HKUST PPOL

香港科技大學
THE HONG KONG
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY

PPOL
Division of Public Policy
公 共 政 策 學 部

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HEAD'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the latest edition of our biannual PPOL newsletter. This issue arrives somewhat later than planned—a modest delay occasioned by recent changes in our staff. Nevertheless, we've worked diligently to ensure this edition meets the high standards we set for ourselves.

Since our previous publication, the Division has seen numerous exciting developments. I am continually impressed by the dedication displayed by our faculty, researchers, and students. It is your commitment that enriches our collective endeavor, fostering a stimulating environment where innovative thinking and impactful research flourish.

This newsletter showcases a selection of our recent initiatives, collaborations, and achievements. The stories within these pages mirror our ongoing commitment to excellence and our dedication to making substantive contributions to our community and the wider world. Our work—whether it involves pioneering research projects or community engagement efforts—continues to inspire and drive positive change.

Professor Naubahar SHARIF
Division of Public Policy, HKUST

Looking ahead, I encourage all of you to engage with us. Whether you have ideas on how we can enhance our work or feedback on this edition, your insights are invaluable.

Thank you all for your continued enthusiasm and dedication. Together, let's strive to make the upcoming academic year one of our best yet.

GRANT AND ACHIEVEMENT

AWARDS
GRANTS

1

Prestigious RGC Research Fellowship Awarded to Professor Pengyu Zhu

The Division of Public Policy is immensely proud to announce that our very own Prof. Pengyu Zhu has been awarded a prestigious Research Fellowship grant from the Research Grants Council (RGC).

This remarkable achievement is a testament to Prof. Zhu's distinguished research capabilities in the field of urban and regional development. His research project, titled "Regional Science and Complex Systems: A Five-year Research Plan on Transportation, Land Use, Labor, and Innovation Systems," has been awarded HK$5.3 million in funding.

The RGC Research Fellowship is a highly competitive scheme that recognizes leading academics who have made significant contributions to their respective fields. Prof. Zhu's selection is a proud moment for our division, as it underscores the world-class caliber of our faculty and their impactful research.

This honor not only reflects the Division's strengths in addressing critical issues related to urban systems and policy, but also reinforces our commitment to driving innovation and generating knowledge that can positively influence policymaking and societal transformation.

We congratulate Prof. Zhu on this remarkable achievement and look forward to the insightful findings that will emerge from his groundbreaking research project.

Prof. Pengyu Zhu
Associate Professor, PPOL

Prof. Alex Jingwei He
Associate Professor, PPOL
Acting Director, IPP

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Professor Alex Jingwei He has been recognized among the top 2% of the most cited scientists worldwide in the fields of Political Science and Public Administration

We are thrilled to announce that Professor Alex Jingwei He has been recognized among the top 2% of the most cited scientists worldwide in the fields of Political Science and Public Administration by Stanford University, based on the 2023 single-year impact metrics. Additionally, he is ranked as the second highest scholar in public policy in Hong Kong.

The Stanford World's Top 2% Most Cited Scholars ranking, released in September 2024, positions Professor He at 488 out of 22,449 scholars globally in the discipline of Political Science and Public Administration. This prestigious ranking highlights researchers who have published multiple highly cited papers, assessed through various citation impact metrics derived from Scopus data, which evaluate both career-long and recent single-year performance. The selection process identifies the top 100,000 scientists based on citation scores (c-scores), considering both self-citations and external citations.

This achievement marks the third consecutive year that Professor He has been included in this esteemed ranking, reflecting the significant global impact and relevance of his scholarly contributions. His areas of expertise include comparative social policy, health policy and governance, and policy innovation and entrepreneurship. Professor He's work not only advances academic discourse but also informs practical policy-making, making him a pivotal figure in his field.

This recognition is a testament to Professor He's ongoing commitment to excellence in research and scholarship. It brings great pride to the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST).

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Professor He on this remarkable accomplishment!

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Professor Masaru Yarime Named Highly Ranked Scholar by ScholarGPS

Prof. Masaru Yarime
Associate Professor, PPOL

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Prof. Masaru Yarime, Associate Professor in the Division of Public Policy (PPOL), for being recognized as a Highly Ranked Scholar by ScholarGPS!

Prof. Yarime is an expert in numerous research domains, including energy policy and technology development, climate change and global environmental governance, policy design and innovation, the emergence of innovation systems, and big data in social science research. With 94 publications in public policy, his significant contributions have earned him the impressive ranking of #53 in Sustainability, placing him in the top 0.05% of scholars globally. This accolade reflects his substantial impact and notable achievements in the field.

ScholarGPS is a leading scholarly analytics platform that acknowledges Highly Ranked Scholars for their exceptional accomplishments across various disciplines. It evaluates over 30 million scholars affiliated with more than 55,000 academic and non-academic institutions worldwide, ranking them based on their productivity, impact, and the quality of their work.

Once again, congratulations to Prof. Yarime on this well-deserved honor!

Prof. Alex Jingwei He
Associate Professor, PPOL
Acting Director, IPP

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Professor Alex Jingwei He Won 2023 Best Policy Research Award by the Chinese Policy Scholars Group (CPSG)

We are proud to announce that Professor Alex Jingwei He, Associate Professor in the Division of Public Policy (PPOL), has been awarded the prestigious 2023 Best Policy Research Award by the Chinese Policy Scholars Group (CPSG). This honor recognizes exceptional contributions to the field of policy research and analysis.

Professor He's award-winning paper, titled "Unpacking the Black Box of Pilot Sampling in Policy Experimentation: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of China's Public Hospital Reform," explores the methodologies employed by governments in selecting pilot sites for large-scale policy experiments. The study focuses on China's extensive public hospital reform program, which encompasses 200 cities nationwide. Utilizing a cutting-edge research approach, Professor He and his co-authors integrated Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) with detailed case studies to reveal five distinct strategies employed in site selection. These strategies oscillate between choosing sites with favorable conditions and ensuring geographic and economic diversity.

The significance of this research lies in its profound insights into the complexities of pilot site selection in policy experimentation, particularly within the context of large-scale reforms. It challenges previous assumptions, highlighting that the process is far more nuanced than commonly understood and offering valuable perspectives on how China navigates its extensive policy reform landscape. Moreover, Professor He's work not only enhances the academic discourse surrounding policy experimentation but also serves as a vital resource for policymakers and researchers worldwide. This award underscores the substantial impact and importance of his contributions to the public policy field.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Professor He on this well-deserved recognition and eagerly anticipate his continued advancements in public policy research.

CPSG

留美公共政策学会

2023 BEST POLICY RESEARCH AWARD

Alex Jingwei He, Yumeng Fan, and Rui Su

This award is presented to you for your outstanding paper entitled:

Unpack the Black Box of Pilot Sampling in Policy Experimentation: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of China's Public Hospital Reform

2023 Best Policy Research Article Award Committee

Xue Gao (Chair), Florida State University   Shan Zhou, Purdue University
Yixin Dai, Tsinghua University   Wenhui Yang, Peking University

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Strengthening International Collaboration: Dr. Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin's Impactful Visit to Tsinghua University
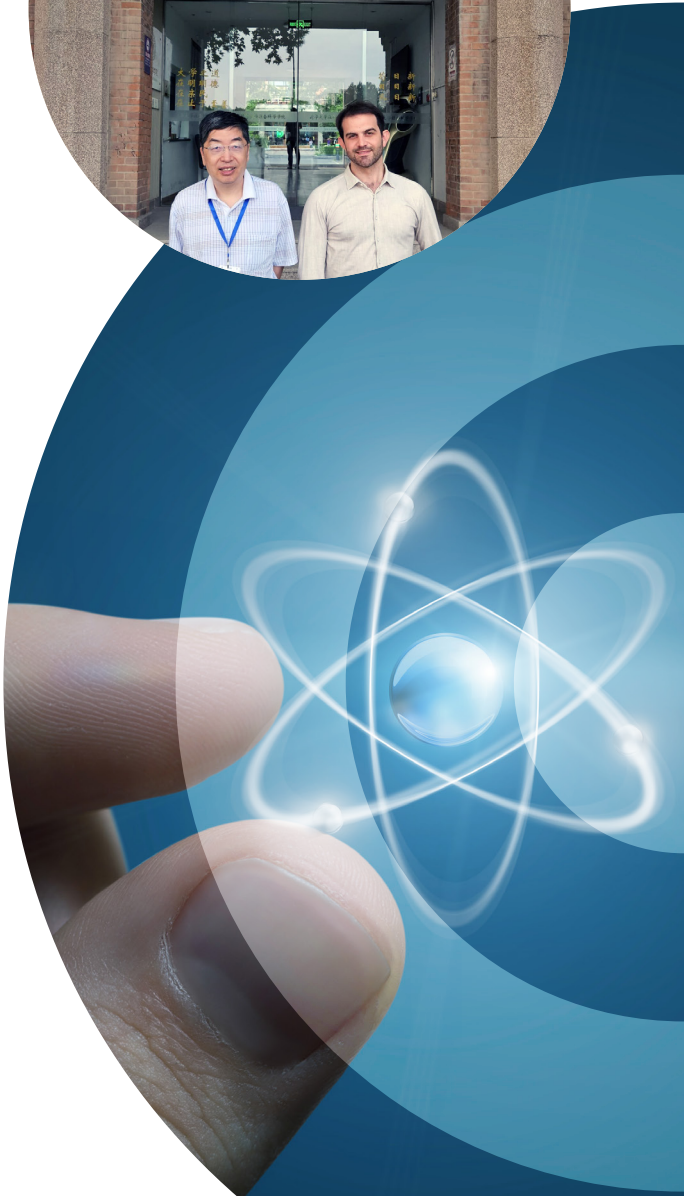
The Division of Public Policy is delighted to highlight the remarkable achievements of our esteemed colleague, Dr. Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin, following his recent academic visit to Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Sponsored by the prestigious AUA Scholars Award, Dr. de Troullioud de Lanversin spent two weeks engaging with leading scholars in the fields of international relations and nuclear security. During his time at Tsinghua University, he offered insightful lectures to students on the critical intersection of technology and geopolitics, sharing his expertise and research findings.

A highlight of his visit was the opportunity to present his research on nuclear arms control to a distinguished audience of scholars at Tsinghua University, as well as to nuclear scientists from the China Academy of Engineering Physics. Through these engaging discussions, Dr. de Troullioud de Lanversin was able to foster meaningful dialogues and explore ways to reduce misunderstanding between China and the United States in the nuclear realm.

In addition to his academic engagements, Dr. de Troullioud de Lanversin also met with former diplomats from the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, as well as scholars from Harvard's Belfer Center. These valuable interactions allowed him to further his understanding of the complex dynamics between the two global powers and identify potential avenues for reigniting cooperation between the US and China expert communities.

The Division of Public Policy takes great pride in Dr. de Troullioud de Lanversin's achievements and is honored to have him as a member of our esteemed faculty.

BDF PROJECT

PROJECT TITLE:
Learning from the Past and Acting for the Future of Hong Kong's Ethnic Minorities: A Comprehensive Analysis of BDF Research Projects and Culturally Sensitive Anti-drug Studies Among South Asians in Hong Kong

FUNDING AGENCY:
Beat Drugs Fund Association, Narcotics Division, Security Bureau

AMOUNT AWARDED:
HK$2,911,980.

Prof. Naubahar Sharif
Head and Professor, PPOL

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
This three-year project, led by the Mental Health Projects Team at the Division of Public Policy at HKUST and funded by the Beat Drugs Fund, the HKSARG, aims to address the rising prevalence of drug use among Hong Kong's Ethnic Minorities. The project's goal is to develop culturally sensitive anti-drug policies and prevention efforts through comprehensive research and community engagement.

The increasing incidence of drug use among Ethnic Minority groups highlights the urgent need for targeted, culturally aware interventions. Historically underserved, these communities—particularly South Asians such as Nepalese, Indians, and Pakistanis—face unique challenges that require a nuanced approach.

The project will employ mixed-methods research over the first two years, engaging 330 Ethnic Minority individuals to gather valuable insights through surveys and interviews. In the final year, the project will focus on outreach and education, benefiting 360 participants through educational talks, interactive workshops, and radio broadcasts. By combining rigorous research with practical education and publicity efforts, the project aims to deliver culturally sensitive recommendations that contribute to a healthier, safer society, and enhance the well-being of Ethnic Minority communities in Hong Kong.

Prof. Kira Matus
Professor, PPOL

GRF GRANT

PROJECT TITLE

Can We Regulate Our way to a Circular Economy? A Study of the Relationship between Extended Producer Responsibility Regulation and Sustainable Innovation in the Textile Industry

FUNDING AGENCY

General Research Fund (GRF), Research Grants Council, Hong Kong SAR (Ref. 16601224)

AMOUNT AWARDED

HK$1,099,992.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project aims to explore the potential of extended producer responsibility (EPR) systems in driving sustainability and circularity in globally dispersed value chains. The global textile and fashion industry, one of the largest, most polluting, high growth, globally dispersed industrial sectors, imposes significant environmental impacts including overconsumption of natural resources, water pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and waste into landfills.

The EU has taken steps towards circularity in the textile industry. In 2018, the EU Waste Framework Directive of 2008 was amended to outline a roadmap with a focus on repair, reuse, a target for member states to establish separate collections of household textile waste by Jan 1, 2025, and a shift of burden towards producers through encouragement of EPR. In response, France (2020), Sweden (2022), Italy (2023) and Netherlands (2023) have introduced binding EPR regulations with targets for clothing recovered for recycling or resale.

The EU's recent proposal for a targeted revision of the Waste Framework Directive, which would require a harmonized EPR program across Europe, with targets for collection, recycling and reuse, policies to prevent 'dumping' of post-consumer textiles, and incentives for developing infrastructures, and innovations that support a more circular apparel value chain. Given the challenges such as the disconnect between the policy goals and the current technologies, infrastructure and business models, the effectiveness of this approach remains to be seen.

GRF GRANT

PROJECT TITLE:
Local Government Innovation under Political Recentralization in Contemporary China: A Two-stage Sequential Study

FUNDING AGENCY:
General Research Fund (GRF), Research Grants Council, Hong Kong SAR (Ref. 16600324)

AMOUNT AWARDED:
HK$791,494.

Prof. Alex Jingwei He

Associate Professor, PPOL | Acting Director, IPP

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
His proposed study explores the impact of political (re)centralization on local government innovations in China. It seeks to address the scholarly debate on whether the powerful political recentralization since 2013 has led to a decrease in local government innovations, or if the fundamental momentum of local state dynamism remains robust despite the changes in political incentives and opportunity structure.

The study will adopt a two-stage sequential research design. First, it will use text-mining techniques to collect data from a large corpus of official texts to map out the macro landscape of local government innovations from 2008 to 2023, before and after the central leadership transition. This quantitative analysis will help identify the various types of innovations.

Secondly, the study will conduct comparative case studies in two provinces to provide in-depth qualitative insights. By combining quantitative and qualitative evidence, the research aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between political (re) centralization and local government innovations in contemporary China.

The findings of this study have important policy implications, as they can inform policymakers and administrators on how to foster an environment conducive to local innovation and good governance, even in the context of political recentralization.

**Prof.
Masaru Yarime**

Associate Professor,
PPOL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

PROJECT TITLE
Data Governance for Innovation for Sustainable
Smart Cities: A Comparative Analysis of Japan,
the United States, and China

FUNDING AGENCY
Abe Fellows Network Collaborative Grants, Social
Science Research Council (SSRC), United States

AMOUNT AWARDED
USD 20,000 (2024-2025).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
This project will explore how "smart" cities in
Japan, China, and the United States are tackling
challenges related to data privacy.

For instance, Japan is working on a concept
called "Society 5.0," which involves building urban
data systems through partnerships between
public organizations and private companies. This
approach aims to balance innovation with the
need to protect personal information. In contrast,
China takes a more centralized approach, where
the government holds significant control over
data. This method has its own set of privacy
concerns and benefits.

Meanwhile, the United States is developing its
own unique system, which combines elements
from both Japan and China but faces different
challenges and opportunities.

By looking at the experiences of these three
countries, we can learn different ways to
manage the trade-offs between sharing data to
enhance urban life and ensuring that people's
privacy is respected.

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

PROJECT TITLE
How the Governance of Standards and
Geopolitics Shape Competition in the
Global Economy

FUNDING AGENCY
UKinSPIRE Award, University of Kentucky,
United States

AMOUNT AWARDED
USD 15,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
This project aims to address the following
research question: How do competing digital
standards help shape competition between
countries and corporations within the global
economy? This research project brings together
expertise in three different arenas of global
standards – digital infrastructure, cross-border
finance, and smart city data – that are essential
to the global economy. This breadth will allow us
to construct a generalized and comprehensive
framework for analyzing (1) the governance
of digital standards and (2) how geopolitical
conflict and corporate competition shape this
governance to build economic advantage. This
resulting framework is expected to be applied to
multiple fields, including international relations,
global production networks, critical data studies,
and national innovation systems.

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AWARD

PROJECT TITLE:
Verification methods for nuclear weapon testing activities

AWARDING INSTITUTION:
The Institute on Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) at the University of Hamburg

Prof. Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin

Assistant Professor, PPOL

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
This project focuses on advancing research related to the verification of nuclear subcritical tests conducted by states, ensuring compliance with the current moratorium on nuclear testing. The objective is to develop scientific methods that enhance the ability to accurately assess these tests, contributing to the broader field of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control.

The project will also emphasize engagement with key stakeholders, including German parliament members and experts from the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). Through this engagement, the research aims to facilitate discussions on findings and insights, fostering collaboration between academic research and policy-making to strengthen regulatory frameworks governing nuclear activities.

Additionally, the project includes the preparation of grant proposals targeting funding sources such as the German Research Foundation and the Stanton Foundation. These proposals will focus on securing resources to expand research capabilities and support further investigations in the critical area of nuclear verification and compliance.

ON GOING PROJECTS

LEADING FACULTY	FUNDING AGENCY	PROJECT
Professor Naubahar Sharif 白立邦 教授	Chief Executive's Project List 2023 – Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	Enhancing the Mental Health of Hong Kong's Non-Chinese Youth Aged 15-24 (2024 - Now)
	Mental Health Initiatives Funding Scheme, Advisory Committee on Mental Health	Strengthening Family Relationships for Hong Kong's Ethnic Minority Communities in the Aftermath of the Covid-19 Pandemic (2023 - Now)
	Mental Health Initiatives Funding Scheme, Advisory Committee on Mental Health	Supporting Ethnic Minority Elderly with Mental Health Needs (2023 - Now)
	Center for Aging Science, HKUST	Towards a More Inclusive Hong Kong: Covid-19, Mental Well-being, and Mitigation Strategies for a Multicultural Elderly Community (2022 - Now)
	HKUST, HKUST (GZ), and Guangdong Science and Technology Department	Mental Well-Being in the Greater Bay Area (GBA): An Interdisciplinary Approach to Awareness, Assessment, and Intervention (2024 - Now)
Professor Masaru Yarime 鎗目雅 副教授	Global Engagement Funds, University College London	Public Perspectives on Personal Data Use for Personalized Covid-19 Advice (2022 - Now)
	Institute for Emerging Market Studies	The Smart City as a Field of Innovation: Effects of Public-Private Data Collaboration on Innovation in the Guangdong Province and Implications for the Greater Bay Area (2022 - Now)
Professor Alex Jingwei He 和經緯 副教授	RGC – General Research Fund	Technocrats and Mid-Level Policy Entrepreneurship in China: Explaining Local Policy Innovations in the Social Welfare Arena 中國大陸的技術官僚與中層政策企業家：解釋社會福利領域的地方政策創新 (2023 - Now)

SCHOLARLY SHOWCASE

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY

SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

Sivarudran Pillai, Vishnu, and **Kira Matus.**

"Regulatory solutions to alleviate the risks of generative AI models in qualitative research."

Journal of Asian Public Policy (2024): 1-24.

Fan, Ziteng, Jing Ning, and **Alex Jingwei He**.

"Slowing down or adapting to technological progress? Automation risk and policy preferences."

Regulation & Governance

STUDY FOCUS

The paper explores the emerging applications of generative AI models, particularly in qualitative research within the social sciences and public policy. While these technologies enhance conversational capabilities, they also raise significant ethical concerns regarding data confidentiality and research integrity. The study identifies potential risks associated with the use of Large Language Models (LLMs), such as GPTs, through a review of scientific literature and discussions with qualitative researchers and stakeholders impacted by these technologies.

The research highlights the need for interventions to mitigate risks affecting the three key groups: Reviewers, Researchers, and Research Respondents (the 3Rs). By comparing current AI-related policies from the European Union, Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China, the authors identify regulatory gaps in addressing the ethical implications of LLM usage in qualitative research.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To ensure ethical integrity in qualitative research utilizing generative AI, policymakers should establish a regulatory framework that encompasses both soft laws and hard laws. This framework should facilitate ongoing dialogue among researchers, regulators, and stakeholders, while implementing guidelines and regulations that protect data confidentiality and uphold research ethics. Emphasizing transparency and accountability will be crucial to fostering trust and promoting responsible use of AI technologies in research.

STUDY FOCUS

This paper examines the relationship between the risks of robots replacing jobs and citizens' preferences for government policies. It aims to clarify mixed results from existing research by investigating when citizens support government intervention to reduce job displacement risks and their preferred policies. A survey in China, the largest robot market, found that citizens favor government action in dangerous work environments over routine jobs. They prefer direct assistance, like training programs, rather than company-focused regulations. Support for government action is stronger when citizens believe beneficiaries deserve help.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

This paper recommends focusing on training programs that directly support workers affected by robot job displacement. Clear communication about the benefits and intended beneficiaries of these policies is essential for gaining public support. Policymakers should also strive for a balance between technological advancement and job security to protect workers' rights.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

Trencher, Gregory, **Masaru Yarime**, and Jeongsoo Yu.

"Using emerging technologies to tackle mobility challenges caused by population ageing: Experiences from Japan."

Technological Forecasting and Social Change 208 (2024): 123729.

Papyshev, Gleb, and **Masaru Yarime**.

"The limitation of ethics-based approaches to regulating artificial intelligence: regulatory gifting in the context of Russia."

AI & SOCIETY 39, no. 3 (2024): 1381-1396.

STUDY FOCUS

The paper examines the mobility challenges posed by population ageing, specifically focusing on Japan as a case study. It explores how innovations like autonomous vehicles and Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) can address these challenges, while highlighting the barriers to their implementation. Through interviews with practitioners and experts, the study reveals interconnected issues such as safety, driver shortages, deteriorating transport services, and accessibility barriers that impact the elderly's mobility and well-being.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should prioritize the development and implementation of mobility innovations tailored to the needs of the elderly. A holistic approach is essential to address the interlinked challenges of safety, accessibility, and service quality, while ensuring that expectations align with the realities of ageing populations.

STUDY FOCUS

The paper explores the regulatory landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) in Russia, highlighting the government's reliance on unenforceable ethical principles and industry self-regulation instead of strict regulations. Based on 50 interviews with policymakers, AI representatives, and academics, the study illustrates how this regulatory regime has been influenced by major tech companies seeking to minimize oversight. This approach, framed as a strategy to promote local innovation, may unintentionally compromise public interest by allowing for "ethics washing," where companies present superficial compliance with ethical standards without real accountability.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Governments should consider establishing clear, enforceable regulations for AI technologies that prioritize consumer protection and public interest. Rather than relying solely on self-regulation and ethical guidelines, a balanced approach that includes robust oversight and accountability measures is essential to mitigate the risks of ethics washing and ensure responsible AI development.

Aoki, Naomi, Melvin Tay, and **Masaru Yarim.**
"Trustworthy public sector AI:
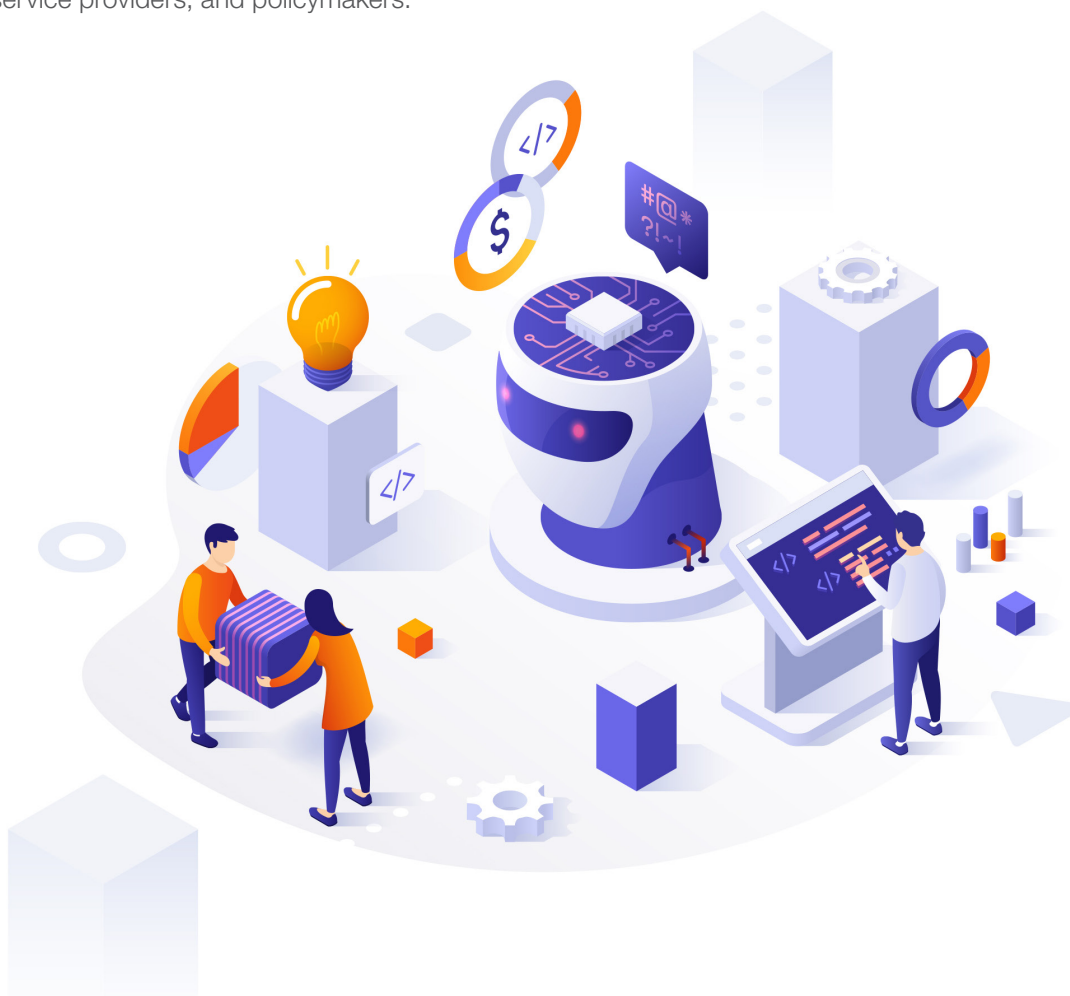
research progress and future agendas."
Research Handbook on Public Management and Artificial Intelligence (2024): 263-276.

STUDY FOCUS

The paper examines the growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in public sector operations and services (AI-PS) across at least 49 countries. It addresses the challenges of implementing AI in public services, particularly the critical issue of building societal trust in AI-PS. The authors emphasize the importance of trust in AI systems for effective public service delivery and conduct a systematic literature review to assess current research on this topic. The findings highlight gaps in knowledge and propose future research directions to better understand and foster trust among various stakeholders, including citizens, service providers, and policymakers.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Governments and public agencies should prioritize initiatives aimed at building societal trust in AI-PS. This includes developing transparent communication strategies, engaging stakeholders in the design and implementation process, and conducting ongoing research to address ethical concerns and enhance public understanding of AI technologies. Establishing clear frameworks for accountability and performance evaluation will also be essential to ensure the responsible deployment of AI in public services.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Vlasceanu, Madalina; Doell, Kimberly C.; Bak-Coleman, Joseph B.; ... **Tyrala, Michael**, ... & Van Bavel, Jay J. (2024).

"Addressing Climate Change with Behavioral Science: A Global Intervention Tournament in 63 Countries".

Science Advances 10(6).

Chen, Xiaodong, Zhuang Miao, Ge Wu, and **Pengyu Zhu**.

"City-level green growth accounting: Evidence from China's thirteen urban agglomerations."

Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews 203 (2024): 114776.

STUDY FOCUS

The paper investigates the effectiveness of various expert-crowdsourced interventions designed to motivate global behavior change in response to climate change. Analyzing data from 59,440 participants across 63 countries, the study tests 11 interventions aimed at improving four climate mitigation outcomes: beliefs, policy support, information sharing, and tree-planting behaviors. The findings reveal that while some interventions had minor effects—such as decreasing psychological distance to strengthen beliefs and inducing negative emotions to enhance information sharing—none significantly increased more effortful behaviors like tree planting. Additionally, the effectiveness of these interventions varied based on participants' initial climate beliefs, indicating that tailored approaches may be necessary.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To effectively drive climate behavior change, policymakers should adopt tailored interventions that consider the diverse beliefs and motivations of different audience segments. Strategies should focus on reducing psychological distance and fostering emotional engagement while recognizing that more demanding behaviors may require distinct approaches. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of interventions will be essential to enhance their effectiveness across various contexts and populations.

STUDY FOCUS

This study investigates the role of urban agglomerations in mainland China in achieving national objectives for 'Carbon Peak' and 'Carbon Neutrality' through strategies that mitigate environmental risks. It focuses on the industrial sector across thirteen urban agglomerations (TUAs) from 2006 to 2016, employing a comprehensive decomposition framework based on the Malmquist productivity index. This framework allows for an analysis of whether changes in productivity are driven by efficiency improvements or technological advancements, considering various input and output variables such as capital and labor.

The findings indicate an average annual environmental productivity gain of 2.6% during the study period, reflecting an overall enhancement in productivity within the industrial sectors of the TUAs. However, a detailed analysis reveals that while energy use and pollutant management contributed positively to environmental productivity growth, the 'catch-up effect'—representing the ability of less advanced areas to emulate more productive regions—was negative at -0.2%. This suggests that the TUAs struggled to reach the productivity levels of their more advanced counterparts, primarily due to negative impacts from industrial energy use and capital inputs.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The study emphasizes the need for technology transfers from more developed regions to less advanced ones, particularly in renewable energy and capital investments. Such transfers are critical for improving environmental performance and productivity within the industrial sectors of the TUAs, highlighting the importance of strategic collaboration and investment in fostering sustainable development.

Soares, Ian Varela, **Masaru Yarime**, and **Magdalena Klemun**,

"Balancing the Trade-off between Data Center Development and Its Environmental Impacts: A Comparative Analysis of Policy Responses in Singapore, Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, USA, and the UK,"

Environmental Science and Policy, 157, 103769 (2024).

Truong, Nhi, Gregory Trencher, **Masaru Yarime**, Brendan Barrett, and Kazuyo Matsubae,

"Barriers to the adoption of electric cars and electric motorcycles in Vietnam,"

Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment, 131, 104204 (2024).

STUDY FOCUS

The paper examines the environmental impact of data center deployment and analyzes policy responses aimed at enhancing their sustainability. Focusing on six major data center hubs— Singapore, the Netherlands (Amsterdam), Ireland, Germany (Frankfurt), the USA (Virginia), and the UK (London)—the study identifies three primary policy responses: moratorium, adjustment, and continuation. It assesses the degree of policy change, the duration of these changes, and their effects on data center deployment rates. Findings indicate that while all regions adapted their strategies, only two implemented long-term measures through stricter environmental standards. The analysis reveals that moratoriums can effectively stabilize resource consumption in the short term, while continuation strategies may lower costs but face opposition.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To promote sustainable data center growth, policymakers should implement stricter environmental standards and consider moratoriums as temporary measures to manage rapid deployment. Additionally, integrating multi-regional infrastructural strategies that align IT infrastructure needs with available energy resources can enhance the effectiveness of sustainability efforts. This holistic approach will help balance growth with environmental responsibility.

STUDY FOCUS

The paper examines the adoption barriers for electric cars (ECs) and electric motorcycles (EMs) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, contributing to the understanding of electric mobility in developing countries. While much of the existing research has focused on ECs in industrialized nations, this study highlights the unique challenges faced in a context where motorcycles dominate transportation. Utilizing a quantitative survey of 944 potential adopters, the authors employed exploratory factor analysis and regression modeling to explore how various structural conditions—such as environmental, economic, social, and institutional factors—impact the psychological barriers to purchasing ECs and EMs.

The findings reveal both commonalities and distinct differences in the barriers affecting the adoption intentions for these two technologies, enhancing our understanding of the complex interplay between structural conditions and psychological factors in urban settings.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To promote the adoption of electric mobility in developing countries, policymakers should implement targeted strategies that address the specific barriers identified for both electric cars and motorcycles. This includes enhancing infrastructure for charging stations, providing financial incentives, and fostering public awareness campaigns. Additionally, engaging with local communities to understand their unique needs and preferences can help tailor interventions that effectively encourage the transition to electric mobility, ultimately reducing environmental impacts and improving energy security.

SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

He, Alex Jingwei, Ling Zhu, and Jiwei Qian.

"Policy design and policy feedback in welfare retrenchment: A survey experiment in China."

Policy Studies Journal (2024).

Wang, Juan, and **Pengyu Zhu.**

"The distribution of shared parking use in time and space: A case study in Guangzhou, China."

Journal of Transport and Land Use 17, no. 1 (2024): 603-623.

STUDY FOCUS

This paper examines how different welfare reform designs influence public attitudes and behaviors, emphasizing the interplay between policy feedback and individual proximity to reforms. Focusing on a 2020 public consultation in China regarding changes to medical savings accounts, the study employs a survey experiment to assess how varying policy designs impact public opposition. The findings reveal that moderate welfare retrenchment leads to significant public resistance, driven not by partisanship, but by specific policy characteristics and individuals' past experiences with health insurance.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

First, tailored policy designs can foster greater public support by aligning reforms with citizen interests. Second, engaging communities during the policy-making process enhances transparency and acceptance. Third, policymakers should consider citizens' past experiences with existing welfare policies, integrating feedback mechanisms to improve satisfaction and trust. Finally, broadening the analysis of public opinion to include diverse factors beyond partisanship can lead to more effective and widely supported welfare reforms. Overall, the study highlights the importance of thoughtful policy design and public engagement in shaping successful welfare reform outcomes.

STUDY FOCUS

This paper investigates the usage patterns of shared parking in Guangzhou, China, focusing on the factors influencing both the total number of transactions and the average duration of parking. By analyzing transaction records from 121 shared parking lots, the study employs a quasi-Poisson regression model to identify key explanatory factors, such as the duration of implementation, parking lot capacity, land use types, proximity to points of interest (POIs), and transit stations. The findings indicate that these factors significantly affect parking transactions. Additionally, a linear regression model reveals that the average parking duration is influenced by land use, the number of nearby office buildings, and peak usage times.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The study emphasizes the importance of enhancing land use planning by integrating shared parking facilities into urban development strategies, particularly in high-demand areas near office buildings and transit stations. Increasing parking lot capacity in these locations can accommodate more transactions and alleviate congestion. Furthermore, raising awareness about shared parking options, especially close to points of interest, can boost participation. Implementing dynamic pricing strategies that reflect peak times may also optimize usage and maximize revenue. Overall, addressing these factors can improve the effectiveness of shared parking schemes and help mitigate urban parking challenges.

Florentin, Kevin Macarius, Motoharu Onuki, and **Masaru Yarime,**

"Facilitating Citizen Participation in Greenfield Smart City Development: The Case of a Human-centered Approach in Kashiwanoha International Campus Town,"
Telematics and Informatics Reports, 15, 100154 (2024).

Tyrala, Michael. (2024).

"World-Systems Analysis and the COVID-19 Pandemic: How the Structural Dynamics of the Capitalist World-Economy Exacerbate Societal Vulnerability and Undermine Collective Responses to External Shocks".
In: Miller, Monica K. (Ed.). The Social Science of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Call to Action for Researchers (pp. 500-514).
Oxford University Press.

STUDY FOCUS

This article investigates how Kashiwanoha International Campus Town has engaged its new residents in the development of a smart city, focusing on a human-centered approach that utilizes smart technologies to address local social issues and enhance resident participation. By employing qualitative methods, including analysis of official documents, field observations, and interviews with citizens and planners, the study highlights the importance of context-sensitive and collaborative strategies in building community within newly developed urban spaces. The findings reveal that investing in citizen participation and placemaking is crucial for fostering community ties and creating an environment conducive to innovation. However, challenges persist in empowering grassroots initiatives, indicating that achieving a balance between community-driven and technology-driven development is complex.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The article makes several policy recommendations aimed at improving citizen engagement in smart city projects. These include prioritizing resident input in planning processes, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and creating platforms for grassroots innovation. By addressing these aspects, the study seeks to shift the narrative surrounding new smart cities from one of criticism to one of opportunity, emphasizing the potential for creating vibrant, inclusive communities through thoughtful engagement and participatory practices.

STUDY FOCUS

This book, The Social Science of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Call to Action for Researchers, edited by Monica K. Miller, explores the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of society, including education, family dynamics, and the economy. Recognizing that the pandemic presents unique challenges that go beyond medical and health sciences, the book emphasizes the importance of understanding social behaviors and psychological responses to the crisis.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Through a collection of essays by international scholars, the book provides a comprehensive overview of the pandemic's timeline, detailing how it has reshaped daily life and societal norms. It examines individual behaviors and experiences during the pandemic, discusses the long-term outcomes following the crisis, and offers best practices for conducting future social science research related to pandemics.

The book serves as a vital resource for researchers and policymakers, aiming to promote recovery from COVID-19 and minimize the negative impacts of future crises. By highlighting the significance of social science in understanding and addressing pandemic-related challenges, it encourages a collaborative approach that integrates psychological and societal perspectives into public health responses.
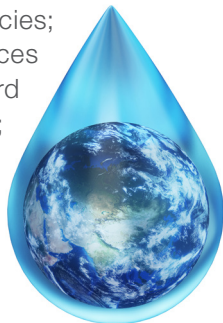
SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

Cuaton, Ginbert Permejo, Yvonne Su, Pamela Katic, and **Masaru Yarime,**

"Unpacking water governance dynamics and its implications for household water security in post-disaster resettlement communities in the Philippines,"
Geoforum, 154, 104053 (2024).

Wu, Sherry Jueyu, Ke Michael Mai, Ming Zhuang, and Fangxin Yi.

"A large-scale field experiment on participatory decision-making in China."
Nature Human Behaviour (2024): 1-8.

STUDY FOCUS

This study examines the complex dynamics of water insecurity faced by households displaced by Typhoon Haiyan in resettlement villages in the Philippines. While much of the existing research has concentrated on water availability and accessibility, this paper highlights the critical role of power and politics in shaping water governance. By employing political ecology and water governance perspectives, the study investigates the overlapping drivers of water insecurity in these post-disaster contexts. Key findings identify five main drivers: inadequate relocation of displaced persons to areas lacking basic facilities; institutional disharmony and delayed involvement of water agencies; governance regime influences leading to substandard housing and water systems; micropolitics affecting water district management; and the economic impacts of maladaptive resettlement on households' ability to afford water.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The study advocates for improved institutional arrangements to enhance the governance of water services in resettlement communities. This includes fostering better coordination among water institutions during resettlement processes, ensuring that basic services like water are prioritized in relocation plans, and addressing power dynamics within local governance structures. By focusing on these areas, policymakers can work towards more equitable and sustainable water security outcomes for disaster-displaced populations.

STUDY FOCUS

This paper investigates the effects of local democratic decision-making in authoritarian contexts, specifically examining whether participatory budgeting can enhance civic engagement and government accountability. Conducted as an intervention involving over 20 million people in China, the study randomly assigned communities to either a treatment group, where citizens engaged in deliberative processes to allocate local community budgets, or a control group. The findings reveal that participatory decision-making significantly increased various forms of civic engagement beyond the budgeting process within six months of the intervention. Residents in treatment communities expressed a greater need for improvements from the central government, suggesting a potential shift towards seeking accountability from an authoritarian regime. Additionally, these changes were associated with a more positive societal outlook and increased satisfaction with government policies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that policymakers and local authorities in authoritarian settings consider implementing participatory budgeting as a means to foster civic engagement and enhance accountability. By encouraging citizen involvement in local decision-making, governments can create pathways for greater public input and oversight, ultimately leading to improved governance and more responsive policies. Such initiatives might not only empower communities but also lead to a more engaged citizenry that holds authorities accountable for their actions.

Lejano, R. P., and W. S. Kan (2024).
"The relational dimensions of collective action."
Planning Theory & Practice, 25(3):413-419.

Lejano, R. P., and Daniel Stokols.
"Social Ecological Systems in Flux."
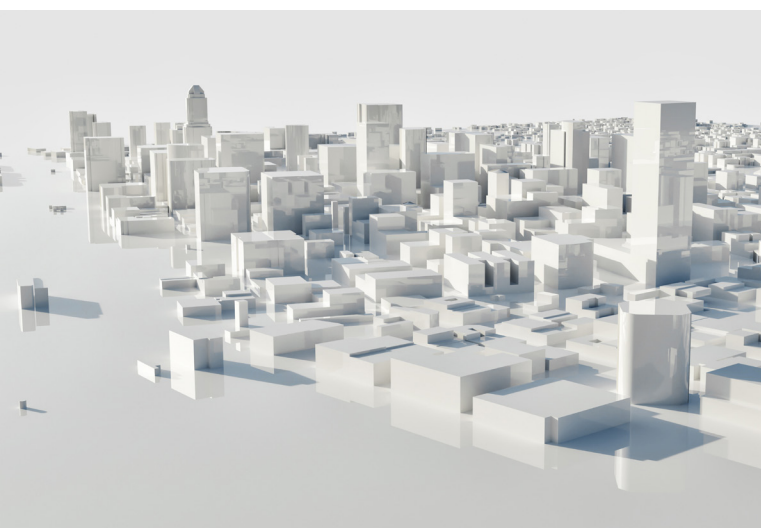*Annual Review of Sociology 50* (2024).

STUDY FOCUS

This paper explores the relevance of Elinor Ostrom's theories on the commons to urban planning, emphasizing the importance of relationality in fostering collective action. It examines how interpersonal connections at farmers' markets illustrate a network of relationships that enhance community engagement. The authors argue that understanding social connections can address urban injustices and promote cooperation, urging planners to rethink governance strategies to prioritize empathy and community ties.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The paper recommends designing urban policies that foster relationality by creating spaces for interpersonal connections, such as community-centered markets and integrated social services, to combat alienation and enhance collective action in urban environments.

STUDY FOCUS

This article addresses the pressing global challenges faced by contemporary society, such as climate change and the risks associated with artificial intelligence. It argues that while scientific and technological advancements have made strides, there remains a significant gap in effectively mobilizing social and political capacities for collective action. This disconnect arises from a tendency to approach complex global crises through unidimensional frameworks, which fail to capture their multifaceted nature.

To address these challenges, the authors propose an integrative approach grounded in the paradigm of social ecology. This perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of social and environmental systems, encouraging a focus not only on the carbon footprint of society but also on the broader social implications of carbon emissions. The article outlines the core principles of social ecology and highlights its potential to foster collaborative research and enhance collective action, ultimately leading to more effective strategies for global governance.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The policy recommendation put forth advocates for the adoption of a social ecological framework in policymaking and governance. By promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and integrating social factors into environmental policies, decision-makers can develop more holistic strategies that address the root causes of global crises. This approach aims to inspire innovative solutions and strengthen collective responses to the urgent challenges facing humanity.

SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

Lejano, R. P., & Kan, W. S. (2024). "IPCC and the City: The need to transition from ideology to climate justice." *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 44(3), 983-990.

Xie, Siqi, Ning Luo, and **Masaru Yarime**, "Data Governance for Smart Cities in China: The Case of Shenzhen," *Policy Design and Practice*, 7 (1), 66-86 (2024).

STUDY FOCUS

This article reflects on the urban components of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which addresses the critical issues of climate change, mitigation, and adaptation within cities. The author critiques the report for its ideological leanings and its tendency to focus on theoretical frameworks rather than providing critical assessments of the actual conditions faced by developing cities. While AR6 emphasizes the importance of reducing carbon footprints, it overlooks the broader social implications—referred to as the social footprint of carbon—and fails to adequately address the significant adjustments that mitigation and adaptation efforts will necessitate for urban populations in developing nations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The article calls for a more nuanced understanding of urban climate challenges, highlighting the need for comprehensive evaluations that consider both environmental and social dimensions. The author recommends that future reports and policy frameworks integrate assessments of social impacts alongside environmental strategies. This approach would ensure that the unique challenges faced by developing cities are acknowledged and addressed, facilitating more equitable and effective climate action that takes into account the realities of urban populations in these regions.

STUDY FOCUS

This paper explores the challenges and opportunities of data governance in the context of smart city development in Shenzhen, China. It highlights the critical importance of establishing effective mechanisms for managing data, given the unique institutional characteristics of the region. The study finds that a centralized government-led approach has been adopted, transitioning from merely addressing the fragmentation of government data to promoting the integration of diverse data sources across society. Collaborative efforts between the government and technology enterprises have resulted in the creation of open data platforms, along with regulations aimed at safeguarding data security and privacy while facilitating data exchange for innovation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

However, the paper identifies several key challenges. Stakeholders lack adequate incentives to provide accurate information, and the value of data is not sufficiently recognized, which hampers data sharing. Furthermore, citizens are often uninformed about the types of data collected and their uses, and institutional mechanisms to ensure responsible handling of citizen data by public authorities are still lacking.

To address these issues, the paper recommends actively involving citizens in data governance processes to align with a people-centered approach to smart city development. This includes enhancing transparency about data collection and usage, creating incentives for accurate data reporting, and establishing robust institutional frameworks to protect citizen data. By fostering citizen engagement, the governance of data in smart cities can be improved, leading to more effective and equitable outcomes.

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES 2024-25

LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY SEMINAR

GLOBAL OUTREACH & EXCHANGE:
BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE SEMINARS

POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES 2024-25
Hong Kong Is Not Over, Why and How?: Economic Reset and International Impact

On October 19, 2024, the Policy Dialogue Series commenced with an engaging session titled "Hong Kong Is Not Over, Why and How?: Economic Reset and International Impact." Organized by the Division of Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) in collaboration with the Department of Social Sciences and Policy Studies at The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK), this event aimed to address the current economic challenges facing Hong Kong in the post-COVID landscape.

The distinguished panel included Professor Anthony Cheung, Chair Professor and Advisor (Public Administration) at EdUHK, and Adjunct Professor at HKUST; Professor Sung Yun-wing, Associate Director of the Joint Shanghai-Hong Kong Development Institute (CUHK and Fudan University), and Associate Director of the Economic Research Centre at the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies; Professor Heiwai Tang, Victor and William Fung Professor in Economics, Associate Dean (External Relations), and Director of the Asia Global Institute at HKU; Associate Professor Wang Xiangwei, Associate Professor of Practice in the Department of

Journalism at HKBU; and Professor Lui Tai-lok, Adjunct Research Chair Professor at EdUHK. The session was moderated by Professor Naubahar Sharif, Head and Professor of Public Policy at HKUST. They discussed the need for strategic repositioning to secure an economic reset for Hong Kong.

Professor Anthony Cheung highlighted signs of growth but noted significant challenges remain, including slowing service growth and declining consumer spending. He emphasized that recovery relies heavily on external demand amidst trade tensions and geopolitical issues, labeling the situation a "triple whammy" of past protests, COVID-19, and US-China tensions. Cheung proposed a strategy to redefine Hong Kong's value and improve governance to enhance competitiveness.

Professor Yun-Wing Sung examined the economy's state, stating that while it's stabilizing, it isn't thriving. Although the population has rebounded slightly, growth is slow compared to China and Singapore. He expressed concerns about declining private investment and the importance of creating a stable environment to attract talent.

Professor Tai-Lok Lui addressed Hong Kong's international profile, stressing the need to adapt to reduced connections with the US while exploring partnerships with ASEAN and European nations. He introduced the idea of "city diplomacy" to enhance Hong Kong's global presence through cultural initiatives.

Mr. Wang Xiangwei argued for a four- or six-year planning approach for Hong Kong, akin to China's five-year plan. He emphasized the need for a collaborative strategy that empowers citizens and effectively communicates Hong Kong's narrative to the international community.

Professor Heiwai Tang provided an overview of Hong Kong's economic landscape, noting GDP fluctuations and the importance of key sectors like financial services and tourism. He highlighted the recovery in business formation and the gradual rebound of tourism, while also addressing challenges in retail and fiscal sustainability.

Overall, the discussions underscored the need for strategic planning, collaboration, and innovative approaches to enhance Hong Kong's economic resilience and international standing.
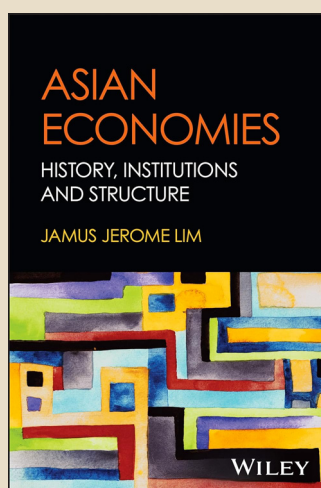
LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY SEMINAR

In a recent seminar, seasoned economist and professor Jamus Lim provided an in-depth analysis of the dynamic economies of Asia. His lecture, titled "In Asian Economies: History, Institutions and Structure," shed light on the sharp contrasts between the region's three major economies—China, India, and Japan—highlighting their unique historical trajectories and institutional frameworks.

Prof. Lim began by examining the historical context that has shaped these economies, discussing how past policies and events have influenced their current structures. He emphasized the rise of the so-called "Dragon economies" in East Asia, which have significantly contributed to the region's economic landscape. Additionally, he explored the resource-rich economies in the West and how they interact with their eastern counterparts.

A core focus of the seminar was the factors that led to the re-emergence of Asian economies on the global stage. Prof. Lim pointed out key

elements such as technological advancements, globalization, and strategic economic policies that have fueled growth. However, he also addressed the challenges these economies have faced, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, including supply chain disruptions and shifts in consumer behavior.

Looking ahead, Prof. Lim discussed the long-term prospects for Asian economies, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and resilience. He raised critical questions about the region's political economy, including the impacts of geopolitical tensions, trade relationships, and domestic governance on future growth.

Overall, the seminar provided attendees with valuable insights into the complexities and interconnections of Asian economies, equipping them with a better understanding of both the opportunities.

GLOBAL OUTREACH & EXCHANGE: BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

The HKUST Belt and Road Forum, themed "Navigating New Frontiers: The Future of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)," was successfully held on October 7, attracting nearly 100 participants from across the university community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni. This gathering provided a critical platform to discuss the BRI's ongoing impact on international cooperation, connectivity, and regional prosperity.

We were privileged to have Mr. Nicholas Ho, the Belt and Road Commissioner of the HKSAR Government, as our keynote speaker. His Opening Remarks set a collaborative tone for the event, emphasizing the importance of the BRI in strengthening economic ties and fostering mutual understanding among participating nations.

The forum featured an esteemed panel of diplomats from several Belt and Road countries, including:

Mr. Chaturont Chaiyakam, Consul General of Thailand in Hong Kong

Mr. Kerim Evcin, Consul General of the Republic of Turkiye in Hong Kong

Mr. Muzambli Markam, Consul General of Malaysia in Hong Kong and Macau

Mr. Riaz Shaikh, Consul General of Pakistan to Hong Kong

Mrs. Endah Yuliarti, Consul for Information and Socio-Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in Hong Kong

These diplomats shared valuable insights into their respective countries' experiences and contributions to the BRI, highlighting the initiative's role in facilitating trade, investment, and cultural exchanges.

The panel discussion, expertly moderated by Prof. Naubahar Sharif, Head of the Division of Public Policy at HKUST, explored a range of topics, including:

Infrastructure Development: How BRI projects have transformed regional landscapes and improved connectivity.

Trade Dynamics: The effects of the BRI on trade flows and economic collaboration among participating nations.

Educational Collaborations: Opportunities for academic exchange and partnerships that arise from BRI initiatives.

Cultural Connectivity: The importance of cultural exchange in building lasting relationships between countries.

Prof. Sharif encouraged an engaging dialogue among panelists and attendees, fostering a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives on the future of the BRI.

As we reflect on the success of this forum, we are excited about the potential for future collaborations and deeper engagements with the Consulates General of BRI countries. We look forward to building on these connections to enhance our collective efforts in promoting international cooperation and understanding.

PPOL SEMINAR

"Network Analysis of Scientific Papers' Policy Impact"

Speaker: Dr. Kimitaka Asatani, Department of Technology Management for Innovation, School of Engineering, The University of Tokyo

AIS SUSTAINABILITY SEMINAR

"Transdisciplinary Learning in Real-World Laboratories to Foster Sustainability Transformations of Socio-Technical Systems"

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Daniel J. Lang, Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Germany

"Measuring Sustainability and Wellbeing"

Speaker: Prof. Shunsuke Managi, Distinguished Professor of Technology and Policy and Director of Urban Institute, Kyushu University, Japan

STUDENT HUB

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

FEATURED STUDENT

THESIS PRESENTATION

ACHIEVEMENT

Xiaotong Li Joins the University of York

We are happy to share that Xiaotong Li, a 2024 graduate from the Division of Public Policy, has started her new role as a Research Fellow at the University of York in the United Kingdom. Under the supervision of Dr. Masaru Yarime, Xiaotong excelled in her studies and developed a strong foundation in public policy research.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Study Tour to Singapore

We are thrilled to share the remarkable experiences from our recent Study Tour to Singapore, which took place from July 9 to 14, 2024. This immersive journey offered our students a unique opportunity to explore Singapore's innovative approaches to urban planning, economic development, public housing, and sustainable practices.

Throughout the tour, students engaged in a variety of learning activities designed to enhance their understanding of public policy in a global context. Here are some key highlights:

Classroom Sessions: Each day began with insightful 3-hour sessions led by esteemed professors, including Prof. Donald Low from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. These discussions set the stage for the day's site visits and encouraged critical reflection on comparative public policy practices.

Site Visits: Students had the chance to visit key sites such as:

Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA): Gaining insights into Singapore's long-term urban planning strategies.

Ang Mo Kio New Town: Exploring a vibrant public housing estate that exemplifies community-focused design.

One-North Industrial Park: Observing innovative economic development initiatives.

Marina Barrage: Learning about sustainable water management solutions.

Cultural Exploration: Evenings were dedicated to experiencing Singapore's rich cultural tapestry, with visits to vibrant ethnic districts like Little India and the bustling Marina Bay financial district.

Independent Exploration: On the final afternoon, students were encouraged to explore the city on their own, allowing them to reflect on their experiences and apply their learning in real-world settings.

REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

The tour not only expanded students' knowledge of public policy but also fostered discussions about the applicability of Singapore's best practices in different contexts. Participants returned with fresh perspectives and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of urban development and sustainable policymaking.

Student Lunch with Faculty

The students of Master's Degree Programs recently had the opportunity to join their faculty members for an engaging lunch event. This informal gathering provided a valuable platform for meaningful interactions and fostering stronger connections between the students and their mentors.

During the lunch, the students were able to engage in open and candid discussions with the faculty, sharing their thoughts, concerns, and aspirations regarding their academic and professional pursuits. The relaxed setting allowed for a free flow of ideas, enabling the students to gain valuable insights and perspectives from the experienced faculty members.

The event served as an excellent avenue for the students to deepen their understanding of the program and to seek guidance on navigating the challenges and opportunities that come with their studies. Faculty members, in turn, gained a better appreciation of the students' perspectives and were able to offer personalized advice and support tailored to the individual needs of the participants.

HKUST Inter-University Public Policy Case Competition 2024

The Public Policy case competition, gathered 42 teams from various universities, fostering a collaborative environment focused on addressing critical policy issues. Among the participants, HKUST stood out with 30 teams, including 14 undergraduate groups and 16 postgraduate teams, specifically 10 Master of Public Policy (MPP) teams. Non-HKUST institutions also made significant contributions, with teams from City University of Hong Kong , Hong Kong University, Lingnan University, Education University Hong Kong and Hong Kong Metropolitan University.

The competition progressed through multiple rounds, with 12 teams shortlisted for Round 2. This group included 8 teams from HKUST (4 undergraduate and 4 postgraduate) and 4 teams from non-HKUST institutions (including HKBU, LingU, and EdUHK). The diversity of participants was impressive, representing a wide range of disciplines such as European Studies, Global China Studies, Quantitative Social Analysis, Environmental Science, Business Management, Computer Science and Engineering, Quantitative Finance, Journalism, and Public Policy/ Administration. This interdisciplinary approach enriched the discussions and solutions proposed during the competition.

The event concluded with an exciting showcase of talent, where the winners were announced:

Champion: Visionarius
(HKUST Undergraduate: EVMT, QFIN, GBUS, GCS)
First Runner-Up: Justanother Team
(HKUST Undergraduate: SENG)
Second Runner-Up: Foggy Dihards
(HKUST Postgraduate: MPP, ENVR)
Third Runner-Up: Pizza Hut
(HKUST Postgraduate: MPP, MPM)

The competition not only highlighted the exceptional skills of the participants but also emphasized the collaborative spirit that defined the event. Each team's unique perspective contributed to a rich dialogue on pressing policy challenges, reinforcing the value of diverse academic backgrounds in crafting effective solutions. This year's competition served as a testament to the capabilities and creativity of emerging leaders in policy-making.

OUR JUDGES:
Prof. Sr Daniel HO (HKU)
Dr. Lawrence HO (EdUHK)
Mr. Kin-kwok LAI (Saint Francis University)
Dr. Kay LAM (Public Policy Consultant)
Prof. Mee KANG (CityU)
Sr Prof. Bay WONG (HKU; Former Assistant Director of Housing, HKSARG)
Prof. Simon YAU (LingU)

KINDNESS WALK

PPOL partners with Impact HK

The Division of Public Policy has partnered with Impact HK to organize a meaningful Kindness Walk, a volunteering activity aimed at serving food and necessities to individuals experiencing homelessness. This initiative reflects a commitment to social justice and community engagement, fostering empathy and understanding within urban environments.

The Kindness Walk is designed as a hands-on experience that allows participants to interact directly with members of the community facing homelessness. Volunteers go out on the streets, distributing essential supplies such as sandwiches, bottled water, hygiene products, and warm clothing. This initiative not only provides immediate relief but also sparks conversations about the broader issues of homelessness and social inequality.

As part of the summer course on Social Justice in Urban Sustainability, this activity highlights the importance of direct action and community involvement in addressing systemic challenges. Students are encouraged to engage with the community, listen to the stories of those they serve, and reflect on the impact of their actions. This experiential learning opportunity enables a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding homelessness and the necessity for sustainable solutions. Combined with another 3 fieldtrips, the summer course encouraged students to proactively investigate how to achieve urban sustainability in diverse aspects through practical action.

Impact HK, a local organization dedicated to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, plays a crucial role in this initiative. Their commitment to compassion and community outreach aligns perfectly with the educational goals of the course. By collaborating with Impact HK, the Division of Public Policy aims to create a lasting impact, not only for those receiving aid but also for the volunteers who gain invaluable insights into the realities of urban life.

FIELD TRIP TO THE ICAC

On 7 May 2024, PPOLs had an opportunity to visit the headquarters of Hong Kong's world-renowned anticorruption agency – the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

Led by Dr. Michael Tyrala, students started the field trip with guided tour of the ICAC's facilities, including the Video Interview Rooms and the Mock Courtroom, followed by a scenario-based, problem-solving case study discussion of corruption with experienced ICAC staff.

The ICAC, established on in 1974, has embraced a three-pronged approach of law enforcement, prevention, and community education to fight corruption since its inception. On 21 February 2024, the Division of Public Policy had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption (HKIAAC) of the ICAC. As a part of our growing collaboration with the ICAC, the field trip provided our students with a further understanding of ICAC's significant role in reducing corruption in public and private sectors and turning Hong Kong into one of the cleanest jurisdictions in the world.

FEATURED STUDENT

Xiao AI
Graduated Student of Master of Public Management Program

Before joining the MPM program, I had three years of work experience—two in auditing and one in business analysis.

Reflecting on my time here, I realize that the MPM program has been an invaluable experience. It has allowed me to rediscover the joy of exploration.

The MPM program has provided a thoughtful environment to consider what career path truly suits me. It's essential to take the time to explore various options and engage with different people before making a decision.

The program's collaborative atmosphere has been particularly impactful. Nearly every course involves group assignments, fostering connections with classmates that often lead to lasting friendships.

The MPM program is a unique opportunity to explore diverse options and engage with individuals from various backgrounds—some with over a decade of experience, others who are successful entrepreneurs, and many with impressive educational qualifications. This diversity enriches our perspectives and fosters a vibrant learning environment

These group experiences have also illuminated areas for my personal improvement, such as developing stronger conviction in my ideas and embracing leadership responsibilities.

To current students aspiring to follow a similar path, It's also important to acknowledge your limitations. Approach your studies with humility and courage, avoiding both arrogance and timidity.

My experiences in the MPM program have made me acutely aware of the complexities in policymaking. I've learned that there are often no clear right or wrong answers, and every proposal has its limitations.

A conversation with a professor inspired me to remember that change, even on a small scale, is possible.

THESIS PRESENTATION

PhD thesis presentation

Xiaotong LI
Understanding Physician Behaviors in China: Exploring the Impact of Patient Violence, Medical Litigation, and Multi-site Practice Legalization

Xinying TAN
Urban Mobility in Transition: Visual and Built Environment, Travel Behavior, Electric Vehicle Policy, Technology, and Charging Planning

Alvin LI
Diets Speak Louder than Words: Investigating the Attitude-Behaviour Gap in Reducing Meat Consumption

MPhil thesis presentation

Li Ying Hillary GIAM
An Analysis of the Lifecycle of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Industrial Settings: Implications for Governing Risks and Responsibilities among Stakeholders

NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

FACULTY INSIGHTS
PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

FACULTY INSIGHT

Prof. Naubahar Sharif's Perspectives on China's Strategic Investment in Laos

In a recent interview, Prof. Naubahar Sharif, head of the Division of Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, provided valuable insights into China's strategic investments in Laos and their implications for Southeast Asia. He discussed how these developments reflect a broader trend of economic influence and connectivity in the region.

FACULTY INSIGHT

Prof. Naubahar Sharif Perspective on China's Strategic Investment in Laos

Interview with the South China Morning Post

Strategic Importance of Laos as a Trade Hub

In a significant move to enhance its economic influence in Southeast Asia, Premier Li Qiang visited Laos earlier this month, highlighting the nation's strategic importance in China's regional plans. Laos, with its unique geographical position, is increasingly viewed as a crucial transport hub for facilitating trade between China and its Southeast Asian neighbors.

Prof. Sharif emphasized that Laos is key to China's ambitions to expand its economic reach. "Laos is seen as a transport hub for China to export Chinese products to the other countries in the subregion and import products from those countries to China," he stated. This sentiment reflects the growing recognition of Laos not only as a recipient of Chinese investment but also as a vital link in a larger supply chain.

Infrastructure Developments and Economic Integration

The completion of the US$5.9 billion railway in 2021, stretching 400 kilometers from Vientiane to China, marks a significant development in this strategy. As Sharif noted, future enhancements—including new roads, airports, and dry ports—are planned to further integrate Laos into China's economic framework and bolster trade routes throughout the region. These infrastructure projects are expected to facilitate smoother logistical operations, enabling Chinese businesses to tap into Southeast Asia's diverse markets more effectively.

The implications of this connectivity extend beyond mere trade; they represent a strategic maneuver for China, especially for its landlocked western regions, which are eager for access to international markets. Sharif pointed out that Laos's role as a transit point will not only enhance China's economic footprint but also create new opportunities for local development.

Opportunities for Local Development and Regional Cooperation

China's growing engagement with Laos is underscored by recent agreements aimed at improving a "connectivity development corridor" linking both nations and Thailand. This collaboration is set to synchronize the China-Laos Railway with Thailand's rail system, further solidifying Laos's position as a critical transit hub.

As economic ties deepen, Laos stands to benefit from increased investment and infrastructure development. This partnership is seen as a pathway to job creation and economic growth for the Laotian people, who view China as a vital ally in their development journey.

In summary, the relationship between China and Laos exemplifies a strategic alignment that could reshape trade dynamics in Southeast Asia, with significant implications for regional development and economic cooperation. With ongoing investments and infrastructure advancements, Laos is poised to emerge as a key player in the region's economic landscape, underlining the critical perspectives shared by Prof. Sharif.

Soon-to-come Public Policy Dialogue Series

Is Hong Kong's Population Policy Working?:
Coping with demographic challenges and attracting talent
18 January 2025 (Saturday) | 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

Young People are the Future: Rebuilding their hope and stake in Hong Kong
15 March 2025 (Saturday) | 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

Think Asia, Think GBA: Hong Kong's regional strategy and positioning
26 April 2025 (Saturday) | 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

Programs	Requirement	Application Deadline for 2025/26 Admissions
MPhil/PhD in Public Policy	• In addition to the University admission requirements, applicants must possess a bachelor's degree in any field with strong academic performance, especially in analytical courses. • Applicants are highly recommended to have a satisfactory GMAT/GRE score.	For applicants from outside Hong Kong: 31st May 2025 For applicants from Hong Kong: 30th June 2025
Master of Public Management (MPM)	• A Bachelor's degree with second class honors; • At least 3 years of full-time working experience; • Fulfilled English Language requirements set by the University.	For applicants from outside Hong Kong: 31st May 2025 For applicants from Hong Kong: 30th June 2025
Master of Public Policy (MPP)	• A Bachelor's degree with second class honors or above from a recognized institution, or an approved equivalent qualification; • Fulfilled English Language requirements set by the University.	For applicants from outside Hong Kong: 31st May 2025 For applicants from Hong Kong: 31st May 2025

All applicants should submit their application documents through https://pg.ust.hk/applynow

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