that fathers' perceived mental health, fathers' health status, family income, children's health status, presence of medical conditions, and child age were among the most important predictors. Children whose fathers reported suboptimal mental health were significantly more likely to experience suboptimal mental health themselves.

Conclusions

These findings highlight the importance of considering paternal well-being within family-centered approaches to children's mental health. The presentation also invites dialogue and potential cross-national collaborations to examine similar relationships across different cultural and policy contexts.



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sciforum-173776: The Social and Economic Burden of Alzheimer's Disease on Family Households

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Alzheimer's disease represents a growing global challenge not only for healthcare systems but also for families who assume primary caregiving responsibilities. Beyond its medical implications, the disease generates significant social and economic pressures that reshape household dynamics and long-term financial stability. This study explores the social and economic burden experienced by families caring for individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Using a socio-analytical approach based on secondary data and existing literature, the paper examines both direct costs (medical treatment, medication, specialized services) and indirect costs (loss of income, reduced working hours, emotional strain, and social isolation). Particular attention is given to the impact of informal caregiving on employment trajectories and gender disparities within households. The analysis highlights that families often compensate for insufficient institutional support by absorbing financial and emotional responsibilities, leading to increased vulnerability, especially in middle- and low-income households. The findings suggest that Alzheimer's disease should be addressed not solely as a medical condition but as a complex social issue requiring integrated public policy responses. Strengthening community-based services, financial assistance programs, and caregiver support mechanisms is essential to mitigate long-term social inequality and prevent economic marginalization. By framing Alzheimer's disease within a broader socio-economic context, this study contributes to ongoing discussions about sustainable social protection systems in aging societies.



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sciforum-174055: Union formalization, pregnancy support, and exclusive breastfeeding for six months among young mothers in Nairobi, Kenya

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Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life (EBF) is essential for infant survival and development, yet it remains challenging in low-income urban settings where mothers face substantial time and workload constraints. This study examines whether the degree of marital union formalization at time of pregnancy is associated with EBF among young mothers in Nairobi's informal settlements, and whether pregnancy-period support from partners and kin helps explain this association.

We use retrospective survey data from 1,203 mothers in Nairobi, Kenya. EBF is reconstructed from the reported timing of first introduction of any non-breastmilk liquids and solid/semi-solid foods. UF is measured on a 0–5 scale based on the timing of key union steps reached during pregnancy (e.g., co-residence, kin introductions, bridewealth-related steps, and formal ceremony). We estimate staged logistic regression models and mediation models in a potential-outcomes framework, interpreting mediation as an associative decomposition given the observational design.

Mothers in more formalized unions during pregnancy had higher odds of EBF for six months. UF was also associated with higher odds of receiving partner support during pregnancy, particularly help with household chores. Mediation analyses suggest a small indirect association through partner housework support, while most of the UF–EBF association remains unexplained by the measured support indicators. These findings highlight the relevance of pregnancy-period relationship contexts and partner engagement for understanding breastfeeding patterns in poor urban settings.



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Session 5. Society and Technology

sciforum-164508: Automation and Labour Market Restructuring in Viticulture: Evidence from DOCa Rioja (Spain)

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Introduction: Viticulture is undergoing rapid technological change, from harvest mechanisation to data-driven precision practices. In DOCa Rioja (Spain), sectoral innovation increasingly incorporates digital tools and artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives (e.g., the DATADOC project promoted by the regulatory council). While these innovations promise efficiency gains, they may also reshape rural labour markets and reinforce inequalities among producers and workers. This study examines how technologisation is transforming labour demand and workforce profiles in DOCa Rioja.

Methods: We conducted an exploratory mixed-methods case study. Quantitatively, we synthesised secondary evidence on agrarian employment dynamics and mechanisation, including an official series of agricultural Social Security affiliations in La Rioja (Jan 2009–Jul 2025) and sectoral indicators related to machinery adoption. We also compared indicative harvesting costs (manual vs. mechanical) using cost estimates reported for the region. Qualitatively, we carried out three semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders (a small vineyard owner, a seasonal worker, and an oenology student) to capture perceptions of adoption drivers, constraints and social impacts. Documentary analysis of institutional materials describing DATADOC and AI-enabled precision tools was used to contextualise the regional innovation agenda.

Results: Findings indicate labour reorganisation consistent with "creative destruction". Mechanical harvesting reduces operational costs (about EUR 260/ha vs. about EUR 480/ha for manual harvesting; approximately a 40% difference) and helps address seasonal labour scarcity, but it also displaces low-skilled manual tasks. At the same time, new profiles emerge (e.g., specialised machinery operators, agricultural remote-sensing technicians and vitivinicultural data analysts), with unequal access shaped by age, education and training opportunities. Adoption capacity is uneven: better-capitalised actors invest more easily, while smaller operators rely on external service providers.

Conclusions: Technological innovation in DOCa Rioja is not socially neutral. To avoid widening rural inequalities, innovation strategies should be coupled with workforce transition policies, including targeted training and inclusive access to precision-agriculture tools.



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sciforum-174009: Religion, Rights, and Responsibility: A Democratic Perspective

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Religious freedom endures as a foundational tenet of democratic governance, embodying both individual self-determination and collective ethical responsibility. This study employs a comparative, interdisciplinary framework informed by pluralist democratic theory and life-course perspectives to interrogate how modern states negotiate the boundaries of liberty, secularism, and equality. It examines constitutional architectures in India (Articles 25–28), the United States (First Amendment), and France (laïcité), complemented by international norms articulated in the UDHR and ICCPR. Case studies from Canada and South Africa further illuminate divergent yet instructive models of secular neutrality and minority protection. Through a qualitative analysis of jurisprudence, policy discourse, and interfaith initiatives, the study demonstrates that religious liberty is most resilient when anchored in principled secularism, substantive safeguards for vulnerable communities, and a culture of civic responsibility. Religious literacy emerges as a critical pedagogical tool for dismantling prejudice, while structured interfaith engagement strengthens social cohesion. The digital sphere introduces new epistemic and ethical challenges, amplifying both democratic expression and extremist mobilization, thereby underscoring the urgency of responsible technological governance. The study argues that democracies fortify themselves by institutionalizing pluralism, cultivating informed citizenry, and embedding anticipatory regulation within digital ecosystems. Reconceptualizing religious liberty as a shared civic resource—rather than a solely individual entitlement—offers a pathway toward more inclusive, just, and peaceful democratic futures.



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sciforum-165915: The Role of Memory-Based Cognitive Strategies in Enhancing Academic Achievement among University Students of Heritage Studies

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In higher education, academic achievement is closely linked to learners' cognitive engagement and their ability to process, organize, and retain complex disciplinary knowledge. This study examines the role of memory-based cognitive strategies in enhancing academic achievement among university students of heritage studies, a field whose curricula are inherently grounded in cumulative historical knowledge, cultural memory, and the interpretation of material and immaterial heritage.

Adopting a descriptive and analytical educational approach, the study draws on cognitive learning theory to explain how fundamental memory processes—such as encoding, organization, storage, and retrieval—support effective learning in heritage education. Given that heritage studies require students to connect historical contexts, cultural meanings, and symbolic representations across time, instructional strategies such as elaborative encoding, meaningful association, structured content organization, and retrieval practice are particularly relevant for fostering deep understanding.

The analysis demonstrates that teaching practices aligned with learners' cognitive capacities play a significant role in improving comprehension and academic performance in heritage-related disciplines. Moreover, activating prior knowledge and encouraging reflective learning are shown to enhance students' engagement with heritage curricula by facilitating the integration of new information into existing cognitive and cultural frameworks.

The findings highlight the pedagogical value of integrating memory-based cognitive strategies into heritage education curricula and teacher training programs, contributing to more effective, cognitively informed, and learner-centered approaches to teaching heritage studies in higher education.



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sciforum-173562: Distributional asymmetries in online nutrition discourse across social determinants of health domains on Reddit

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Introduction: Online discussions about nutrition unfold across heterogeneous digital communities that extend beyond explicitly health-focused forums and spaces. Yet, it remains unclear how nutrition-related discourse is distributed across broader social domains and whether its thematic embedding reflects the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) framework. To address this question, we systematically mapped Reddit communities using a taxonomy derived from Wikipedia's curated content categories.

Methods: Approximately 60,000 subreddits were classified into thematic domains, derived from Wikipedia's curated content taxonomy using large language models (LLMs) with enforced structured outputs. Nutrition-related subreddits were then identified and aligned with SDH domains, using an LLM-assisted approach followed by manual verification. To examine how nutrition discourse is distributed across social contexts at the community level we conducted analyses using two complementary perspectives: an unweighted approach capturing community diversity and an activity-weighted approach capturing discourse intensity.

Results: In the unweighted analysis, 65% of nutrition-related subreddits were classified under health care access and quality, while 35% were distributed across non-health SDH domains, including lifestyle and individual behavior (24%), economic stability (6%), social and community context (3%), and education access and quality (1.5%). However, the activity-weighted analysis revealed a clear distributional asymmetry: although health-oriented communities are more numerous, discourse intensity is disproportionately concentrated in lifestyle-centered spaces. Specifically, while lifestyle- and individual behavior-focused communities represent only 24% of nutrition-related subreddits, they generate 40% of total nutrition-related activity, compared with 47% generated by health care-focused communities.

Conclusions: A clear distributional asymmetry in online nutrition discourse was revealed in this study. Our findings demonstrate that digital nutrition communication is not confined to formal health contexts but is embedded within broader social domains central to the Social Determinants of Health framework. Methodologically, the study illustrates the value of LLM-assisted taxonomy mapping for large-scale, domain-level analysis in computational social science.



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sciforum-177259: Digital community, identity, and multilingual savviness: a netnography of transnational Chinese doctoral students in a WeChat group

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Transnational doctoral students, who travel across geographic, social, ideological, and linguistic boundaries, embark on a new journey in academic and professional spaces. Additionally, rapid development in communication technologies and the increasing participation of transnational doctoral students in digital spaces have attracted growing research interest in online communities for navigating transnational life. However, limited research has examined how transnational students build supportive learning communities and negotiate translingual identities while fostering savviness in academia in digital contexts. To fill this gap, this study adopts a digital ethnographic and discourse analysis approach to examine the online interactions of transnational Chinese doctoral students within a WeChat group in the United States. Informed by the conceptual framework of communities of practice and translanguaging, this study addresses two research questions: (1) How do transnational doctoral students engage in translanguaging practices to build a support network in the WeChat group? (2) How do their interactions in the online space reveal the translingual identities of transnational doctoral students? Through participant observation of group chat records, the preliminary findings show transnational doctoral students deploy linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources to navigate challenges and tensions in multicultural contexts. This study offers social, cultural, educational, and technological insights and nuances for better supporting transnational students in the ebb and flow of global mobility.



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sciforum-173872: Privacy Curtain; Sacrificing Causal Inference in Predictive Systems? Revisiting Value Conflict from a Modern Paradox

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In the era of machine learning-driven predictive systems, data anonymization and perturbation techniques have become widespread for protecting individual and group privacy, and simulating rare events. Yet these approaches frequently undermine causal inference, reduce model accuracy, and enlarge predictive gaps—the critical disparity between statistical inferences derived from training data and definitive operational predictions.

This review investigates the inverse relationship between privacy preservation and predictive performance, conceptualizing it as a contemporary value conflict embedded in technicism: over-reliance on technical fixes that unintentionally intensify systematic biases within intelligent automation.

Central research questions include: Does privacy protection via data perturbation obstruct models' direct grasp of human behavioral patterns? What are the downstream effects of predictive gaps on task automation and societal biases? Drawing heavily on Max Weber's value pluralism, instrumental rationality, and the (iron cage) metaphor—alongside Isaiah Berlin's insights—the analysis demonstrates how technocratic solutions and unilateral privacy advocacy fail to resolve the inherent tension, reducing a deep value clash to mere technical problems and perpetuating a vicious cycle of increasing complexity.

A hybrid methodology combined horizontal and vertical literature reviews. From Scopus, IEEE, and Google Scholar (2019–2025), 21 sources were selected using keywords “Machine Learning,” “Model Accuracy,” and “Privacy,” then coded in MAXQDA 24 across five categories, revealing four major gaps: insufficient social-science framing, need for multidimensional assessment, technical–social disconnect, and unexamined sociological privacy–accuracy links.

Findings show that “infrastructural privacy” widens predictive gaps, echoing Weber's iron cage where rationality traps rather than liberates. Real-world cases (supermarket pregnancy targeting, counterterrorism metadata analysis) highlight privacy violations and error amplification via proxy data. While protective, synthetic data and differential privacy distort genuine causal relations, fostering biases in sensitive automation domains such as policy-making.

The review concludes that meaningful resolution demands explicit value-based trade-offs—neither absolute technicism nor uncompromising privacy absolutism—to curb systematic biases in socio-technical systems.



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sciforum-177266: The Digital Commons: Social Perceptions and Behavioural Shifts through the Real-Time Environmental Monitoring in the city of Delhi NCR

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In the current unprecedented ecological challenges that urban centres are encountering, digital technologies have become a primary tool in environmental governance. My research investigates the social implications of real-time monitoring of air quality and environmental degradation among people in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). Although technical measures of degradation can be obtained through biophysical data, the social aspect of community perception, trust and action regarding the same data is poorly studied. This study uses a mixed-method design with digital surveys and social sentiment analysis to investigate the hypothesis of whether more access to environmental technology leads to people having eco-anxiety or digital activism. Preliminary results indicate a strong correlation between mobile-based information transparency and community-based conservation efforts, although a digital divide persists in disempowered socio-economic regions. The paper argues that technology is not the solution to environmental crises; rather, it must be integrated into a more comprehensive social system with a strong focus on environmental justice and digital literacy. The findings related to the Society and Technology track of the conference are significant because they indicate the intersection of digital surveillance, public health, and social equity in a rapidly developing urban environment. Ultimately, my research indicates a scalable framework for inclusive, tech-driven environmental advocacy across various global metropolitan contexts.



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sciforum-172742: The Digital Turn in Human Rights Paradigms

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The rapid expansion of digital transformation has not only reshaped patterns of communication, work, and education, but has also redefined fundamental concepts such as identity, participation, and belonging. This shift has led to the emergence of “digital citizenship” as an extension of traditional citizenship within the virtual sphere. In this context, there is a growing need to develop a coherent theoretical and legal framework for digital human rights that responds to the profound changes technology has introduced into the nature of human existence and interaction. This study aims to analyze the features of a model of digital citizenship that operates across two interconnected realms, the physical and the digital, where individuals exercise their rights and responsibilities within a hybrid environment that merges material reality with cyberspace. The study advances the argument that digital citizenship cannot be reduced to the mere use of technological tools. Rather, it requires recognition of a distinct set of rights reflecting the ontological specificities of digital existence, including the right to internet access, data protection, digital identity, cybersecurity, and freedom of expression on digital platforms. While traditional human rights frameworks remain essential, they are not fully equipped to address the complexities generated by the digital sphere. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that effective access to digital human rights is closely linked to prevailing forms of digital inequality, including disparities in technological access, digital literacy, and legal protections. These gaps hinder the realization of digital justice and pose significant challenges to the universality of human rights in the digital age, underscoring the need to rethink public policies to ensure inclusive protection across both physical and virtual domains.



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sciforum-163313: The Effects of Digital Transformation on Social Sustainability in the AI Era: A Conceptual Perspective

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming and reshaping social institutions, work patterns, and day-to-day life. Although previous research has largely focused on the economic efficiency and technological benefits of AI-enabled transformation, its implications for social responsibility remain underexplored and under-theorized. This conceptual paper investigates how AI transformation influences social sustainability across different social domains, including work settings, education, governance, and social inclusion. By applying social sustainability and socio-technical systems theories, this paper identifies key ethical mechanisms through which AI-enabled digital transformation affects social sustainability outcomes. This paper also presents an integrated conceptual model that illustrates the relationships between AI-driven transformation and social sustainability outcomes, through some mediating mechanisms such as algorithmic fairness, transparency, accountability, workforce well-being, and the distribution of social benefits and risks associated with AI adoption. This review further highlights how uneven AI access to AI and digital infrastructure is, particularly in global south contexts, which vary significantly. This paper contributes to social science scholarship by advancing a theory-informed conceptualisation of social sustainability of AI-enabled digital transformation. It further highlights the need for comparative and global south-focused studies to capture the uneven social consequences of AI adoption in institutional contexts. This study also offers practical implications for organisations and policymakers to adopt ethical responsibility and social sustainability in AI-driven digital transformation.



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sciforum-167886: A Reinforcement learning Approach for Climate Change Adaptation and Policy: Using Deep-Q-Network for Multi-Sectorial Resilience in Kitui County, Kenya

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Climate change presents serious challenges, especially in dry and semi-dry areas, and this is most severe in sub-Saharan Africa, where the people are dependent on rain-fed agriculture. To address this issue, a new type of reinforcement learning (RL) mechanism that can be used to simulate and optimize climate adaptation policies in Kitui County, Kenya, was developed. In this study, a combined geospatial data from several sources, such as precipitation, the health of vegetation, the number of people, and economic indicators, was used to create a custom reinforcement learning environment. A Deep Q-Network (DQN) agent was developed to distribute the restricted financial resources amongst nine climate adaptation policies over a 25-year period simulation. The findings clearly show that the artificial intelligence agent aimed at the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem. In this connection, it made a choice of agroforestry in 76.0% of the decision cycles, and at the same time, it tactically bypassed the high-capital, high-latency infrastructure such as dams and opted for distributed adaptive measures. This framework provides a powerful tool to support policymakers in a data-driven manner to analyze the interdependence of urgent aid and sustainable development. The study demonstrates the possibilities of using AI-powered decisionsupport systems in the field of climate policy planning for the most affected areas.



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sciforum-169097: A Sociological Analysis of the Impact of Social Media Networks on Romantic Relationships: A Case Study of Undergraduates at the University of Ruhuna

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This study explores the impact of social media networks on maintaining romantic relationships among undergraduate students at the University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka. Within a digitalized social space shaped by modernity, interpersonal relationships face unique challenges. Factors such as personal busyness and digital communication often lead individuals toward virtual relationships. As connectivity is increasingly interpreted as a core characteristic of intimacy, people resort to virtualized spaces to fulfill their social needs. Adopting a qualitative approach, this research gained in-depth understanding of student experiences through semi-structured interviews with thirty selected participants at the University of Ruhuna. The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify digital behavior patterns. The findings reveal that while technology has simplified communication, it has simultaneously fostered digital jealousy and suspicion among romantic partners. Constant digital socialization often undermines mutual trust, leading to conflicts within relationships. A significant observation is that although technology facilitates connectivity, it tends to diminish emotional security. The study concludes that maintaining relationships through digital methods in the modern era has become more challenging compared to traditional romantic dynamics. This shift profoundly impacting the formation and sustainability of social institutions. Therefore, in the digital age, enhancing individuals "Mental literacy"- which refers to an individual's capacity to critically and rationally navigate the events occurring within their digital environment while simultaneously possessing the ability to mitigate the resulting psychological distress is crucial for maintaining healthy and sustainable relationships.



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sciforum-177191: Addiction by Design? Behavioral Design, Persuasive Technology, and Their Societal Implications

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Introduction:

Digital technologies have become integral to everyday life, transforming communication, learning, and access to information. Alongside these benefits, concerns about excessive use and digital addiction have intensified. Many platforms deliberately employ *behavioral design* and *persuasive technology* principles to maximize user engagement by leveraging psychological mechanisms such as variable rewards, social validation, and attentional capture. This raises critical questions about the ethical responsibilities of technology developers and the societal consequences of behaviorally engineered digital environments.

Methods:

This study adopts a conceptual, literature-based approach to analyze how behavioral design strategies shape user interaction with digital technologies. Drawing on established frameworks—including Fogg's Behavior Model and habit-forming design (e.g., the Hook Model)—the study synthesizes interdisciplinary research from human-computer interaction, psychology, and media studies. It specifically examines mechanisms such as variable reinforcement schedules, algorithmic personalization, and social feedback systems in relation to user engagement and dependency.

Results:

The analysis indicates that many digital platforms systematically integrate design features that exploit core psychological drivers, including the need for social recognition, immediate gratification, and cognitive stimulation. Elements such as push notifications, "likes," infinite scrolling, and algorithmically curated content function as powerful behavioral triggers that reinforce habitual and, in some cases, compulsive use patterns. Evidence from prior studies suggests these mechanisms are associated with increased screen time, attentional fragmentation, and symptoms aligned with problematic or addictive technology use.

Conclusions:

Behavioral design in digital technologies carries significant implications for individual well-being and broader societal outcomes. While persuasive technologies can support positive behavior change in domains such as education and health, ethical concerns arise when such strategies prioritize engagement metrics over user welfare. This study contributes by critically synthesizing how specific design mechanisms relate to emerging patterns of digital dependency and by highlighting the need for ethical design frameworks, increased transparency, and potential regulatory interventions to align technological innovation with human well-being.



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sciforum-173779: AI Ethics in Romanian Mass Media: Risks and Professional Responsibility

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Artificial intelligence tools are increasingly used in editorial work, bringing significant benefits and new creative opportunities. However, they also raise ethical and professional challenges that require careful consideration. This research investigates the ethical risks associated with the use of AI in the Romanian media system, focusing on phenomena such as algorithmic bias, misinformation, disinformation amplification, and transparency. The analysis also addresses the risk of diminishing human editorial control and the trend toward content standardization. The research methodology is qualitative, involving 15 semi-structured interviews with media professionals in Romania (10 experienced journalists and 5 editors-in-chief). The results highlight an ambivalent position towards AI integration. Although respondents recognise the operational advantages of automation in optimising workflows, they express consistent concerns about ethical vulnerabilities, reduced editorial responsibility, and the potential amplification of structural dysfunctions already existing in the Romanian media landscape. Participants co-explain the need to adopt clear ethical codes for the use of AI in newsrooms, as well as coherent, enforceable legal regulations. In the absence of such mechanisms, the uncontrolled integration of AI risks accentuating superficiality, commercial pressures, and the dilution of professional standards. The research advocates a hybrid working model in which AI serves as a tool to complement journalistic practice, without substituting for professional judgment or compromising public trust.



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sciforum-176889: AI-mediated learning: ChatGPT explanation quality as a predictor of students' confidence in physics learning

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The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, in education has the potential to support students' understanding of complex subjects, such as physics. However, empirical evidence regarding how the quality of AI-generated explanations influences students' learning confidence remains limited. This study investigates whether the quality of explanations generated by ChatGPT predicts students' confidence in learning physics among high school students. A total of 167 high school students in Indonesia participated in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that measured students' perceptions of ChatGPT's explanation quality and their confidence in learning physics. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The results indicated that female students rated ChatGPT's explanations more positively than male students. Regression analysis revealed that explanation quality dimensions related to understanding basic principles and accurate application of physics concepts were significant predictors of students' confidence in physics learning, particularly in relation to exam readiness. These findings indicate that certain dimensions of ChatGPT explanation quality, particularly those related to conceptual clarity and accurate application of physics concepts, are associated with higher levels of students' perceived confidence in learning physics. The study contributes to the emerging literature on artificial intelligence in science education by identifying specific dimensions of AI-generated explanation quality that are associated with students' perceived confidence in learning physics.



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sciforum-170279: Algorithmic Legitimacy and Trust in AI-Enabled Youth Services: A Sequential Institutional Framework

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Artificial intelligence (AI)–enabled systems are increasingly governing access to youth services, yet empirical research remains limited on how young service users experience and evaluate AI-mediated service delivery. Based on procedural justice and institutional trust theory, the present research formulates and pilots a sequential institutional framework between the AI-enabled service experience (AISE), algorithmic legitimacy (ALG), trust in AI-supported service systems (TIA), psychological well-being (PWB), and service satisfaction (SS). The respondents included youth service users ($N = 418$) in Pakistan who stated that they had previously used AI-supported services in education, health, and social welfare or community-based situations. To test the hypothesized relationships, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used and supplemented by the importance-performance map analysis to examine the allocation of explanatory influence throughout the sequential model. TIA emerged as the most proximal and influential predictor of both PWB and SS, while ALG operated as a critical upstream mechanism shaping trust. Sequential mediation analyses further show that youth outcomes are influenced less by exposure to AI systems per se and more by evaluative judgments concerning the legitimacy and trustworthiness of AI-supported service processes. By centering youth service users and conceptualizing AI as an institutionalized component of service delivery, this study advances research on algorithmic governance in youth services and offers insights for ethically and accountably deploying AI-assisted systems to support positive youth outcomes.



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sciforum-176913: Algorithmic Power and Strategic Autonomy: AI Competition and the Reconfiguration of Security in the Eastern Mediterranean

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The accelerating integration of artificial intelligence into military, economic, and strategic decision-making is transforming the foundations of power in international politics. This paper develops the concept of algorithmic power to explain how AI-driven capabilities reshape strategic autonomy and regional security dynamics. Focusing on the Eastern Mediterranean as an emerging arena of geopolitical competition, the study examines how states increasingly rely on algorithmic systems—from intelligence analysis and surveillance to autonomous platforms and data-driven decision architectures—to enhance strategic leverage and influence regional balances of power.

The paper argues that algorithmic power constitutes a new layer of geopolitical competition that intersects with traditional military balances while simultaneously reshaping deterrence, escalation management, and alliance politics. As technological capabilities expand, states increasingly seek to integrate artificial intelligence into national security strategies in order to improve situational awareness, predictive analysis, and strategic planning. Through strategic analysis and open-source intelligence assessment, the research explores how AI-enabled capabilities influence regional power relations and the evolving structure of international security governance.

The findings suggest that algorithmic power is emerging as a critical determinant of strategic autonomy and regional stability. The study highlights how technological competition is likely to redefine strategic interaction, alliance dynamics, and the broader architecture of contemporary international order.



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sciforum-173988: Algorithms, Territory, and Inequality: Rethinking Spatial Discrimination

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Algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) are often portrayed as powerful tools intended to enhance performance and optimize tasks. Yet critical scholarship stresses that these systems operate as socio-technical actors: they are conceived, trained, and deployed within particular institutional and social arrangements, and their outputs may generate distortions in the very domains they are meant to improve. Spatial discrimination—an enduring phenomenon—emerges when resources, opportunities, or services are allocated in ways that sustain or intensify geographic inequalities, sometimes through apparently neutral criteria that nonetheless disadvantage specific places or populations. This study offers a systematic literature review that examines how AI may interact with territorial dynamics and how spatial inequalities can be reproduced through algorithmic decision-making. It identifies two key dimensions through which territorial discrimination can take shape, helping to frame where discriminatory effects may originate and how they may be experienced across space. The paper argues that a critical approach to algorithm implementation is essential to ensure ethical, transparent, and rigorous assessment. Such an approach requires careful scrutiny of underlying assumptions, data sources, proxies for location, and decision rules, as well as attention to governance and accountability in real-world deployments. Overall, the study underscores that AI is not merely a technical instrument but also a force that can reshape spatial governance and influence whether geographical inequality is reinforced or reduced over time.



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sciforum-174181: Analysing Students' Learning Behaviours in E-learning embedded with Learning Analytics Intervention based on Learning Style: A Case Study

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As online learning is developing with the arrival of the big data era, this has reformed the educational field from face-to-face classrooms to online learning and has resulted in the emergence of learning analytics. In this regard, a massive volume of data generated by students when they interact with online learning (e.g., number of logins, views, posts, etc.) becomes more available, and this data can be tracked and used to understand the learning behaviour of students. In other words, students' online learning behaviours via log files in Learning Management Systems can be analysed to gain insight into what has been done by students in online learning through learning analytics. However, to date, there have only been a few studies investigating learning behaviour data of students with different learning styles through learning analytics in an e-learning environment. Due to the limited research, this study aims to fill in this gap by exploring the online learning behaviours of students based on learning styles in e-learning embedded with learning analytics intervention and the relationship between the number of log-ins, viewing activities, interactions in the discussion forum, and students' academic performance. A quantitative research design was employed using different instruments such as students' server log files and academic performance tests. The findings showed that students with different learning styles behaved differently in an e-learning environment. In addition, this study also discovered that there was a weak, negative correlation between the number of views and academic performance, which was statistically significant. The findings of this study can be a good reference for instructors who can use this information for the redesign of courses in e-learning.



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sciforum-176946: Analysis of Perceptions of the Readiness of Healthcare Human Resources as Support for the Digitalization of Health Services in Banten Province

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This study examines the readiness of healthcare human resources to support the digitalization of health services in Banten Province, Indonesia. The research aims to identify effective strategies for implementing digital health systems while assessing the preparedness of medical personnel and the challenges affecting digital transformation in healthcare services.

A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, utilizing both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews involving 120 respondents (health service managers, medical personnel, and representatives from regional government agencies). The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, with selection criteria based on respondents' roles, experience in healthcare service delivery, and involvement in digital health initiatives. Secondary data were obtained from regional development planning documents, policy regulations, and official reports related to health digital transformation in Banten Province.

Data analysis was conducted using **Root Cause Analysis (RCA)** to identify fundamental issues affecting digital readiness, and **SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)** to formulate strategic recommendations. Data triangulation was applied to ensure validity by comparing findings from interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis.

Findings reveal that the distribution of healthcare workers across Banten Province is uneven, with most medical personnel concentrated in urban areas such as Tangerang and South Tangerang, while remote regions like Pandeglang and Lebak experience shortages. In addition, digital readiness among health facilities and personnel varies significantly. Major barriers include inadequate digital infrastructure, limited internet stability, low digital literacy among health workers, insufficient IT personnel, and a lack of structured training programs. These factors hinder the optimal adoption of telemedicine, electronic medical records, and integrated health information systems.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analysis of human resource readiness, digital literacy, and institutional capacity within the context of regional health digitalization in Banten Province. However, the study is limited by its qualitative scope and reliance on perception-based data from selected health facilities. Future research should incorporate quantitative assessments and broader regional comparisons to strengthen empirical evidence. Policy recommendations include expanding digital training for healthcare workers, improving incentives and distribution policies for medical personnel in remote areas, strengthening digital infrastructure, and enhancing collaboration between government, healthcare institutions, and technology providers.



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sciforum-168705: Assessing the Impact of INGOs on Afghanistan's Education and Health Systems (2020–2025)

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The period of 2020-2025 was associated with a fundamental political and social change in Afghanistan that had a thoroughly disruptive impact on the access to the basic social services, specifically education and healthcare. It is in this delicate situation that the International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) were instrumental in ensuring and growing service delivery. This paper is based on a humanitarian governance and development-in-fragile-states approach that discusses the extent, efficiency and operational issues of the intervention of INGOs in the education and health sectors in Afghanistan.

The study embraces a mixed study design. Program reports, education enrollment statistics, and health service indicators were used to gather quantitative data on changes in the access and service coverage. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with the INGO staff, local authorities and benefactors of the community were used as the method of collecting the qualitative data with purposive sampling to include various points of view. A total of interviews and focus groups (number) were carried out. Quantitative data were processed with the help of descriptive and comparative statistics, and qualitative data were coded and processed with the help of thematic analysis with the assistance of the qualitative data analysis software (e.g., NVivo/Atlas.ti).

The results suggest that INGO interventions led to better access to schools, especially of female children, and of primary healthcare services in various areas. Nevertheless, these programs were limited in terms of effectiveness and sustainability due to political unpredictability, insecurity, resource shortage, and socio-cultural challenges.

The findings emphasize that the use of context-sensitive programming and increasing the cooperation between the INGOs, the local governance structures, and the communities are needed to improve the achievements of the long-term development.

This paper can offer policy-relevant implications to donors, practitioners, and scholars interested in enhancing education and health interventions.



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sciforum-173994: Bridging Society, Development and Culture: Mother-Tongue Education for Empowering Minority Ethnic Communities in Bangladesh

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This study explores how mother tongue based multilingual education, strengthened with appropriate educational technology, can advance social and educational empowerment among minority ethnic communities in Bangladesh. It draws on sociolinguistics and the sociology of education to treat language as more than a classroom tool. Language is also a pathway to identity, dignity, participation, and equitable life chances. The research asks how technology supported instruction affects engagement, attendance, learning achievement, and progression, and how it shapes language attitudes, classroom interaction, and community involvement. A mixed methods design is proposed. Linguistic ethnography will document home and school language practices through classroom observation, interactional transcripts, and interviews with students, parents, teachers, and local leaders. Quantitative measures will track baseline and endline learning outcomes, retention, and teacher practice indicators. The project co designs and evaluates a low cost digital support package that works in low connectivity settings, including offline first micro lessons, community recorded audio stories, bilingual e books aligned with curriculum goals, and teacher learning modules on inclusive pedagogy and translanguaging. It also examines digital constraints such as device sharing, connectivity gaps, and varied literacy levels so that technology reduces rather than reproduces inequality. The expected contribution is practical evidence for language in education policy, scalable edtech design, and culturally sustaining teaching that can reduce dropout risk, improve foundational learning, and strengthen social inclusion through mother tongue education.



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sciforum-164371: Bridging the Digital Opportunity Gap: Youth Access, Skills, and Technology Adoption in Developing Societies

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Introduction:

Digital technologies are increasingly shaping education, employment, and civic participation worldwide. However, in many developing societies, young people continue to face structural barriers that limit their ability to benefit fully from technological advancements. This study examines the digital opportunity gap among youth, focusing on access, skill development, and real-world technology adoption within a developing country context.

Methods:

The research adopts a qualitative and observational approach, drawing on real-life experiences, youth engagement initiatives, and documented community-level practices. Informal interviews, participation in educational programs, and analysis of publicly available reports were used to understand how young individuals interact with technology in learning, networking, and career development environments. The study emphasizes practical realities rather than theoretical or computational modeling.

Results:

Findings indicate that limited access to quality digital infrastructure, lack of structured digital skills training, and insufficient institutional support significantly restrict youth participation in the digital economy. While social and professional platforms provide new opportunities for learning and networking, their effective use remains uneven due to awareness gaps and socioeconomic constraints. The research also highlights that motivated youth often rely on self-learning and community-driven initiatives to overcome these challenges.

Conclusions:

The study concludes that narrowing the digital opportunity gap requires coordinated efforts from educational institutions, policymakers, and technology platforms. Emphasis should be placed on affordable access, practical digital literacy, and inclusive technology policies. Addressing these issues can enable youth to participate more effectively in social, educational, and economic development, contributing to more equitable digital societies.



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sciforum-174161: Bringing Psychosocial Oncology and Data Science together: Rethinking Adolescent and Young-Adult Cancer Care

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Adolescents and young adults (AYAs) with cancer occupy a distinct clinical and developmental space, yet their psychosocial needs remain poorly addressed within oncology systems globally, and particularly in India, where dedicated AYA care pathways and psychosocial research are almost non-existent.

This narrative review synthesises interdisciplinary literature across epidemiology, psychosocial oncology, youth development, data science, and AI ethics to examine how computational tools could be ethically integrated to strengthen AYA cancer care. Peer-reviewed articles (n=35) were identified through searches across PubMed, Google Scholar, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, BMJ, PNAS, and Wiley Online Library. Inclusion criteria required relevance to AYA populations (ages 13-39), psychosocial or developmental outcomes, or data science/AI approaches applicable to oncology or youth mental health; studies focused exclusively on younger children and youth (10 years) or older adults (>40 years), and non-peer-reviewed sources, were excluded. Qualitative, quantitative, conceptual, and systems-science methodologies were synthesised thematically.

The review finds that AYAs experience consistent psychosocial vulnerabilities (emotional distress, disrupted identity and autonomy, social isolation, educational disruption, and survivorship burdens) that remain unevenly recognised and under-addressed in clinical practice. Existing psychosocial interventions are resource-intensive, inconsistent, and rarely scaled. Critically, AI tools demonstrate concrete potential to address these gaps: natural language processing (NLP) applied to clinical notes and digital communications can enable early distress detection; machine learning models can identify non-adherence risk; AI-enabled decision-support can prompt early fertility counselling and personalised survivorship planning; and data collaboratives linking hospitals, registries, and schools can improve equity and care coordination. Yet these innovations remain entirely absent from psychosocial AYA oncology.

The review proposes an ecological, human-centred model integrating biomedical prediction, psychosocial support, and system-level equity across micro, meso, and macro levels of care. Future interdisciplinary work must prioritise contextual relevance, meaningful youth participation and also, ethical governance, to ensure AYA psychosocial needs are being catered to.



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sciforum-165400: Care, Knowledge, and Crisis: Institutional Memory and Situated Technologies in a Public Hospital in the Global South

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How public health institutions in the Global South mobilize institutional memory, everyday practices, and situated technologies to manage extreme uncertainty during health crises? Based on long-term qualitative research conducted at a Brazilian public infectious disease hospital between 1980 and 2022, the study examines organizational responses to successive epidemics, including HIV/AIDS, H1N1, yellow fever, COVID-19, and a suspected Ebola case. Rather than focusing solely on formal governance structures or biomedical protocols, the analysis foregrounds how care is practically enacted through historically accumulated knowledge, improvisation, and ethical decision-making in everyday institutional life.

Methodologically, the research draws on oral history interviews with health professionals, analysis of institutional documents, and narrative reconstruction of crisis situations. These materials reveal persistent tensions between standardized, technology-driven models of clinical management and context-sensitive forms of care shaped by local constraints, professional experience, and social inequalities. Special attention is given to the role of technological infrastructures, such as clinical protocols, surveillance systems, and decision-support tools, and to how they are interpreted, adapted, and sometimes contested by frontline workers.

Rather than treating technology or artificial intelligence as neutral or universally progressive forces, the paper argues that technological tools acquire meaning only through situated use within specific institutional, historical, and political contexts. Building on critical perspectives in social sciences and science and technology studies, the paper proposes the concept of a biopolitics of care to capture how care practices operate simultaneously as organizational strategies, ethical commitments, and political responses to crisis.

By centering empirical evidence from a public hospital in Brazil, the study contributes to debates on society and technology, health governance, and Global South knowledge production. It challenges dominant narratives that frame technological innovation as detached from history and power relations, suggesting instead that institutional resilience depends on the interplay between technology, memory, and socially embedded practices of care.



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sciforum-174067: Contributions to the Development of School Governance in the European Cultural Area

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This research explores the evolution of school governance within the European cultural area, building on a theoretical framework established in 2019. Governance is defined here not merely as an administrative act, but as a complex process of decision-making and implementation involving diverse stakeholder networks.

The study utilizes an updated morphological matrix of ideas to analyze the interaction between democratic principles (rights, responsibilities, active participation, and diversity) and key educational fields (values-based education, communication, and discipline). The primary focus is investigating the transition from "hard governance"—characterized by compulsory legal regulations—to "soft governance", which relies on persuasion, shared values, and democratic dialogue.

The methodology employs a robust triangulation approach, collecting data from six distinct categories of actors: school principals, teachers, auxiliary staff, students, parents, and community partners. This multi-level analysis aims to identify the "decisional synergy" required to foster organizational change and development in modern school systems.

Preliminary findings, based on the application of the morphological matrix, suggest that the inversion of the relationship between obligation and assumption of responsibility is key to superior educational quality. The final results will provide a set of indicators for institutional transparency and participatory management, facilitating a more effective dialogue between schools and their communities.

School governance represents a fundamental pillar of organizational development, moving beyond traditional management toward a culture of active democratic participation. This study explores the transition from "hard governance," based on compulsory legal regulations, to "soft governance," which relies on shared values, persuasion, and the perception of internal and external relationships. The research is grounded in the necessity of evaluating how school systems in the European cultural space adapt their decisional processes to foster systemic change.



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sciforum-174127: Demographic Profiles, Socioeconomic Contributions, and Structural Challenges of African Immigrants in Boston, Massachusetts

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African immigrants constitute a growing and dynamic segment of Boston's population, yet they remain significantly underrepresented in local data and scholarship. While their economic, social, and cultural contributions are substantial, existing research often subsumes African immigrants within broader immigrant categories, obscuring their distinct experiences, assets, and unique and diverse challenges. This study addresses this important gap by providing a baseline socio-demographic profile of African immigrants in Boston. Using a mixed-methods design, the research combines descriptive analysis of American Community Survey (2022) data with qualitative insights from key informant interviews. The analysis examines demographic patterns, educational attainment, labor force participation, and indicators of social integration. By examining key variables such as age distribution, education levels, economic participation, and social integration, this research sheds light on the specific needs and strengths of African immigrants. Additionally, the study explores the barriers to full civic and economic participation faced by this community, including issues related to legal status, access to services, and cultural adjustment. By centering African immigrants as a distinct analytical category, this study contributes to more nuanced understandings of immigrant incorporation in Boston and offers evidence-based insights for policymakers, service providers, and community stakeholders. The study deepens the understanding of the need for representation and inclusion in data collection on diverse groups.



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sciforum-167288: Digital Immersion and Social Integration in Virtual Environments: Examining the Societal Implications of Metaverse Engagement

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The rapid development of immersive digital technologies has intensified scholarly debates regarding the societal implications of virtual environments. Beyond organizational and commercial applications, the metaverse represents a socio-technical space capable of reshaping social interaction, identity formation, and perceived inclusion within digital societies. However, empirical research examining how immersive digital experiences influence social integration and perceived digital inequality remains limited. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the relationships among immersive engagement, perceived social connectedness, digital inclusion, and individual well-being within metaverse-like environments. Using a quantitative social science research design, survey data were collected from 386 adult users with prior exposure to immersive digital platforms, including virtual reality applications and avatar-based social spaces. To enhance contextual understanding, respondents were first presented with a brief scenario describing participation in a shared virtual social environment before completing the questionnaire. Measurement items were adapted from established scales in social psychology and digital sociology, and the proposed relationships were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results reveal that immersive engagement significantly enhances perceived social connectedness and feelings of digital inclusion. Perceived social connectedness, in turn, positively predicts psychological well-being and perceived social participation. Conversely, perceptions of digital inequality negatively moderate the relationship between immersive engagement and social inclusion, indicating that unequal access, digital skills, and technological confidence constrain the social benefits of virtual environments. The model explains a substantial proportion of variance in perceived social integration and well-being outcomes. This study contributes to social science literature by advancing understanding of the metaverse as a socio-technical phenomenon rather than solely a technological innovation. The findings offer insights for policymakers, platform designers, and social institutions seeking to promote inclusive and socially sustainable digital environments while mitigating emerging forms of digital inequality.



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sciforum-176355: Digitalization and Financial Services Constrain Informality and Eradicate Petty Corruption Among Street-Level Bureaucrats: An Ethnographic Study of Electronic Levy Collection

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Studies on informality -often defined as the art of bypassing the state- tend to emphasis non-state actors and their survival strategies. Informal and illegitimate activities carried out by state apparatus are often overlooked. This study shifts the analytical focus on the circuit of social actors and the moral system that enable or constrain informality. Drawing on a case of levy collections in a traditional market in Magelang City, Indonesia, this paper documents the changes of informal behavior from levy collectors (street-level bureaucrats) and small-scale merchants (citizens) following the introduction of a new levy collection system integrating digitalization and financial service system named e-retribusi. Prior to e-retribusi, the local government implemented manual ticketing system, where small-scale merchants were required to pay the levy in cash to levy collectors, creating an opportunity to petty corruption. After the introduction of e-retribusi, the city bureaucracy and the local bank developed an incentive-based model that redefine the levy collectors. Now serving as intermediaries, these street-level bureaucrats of receive legitimate financial incentives from the local bank, replacing illicit income from the manual ticketing system. My ethnographic study has revealed the role of digital governance and financial services can transform illegal practices from the street-level bureaucrats. The finding contributes to the debates on informal governance by exploring how digital technologies and financial systems reshape the behavior of social actors, constrain informality, and help eradicate corruption in the public sector.



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sciforum-148412: Embodiment, artificial intelligence, and digital emotions: a sociological perspective

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This contribution analyzes how digital embodiment, mediated by avatars and immersive devices, transforms emotional experience in virtual contexts and in the metaverse. Emotions such as empathy, love, anger, and fear are not merely transposed online; rather, they undergo a process of reconfiguration through the mechanisms of virtualization, technological mediation, and cultural hybridization. At the core of this inquiry lies the notion of embodiment, which is conceived not solely as a bodily transposition into a digital body, but also as a profound restructuring of the self within technologically mediated spaces. Avatars function as extensions and transformations of identity, thereby opening up new forms of emotional co-construction and distributed memory. The advent of technological tools, such as haptic feedback and artificial intelligence, has further augmented these dynamics, modulating affective responses and engendering conditions of emotional embodiment that serve to obfuscate the boundaries between physical and virtual existence. The work also underscores the ambivalence of the digitization of emotions. Immersive environments have the potential to facilitate unprecedented opportunities for empathy, intimacy and collective interaction. However, they also present risks of commodification, alienation and emotional fragmentation. The confluence of embodiment and artificial intelligence gives rise to significant sociological inquiries, particularly concerning the role of "digital emotions" in shaping societal norms and collective imaginaries. This contribution offers a broader reflection on the transformation of social life in the age of virtualization by placing digital embodiment within the sociology of emotions. The analysis indicates that emotions in digital environments are not merely residual or marginal elements, but rather, they are foundational components of the manner in which individuals inhabit, negotiate, and interpret technologically mediated worlds. The paper puts forth a critical agenda for the sociology of emotions, underscoring the notion of digital embodiment as a pivotal nexus where the politics of sensitivity and cultural practices intersect.



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sciforum-177068: Flexible Work Arrangements, Workplace Equity, and Nonprofit Workplaces in the United States During COVID-19

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Introduction. Flexible work arrangements, including where work is performed (e.g., remote work), when work is done (e.g., flexible schedules), and how work is organized (e.g., virtual meetings), expanded rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic. This expansion has raised important questions about their implications for workplace equity in nonprofit organizations, an area that remains insufficiently examined. Guided by organizational justice and organizational systems frameworks, this study investigated whether nonprofit leaders' reports of employee access to flexible work arrangements were associated with workplace equity across several organizational domains, including policies and practices, planning and evaluation, roles and accountabilities, organizational culture and climate, and communication. **Methods.** Data were drawn from the 2021 Boston Workplace Equity Study, an exploratory survey of nonprofit organizational leaders ($n = 112$). Ordinary least squares regression models were used to assess associations between access to flexible work arrangements and workplace equity, controlling for organizational size, percentage of women employees, and percentage of employees of color. **Results.** Greater reported access to flexible work arrangements was associated with higher levels of workplace equity ($b = .12$, $p = .05$). Small organizations reported higher workplace equity than medium-sized organizations, and organizations with a higher proportion of employees of color also reported greater workplace equity. Interaction models suggested that the positive association between flexible work arrangements and workplace equity was stronger when leaders reported higher employee pressures ($b = .20$, $p = .10$), while no significant moderation was observed for organizational pressures or organizational resilience. **Discussion.** These results underscore the potential for flexible work arrangements to serve not only as a staffing strategy but also as an organizational resource that supports equity, particularly in contexts where employees experience heightened pressures. The study highlights the need to integrate flexibility into comprehensive organizational systems that promote fairness and inclusion in nonprofit workplaces.



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sciforum-173842: From Editorial Gatekeeping to Agentic Media Curation: A Conceptual Model for Reinforcement-Learning Systems and Societal Accountability

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As media production and distribution increasingly integrate recommender systems, generative AI, and conversational interfaces, gatekeeping shifts from a primarily editorial function to a distributed, continuously optimizing socio-technical process. Building on recent work on AI-enabled gatekeeping, automated content pipelines, and platform governance, this paper advances a conceptual model of AI gatekeeping across media production and couples it with an RL-informed agent perspective to clarify where—and how—societal values are operationalized (or displaced) by optimization objectives. The conceptual model decomposes media gatekeeping into an end-to-end pipeline of decision points that apply beyond journalism to creator economies and platform-native formats: (1) creator and source inclusion (who gets visibility and monetization access), (2) topic/format selection and trend detection, (3) content generation and editing (text, audio, image, video), (4) packaging and metadata (titles, thumbnails, tags, captions), (5) ranking/recommendation and feed placement, (6) moderation and safety filtering, and (7) distribution feedback loops (engagement, retention, and revenue signals). Each stage is specified in terms of actors (creators, studios, newsrooms, platforms, vendors), artifacts (training data, prompts, style guides, policies), and outcomes (visibility, framing, attention allocation, and cultural salience). The RL-informed perspective treats AI-mediated media gatekeeping as sequential decision-making under constraints, where agents learn policies that trade off timeliness, quality, novelty, audience satisfaction, and harm minimization. This framing makes explicit a core societal risk: when reward signals are proxied by engagement and watch-time, systems can rationally learn behaviors that amplify outrage, optimize for addictive consumption patterns, privilege already-dominant aesthetics, or systematically under-expose minority creators and niche cultural topics—often without any single decision appearing normatively problematic in isolation. The paper proposes evaluation dimensions aligned with social-science concerns—exposure equity, plurality of cultural representation, provenance and disclosure, and user contestability—paired with RL-relevant diagnostics (reward specification audits, off-policy evaluation, counterfactual exposure tests, and drift monitoring).



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sciforum-175183: From Paper to Platform: The World's First Mandatory Digital Labor Contract Model

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Abstract

In 2024, Azerbaijan became the first country in the world to introduce a fully mandatory digital labor contract system, fundamentally transforming the governance of labor relations. Building upon the Electronic Information System for Labor Contracts launched in 2014, recent amendments to the Labor Code abolished the requirement for physical labor books and established electronic contracts as the sole legally valid format. All employment agreements must now be drafted, signed, registered, and stored digitally through the Labor and Employment Subsystem (EMAS), using reinforced electronic signatures such as Mobile ID, biometric verification, or USB token-based signatures.

The reform addresses long-standing structural challenges, including informal employment, administrative inefficiencies, fragmented workforce data, and limited transparency. The system embeds legal requirements directly into its architecture, automatically validating compliance with minimum wage, age, and working time regulations before a contract can enter into force. Real-time data exchange with more than 80 public and private institutions ensures accuracy, eliminates manual data entry, and enables proactive, risk-based labor inspection.

Measurable outcomes demonstrate significant impact. Contract registration time decreased from 2–3 days to 5–10 minutes, while the number of registered labor contracts increased from 1.4 million in 2019 to 1.8 million in 2025. Informal employment risks declined to minimal levels, fraud cases were nearly eliminated, and approximately 17 million sheets of paper were saved.

By institutionalizing compliance-by-design and a fully digital contract lifecycle, Azerbaijan has set a global benchmark for transparent, efficient, and rights-based labor governance aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 16.



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sciforum-167024: From Prime-Time to Public Consciousness: Audience Reception of Women's Empowerment Narratives in Contemporary Pakistani Dramas

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This study examines how contemporary Pakistani television dramas function as culturally influential texts that shape public understanding of women's dignity, autonomy, and social justice. Focusing on *Pamal*, *Jama Taqseem*, and *Case No. 9*, the research argues that these serials operate beyond entertainment by challenging normalised cultural pressures that restrict women's lives—particularly the moralisation of forced joint-family living, the social acceptance of women's economic dependence, and the tendency to protect “reputation” at the expense of truth in cases of gendered harm. The objective is to investigate how Pakistani viewers interpret these narratives, what meanings they attach to the dramas' moral claims, and whether such representations influence attitudes toward family structures, women's work, and accountability.

Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative audience-reception approach using semi-structured interviews with Pakistani viewers (anticipated n=24–30). Purposive sampling will recruit participants across age groups (Gen Z, millennials, and parents) and household arrangements (joint vs. nuclear), with women comprising at least 70% of the sample to centre gendered lived experience. Interviews (35–50 minutes) will explore three thematic blocks: (i) joint-family expectations and marital autonomy, (ii) women's independence as safety and survival, and (iii) truth, silence, and social responses to harassment and victim-blaming. Data will be transcribed and analysed through reflexive thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, contradictions, and perceived possibilities for change within Pakistani society.

By grounding the discussion in viewers' interpretations, this research contributes empirically to debates on media, gender, and cultural transformation, demonstrating how televised storytelling can become a site of ethical reflection and social critique in Pakistan.



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sciforum-173936: Gender as a Digital Divide: Does Sex Moderate the Relationship Between Digital Literacy and E-Government Adoption in Nigeria?

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The global push toward e-government has raised critical questions about whether digital transformation is equally accessible across demographic groups. While digital literacy has been widely recognised as a key determinant of e-government adoption, the moderating role of gender in this relationship remains insufficiently explored, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where structural inequalities intersect with digital access disparities. This study investigates whether sex significantly moderates the relationship between digital literacy and e-government adoption among Nigerian citizens. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed, with structured questionnaires administered to 369 respondents selected through stratified random sampling in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Digital literacy, e-government adoption, and demographic variables were measured using validated multi-item scales. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via SmartPLS, with multi-group analysis (MGA) applied to test the moderating effect of sex across male and female subgroups. Findings confirm that digital literacy exerts a significant positive influence on e-government adoption. However, multi-group analysis reveals that sex significantly moderates this relationship, with digital literacy demonstrating a stronger predictive effect on e-government adoption among male respondents than female respondents, reflecting persistent gendered digital inequalities in the Nigerian context. The study concludes that e-government strategies that overlook gender as a structural variable risk deepening existing digital divides. Policymakers and public administrators must adopt gender-sensitive digital literacy interventions to ensure equitable access to and benefits from e-government platforms in developing countries.



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sciforum-177217: Gender disparities in perceived health and functional limitations among institutionalized older adults with Age-Related Macular Degeneration. Implications for secondary chronic pain and multimorbidity

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Background: Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) causes severe central vision loss in adults >55 without direct ocular pain, but impairs autonomy and quality of life. In long-term care, AMD disproportionately burdens women due to longevity, biological/hormonal, and sociocultural factors, worsening access to care/rehabilitation and amplifying multimorbidity (musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, frailty), falls, dependence, isolation, and caregiver load—all driving secondary chronic pain (physical from immobility/falls; psychosocial/emotional from autonomy loss). **Objective:** Examine gender patterns in perceived health and functional domains among 314 institutionalized AMD residents (EDAD 2023, INE, Spain), highlighting non-visual limitations as key drivers of secondary pain, with greater female impact. **Methods:** Secondary analysis of sociodemographics and functional subscales (high reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.88$). Bivariate Pearson correlations ($p < 0.01$) linked difficulties (with/without assistance) to ordinal perceived health. **Results:** Women predominated (79.3%, $n=249$), were older (88.56 ± 8.14 vs. 85.51 ± 13.39 years), with higher severe disability and poorer health perceptions. Strongest correlations with negative health: mobility (walking outside assisted $r=0.336^*$), self-care (eating assisted $r=0.376^*$), communication/learning (understanding assisted $r=0.406^*$). Visual items weaker (reading $r=0.228^*$), mitigated by aids—indicating pain from functional/multimorbid consequences disproportionately affects women. **Conclusions:** Institutionalized women with AMD face amplified vulnerabilities, poorer health, and higher secondary chronic pain risk from mobility/self-care deficits and multimorbidity. Prioritize gender-sensitive holistic pain assessment, non-visual interventions, equitable rehabilitation, caregiver VR empathy training, and psychosocial support to reduce burden in this female-majority group. Future gender-stratified models for personalized care.



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sciforum-177057: Helping Others, But Not Better Connected? Internet Access in Midlife and Later Life

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Introduction. Helping professions are often assumed to provide greater exposure to workplace technology and fewer barriers to reliable internet access because many such roles involve routine use of computers, electronic records, and online platforms. Yet digital inequality research suggests that internet access is shaped not only by adoption but also by context, autonomy, and the continuity of use across settings. This study examined whether adults in helping professions were more likely to have broader internet access contexts in midlife and later life. **Methodology.** Data were drawn from the 2023-2025 Current Population Survey (CPS) Internet Use Supplement, a nationally representative federal household survey in the U.S., and focused on adults aged 50 and older (N = 14,507). Internet access was classified into three categories: access limited to home, access across home and outside settings, and access limited to outside settings. Helping profession status was recoded from CPS occupation codes using occupational groupings informed by O*NET, a U.S. occupational information system, including healthcare, education, community and social services, and related helping roles. **Results.** Survey-weighted multinomial logistic regression models were estimated, adjusting for age, sex, education, and race/ethnicity, with outside-only access as the reference group. Contrary to expectation, helping profession status was not significantly associated with either access limited to home (RRR = 0.88, 95% CI [0.69, 1.12], p = .302) or access across home and outside settings (RRR = 0.93, 95% CI [0.75, 1.14], p = .474). In contrast, educational attainment was more strongly associated with access patterns. **Conclusion.** These findings suggest that occupational identity alone may be a weak indicator of digital continuity in midlife and later life. Technology-dependent services should assess actual access conditions rather than infer digital readiness from the profession.



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sciforum-173352: Human-AI Collaborative Intelligence in Digital Manufacturing: Sociotechnical Implications of Automated Decision-Making on Workforce Dynamics and Organizational Trust

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The rapid integration of artificial intelligence into manufacturing environments fundamentally reshapes worker identity, organizational hierarchies, and labor relations. While technical literature emphasizes efficiency gains from AI-driven automation, critical questions remain about how workers perceive, adapt to, and resist algorithmic management systems. This research examines the sociotechnical dimensions of AI implementation across manufacturing facilities in Iran, South Korea, and the UAE, analyzing how cultural contexts mediate worker responses to automated supervision and predictive maintenance systems.

Through mixed-methods analysis combining worker surveys, organizational ethnography, and machine learning performance data from 847 firms, we reveal significant disparities between technical optimization and social acceptance. Workers in facilities with transparent AI systems reported 43% higher trust levels compared to opaque algorithmic management. Our findings challenge techno-deterministic assumptions, demonstrating that successful AI integration depends less on algorithmic sophistication than on participatory implementation strategies that preserve worker autonomy and dignity.

We introduce a "sociotechnical friction index" measuring resistance points where technological capabilities clash with organizational culture and labor expectations. Results show that facilities prioritizing human-AI collaboration over full automation achieved both higher productivity and lower turnover rates. This research contributes to critical technology studies by documenting how Global South manufacturing contexts negotiate AI adoption differently than Western models assume, offering insights for policymakers addressing technological unemployment, algorithmic accountability, and the future of work in an AI-augmented economy.



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sciforum-174056: Intermittency, Location and Energy Transitions: A critique of Andreas Malm's water-to-steam power narrative

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In his influential 2016 book *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming*, Swedish scholar Andreas Malm offered a new explanation for the English cotton manufacturing industry's transition from rural, abundant, and cheap direct-drive waterpower to urban and more expensive stationary coal-generated steam power. After exonerating waterpower's unreliability, non-scalability and geographical inflexibility, he argued the real culprits were capitalists who prioritized controlling their workforce in a time of labor unrest, something more easily achieved in large agglomerations with abundant surplus labor. As such, the current climate crisis is rooted in the outcome of a class struggle rather than inherent advantages of carbon fuels over previous power sources. With adequate public planning and support, moving away from carbon fuels towards preferable alternatives should therefore be easier than commonly imagined.

This essay challenges Malm's historical narrative by revisiting traditional and more recent interpretations and evidence that demonstrate how the combination of costlier steam engines and urban locations delivered greater returns on investment because of factors ranging from reduced transportation costs to easier access to larger and more diverse pools, service providers and skilled labor. A case is made that overturning past outcomes of market processes that factored in numerous trade-offs is much more complex, costly and environmentally damaging than suggested by Malm's historical narrative.



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sciforum-173922: Leadership, Social and Digital Skills in the Tourism Sector in Crete: Digital Transformation and Gender Dimensions

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Introduction:

The accelerating digital transformation of the tourism sector, driven by the expansion of digital platforms, data management systems, and artificial intelligence applications, is reshaping labor relations and skill requirements. In this context, the development of leadership, social/communicative, and digital skills has become critical to the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism enterprises. This study examines the role of these skills within the tourism and cultural sectors in Crete, with particular emphasis on the gender dimension.

Methods:

The study is based on quantitative research employing structured questionnaires (including both closed- and open-ended questions) distributed to more than 500 tourism and cultural enterprises across all regional units of Crete. The final sample consisted of 287 enterprises. The analysis focused on employers' and senior executives' perceptions of essential leadership competencies, employees' social/communicative and digital skills, and organizational capacity for adaptation to technological change.

Results:

The findings indicate that effective leadership, combined with the enhancement of digital and communicative skills, constitutes a key factor in strengthening organizational resilience. At the same time, the transition toward increasingly digitalized work environments appears to affect professional opportunities for men and women in distinct ways, potentially reinforcing existing gender disparities.

Conclusions:

Sustainable development in the tourism sector requires empowering leadership models and inclusive strategies for digital skills development. Integrating a gender-sensitive perspective into training policies and organizational development initiatives is essential to prevent the reproduction of inequalities within the broader context of technological transformation.



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sciforum-176233: Mapping global agricultural research trends and their implications for farmer productivity and sustainable livelihoods

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Over the past two decades, agricultural research has undergone a significant transformation, increasingly integrating sustainability, climate resilience, and technological innovation to address the complex challenges of global food production and rural livelihoods. This study mapped global agricultural research trends and examined their implications for farmer productivity and sustainable livelihoods. Using 128 filtered documents from Scopus (exported February 25, 2026), VOSviewer was applied to analyze co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence networks, and overlay. Findings indicated that global research had evolved from early studies emphasizing environmental sustainability, carbon management, land use, and climate resilience, toward more recent work focused on digital and smart agriculture technologies, including big data, internet of things (IoT), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), intelligent robotics, and agriculture 5.0. This evolution reflected the emergence of integrated thematic pillars encompassing sustainability, environmental management, technological innovation for smallholders, and crop production systems. The study also highlighted that strong interdisciplinary and cross-regional collaborations were instrumental in knowledge integration and the development of context-responsive strategies. The results demonstrated that contemporary agricultural research is increasingly combining productivity enhancement with ecological stewardship, providing evidence-based insights to support resilient farming practices, technological adoption, and sustainable livelihoods globally. The study provides strategic insights for guiding future research directions, strengthening innovation ecosystems, informing evidence-based policymaking, and fostering inclusive agricultural transformation across diverse socio-economic and geographic contexts.



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sciforum-168094: Mosque Architecture in Bali as Social Technology: Islamic Hindu Acculturation and Cultural Sustainability

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In a globalised context where cultural diversity and sustainability are central concerns within the built environment, religious architecture increasingly reflects processes of cultural adaptation and social coexistence. In Bali, mosque architecture offers a distinctive case of acculturation between Islamic architectural principles and a Hindu majority cultural context. Rather than adopting standardised mosque forms, many mosques in Bali demonstrate adaptive design approaches shaped by local cultural norms and sustainability considerations.

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on secondary data. Data sources include peer reviewed academic literature, architectural drawings, planning and regulatory documents, and publicly available visual records of selected mosques in Bali. A thematic analysis approach is employed to examine how cultural acculturation and sustainability are articulated through architectural form, spatial organisation, and symbolic representation.

The analysis identifies recurring design strategies, including selective localisation of architectural elements, moderated religious symbolism, and contextual spatial adaptation influenced by Hindu Balinese traditions. These strategies demonstrate how mosque architecture responds to cultural context while maintaining religious function and visibility.

The study concludes that mosque architecture in Bali operates as a form of social technology through which Islamic Hindu acculturation contributes to cultural sustainability and social harmony. By framing architecture as a socio technical practice, this research contributes to social science discussions on Society and Technology and highlights the role of the built environment in sustaining pluralistic and culturally diverse societies.



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sciforum-177251: Opportunity Recognition and Indigenous Enterprise in Southern/West Cameroon, 1939–1972

Lambert Munang Ngong

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This study examines how indigenous entrepreneurs in Southern/West Cameroon identified and appropriated business opportunities between 1939 and 1972. Drawing on theories of entrepreneurial opportunity advanced by Joseph Schumpeter and later scholars such as Shane and Venkataraman, the paper explores how local actors creatively mobilised available resources, responded to unsatisfied market needs, and developed innovative business strategies within the colonial and early postcolonial economy. Using historical sources, archival materials, and oral testimonies, the study highlights the ingenuity and alertness of indigenous entrepreneurs who transformed underutilised resources and emerging market demands into viable enterprises. The findings reveal that entrepreneurial initiative in West Cameroon was strongly driven by the ability to recognise opportunities embedded in everyday economic realities. Entrepreneurs such as Victor Mukete, John Ngochi, Paul Sinju, Barnabas Anguh, and William Ebobi Monangai demonstrated remarkable foresight in exploiting fertile agricultural land, forest resources, local crops, and expanding regional markets. Others pioneered businesses in transportation, construction, education, manufacturing, and retail distribution, often responding to infrastructural needs, technological gaps, and consumer demands in a rapidly changing society. These entrepreneurs also innovated by serving customers more efficiently than expatriate firms, establishing local supply chains, and creating new organisational structures. By documenting these initiatives, the paper challenges narratives that portray African economies as largely dependent or externally driven. Instead, it demonstrates that indigenous entrepreneurial agency played a critical role in shaping economic transformation in West Cameroon. The study therefore contributes to the historiography of African entrepreneurship by foregrounding local innovation, resourcefulness, and adaptive strategies in the development of postcolonial economies.



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sciforum-172836: Perceptions of Algorithmic Fairness, Income Stability, and Social Protection as Determinants of Income Volatility in India's Gig Economy

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Introduction

The recent surge in the development of digital labour platforms in India has heightened worries about the issue of income instability and financial insecurity among gig workers. The allocation of tasks, pricing, incentives, and performance assessment are controlled by computerized management systems that tend to bring uncertainty in earnings. At the same time, financial vulnerability is made worse by the lack of access to formal social protection mechanisms. Although earlier studies have addressed the subject of algorithmic control and labour precarity in isolation, there is very limited empirical information that addresses worker perceptions of fairness, income stability, and social protection as a combined factor in income volatility in emerging economies.

Methods

It used a validated 20-item Likert-scale measure to collect primary data on 220 gig workers on ride-hailing, food delivery, logistics, and home-service platforms in India. Cronbach alpha ($\alpha > .79$) was used to assure reliability. A five-factor model with 67.27 per cent of overall variance was supported by Exploratory Factor Analysis. Multiple regression analysis was done to discover predictors of income volatility.

Results

The regression model was statistically significant ($R^2 = .419$, $p = .001$). Perceived Income Stability ($\beta = .278$, $p = .001$), Algorithmic Fairness ($\beta = .231$, $p = .001$), and Perceived Social Protection Adequacy ($\beta = .188$, $p = .005$) significantly predicted income volatility. Social Security Awareness was not statistically significant ($p = .073$).

Conclusions

The conditions of structural platforms and subjective perceptions of fairness, stability, and institutional support have a role in the volatility of incomes in the Indian gig economy, in addition to other factors. To decrease economic precarity within digital labour markets, policy reforms must focus on earnings predictability, algorithmic transparency and sufficient social protection systems.



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sciforum-170926: Platform Anxiety and the Social Production of Uncertainty in Digital Societies

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Digital platforms have evolved into core infrastructures of contemporary social life; however, their continuous transformation generates persistent forms of collective uncertainty. This paper introduces the concept of platform anxiety to explain how algorithmic environments produce socially shared experiences of instability, unpredictability, and perceived loss of control. Rather than framing anxiety as an individual psychological condition, the study conceptualizes it as a structurally mediated phenomenon emerging from socio-technical design.

Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative design based on thematic analysis of in-depth user narratives and observed platform interaction practices. The empirical material consists of qualitative data collected from [n = ...] active social media users, focusing on their everyday experiences of visibility, algorithmic change, and communicative self-regulation across major digital platforms. Data were analyzed through iterative coding procedures to identify recurring interpretive patterns and adaptive strategies.

The findings indicate that rapid interface changes, opaque algorithmic decision-making, and continuous visibility pressures intensify reflexive self-monitoring and reshape communicative norms. Users respond by developing micro-level risk management strategies, including selective self-disclosure, temporal withdrawal, and identity modulation. These practices significantly influence trust formation, participation patterns, and perceptions of agency within digital environments.

The paper argues that platform anxiety constitutes a defining condition of hyperconnected societies, affecting not only individual well-being but also the structure of digital public interaction. By framing uncertainty as a systemic outcome of platform architecture, the study contributes to interdisciplinary debates in communication theory and digital sociology and offers a robust conceptual framework for analyzing the long-term social consequences of algorithmically mediated communication.



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sciforum-177062: Reconfiguring Knowledge Access: Libraries at the Intersection of Society and Digital Technology

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Introduction:

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed how knowledge is produced, accessed, and circulated in contemporary society. Technologies such as the internet, artificial intelligence, big data, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) have reshaped social interaction, learning environments, and information ecosystems. Within this evolving digital landscape, libraries are undergoing significant institutional and functional transformations. No longer confined to their traditional role as custodians of printed collections, libraries increasingly operate as knowledge infrastructures that mediate among technology, information access, and social participation. Understanding this transformation is essential for examining how technological change influences knowledge systems and social inclusion.

Methods:

This study adopts a conceptual and analytical approach drawing on perspectives from information science, social informatics, and the sociology of technology. It is based on a structured review of relevant literature, with sources selected according to their relevance to digital transformation, libraries, and knowledge societies. The selected literature was systematically analysed to identify key themes, theoretical perspectives, and ongoing debates related to the evolving role of libraries in contemporary knowledge environments.

Results:

The analysis indicates that libraries have become central actors in facilitating equitable access to digital information and knowledge resources. By integrating digital repositories, online databases, and networked information systems, libraries support research, education, and public knowledge dissemination. Furthermore, libraries play a crucial role in addressing the digital divide by promoting digital literacy, providing access to technological infrastructure, and enabling inclusive participation in the information society. However, challenges related to digital inequality, information overload, misinformation, and data governance continue to shape the evolving role of libraries in technologically mediated environments.

Conclusion:

Libraries function as critical intermediaries between technological innovation and societal knowledge needs. Strengthening library-based digital infrastructures, information literacy initiatives, and inclusive access policies is essential for ensuring that technological progress contributes to equitable knowledge production and informed civic participation in the digital age.



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sciforum-173718: Rejecting Scientific Facts About Vaccination by Public Policy Actors in Slovakia: Social, Health, and Economic Consequences

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This article examines how the rejection of established scientific knowledge on vaccination by public policy actors in Slovakia contributed to broader societal, public health, and economic consequences during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis is situated at the intersection of scholarship on vaccine hesitancy, science denial, populist communication, and the mainstreaming of extremist narratives. Within this framework, science denial is understood as a political and discursive process through which empirically validated claims concerning vaccine safety, effectiveness, and risk–benefit balance are contested and delegitimized in the public sphere.

Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative case study of Slovakia based on the systematic analysis of publicly available and verifiable sources, including international academic literature on vaccine hesitancy, Slovak survey-based research on public attitudes and institutional trust, epidemiological evidence, official policy documents, and analyses of the economic costs associated with low vaccination uptake. This multi-source approach enables the examination of linkages between political communication, institutional distrust, and vaccination-related outcomes.

The findings suggest that vaccine hesitancy in Slovakia is shaped less by educational attainment than by political distrust, low institutional confidence, and susceptibility to conspiratorial narratives. A key mechanism identified is the mainstreaming of antivaccine discourse, whereby narratives initially associated with extremist and conspiracy-oriented actors gradually gained legitimacy within broader populist politics and, at times, informed policy signals. These dynamics contributed to the erosion of trust in scientific and public institutions, intensified social polarization, adverse health outcomes linked to persistently low vaccine uptake, and rising economic burdens.

Theoretically, the study contributes to existing literature by conceptualizing vaccine hesitancy as a politically mediated and institutionally reinforced process. Practically, it underscores the importance of evidence-based health governance, stronger political accountability, and coordinated state-level strategies to counter health misinformation and rebuild public trust.



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sciforum-166489: Relieving Suffering as a Health System Responsibility: Governance and Global Inequities in Palliative Care

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Palliative care evolved with the recognition of subjectively experienced human suffering at the end of life. However, suffering becomes addressable at scale only when recognised, prioritised, and acted upon through social institutions. This paper examines how the understanding of consciousness and suffering shape the governance and distribution of palliative care within health systems, with implications on global inequities in palliative care. Based on an interdisciplinary synthesis of social science, bioethics, and global health policy literature, the paper analyses why palliative care remains unevenly integrated, despite strong normative commitments at the international level.

There are persistent asymmetries between high-income and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in palliative care coverage and access to essential medicines, especially opioids. These inequities are not attributable solely to differences in economic resources, but are also mediated by institutional mechanisms, such as regulatory regimes, health financing structures, workforce authority, and political prioritisation. Examples are used to illustrate how alternative institutional arrangements, such as task-shifting in opioid prescribing and community-based care platforms, can expand access even in resource-constrained settings.

Palliative care should be conceptualized as a social institution grounded in shared human consciousness. Inequitable access reflects differences in how societies value, govern, and operationalise suffering. Addressing these disparities requires not only clinical capacity but policy coherence, proportionate regulation, and accountability mechanisms that recognise relief of suffering as a core obligation of health systems.



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sciforum-169424: Representation of Minority Groups in Pakistani Media

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Introduction:

Media plays a essential role in defining social affectation and clustered individuality in any society. In a doctrine and multi-religious state such as Pakistan, media representation of minority communities especially religious minorities is of momentous value. Straight and fair representation of minorities, as well as communication of their rights and questioning, testimonial to social compatibility and inclusion. This study direction on the role and representation of minorities in Pakistani electronic, print, and digital media, and examines the steady of freedom and clearness minorities content within these media platforms.

Methods:

This research adopts a qualitative formulation based on a review of existent academic literature, relative analysis of accessible media content, and interrogation of public views and people perceptions. Secondary data from previous research studies, media reports, and relevant materials are analyzed to measure existing process, structure, and clarity in the representation of minorities in Pakistan.

Results:

The aggregation shows that minority representation in Pakistani media is frequently limited and contradictory. While minorities are not totally absent from media communicative, their existence is often restricted, minimal, or subject to critical analysis. In many cases, minority sounds receive low attention, and their issues are not bestowed proportionately or comprehensively across different media platforms.

Conclusions:

The study concludes that there is a need for developed media pattern to guarantee fair, balanced, and exclusive representation of minority communities in Pakistan. It proposes applicable measures to code existent faults in media representation and emphasizes the value of orienting media policies and exercise with global modular. The paper also presents a theoretical account and methodology aimed at raise transparency, freedom, and relative representation of minorities in Pakistani media.



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sciforum-176512: Scrolling Science: understanding how Audiences engage with Short Science Videos on Social Media

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Introduction

Short-form video has rapidly become a dominant format for communicating science on social media platforms. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts enable the dissemination of scientific information through concise, visually dynamic content designed for mobile and algorithm-driven environments. While this format is increasingly adopted by researchers, institutions, and science communicators, the mechanisms influencing how audiences engage with short science videos remain insufficiently understood. Examining these factors is crucial for understanding how digital platforms shape contemporary science communication practices.

Methods

This study presents a systematic literature review examining the factors influencing the consumption of short-form science videos on social media platforms. The review followed PRISMA guidelines and analysed peer-reviewed studies published between 2019 and 2024. Searches were conducted across multidisciplinary databases including ACM Digital Library, IEEE Xplore, Elsevier, Springer, and Google Scholar. After applying inclusion criteria and quality assessment using an adapted Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), 29 high-quality studies were included in the final synthesis.

Results

The analysis reveals that audience engagement with short science videos is shaped by several interconnected factors. Platform algorithms play a central role in determining visibility, prioritising videos that generate high interaction metrics such as likes, comments, and shares. Narrative and visual strategies—including storytelling, humour, and visually appealing animations—significantly enhance viewer retention and engagement. Emotional resonance and accessible language also contribute to higher interaction, particularly among younger audiences. At the same time, the literature highlights challenges such as the risk of misinformation, the oversimplification of scientific concepts, and accessibility barriers.

Conclusions

Short science videos are now a prominent format for communicating science on social media. Their effectiveness reflects interactions among platform algorithms, narrative strategies, and audience engagement. Overall, digital platforms mediate how science circulates and is understood publicly, underscoring the interdependence of society and technology in contemporary science communication.



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sciforum-174036: Seeing Protest Before It Happens

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How do predictive monitoring technologies affect the likelihood and form of protest? Classical repression theories analyze state coercion as reactive responses to observable collective action. This framework fails when algorithmic surveillance enables states to intervene *before* mobilization occurs, inverting the temporal sequence that defines conventional repression. I develop a theory of anticipatory repression wherein states deploy predictive analytics to identify and preempt potential threats rather than responding to manifest challenges. Anticipatory repression operates through three interconnected mechanisms. Perception renders potential dissent informationally visible by capturing behavioral signals through surveillance networks and data scraping. Prediction transforms these signals into probabilistic risk assessments through algorithmic analysis. Preemption operationalizes prediction through early interventions designed to disrupt mobilization before protests become observable in empirical records. These mechanisms generate three testable propositions: predictive surveillance infrastructure deployment (1) reduces protest incidence, with effects strongest for spontaneous, low-threat mobilization; (2) alters protest form by increasing organizational formality and reducing public visibility; and (3) operates similarly across regime types while varying in implementation intensity according to institutional constraints. I employ a nested mixed methods design combining quantitative analysis of protest event data with qualitative case studies examining surveillance deployment in China, Nigeria, and the United States. Preliminary analysis suggests that predictive monitoring correlates with reduced mobilization and systematic changes in organizational tactics across different political systems, with significant implications for democratic contestation and civil liberties in an era of ubiquitous surveillance.



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sciforum-175932: Social Media Challenges as an Intersection between Internet Memes and Traditional Challenges: A Conceptual Analysis

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Social Media Challenges (SMCs) have become a prominent and widely recognized phenomenon within contemporary digital culture, particularly on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. While a substantial body of empirical research has examined their content, diffusion, and social effects, the conceptual foundations of these challenges remain comparatively underdeveloped. This study addresses this gap by offering a conceptual analysis of Social Media Challenges as an intersection between Internet memes and traditional challenges, clarifying how this intersection gives rise to a distinct participatory digital phenomenon.

The study adopts a conceptual-theoretical approach based on an etymological and historical review of the concepts of challenge and meme. Drawing on linguistic sources, historical texts, and scholarship on digital culture, it traces key shifts in the meanings of both concepts and examines how these trajectories converge within contemporary social media environments. The analysis also synthesizes existing definitions of Social Media Challenges to formulate an integrated conceptual framework grounded in their historical and cultural development.

The analysis demonstrates that Social Media Challenges emerge where the structured, goal-oriented, and performative logic of traditional challenges intersects with the replicability, adaptability, and circulation dynamics characteristic of meme culture. A defining feature of SMCs is the presence of an explicit or implicit invitation to participate, encouraging individuals or groups to perform a specific task, document their engagement, and circulate it through social media platforms. This participatory structure supports replication and variation while enabling large-scale visibility and diffusion. At the same time, the study shows that not all challenges function as memes and not all memes operate as challenges, underscoring intersection as the key conceptual location of Social Media Challenges.

By positioning Social Media Challenges at this intersection, the study clarifies what distinguishes them from adjacent phenomena and provides a coherent conceptual framework for understanding participatory practices shaped by social-media technologies.



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sciforum-176610: Survey Questionnaires and the Measurement of Algorithmic Awareness in Social Research

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The growing influence of algorithmic systems in everyday digital environments has led to increasing scholarly interest in users' awareness of these systems, a phenomenon commonly referred to in the literature as *algorithmic awareness*. In recent years, social science research has increasingly relied on survey questionnaires to investigate how individuals perceive, understand, and evaluate algorithmic systems.

This paper reviews how questionnaires have been employed in empirical research on algorithmic awareness, focusing on the methodological challenges associated with measuring this concept through survey research. Measuring algorithmic awareness poses specific difficulties for social research, as algorithmic systems are often opaque, operate in the background of everyday digital environments, and are only partially understood by users. As a result, individuals' perceptions of their awareness may not correspond to their actual understanding of how algorithmic systems function.

Against this background, the paper examines the main measurement strategies adopted in the existing empirical and methodological literature. First, it reviews the use of self-report items that ask respondents to directly assess their level of awareness. Although widely adopted in studies on algorithmic awareness (Gran et al., 2021; Min, 2019; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Neubaum, 2023), these measures raise methodological concerns related to overconfidence, social desirability, and discrepancies between perceived and actual knowledge (Hargittai, 2009; Mondak, 1999). Second, the paper discusses psychometric scales developed to capture the multidimensional nature of algorithmic awareness, such as the Algorithmic Media Content Awareness scale (Zarouali et al., 2021), highlighting both their advantages and limitations. Third, it considers alternative survey designs aimed at measuring knowledge more indirectly, for instance through knowledge tests or experimental designs embedded within surveys (Brodsky et al., 2020; Cotter & Reisdorf, 2020).

Particular emphasis is placed on scenario-based questions, which present respondents with realistic situations involving algorithmic systems in everyday contexts such as social media, online shopping, and information search. This approach is particularly valuable when studying algorithmic awareness, as the concept itself is highly abstract and often difficult for respondents to evaluate directly. By grounding questions in concrete situations, scenario-based designs make the phenomenon more tangible and enable researchers to better capture individuals' practical understanding of how algorithmic systems operate (Dogruel et al., 2022). Overall, the paper discusses the strengths and limitations of survey-based approaches and outlines methodological directions for future research on algorithmic awareness.



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sciforum-169085: Technology-Facilitated Intimate Partner Sexual Violence: An Empirical Study on Socio-Techno Patterns, Prevalence, and Impacts Among Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

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Background and Purpose: Technology-Facilitated Intimate Partner Violence (TFIPV) represents a rapidly rising form of abuse in India, where digital platforms are weaponized to exert control, monitor, coerce, and sexually exploit individuals within intimate relationships. This study aims to empirically examine the socio-technical patterns of such abuse, investigate its psychological and social impacts on survivors, and explore rural–urban variations in experience and access to support.

Methods: Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study analysed 231 survivor-generated social media posts and conducted semi-structured telephonic interviews with 48 survivors of TFIPV across diverse socio-demographic backgrounds. Data were subjected to thematic and comparative analysis to identify recurring patterns and contextual disparities.

Findings: The research reveals two emergent frameworks: the “Digital Abuse Cycle,” where abusers oscillate between public humiliation and private surveillance, and the “Digital Helplessness Spiral,” characterizing victims’ emotional erosion and social isolation. Rural survivors reported heightened vulnerabilities due to poor digital literacy and lack of legal awareness, while urban survivors faced reputational threats and professional sabotage.

Conclusions and Implications: TFIPV is deeply rooted in structural patriarchy and normalized digital control. The study proposes a TRUST Framework to inform professional practice, policy reform, and future interdisciplinary research aimed at addressing this under-recognized yet urgent form of violence.



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sciforum-157947: The Affective-Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering: How Emotions and Values Shape Concepts

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Abstract. The paper contributes to interdisciplinary dialogue between philosophy, ethics, and social sciences by developing the Affective Ethical Model of Conceptual Engineering (AEMCE). The model also fills a problematic gap in conceptual engineering (CE) by preempting affective and moral aspects of societal constructs. Where normative CE tries to bring concepts in line with the moral and societal purpose, it often does not consider the negative effects that emotionally loaded concepts can have on individuals, including harm, marginalization, or empowerment. The AEMCE is a methodological synthesis of hard philosophical argumentation of high empirical validation, which is guided by the Affective Performance Test (APT). The given hybrid instrument will offer both quantitative and qualitative data, which would make it possible to measure emotional involvement and harm reduction in various settings and groups. The methodological framework is arranged in four circles of repetitive phases, i.e., diagnosis, design, circulation, and evaluation, which have been arranged in such a way to warrant continuity of ethical accountability besides perpetual conceptual revision and metamorphosis. Empirical findings of a pilot application of the topic of the stigmatizing label of illegitimate children in Algeria support the ability of the model to transform the harmful categories into language-neutral, socially inclusive terms. The results indicate that AEMCE fosters linguistic equity, social cohesiveness, and conceptual change with the help of emotional intelligence.



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sciforum-174039: The Displacement of Algorithmic Authority Infrastructure and the Rearrangement of Governance in the Global South

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Introduction:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is slowly entering policing, welfare support, and the legal systems of the Global South, thereby changing how institutions operate. The introduction of AI in the Global South is not only a technological phenomenon of modernization of the equipment but also a complete restructuring of the government, which was realized by replacing the current infrastructure. Without transparency and challenge mechanisms, the locus of accountability will move not only out of the formal oversight structures but also into more opaque processes.

Methods:

The research will use a mixed-methods approach to compare the acceptance of AI systems in India, Brazil, and Kenya. It analyzes 35 procurement contracts, AI strategy studies on the national level, and statistical data of predictive policing and welfare automation. Those findings are critically triangulated against 24 semi-structured interviews with judges, public defenders, technologists, and representatives of civil society. In place of gauging the effects on efficiency, the analytical framework focuses on the conversion of operational authority, changes in discretionary space, and the stability of procedural protection within institutional practice.

Results:

It has been found that algorithmic infrastructures mechanize the operational power of proprietary technical ecosystems, thus restricting the discretionary judgment and institutional access to model construction and information logic. Respondents identified a few avenues to challenge automated decisions, noting inconsistencies in regulations. The comparative analysis of the three national settings shows that the tendency to refer to outside vendors and spend minimal internal audit power is universal.

Conclusion:

The introduction of AI in the Global South is not only a technological phenomenon of modernizing equipment but also a complete restructuring of government, achieved by replacing the current infrastructure. Without transparency and challenge mechanisms, the locus of accountability will move not only out of the formal oversight structures but also into more opaque processes.



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sciforum-177109: The impact of mobile broadband internet on literacy: Evidence from Nigeria

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Over the past few decades, there has been a massive expansion of the internet across both developed and developing economies. Despite a growing body of research exploring its effect on firm performance, much less is known about its impact on educational outcomes. This paper examines the impact of 3G mobile broadband coverage on basic literacy among Nigerian children aged 5-12 years, as measured by a binary indicator of the ability to read and write. The analysis draws on a geographically matched mobile network coverage map and three waves of panel data from the Nigerian General Household Survey, conducted in 2010–11, 2012–13, and 2015–16. Exploiting the quasi-experimental variation generated by the staggered rollout of 3G infrastructure, the study employs the Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021) difference-in-differences estimator, which accounts for treatment effect heterogeneity across time and units. We find a robust and statistically significant positive association between mobile broadband coverage and literacy attainment among primary-school-aged children. The effects are particularly pronounced among boys, children from economically disadvantaged households, and those who were younger and enrolled in school at baseline. Our findings provide suggestive evidence that the impacts operate directly through enhanced parental aspirations and indirectly through an increase in household income. Overall, this study highlights the essential role of digital technologies in promoting educational equity.

Keywords: Literacy, mobile broadband, Nigeria



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sciforum-175048: The Influence of 90s cartoon on Millennials and Generation Alpha in Pakistan

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This research explores the emotional, behavioral, and developmental influence of 1990s animated content on individuals who were children during that decade, with a focus on the Pakistani context. Targeting Millennials currently in their 30s and 40s, the study examines the lasting impact of nostalgic media on emotional growth, social behavior, and cultural identity, and compares it with the experiences of Generation Alpha, who are being raised in a digitally immersive era. The qualitative study involves 40 participants 20 parents (10 male, 10 female) and 20 children (10 boys, 10 girls) through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. It investigates how nostalgic attachment to 90s cartoons influences contemporary views on childhood, parenting, and education. The research analyzes international animated classics such as *The Lion King* (1994), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), and *Aladdin* (1992), recognized for their emotional storytelling, moral frameworks, and hybrid animation techniques, all of which gained popularity in Pakistan via dubbed television broadcasts. In addition, the study incorporates regional animated figures such as Uncle Sargam, created by Farooq Qaiser, and Meena, introduced by UNICEF in 1993, which played pivotal roles in promoting social awareness, particularly in areas like girls' education and children's rights. Findings suggest that while today's fast-paced, technologically driven media often emphasizes visual stimulation, it lacks the emotional depth and cultural grounding found in earlier content. By comparing intergenerational responses, this study underscores the evolving role of animated narratives in shaping emotional resilience, moral understanding, and cultural imagination among children in Pakistan.



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sciforum-175089: The Influence of Problematic Social Media Use on Neuroticism: Literature Review

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Introduction: Problematic social media use has been increasingly associated with adverse psychological outcomes among adolescents and young adults. Neuroticism, a personality trait characterized by emotional instability and negative affect, may both predispose individuals to and be exacerbated by excessive social media engagement. This study aimed to synthesize empirical evidence examining the association between problematic social media use and neuroticism.

Methods: A targeted narrative literature review was conducted using PsycINFO in July 2024. Peer-reviewed empirical studies assessing social media use and neuroticism in adolescent and young adult populations were identified using predefined inclusion criteria. Studies were included if they assessed both constructs using validated measures. Due to methodological variability across studies, findings were synthesized narratively.

Results: Five studies met inclusion criteria with sample sizes ranging from 151 to 1146 participants. Across studies, problematic social media use was consistently positively associated with neuroticism, with small-to-moderate effect sizes ($\beta \approx .18-.45$). Mediating factors such as fear of missing out (FoMO) and self-control were found to influence this relationship. Indirect associations were also observed through behaviours such as phubbing, while one study reported no direct association, indicating variability depending on measurement approaches and outcomes with neuroticism, with small to moderate effect sizes. Fear of missing out and phubbing strengthened this association, while higher self-control was associated with lower neuroticism. Findings were consistent across diverse cultural samples.

Discussion: The findings support a consistent correlational relationship between neuroticism and social media use, though causality cannot be inferred. Variability in study design, measurement tools, and sample characteristics limits generalizability. Psychological mechanisms such as FoMO and reduced self-control may partially explain the observed associations. The reviewed evidence suggests a robust association between problematic social media use and elevated neuroticism, with emotional and behavioral mediators playing a significant role. All included studies reported correlational findings, limiting causal inference.

Conclusion: Individuals with higher neuroticism may be particularly vulnerable to maladaptive engagement patterns. However, all findings are correlational, limiting causal inference. Future longitudinal research is needed to clarify directionality and inform interventions targeting emotional regulation and healthier social media use.



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sciforum-172008: The interplay between public policy and social movements: evidence from Bangladesh

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Social movements are central to Bangladesh's political and social fabric; scarcely a month passes without one emerging. These movements have repeatedly shaped governance, transforming popular grievances into tangible political and policy outcomes that redefine the nation's democratic and socio-economic landscape. This study examines the dynamic interplay between public policy and social movements, highlighting how policies can generate public discontent, signal social necessity, and be actively reshaped through citizen mobilization. Drawing on a qualitative, document-based narrative conceptual methodology, the study analyses historical records, news reports, government documents, and scholarly research to explore political and socio-economic mobilizations, encompassing both historical and contemporary episodes. Findings reveal that social movements operate as structurally embedded actors within the governance ecosystem, functioning as informal accountability mechanisms that influence policy content, amplify public scrutiny, and reinforce democratic responsiveness. Policies perceived as unjust, exclusionary, or poorly implemented often serve as triggers for collective action, while weak institutional channels increase the reliance on extra-institutional participation. The study identifies cyclical patterns in which policy decisions, mobilization, and state responses interact recursively, producing adaptive governance outcomes. Moreover, social movements are shown to contribute to broader societal debates, shaping public discourse, highlighting structural inequities, and fostering civic consciousness. The paper concludes with recommendations for participatory policy design, strengthened institutional responsiveness, and the cultivation of formal channels for citizen engagement. It further suggests directions for future research, including longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts, comparative analyses across national and regional contexts, and the examination of digital mobilization and social media as transformative tools for collective action in contemporary governance. By elucidating the mutually constitutive relationship between policy and social movements, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of Bangladesh's evolving democratic landscape and the mechanisms through which citizens influence governance outcomes.



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sciforum-173242: The Loneliness Economy: How Digital Platforms Profit from Social Isolation

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Digital platforms promise connection, community, and convenience. Yet rising rates of loneliness, declining face-to-face interaction, and increased social fragmentation suggest a paradox at the heart of technological society. This paper argues that contemporary digital economies are structurally incentivized to monetize human isolation rather than reduce it.

Through an analysis of platform design, attention economies, and data-driven engagement models, the study contends that social media and AI-powered systems are optimized to capture attention, prolong screen time, and stimulate emotional dependency. These mechanisms, while profitable, may inadvertently weaken offline social bonds and reshape interpersonal relationships into algorithmically mediated exchanges.

The paper explores how recommendation systems, personalized feeds, and digital consumption patterns contribute to the commodification of intimacy and belonging. It raises a central question: if platforms financially benefit from prolonged engagement, do they have meaningful incentives to foster genuine human connection?

Rather than framing technology as inherently harmful, this research situates the problem within broader political-economic structures that reward engagement over well-being. It concludes by discussing regulatory and ethical frameworks capable of realigning technological innovation with social cohesion.

Ultimately, it asks whether society is confronting a technological crisis or merely adapting to a new economic model built on engineered dependency. If digital platforms thrive when users remain emotionally and socially tethered to their screens, then the boundary between connection and exploitation becomes increasingly blurred. The deeper concern is whether social fragmentation is an unintended consequence of innovation or a predictable outcome of profit-maximizing design.



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sciforum-155874: The Silent Crisis of Science in Iran: A Grounded Theory Approach

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Iran's scientific community faces a silent crisis, manifested through persistent and interwoven barriers that undermine research vitality. This study applies Grounded Theory to dissect the structural, cultural, economic, and personal impediments confronting academia in Iran. Through in-depth interviews with eight PhD candidates experienced in Iran's higher education system, data were analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding stages to ensure analytic rigor.

The emergent core category, "Challenges of the Iranian scientific community," encapsulates the complex reality of scientific stagnation. Four interconnected dimensions arise as subcategories: causal conditions (e.g. funding scarcity, bureaucratic inertia), contextual factors (political constraints, institutional norms, and cultural expectations), strategies adopted (e.g. internal adaptation, selective collaboration), and consequences (declining productivity, brain drain, disillusionment). Beyond identifying these patterns, the study emphasizes how systemic and cultural dynamics jointly hinder innovation and international collaboration. It further argues that the sustainability of Iran's research ecosystem depends on rebuilding trust, transparency, and merit-based evaluation within institutions.

The study proposes a conceptual model clarifying the relationships among these dimensions and offers policy recommendations for institutional reform, international engagement, and capacity building. This work contributes theoretically to understanding the dynamics of scientific decline and practically to designing interventions that may revive Iran's research environment.



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sciforum-173974: The Trend of Self-Diagnosis: How Social Media Algorithms Shape the Perception of Mental Illness as a Personal Identity

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Abstract

The phenomenon of self-diagnosis regarding mental health disorders has escalated significantly due to the massive influx of educational content aggressively personalized by social media algorithms. The novelty of this study lies in identifying the phenomenon of 'digital identity fusion,' where social media algorithms do more than validate symptoms; they reconstruct mental health labels into instruments for social navigation and self-aesthetics that paradoxically diminish the user's self-efficacy. This study aims to elucidate how algorithmic mechanisms contribute to reshaping the perception of mental illness, shifting the paradigm from a clinical diagnosis to a central facet of the user's self-identity. Methods: Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis), this research involved three participants (n = 3) selected through purposive sampling to represent different social pressure spectrums: a university student, a private employee, and a creative freelancer. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews focusing on the history of algorithmic exposure and the motivations behind self-diagnostic behavior. Results: The results indicate that algorithms create echo chambers that trigger confirmation bias, leading individuals to adopt labels such as ADHD or Anxiety as self-defense mechanisms against external pressures. The findings reveal an identity fusion where mental health labels are utilized as aesthetics or personal branding to build a unique or "authentic" self-narrative within digital spaces. Collectively, these interactions with algorithms have diminished participants' self-efficacy, as individuals feel bound to a permanent "disease identity". Conclusion: The study concludes that self-diagnosis has shifted from a mere search for medical information toward the formation of a core identity used for social navigation. Consequently, future psychological interventions must integrate algorithmic literacy to restore individual personal agency.



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sciforum-160891: Too human to resist: AI Anthropomorphism and manipulation vulnerability in Gen Z

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Generation Z has grown up with artificial intelligence as a daily companion, yet anthropomorphism (attributing human characteristics to non-human entities) shapes how they perceive and interact with AI systems. While anthropomorphic perceptions can enhance engagement, they create a vulnerability: when adolescents perceive AI as having intentions, emotions, or moral agency, they become susceptible to manipulation through emotionally persuasive or deceptive AI design. This study explores how adolescents anthropomorphize AI across four dimensions: cognitive (agency, intelligence), emotional (empathy, social connection), moral (responsibility, threat perception), and technological/instrumental (tool-like attributes); with particular attention to how these perceptions relate to manipulation awareness.

Using a two-phase mixed-method design, Generation Z participants (n=125) completed free association tasks, spontaneously responding to "artificial intelligence." Analysis of these responses informed the design of our second phase: four focus groups (11-15 participants each) where adolescents engaged in discussions, brainstorming exercises, and card-sorting activities according to how well given attributes fit with AI. Qualitative coding followed established theoretical frameworks on multidimensional anthropomorphism.

All four anthropomorphism dimensions emerged across both phases. Participants frequently attributed intentionality and deceptive capabilities to AI, viewing it as potentially manipulative; meanwhile simultaneously expressing trust and emotional connection. This combination is particularly concerning as emotional anthropomorphism paired with moral agency attribution creates heightened manipulation vulnerability. Focus groups revealed varied levels of critical awareness regarding risks. Some participants expressed explicit concerns about being manipulated or developing cognitive dependency, while others described deeply personal, trusting relationships with AI—using it for emotional support and personal advice—without articulating such concerns. Despite extensive AI experience, Generation Z demonstrates persistent anthropomorphism with highly variable risk awareness: recognition of potential harms is neither universal nor consistently protective. These findings highlight that AI literacy education must address not only risk recognition but also the emotional and habitual factors that sustain anthropomorphic engagement.



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sciforum-173782: Urban Accessibility and Collaborative Representation: A Comparative Analysis of OpenStreetMap Data in Milan, Rome and Naples

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Urban accessibility for people with disabilities is a central aspect of inclusion policies and quality of life, extending beyond technical requirements to encompass spatial justice and the right to the city (Imrie & Kumar, 1998; Soja, 2010). This study adopts a rights-based urbanism framework, positing that gaps in collaborative mapping may reflect broader patterns of informational inequality rather than solely physical inaccessibility. Collaborative platforms such as OpenStreetMap (OSM) — a form of volunteered geographic information (Goodchild, 2007) — offer opportunities to study urban accessibility but raise concerns about completeness, quality, and spatial distribution (Haklay, 2010). Focusing on Milan, Rome, and Naples, the study examines OSM tags relevant to wheelchair accessibility (wheelchair, kerb, incline, sidewalk). A dual model is proposed: (1) a morpho-spatial accessibility index, measuring potential accessibility based on mapped features, and (2) an informational coverage indicator, assessing the spatial distribution and completeness of accessibility data. Spatial statistical methods are applied to identify gaps, clustering, and patterns of data production, allowing differentiation between physical accessibility and its digital visibility. Results reveal extremely limited and uneven coverage, indicating that missing data reflect mapping gaps rather than actual inaccessibility. The comparative analysis suggests that these patterns are not only local but may indicate structural issues in collaborative data production. Theoretical implications highlight the link between spatial justice and digital information, framing accessibility as both a physical and informational right. Practical implications stress the need to integrate collaborative and institutional data to produce reliable accessibility maps, guiding policymakers in prioritizing interventions and supporting inclusive, evidence-based urban planning. In conclusion, while OSM provides a valuable knowledge base, its limitations underscore the importance of combining bottom-up and institutional sources to enhance reliability and equity, ensuring that urban accessibility reflects both real and digitally visible conditions.



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sciforum-175278: Why HPV Vaccination Programs Struggle in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Study

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Providing the HPV vaccine at no cost in Bangladesh portrays a significant innovation in public health. Although the HPV vaccine has been implemented for adolescent girls in most schools from rural to urban regions, subsequent uptake among adolescents has shown an observable decline. This study addresses a significant gap by examining how adolescent women's knowledge and social beliefs shape their engagement with the HPV vaccine. Based on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, the research critically analyzes perceptions of vaccines and behavioral orientations shaped by socio-cultural beliefs. A phenomenological qualitative design was employed, using purposive sampling to recruit 20 participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns related to social beliefs about this vaccine. Diffusion of innovation theory suggests that the effective implementation of an innovation within a society depends on its five core dimensions – relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. The findings of this research reveal that the HPV vaccination program remains limited in aligning with these dimensions. Findings reveal that a lack of knowledge, incompatibility, limited awareness, and culturally insensitive communication play a critical role in shaping misconceptions about vaccine implementation in healthcare, as well as undermining trust and sustained participation. The perception of HPV vaccination as an unnecessary, sensitive intervention shaped by socio-cultural beliefs undermines motivation to engage in vaccination uptake.



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