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CONTENTS

- Opening Message ____ 2
- Achievements and Grants ____ 3
- Ongoing Projects ____ 7
- Scholarly Showcase ____ 9
- Conferences and Events ____ 21
- Seminar Archive ____ 24
- Student Hub ____ 27
- News and Upcoming Events ____ 33

OPENING MESSAGE



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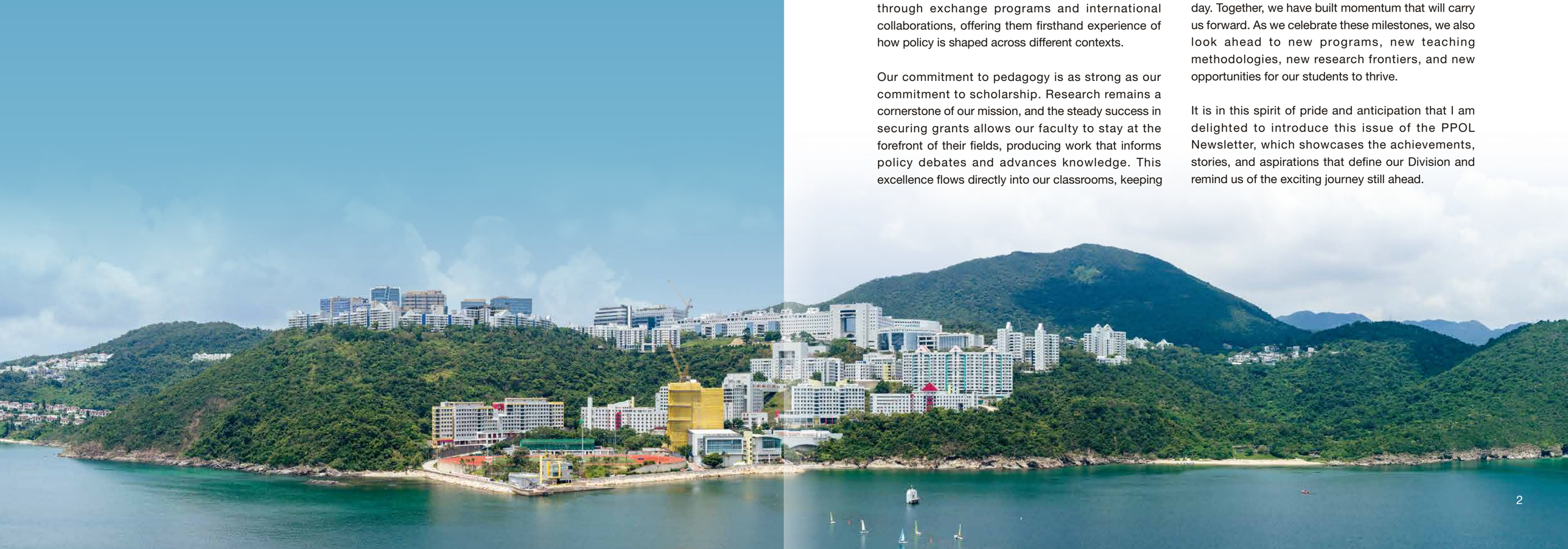
We have so much to celebrate in PPOL. The past few months have been marked by progress and creativity, thanks to the collective efforts of our faculty, students, and staff. I am immensely proud to be part of our Division, not only because of the programs we have built and the robust curriculum we continue to expand, but also because I get to work alongside colleagues who are extraordinary professionals and inspiring people. Their dedication to teaching and research is the foundation of our success and reason why we continue to grow in strength, reputation, and impact.

Our programs have expanded in scope and ambition, offering students new opportunities to explore the interdisciplinary nature of public policy. The diversity of our faculty, from our backgrounds and expertise to our worldviews and perspectives, enriches the classroom experience and ensures that our students benefit from a truly global outlook. This same diversity is reflected in the doors we continue opening for our students through exchange programs and international collaborations, offering them firsthand experience of how policy is shaped across different contexts.

Our commitment to pedagogy is as strong as our commitment to scholarship. Research remains a cornerstone of our mission, and the steady success in securing grants allows our faculty to stay at the forefront of their fields, producing work that informs policy debates and advances knowledge. This excellence flows directly into our classrooms, keeping our teaching fresh, adaptive, and connected to the latest developments, while our achievements in pedagogy, reflected in colleagues receiving fellowships and recognition for innovative pedagogical approaches, underscore how deeply our dedication to teaching and research strengthen the Division and enrich the experience of our students.

But what makes these accomplishments truly meaningful is that they are shared. They reflect the collective energy of our Division; the faculty who push boundaries, the students who bring curiosity and creativity, and the staff who support our mission every day. Together, we have built momentum that will carry us forward. As we celebrate these milestones, we also look ahead to new programs, new teaching methodologies, new research frontiers, and new opportunities for our students to thrive.

It is in this spirit of pride and anticipation that I am delighted to introduce this issue of the PPOL Newsletter, which showcases the achievements, stories, and aspirations that define our Division and remind us of the exciting journey still ahead.



ACHIEVEMENTS AND GRANTS



Prof. Masaru YARIME's Co-authored Paper Received the Best Poster Award at the International Conference on the Science of Science and Innovation (ICSSI) 2026

HKUST's Division of Public Policy (PPOL) is delighted to announce that a collaborative research paper co-authored by PhD candidates Siqi XIE, Xuan ZENG, and PPOL Associate Professor Masaru YARIME has been awarded the **Best Poster Award** at the International Conference on the Science of Science and Innovation (ICSSI) 2026. Hosted in Boulder, Colorado, USA from June 29 to July 1, 2026, this prominent annual conference gathers global scholars to advance research on science systems, technological progress and innovation governance.

The award-winning poster carries the full title "Bless or Curse? An Empirical Analysis of the Effects of U.S. Export Controls on China's High-Tech Innovation Through the Lens of Entity-Listed Firms". Centered on entity-listed enterprises as the core research sample, the study delivers an in-depth empirical examination of how U.S. export restriction policies reshape the high-tech innovation trajectory of targeted Chinese firms, unpacking both constraining pressures and potential transformative incentives brought by external regulatory barriers to domestic technological development.

The paper's three authors bring complementary academic backgrounds rooted within HKUST's interdisciplinary research ecosystem. Siqi XIE is a PhD Candidate enrolled in the University's Individualized Interdisciplinary Program specializing in Innovation, Policy and Entrepreneurship. Xuan ZENG pursues doctoral studies within the Division of Public Policy. Their supervisor and co-author, Associate Professor Masaru YARIME, is a core faculty member of HKUST PPOL, whose research portfolio spans technology policy, climate governance, smart city systems and data-driven social science inquiry.

This joint work embodies the division's core mission of integrating graduate student research with faculty-led interdisciplinary public policy scholarship.

ICSSI stands as a leading international platform for the science of science field, evaluating poster submissions based on originality of research questions, methodological rigor, empirical insight and contribution to policy-relevant innovation studies. By securing the Best Poster Award, the team's analysis of geopolitical technology regulation and industrial innovation has received formal peer recognition from the international academic community.

This milestone achievement highlights the robust graduate research training and impactful policy-oriented scholarship fostered by HKUST's Division of Public Policy. It further solidifies the division's standing as a key center for cutting-edge research at the intersection of international technology policy, industrial development and public governance.

Congratulations to Siqi XIE, Xuan ZENG and Professor Masaru YARIME on this well-earned conference distinction. We anticipate this research will continue to offer valuable evidence and perspectives for global discussions on trade controls, technological competition and inclusive innovation governance.





Prof. Stuart GIETEL-BASTEN Appointed as a Member of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council

The Division of Public Policy is proud to announce that Prof. Stuart GIETEL-BASTEN, Professor and a distinguished scholar in the Division of Public Policy, has been appointed as a member of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council.

The G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) is an independent body of leading global experts established to provide high-level, evidence-based advice to G7 leaders on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. As a member of the Council, Prof. Gietel-Basten will contribute his expertise to shape discussions, develop actionable recommendations, and drive progress on critical gender equality priorities across the G7 agenda.

Prof. Gietel-Basten's research spans demography, population policy, family change, and gender dynamics, with a focus on East Asia and comparative international perspectives. His work has been widely published in leading academic journals and cited in policy discussions globally. Beyond academia, he brings extensive experience in engaging with governments, international organizations, and civil society to translate rigorous research into policy impact—an expertise he will bring to his role on the GEAC. This prestigious appointment underscores Prof. Gietel-Basten's standing as a leading voice in global gender and population policy.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Prof. Gietel-Basten and look forward to his impactful contributions as he takes on this important role, further elevating the Division of Public Policy's engagement in international policy dialogue.

G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council



Prof. Alex Jingwei He Appointed as a Panel Member of the Research Grants Council (RGC)

The Division of Public Policy is proud to announce that Prof. Alex Jingwei He, Professor at the Division of Public Policy, has been appointed as a Panel Member of the Research Grants Council (RGC).

The RGC, established under the University Grants Committee (UGC), is the key public funding body supporting academic research in Hong Kong. It plays a vital role in promoting high-quality research across disciplines and fostering academic excellence in the region. As a member of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel (Joint Research Schemes), Prof. He will contribute his expertise to the peer review process, evaluating research proposals and advising on funding allocations to support impactful and innovative research projects.

Prof. He's research focuses on public health policy, health system governance, and social policy in Greater China, with extensive publications in leading international journals and significant contributions to evidence-based policy making. His deep understanding of public policy challenges and research methodologies makes him well-positioned to contribute to the RGC's mission of advancing research excellence in Hong Kong.

This appointment reflects the high regard for Prof. He's academic standing and expertise in the field. We extend our warmest congratulations to Prof. He and look forward to his contributions to shaping the future of research funding in the humanities and social sciences in Hong Kong.

UGC 大學教育資助委員會 University Grants Committee

ONGOING PROJECTS

Leading Faculty	Funding Agency	Project
 Prof. Kira Matus	RGC - General Research Fund	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 (2025 - Now)
		Towards 1.5C Lifestyles: What motivates sustainable consumption choices in Hong Kong? (2022 - Now)
 Dr. Nicolo LUDOVICE	Research Grants Council (RGC) of Hong Kong	Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Health Sector in the Postwar Philippines, 1946-1953 (2026-Now)
 Prof. Pengyu Zhu	RGC – Research Fellow Scheme	Regional Science and Complex Systems: A Five-year Research Plan on Transportation, Land Use, Labor, and Innovation Systems (2024 - Now)
	Chief Executive's Policy Unit – Public Policy Research Funding Scheme	Bus Electrification in Hong Kong: Energy Consumption Prediction and Charging Facility Planning (2024 - Now)
		Enhancing the implementation of "One University, Two Campuses" and mutual recognition of academic qualifications: A mixed-methods study (2025 - Now)
 Prof. Alex Jingwei He	General Research Fund (GRF, external competitive), Research Grants Council, Hong Kong SAR (Ref. 16600324)	Local Government Innovation under Political Recentralization in Contemporary China: A Two-stage Sequential Study
	Tsinghua University	Delayed retirement and mass feedback in China (2025 - Now)
	Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policy, World Health Organization	Use of digital health technologies and data to enhance health system outcomes (2025 - Now)
	Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme	Understanding China's Huge and Complex Health Policy Reform: A Governance Approach
	General Research Fund (GRF, external competitive), Research Grants Council, Hong Kong SAR	Struggling with an Ageing Population and Economic Downturn: An Examination of the Policy Feedback Effects in China's Social Security System

Leading Faculty	Funding Agency	Project
 Prof. Masaru Yarime	HKUST Li & Fung Supply Chain Institute	Establishing Digital Product Passport for Sustainable Supply Chains: Centralized and Decentralized Approaches to Data Governance (2025 - Now)
 Prof. Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin		AI Academic Upskilling Program for Social Scientists
 Dr. Fangxin Francine YI (in collaboration with Prof. Yike Guo.)	NSFC–RGC Joint Research Scheme	"Human–Machine Collaborative Intelligent Deliberation and Public Policy Optimization Using Generative Multi-Agent Large Language Models." (2025 - Now)
	NSFC General Research Grant	PI (2026 - 2029) Human-Machine Collaborative Intelligent Deliberation and Public Policy Optimization Using Generative Multi-Agent Large Language Models
	NSFC-RGC Joint Research Scheme Fund	Co-I (2026 - 2029) Generative Content Detection and Ethical Value Alignment for Multimodal Large Models
 Dr. Jeffrey CHOW	Environment and Conservation Fund	Comparative Assessment and Valuation of Ecosystem Services Generated from Recreation and Conservation in Coastal Wetland Habitats

SCHOLARLY SHOWCASE



Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy



Jingwei He, Alex, Hongqiao Fu, and Na Tang. "From local innovation to national policy: Cross-boundary policy entrepreneurship in China's health regulatory reform." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 85.1 (2026): 51-70.

Focus of Study

This study explores the cross-boundary policy entrepreneurship model in China's healthcare sector, analyzing how a local internet hospital pilot in Ningxia scaled up to become a national telemedicine policy. It examines how multi-stakeholder coalitions (local governments, hospitals, and tech firms) broke institutional and sectoral barriers to drive regulatory change, identifying key roles including policy entrepreneurs, process brokers, program champions, and technology innovators. The research traces the two-stage evolution of the reform—local pilot implementation and national policy diffusion—and highlights how actors employed framing, coalition-building, venue-shopping, and persuasion strategies to advance the agenda, with a focus on the tensions between disruptive digital innovation and traditional healthcare governance.

Policy Recommendation

Policymakers aiming to foster inclusive digital health innovation should adopt a multi-level, collaborative framework: support cross-sector partnerships to design and test local pilots, create formal pathways to scale successful grassroots solutions into national policy, and update regulatory systems to balance innovation with accountability. Additionally, clarifying the roles of public and private actors, strengthening oversight of data security and service quality, and nurturing a culture of adaptive governance can help emerging economies replicate China's experience while mitigating risks of over-commercialization and regulatory capture.



Khanal, Shaleen, and **Masaru Yarime**. "Exploring geopolitics and innovation: the role of bilateral relationships in shaping research collaboration." *Science and Public Policy* (2026): scag024.

Focus of Study

This paper explores how bilateral geopolitical ties shape global research collaboration and innovation. Using multiple international databases and econometric methods, it verifies three hypotheses. The results show cross-border research collaboration effectively improves patent quality. Better bilateral relations greatly raise the quantity of scientific cooperation via researcher mobility and high-tech trade. However, national ties only partially influence patent quality, failing to affect technological originality and radicalness. The study clarifies the complex interplay between geopolitics and innovation, filling research gaps in this field and offering empirical evidence for cross-border scientific cooperation amid rising global frictions.

Policy Recommendation

Governments should avoid blanket restrictions on cross-border research and technology exchanges. They need to adopt targeted rules to balance scientific openness and national security, especially for dual-use technologies. Nations are advised to build stable bilateral and multilateral scientific partnerships and launch joint research projects on global public issues. Policymakers can use tax incentives and funding support to encourage enterprises and research institutions to conduct international cooperation. It is also vital to strengthen scientific talent mobility and high-tech trade, to sustain global innovation vitality and build resilient international research networks.

Masaru Yarime. “Data Governance for Artificial Intelligence in Addressing Climate Change.” *Field Actions Science Reports. The journal of field actions* Special Report (2026): 68-71.

Focus of Study

This paper discusses the integration of artificial intelligence and climate action, centering on data governance. It analyzes AI’s wide applications in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and points out that data fragmentation, uneven data distribution, algorithmic bias, AI’s carbon footprint and imperfect institutional mechanisms restrict the effective use of climate AI. It also summarizes existing solutions including open data platforms, data trusts and public-private partnerships, and emphasizes that sound data governance is the core to unleash AI’s potential for addressing climate change.

Policy Recommendation

Policymakers should unify global data standards and break data silos, optimize technical infrastructure to narrow regional data gaps and digital divide, build inclusive and fair AI models to avoid algorithmic discrimination, establish multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms such as climate data trusts, deepen public-private cooperation, and balance AI’s climate benefits and energy consumption to promote responsible application of climate AI.



Asatani, Kimitaka, Yurie Iwata, Yuta Tomokiyo, Basil Mahfouz, **Masaru Yarime**, and Ichiro Sakata. “Structure of Scientific Knowledge Flows to Intergovernmental Organizations.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS* (United States) 123, no. 17 (April 2026): e2514861123.

Focus of Study

This study examines scientific knowledge flows from academia to intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) using 230,737 IGO-cited papers (2015–2023) across 23 research fields. It identifies “Highly IGO-Cited Scientists (HIC-Sci)” — merely 0.7%–4.4% of authors producing 30% of IGO-referenced research. The paper unpacks three drivers of this extreme concentration: dense transnational co-authorship networks overlapping IGO advisory bodies like IPCC, faster IGO citation uptake, and standardized policy-oriented vocabulary. Mature fields (climate modeling) show far tighter concentration than emerging areas (AI & data science). HIC-Sci networks follow a Western Europe core-periphery geographic structure, and cross-IGO co-citation amplifies elite dominance, even amid IGO diversity reforms.

Policy Recommendation

The research proposes targeted institutional reforms to balance scientific credibility and procedural legitimacy for IGOs. First, IGOs should implement transparent author-level citation tracking to expose uneven knowledge sourcing, complementing existing conflict-of-interest and expert selection rules. Second, emerging policy domains such as AI governance need formal inclusive monitoring mechanisms before epistemic consensus solidifies to avoid entrenched elite bias. Third, IGOs must mitigate core-periphery geographic imbalance by systematically integrating observational, non-mainstream research from underrepresented regions. Finally, regular long-term evaluations of evidence synthesis outcomes are required, as procedural diversity adjustments fail to offset persistent citation concentration driven by cumulative advantage and network lock-in.



Julien de TROULLIOUD de LANVERSIN, Christopher Fichtlscherer, and Moritz Kütt. “Verification of very low-yield nuclear tests with post-experiment gamma spectroscopy.” *Physical Review Applied* 25.4 (2026): 044008.

Focus of Study

Against the background of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) zero-yield standard and widespread low-yield nuclear experiment disputes among nuclear-armed states, this research distinguishes supercritical nuclear tests that produce self-sustaining fission chain reactions from non-prohibited subcritical experiments. Relying on 6,000 sets of neutronics, isotope evolution and photon transport numerical simulations, the paper develops a post-test gamma spectroscopy onsite verification method based on fission product and plutonium-239 gamma ray intensity discriminant ratios. It systematically analyzes how core variables including initial fission quantity per kilogram of plutonium, inspection interval after test, and pre-test assembly criticality affect detection accuracy. Simulation results confirm that the proposed technique can reliably identify all supercritical nuclear tests with explosive yields above 38 grams TNT equivalent, even with minimal prior information of test parameters. This study fills the technical research gap of onsite post-experiment verification for ultra-low-yield nuclear tests, and supplements technical evidence for international nuclear disarmament and treaty compliance monitoring theories.

Policy Recommendation

International nuclear non-proliferation and treaty monitoring authorities should take post-test gamma spectrum discriminant ratio detection as a core onsite verification tool to enforce the CTBT zero-yield standard, with existing remote seismic and radionuclide monitoring systems as auxiliary detection means. Stable international inspection frameworks are required to clarify standardized sampling, measurement and data analysis procedures for low-yield test sites, and additional technical R&D funding should be allocated to optimize portable high-purity germanium detector devices for field inspection. Relevant intergovernmental organizations need to establish unified isotope chronology calibration standards (based on Fe-59/Mn-54 isotopic ratios) to narrow the uncertainty of test time estimation. It is critical to abandon ambiguous blanket monitoring rules, balance inspection rigor and state confidentiality protection, and adopt composite technical verification instruments to eliminate loopholes in identifying covert ultra-low-yield supercritical tests, so as to reduce nuclear tension and advance the full entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty



Environmental Policy and Sustainability



Gebhardt, Sebastian, Yun Hou, and **Masaru Yarime**. “Directing environmental innovation toward radical clean technologies for sustainable transitions: Market-based vs. command-and-control policies.” *Research Policy* 55.4 (2026): 105446.

Focus of Study

This study classifies environmental innovation into clean technologies and pollution abatement technologies. Using 1991–2020 patent data of manufacturing firms from 17 EU countries and multiple empirical methods, it compares how market-based and command-and-control (C&C) policies affect corporate environmental innovation. Market-based policies offer long-term incentives, flexibility and market effects to drive radical clean technology development, while rigid C&C rules cannot foster transformative innovation. Empirically, market-based policies greatly promote clean technologies and their technological radicalness, yet C&C policies show no significant effects. The paper addresses the research gap on policy guidance for innovation direction and enriches relevant theories on sustainability transitions.

Policy Recommendation

Policymakers should take market-based tools like carbon taxes and emission trading as core measures to advance radical clean technologies, with C&C policies serving only as supplements. Stable policy frameworks are required to stabilize market expectations, and more public R&D funding should be provided for high-risk emerging clean technologies. Governments also need to cultivate related niche markets via industrial and infrastructure planning. It is vital to abandon campaign-style regulation, balance regulatory intensity and implementation flexibility, and adopt mixed policy instruments to break the reliance on polluting technologies, so as to realize long-term and systematic sustainability transitions.



Yunjiang Yu, Chenwei Fan, Yingying Zhang, Yigang Wei, **Pengyu Zhu**, Xuyang Zheng, Jianghui Liu. “From grey to green: The role of emission trading schemes in China’s urban transformation.” *Energy Strategy Reviews* 64 (2026): 102084.

Focus of Study

This paper adopts the synthetic control method and DEA model to explore how China’s pilot emission trading schemes (ETS) affect urban green development efficiency from 2003 to 2020. The results show ETS improves urban green efficiency by 10%–15% overall, with obvious regional disparities. Technological innovation and industrial restructuring are two core influencing mechanisms. Multiple robustness tests verify the policy effects. The study also discusses institutional constraints and external shocks impacting policy implementation, filling gaps in evaluating ETS’s comprehensive green benefits and offering empirical support for national carbon market construction.

Policy Recommendation

China should further expand the coverage and improve operational mechanisms of the national ETS. Governments shall formulate differentiated carbon market rules based on regional resource endowments and industrial features. It is vital to boost financial participation and innovate carbon financial products to optimize resource allocation. Authorities need to continuously incentivize corporate green technological innovation and industrial upgrading. Besides, supportive infrastructure for clean energy should be perfected, and rigid institutional barriers in key sectors should be removed, to fully unleash ETS’s potential in advancing low-carbon and sustainable urban transformation.



Soares, Ian V., Anna Furberg, Shoaib Azizi, Göran Finnveden, **Masaru Yarime**, and Magdalena M. Klemun. “Estimating Cross-Border Cloud Computing Emissions: A Consumption-Based Approach Applied to Major European Data Center Hubs.” *iScience* (United States) 29, no. 6 (June 2026): 116061.

Focus of Study

This 2026 study establishes a consumption-based accounting method to measure cross-border cloud emissions, fixing limitations of traditional location-based accounting that attribute all data center pollution to host countries instead of end consumers. It targets three major EU cloud hubs—Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands—covering 2017–2022, classifying cloud traffic into domestic, export and import flows. Analysis reveals distinct national profiles: Germany’s 75% domestic cloud usage, Ireland’s 85% export-oriented hyperscale infrastructure, and the Netherlands’ balanced cross-border data exchange. The paper quantifies electricity and carbon intensity gaps across nations, assesses energy efficiency improvements, and conducts regional sensitivity tests to prove that relocating cloud workloads alters total emissions, filling the research gap of unquantified transboundary digital carbon flows.

Policy Recommendation

The paper suggests complementary policies alongside existing territorial emission rules rather than replacing them. Host nations should enforce strict licensing rules for data centers above 50MW peak capacity, obligating operators to fund grid construction and renewable energy projects to offset local infrastructure costs. Governments need to incorporate consumption-based metrics into energy planning to avoid inaccurate demand projections, especially for import-reliant Germany. Cross-border cooperation is vital to leverage low-carbon grid arbitrage: hosting cloud services in EU low-carbon areas cuts total emissions by 4%, while fossil-heavy regions push emissions up by 8–12%. Authorities should also push hyperscale cloud firms to disclose customer geographic data to build fair climate responsibility-sharing mechanisms between hosting and consuming countries.





Wing Shan Kan, Nina Sander, Ching Chit Chau, and **Raul P. Lejano**. “Climate and relationality: Transforming gendered relations from vulnerability to resilience.” Progress in Disaster Science (2026): 100653.

Focus of Study

The study examines how gendered social relationships shape women’s vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events. Using a relational perspective, the authors argue that women’s disproportionate exposure to disaster risks is produced by context-specific cultural norms, unequal power relations, limited access to resources, and gendered divisions of labour. The article also explores how these same relationships can be transformed to strengthen resilience and empowerment. Rather than presenting women only as passive victims, it emphasizes their roles as local knowledge holders, community leaders, and active participants in disaster preparedness and climate adaptation. The study therefore focuses on how institutional change, participatory communication, and women-led initiatives can challenge social exclusion, strengthen women’s agency, and improve disaster risk reduction, planning, and policy responses.

Policy Recommendation

This paper recommends transforming climate and disaster policy from merely including women to restructuring institutions with their active leadership. Policymakers should strengthen women’s representation in decision-making, redistribute resources and unpaid care responsibilities, and direct more climate funding to local women-led organizations. Disaster programs should remove practical barriers to participation by providing childcare support and considering meeting times, mobility, and accessibility. Women should also be treated as local knowledge holders and co-designers of climate adaptation rather than passive recipients of expert information. Participatory communication, storytelling, community dialogue, and shared decision-making should be incorporated into disaster risk reduction planning so that policies better reflect local experiences, strengthen women’s agency, and connect formal institutional frameworks with the everyday realities of climate-vulnerable communities.



Social and Urban Policy



Gietel-Basten, Stuart. “The roots of equality?: Marital age homogamy and female agency in Lesotho, 1880-Present.” *Canadian Studies in Population* 53.1 (2026): 1.

Focus of Study

This demographic paper uses marital age homogamy and the Girlpower-Index to trace Lesotho’s gender equality origins. It compares 3,575 1880–1939 church marriage records with 2004–2024 DHS survey data. After filtering inconsistent marriage samples, the study finds nearly unchanged spousal age gaps and female agency metrics over a century. It refutes the mainstream view that balanced marital power only comes from recent modernization, proving Lesotho’s high female autonomy has deep historical roots, though its church-only dataset limits full societal generalization.

Policy Recommendation

For Lesotho’s gender policymakers, long-term marriage demographic trends should guide anti-early-marriage and women’s empowerment programs built on its historic female agency foundation. For African governments and researchers, digitizing colonial demographic archives is critical to avoid biased gender policy analysis. Policymakers should abandon over-simplified modernization frameworks and incorporate indigenous marital traditions to craft contextually suitable, sustainable gender equality policies across Sub-Saharan Africa.



He, Alex Jingwei, Mengjie Long, Xiaoting Liu, Na Tang “Forging integrated care through collective policy entrepreneurship in a fragmented health system: a tale of two counties in China.” *Health Economics, Policy and Law* (2026): 1-19.

Focus of Study

This qualitative comparative study examines county medical conglomeration, China’s vertical integrated care model, through collective policy entrepreneurship theory, selecting Deqing (Zhejiang) and Zhijiang (Hubei) as pioneer cases. It addresses severe fragmentation in China’s health system caused by split governance, fee-for-service incentives and weak primary care. Field interviews reveal two distinct reform pathways: Deqing’s consensus-driven technocrat coalition and Zhijiang’s top-down crisis-led leadership team. Both entrepreneurial groups deployed shared tactics like cross-region policy learning and bundled global budgets, yet adopted divergent organizational structures shaped by local economic and healthcare pressures to unify county hospitals, township clinics and village facilities.

Policy Recommendation

The paper offers multi-level health policy suggestions for fragmented systems across developing nations. Governments should nurture collective policy entrepreneurs at county levels, granting local discretionary space for incremental care integration pilots. Vertical medical conglomeration paired with bundled global budgets is recommended to realign provider incentives away from volume competition. Policymakers must tailor integration architectures to regional socioeconomic conditions instead of copying uniform models. Inter-departmental coordination mechanisms need establishment to break bureaucratic silos, and regular upper-level venue communication should be encouraged to secure political endorsement and scale proven local health innovations nationwide.



Xinyi, Wang, and **Naubahar Sharif**. “Life as an ethnic minority (EM) university student: Comparing mental health challenges among local and international EM students in Hong Kong.” *British Educational Research Journal* (2026).

Focus of Study

Based on self-determination theory, this qualitative study explores and compares mental health issues of local and international ethnic minority university students in Hong Kong via interviews and observations. Both groups face similar pressures affecting competence and autonomy, such as academic stress, financial burdens and language-related career barriers. Their biggest divergence lies in social connection: international students suffer from loneliness and social exclusion, while local ethnic minorities endure long-term ethnic segregation and discrimination. The research fills research gaps in non-Western contexts and reveals shared and unique stressors for two minority student groups, as well as existing deficiencies in campus mental health support systems.

Policy Recommendation

Universities and authorities should adopt targeted interventions for the two groups. For international minority students, launch social exchange and buddy programs to ease loneliness and exclusion. For local ethnic minorities, introduce institutional reforms and public campaigns to eliminate segregation and discrimination. All campuses need to upgrade mental health services with cultural competence, expand service capacity and reduce stigma. Additionally, optimize curriculum and language training, improve career support, and build inclusive campus cultures with diversified facilities and activities to safeguard minority students’ mental well-being.

Chen, Wenjin, **Naubahar Sharif**, and Xinyi Wang. “The trust trap: how trust in online health information harms subjective well-being.” Humanities and Social Sciences Communications (2026).

Focus of Study

This research addresses an underexplored negative link between trust in online health information and people’s subjective well-being, drawing on nationally representative 2021 Chinese CGSS data of 1,305 respondents. Multiple rigorous methods including instrumental variables and propensity score matching confirm the adverse association. Three mediating channels are identified: excessive online health search intensity, distorted health literacy including biased self-health perception, and worsened mental health such as depression. Poor physical health and lack of public medical insurance amplify this harm. Heterogeneity tests reveal the damage disproportionately hits low-socioeconomic groups, rural hukou holders and residents of less developed regions, exposing digital health inequities rooted in limited health and digital literacy.

Policy Recommendation

The paper puts forward targeted public health interventions to mitigate the “trust trap” of unreliable online health content. Governments should launch official, physician-verified health platforms and deploy source authentication technology to filter misleading medical information. Authorities need to roll out tailored health and digital literacy training for vulnerable rural, low-income and less-developed regional populations to sharpen their ability to evaluate online claims. Policymakers should also expand affordable public medical insurance and primary care access to reduce overreliance on unregulated online health resources, alongside regular monitoring of digital health misinformation to protect disadvantaged groups’ mental and overall well-being.



Yi, Fangxin, Hongfei Yu, Xianyun Zhang,Yang Yue “Hong Kong land development and policy intensity: strategic embedding in a period of transition.” *Journal of Asian Public Policy* (2026): 1-16.

Focus of Study

This paper explores Hong Kong’s land policy intensity and its fiscal impacts during the transitional period. Using ERNIE large language model to quantify policy intensity from 1997–2023 Policy Addresses, alongside time-series models, it finds stronger land policies cut absolute land revenue but keep its fiscal share stable due to institutional path dependence. Policy effects show clear temporal dynamics: bidirectional causality in Year 1, one-way policy dominance in Year 2, and fading impacts after Year 3. It reveals the shift of land governance from revenue pursuit to social welfare while constrained by long-standing fiscal structures.

Policy Recommendation

Set up fiscal stabilization funds to cushion short-term land revenue drops, diversify fiscal sources and adjust expenditure structures to ease reliance on land income, adopt differentiated governance aligned with policy timeframes for market regulation, institutional coordination and long-term reform, and prioritize public housing and social equity while establishing a multi-dimensional policy evaluation system.



Chaoqun Zhang, Mei Meng, Ziyue Chen, Wenchong Du, Weihua Dong, Jianghao Wang, Bingbo Gao, F**angxin Yi**, Kaixin Zhu, Jianqiang Hu, Yuheng Fu, Jing Yang, Manchun Li & Qiao Wang. “Wavelength-specific urban nighttime light modulates expressed sentiment across China.” Nature Cities 3.3 (2026): 261-272.

Focus of Study

This research combines 40m multispectral SDGSAT-1 satellite night light data and over 4 million geotagged Chinese Weibo posts to examine wavelength-specific artificial night light (ALAN) impacts on public sentiment. Fixed-effect regressions show blue light raises negative sentiment by 15.9% while moderate green light boosts positive mood by 5%. Risks concentrate in eastern Chinese commercial zones, and distance, seasonal and temporal heterogeneities exist across red/green/blue bands. Simulations prove tuning correlated color temperature cuts sentiment risks by 89.7%, far better than only dimming brightness, revealing spectral design’s overlooked mental health value in urban lighting research.

Policy Recommendation

Urban lighting policymakers should abandon simple brightness reduction and prioritize warm low-blue light spectra to ease residents’ negative emotions. Local governments need zone-targeted lighting rules: stricter blue light limits for commercial hotspots and seasonal adaptive light adjustments. City planners must integrate sentiment risk mapping into urban nightscape planning. Regulators should revise LED lighting standards to balance energy efficiency and public mental wellbeing, and launch monitoring systems tracking spectral pollution across high-population urban areas nationwide.



Praveen Maghelal, Yuqing Guo , Xuan Zhang , **Pengyu Zhu**. “Impacts of built environment and socioeconomic factors on trip-chaining in Abu Dhabi.” *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives* 37 (2026): 101958.

Focus of Study

Taking Abu Dhabi of the United Arab Emirates as the research case, this study uses 9,052 valid samples from the official 2015 travel survey, adopts the Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial model and the 3Ds built-environment framework to conduct the first systematic research on residents’ trip-chaining behavior in Middle Eastern cities. It mainly analyzes how individual socioeconomic factors including gender, employment status, driving license and travel mode, household attributes and urban built environment affect the complexity of trip chaining, and carries out heterogeneity analysis among different groups. This study fills the research gap of trip-chaining studies in the Middle East, identifies that residents’ travel patterns are jointly shaped by private car dominance, inadequate public transit, local culture and demographic structure, and its findings provide empirical support for transportation demand management in similar Middle Eastern cities.

Policy Recommendation

In accordance with Abu Dhabi’s urban layout, demographics, culture and travel features, local authorities should implement inclusive transportation planning to satisfy diverse travel demands of females, teenagers and non-drivers, expand and optimize public transit networks, improve fare subsidies and multimodal transfer systems to enhance the flexibility and appeal of public transport. Meanwhile, the government shall promote high-density mixed-use development and transit-oriented construction to cut travel distances and realize integrated development of land use and transportation. It is also essential to improve non-motorized travel facilities, adopt parking management and congestion pricing to encourage green travel, guarantee females’ travel safety based on local culture, and cooperate with enterprises to adjust commuting hours. These comprehensive measures can reduce reliance on private cars, ease peak-hour traffic and build an equitable, efficient and sustainable urban transportation system.



Garba, Samaila, and **Pengyu Zhu**. “A bibliometric performance and network analysis of red-light camera impact on signalized intersection safety.” *Journal of Safety Research* 97 (2026): 86-111.

Focus of Study

This study adopts bibliometric performance and network analysis (BPNA) combined with systematic literature review (SLR) to sort out literature on red-light cameras (RLCs) and signalized intersection safety from 1975 to 2024. It systematically analyzes the knowledge structure, thematic evolution, influential authors, journals and institutions in this field, evaluates the flaws of various research methodologies as well as existing research challenges and limitations. The paper also explains why the effectiveness of RLCs in curbing red-light running and reducing traffic crashes remains controversial and explores the integration of emerging technologies such as vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2) communication. It aims to identify research hotspots and future directions, offering comprehensive theoretical references for traffic safety governance at signalized and follow-up academic research.

Policy Recommendation

Based on the research findings, traffic authorities shall rationally deploy red-light cameras and combine them with on-site law enforcement, driver education and community publicity to establish a diversified management system. Cameras should be arranged differentially according to regional conditions, traffic environments and crowd characteristics, while traffic signal timing and yellow light duration at intersections need to be optimized to address dilemma zone issues. It is also necessary to unify data collection standards and evaluation systems to scientifically assess the actual effectiveness of RLCs. Authorities should actively promote the integration of RLCs with vehicle-to-infrastructure and intelligent transportation technologies to guide standardized driving via real-time information. Meanwhile, attention should be paid to public acceptance, privacy protection and relevant laws, public opinions shall be collected continuously to optimize law enforcement procedures and penalty rules, so as to comprehensively improve traffic safety and efficiency at signalized intersections.



CONFERENCES AND EVENTS



HKUST PPOL Co-hosts the Inaugural Hong Kong Social Science RPG Poster Conference 2026

The inaugural Hong Kong Social Science RPG Poster Conference 2026, jointly organized by the Division of Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at City University of Hong Kong (CityUHK), was successfully held at HKUST on June 8, 2026. The conference aimed to bring together Research Postgraduate (RPG) students across Hong Kong working in the social sciences and related fields. It provided participants with an opportunity to spark new friendships, find future collaborators, and build a lasting professional social network.

The conference was conducted in a poster presentation format and featured research across the General Social Sciences, Public Policy, and Public Administration. Its thematic scope was organized into six core tracks: Public Administration & Public Policy; Political Science & Global Governance; Sociology & Demography; Economics & Public Finance; Business Administration & Organizational Behavior; and Interdisciplinary & Emerging Social Sciences, with interdisciplinary research especially encouraged.



During the conference, all 25 selected RPG students from HKUST, CityUHK, EdUHK, and HKBU presented their research and findings through carefully designed academic posters across two structured poster sessions. They also engaged in friendly and meaningful exchanges and in-depth discussions on their respective research topics, sharing academic perspectives while gaining valuable feedback and inspiration from fellow researchers and other attendees.

For the poster presentations, Dr. Nicolo LUDOVICE served as the judge, and a total of eight participants received awards in recognition of their outstanding work. Among the award recipients, three were from HKUST: Alan Kai Yu HO received the Best Poster Award, Zhizhao LI received the Runner-up Award, and Teklebirhan Alemnew GEBEYEHU received the Excellence Award. Finally, the awards were presented by Prof. Kira MATUS during the closing ceremony.





PPOL Prof. Alex Jingwei HE led a team to launch Specialized AI Model for Health Policy Analysis in China

An interdisciplinary team led by Prof Jingwei Alex He of the Division of Public Policy and Prof Sirui Han of the Division of Emerging Interdisciplinary Areas has developed HECO (Health Reform China Observatory), a specialized large language model designed for health policy analysis in China. The model was officially presented at a high-profile conference in Beijing on June 27, 2026, hosted jointly by the China Health Development Center and the School of Public Health at Peking University.







HECO was built to deliver extensive and professional health policy analysis for the Chinese context and beyond. The model has been validated by approximately 30 stakeholder users across the Chinese health system, including local health officials, hospital administrators, clinical leaders, physicians, health policy analysts, and industry practitioners. In blinded evaluation, HECO outperformed leading general-purpose large language models on all critical dimensions, including analytical accuracy, depth of reasoning, clarity of expression, citation of evidence, and experiential fit.

The Beijing conference was attended by senior officials from the National Health Commission, local health authorities, official think tanks, clinical leaders, and peer researchers. HECO had been soft-launched on campus in March 2026 at an event attended by senior scholars from the World Health Organization, the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and local industry practitioners.

The project reflects the team’s commitment to harnessing AI for evidence-informed policymaking and to strengthening health system governance through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Seminar Archive



Prof. Luca Mora
Professor of Urban Innovation
Business School of Edinburgh Napier University, UK

From Science to International Policy Development: Ten Years of Research to Reframe Technology Governance for Smart City Innovation

In this talk, Prof. Luca Mora reflected on the fragmented governance challenges of smart cities and proposed a transition path from traditional government management to multi-stakeholder collaborative governance. It explored how to translate academic research into international policy tools to promote inclusivity and accountability in smart city development.



Dr. Mengying WU
Postdoctoral Fellow,
Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability,
Harvard University

Policy Interactions and the Cost of Decarbonizing Aviation

In this seminar, Dr. Mengying WU focused on policy synergies in aviation decarbonization, analyzing how interactions between different emission reduction policies (e.g., carbon pricing, technical standards, market mechanisms) impact industry costs. It identified potential conflicts and synergies in policy mixes, providing empirical evidence for designing efficient and cost-effective decarbonization pathways in the aviation sector.



Mr. Patrick Ho
Head of Sustainable Development,
Swire Properties & Member of Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)

Beyond Carbon: Why Nature Risk Is Business Risk

In this study, Mr. Patrick Ho used the TNFD framework to explain how biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation translate into operational, reputational, and financial risks for businesses. Drawing on Swire Properties' urban greening initiatives, it demonstrated how Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can create both ecological and commercial value.



Prof. Siddharth Chatterjee
Chief Executive Officer,
Global Neighbours Founding Co-Director,
One Earth Institute Former UN Resident Coordinator in China Visiting Professor,
Tsinghua University

China, the Asia-Pacific, and the New Multilateralism: Leading Through Fragmentation

In this talk, Prof. Siddharth examined the Asia-Pacific's role in advancing new multilateralism, analyzing how China and regional partners can build consensus through innovative cooperation mechanisms amid division, offering an Asia-Pacific perspective on global governance reform.



Prof. Xiangwei WANG
Associate Professor of Practice Department of Journalism Hong Kong Baptist University

China-US Relations – Where Do We Go From Here?

In this seminar, Prof. Xiangwei WANG traced the evolution of China-US relations, examining key differences and potential areas of cooperation in current bilateral interactions. It explored the future trajectory of the relationship amid shifting geopolitical and economic landscapes, offering a multi-dimensional analysis of the complexities of China-US engagement.



Prof. Shenjing He
Lady Edith Kotewall Professor in the Built Environment
Head of the Department of Urban Planning and Design
The University of Hong Kong

Infrastructuring Mobilities in the Greater Bay Area: The Rise of Infrastructural Regionalism at the Conjuncture of Polycrisis

In this talk, Prof. Shenjing He introduced the concept of "infrastructural regionalism,"based the case of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, analyzing how cross-border infrastructures reshape regional governance amid polycrisis. It explored how flows of infrastructure in education, healthcare, and transportation drive regional economic integration and collaborative innovation.



Prof. Józef Hernik
Professor
Department of Land Management and Landscape Architecture
University of Agriculture in Krakow (Poland)

Policy Interactions and the Cost of Decarbonizing Aviation

In this talk, Prof. Józef Hernik explored the balance between cultural heritage protection and urban development, drawing on European and Asian cases to analyze how land management and landscape planning policies can advance regional development while ensuring the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage. It offered practical insights for governance models that reconcile development and heritage conservation.



Prof. Daniel M Kammen
Bloomberg Distinguished Professor
Department of Civil and Systems Engineering,
Johns Hopkins University

Innovation for the Just Energy Transition

In this study, Prof. Daniel M Kammen focused on equity in the energy transition, arguing that technological innovation alone is not a panacea and must be paired with policy design to protect vulnerable groups. It explored how innovative models like distributed energy and community participatory governance can advance an energy transition that delivers both deep decarbonization and social inclusion.



Prof. Vivian Kwang-wen Lin
Honorary Professor, HKU
Adjunct Professor, CUHK; LaTrobe University
Visiting Professor, HKUST

From Evidence to Policy: What Evidence Matters for Health Policy?

In this talk, Prof. Vivian Kwang-wen Lin reflected on the logic of evidence application in health policy-making, arguing that traditional randomized controlled trials are not the sole standard. It proposed a multi-dimensional evidence framework integrating real-world data, social impact assessments, and public participation, exploring how to enhance the scientific rigor, accessibility, and equity of health policies.



Prof. Karen GREPIN
Associate Professor
School of Public Health
The University of Hong Kong

Measuring and Monitoring Financial Protection for Health: From Theory to Practice

In this seminar, Prof. Karen GREPIN focused on the full process of measuring and monitoring health financial protection systems, sorting out the core logic from theoretical framework construction to practical application. It analyzed the methodological limitations and implementation challenges in current health financial protection assessments, and explored how to build a scientific and operable monitoring indicator system combined with global and local practice cases, providing practical references for improving the equity, accessibility and sustainability of health security systems.

STUDENT HUB



Student Achievement

2nd Runner-Up at the HKUST Talent Quest 2025

We celebrate ZENG Yuqiyu, a Master of Public Policy (MPP) student from HKUST's Division of Public Policy, who has won 2nd Runner-Up at the HKUST Talent Quest 2025, held in celebration of the University's 35th Anniversary. Her standout performance at the event showcases exceptional artistic talent and cultural expression, reflecting the MPP program's spirit of creativity and multicultural engagement.





Throughout the competition, Yuqiyu delivered a captivating performance that embodied passion, cultural heritage, and artistic excellence—qualities that define both outstanding performers and future public policy leaders. This achievement not only honors Yuqiyu but also the vibrant and diverse community of the Division of Public Policy.

PHD Thesis Presentation



Dr. Elizaveta Dorrer

Measuring Normalisation: Facial Recognition Technology in Moscow

Student Activities

Master of Public Policy Analysis Exercise 2025-2026: Advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through Policy Innovation and Collaboration



The Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE) is an eight-month capstone practicum of the two-year Master of Public Policy (MPP) programme offered by the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Centered on the theme of "Advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) through Policy Innovation and Collaboration", the 2025/26 PAE embodies the programme's core mission of nurturing future policy leaders who are capable of translating global sustainable development frameworks into concrete, actionable local solutions. In this academic year, MPP students presented their group project outcomes across two parallel sessions during the full-day conference, demonstrating rigorous policy analysis skills and collaborative problem-solving capabilities.

Dr. Marie N. BERNAL from the Division of Public Policy delivered the opening remarks. She introduced the background and positioning of the PAE programme and acknowledged the collective efforts of all academic supervisors, client consultants, partner organisations and participating students. Prof. Kira MATUS of the MPP programme encouraged students to derive practical and implementable insights from their PAE experience. She highlighted that the wide-ranging research topics explored by student teams, including urban climate resilience and urban biodiversity conservation, faithfully mirror the inherent complexity of real-world policy-making and public governance.

The 2025/26 PAE projects were fully supported by an experienced academic supervision team, consisting of Prof. Kira Matus, Prof. Raul P. Lejano, Prof. Masaru Yarime, Prof. Alex He, Prof. James Wong, Prof. Xiaofan Zhao, Dr. Fangxin Francine Yi, and Dr. Michael Tyrala. Under the joint mentorship of academic instructors and professional client advisors from industry and government sectors, MPP students conducted group-based specialised policy research. Their studies primarily explore how policy innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration can facilitate the local implementation and advancement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Hong Kong and neighbouring regions. Addressing pressing sustainable development challenges, the projects cover key areas including climate governance and urban resilience building, urban biodiversity preservation, food waste mitigation among small and medium-sized enterprises, and sustainable population development, systematically identifying both opportunities and practical constraints in the delivery of local sustainable development initiatives.

The annual PAE conference serves as a professional platform for practical achievement demonstration and academic exchange. It enables students to apply public policy theories and analytical frameworks acquired from coursework to real-world public governance scenarios, accumulate front-line industry experience, and build professional networks with industry practitioners and potential partners. During the conference, each student group presented their research findings. Closely aligned with the UN SDGs, their studies focus on cutting-edge policy challenges in urban governance, ecological conservation, livelihood improvement, and industrial green transition, featuring diverse analytical perspectives and strong practical relevance. Following each presentation, academic supervisors and client consultants provided professional comments and targeted feedback, offering detailed optimisation suggestions on research frameworks, policy design and implementation feasibility to help students refine and strengthen their project outcomes.



The 2025/26 PAE programme received robust support from senior client consultants across diverse industries in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. Serving as senior management personnel, department heads and core executives in their respective fields, these consultants provided students with valuable industry insights and localized governance experience. The MPP programme has long fostered in-depth industry-academia collaboration with industrial institutions and government bodies. By delivering practical training based on authentic policy issues, the programme empowers students to tackle real-world public governance challenges, contribute evidence-based policy research to regional sustainable development, and effectively advance the localized implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Student Activities

2025-2026 PAE Celebration Dinner

As the formal agenda of the PAE final conference came to a successful conclusion, the program specially held a celebratory dinner to mark the perfect completion of this year's practicum project. All participating students, academic supervisors, and faculty members of the division gathered together for this special gathering.

Throughout the dinner, the atmosphere remained relaxed, joyful, and heartwarming. After a full year of dedicated research, intensive preparation, and the high-pressure rhythm of project implementation, everyone finally had the chance to step away from their busy schedules. They greeted one another warmly, catching up freely and enjoying the rare moment of leisure together. The venue was filled with constant laughter and lighthearted conversation.



More than just a celebratory meal, this dinner served as a meaningful gathering that wrapped up the practicum on a positive and heartfelt note. It offered everyone a chance to unwind and connect on a deeper level, strengthening the bonds among students, supervisors, and faculty members. The event not only marked a perfect conclusion to the practicum project but also deepened the cherished relationships built throughout the year, leaving everyone with beautiful, unforgettable memories to carry forward.





PPOL End-of-Year Cocktail Gala 2026

On May 27, 2026, the PPOL program hosted a vibrant End-of-Year Cocktail Gala at the Intercontinental Grand Stanford Hotel in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, bringing together students, faculty, and staff to celebrate the conclusion of a remarkable academic year and honor their collective achievements.

Attendees arrived dressed in glamorous and smart attire, ready to enjoy an evening of connection and celebration. A highlight of the night was the instant photo booth, which guests used to capture dazzling keepsake photos against custom-designed backdrops throughout the event. The exciting lucky draws also added an extra layer of fun and anticipation, keeping the energy high from start to finish.





This gathering offered a joyful, relaxed space for the PPOL community to unwind after a year of hard work. It was a chance to step away from academic routines, share memories, and strengthen bonds with one another in a casual, festive setting.

Such events play a vital role in fostering a warm, inclusive community spirit within PPOL. We thank all attendees for joining this memorable night and making the gala a wonderful celebration of our shared journey. The PPOL program will continue to host engaging gatherings to nurture connection and belonging among students, faculty, and alumni.



NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



Technological Strength without Growth? Prof. Donald Low Explores China's Tech Advantage and Economic Slowdown

Prof. Donald How Tian LOW published a commentary on Channel NewsAsia (CNA) on June 3, 2026. He put forward a core developmental paradox: while China holds world-leading technological strengths in new energy vehicles, renewable energy and artificial intelligence, its macroeconomy and stock market remain under persistent pressure. He constructed a streamlined analytical framework connecting technological advancement, domestic consumption, the property sector slump and local government debt issues. He pointed out that technological advantages alone cannot drive comprehensive economic growth, as weak consumption and a depressed real estate sector keep squeezing corporate profits and dampening market confidence.

Professor Donald Low further elaborated on the imbalance between massive domestic investment in AI and lacklustre stock market performance. Global capital is flowing into overseas semiconductor sectors, leading to substantial market value losses for China's leading tech firms.

He warned that geopolitical restrictions on chips and the slow commercialisation of technological achievements would widen the gap between technical breakthroughs and tangible economic returns. In closing, he proposed coordinated balanced structural reforms covering consumption stimulation, property risk resolution and industrialisation of technological innovations, so as to translate technological strengths into steady, long-term economic growth momentum.

Commentary

Commentary: What China's underperforming tech stocks say about its real economy

China cannot keep boosting only one part of the economic growth equation, says public policy professor Donald Low.



People visit a terrace of a shopping mall overlooking the central business district (CBD), in Beijing, China August 11, 2025. (Reuters/Tingshu Wang)



Donald Low

03 Jun 2026 06:00AM
(Updated: 03 Jun 2026 07:32AM)

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Nuclear Risks and Monitoring Limits – Prof. Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin's view on debates over China's low-yield nuclear testing

On March 11, 2026, Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin, Assistant Professor at the Division of Public Policy of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), was interviewed by Science (science.org), a leading international academic journal. His analysis was featured in the special report Allegations Chinese Nuclear Blast May Reignite Weapons Testing. During the interview, Prof. Julien examined the debate over U.S. allegations that China may violate the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), unpacking the core reasoning behind ongoing global nuclear tensions from multiple perspectives.

Prof. Julien began the discussion by comparing the historical scale of nuclear testing conducted by China and the United States. Prior to signing the CTBT in 1996, China carried out fewer than 40 nuclear tests at Lop Nur, a figure vastly lower than the more than 1,000 tests undertaken by the U.S. He argued that China's limited track record of nuclear testing shapes its strategic calculus regarding potential low-yield nuclear tests in the future.

Prof. Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin structured his subsequent arguments around two distinct dimensions: technical requirements and on-site infrastructure evidence. First, addressing technical imperatives: mainstream projections forecast that China's nuclear warhead stockpile will expand from approximately 600 warheads to 1,000 by 2030. Low-yield nuclear testing, in his view, serves as a viable technical approach to refine warhead designs and sustain the long-term reliability of an enlarged nuclear arsenal. Second, citing infrastructure developments backed by satellite imagery referenced in the Science article: a new laser fusion complex in Sichuan built to match the capabilities of the U.S. National Ignition Facility, alongside ongoing excavation work at the Lop Nur nuclear test site. According to Prof. Julien, the concurrent development of these two projects signals China's pre-emptive infrastructure preparations for the possible resumption of nuclear testing.


Science

SCIENCEINSIDER | ASIA/PACIFIC

Allegations of a Chinese nuclear blast may reignite weapons testing

As new global arms race looms, accusation highlights limits to monitoring low-yield tests

24 FEB 2026 · 3:50 PM ET · BY RICHARD STONE

Ballistic missiles are brandished during a 2025 military parade in Beijing. China is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal. LIU ZHAOJIONGHUA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Program Admissions

Programs	Requir ement	Application deadline for 2026/27 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 2027 For applicants from Hong Kong: 30th June 2027
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 2027 For applicants from Hong Kong: 30th June 2027
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 2027 For applicants from Hong Kong: 31st May 2027

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

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