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

Contents

Head's Message

**Professor
Naubahar SHARIF**

Head, Division of Public Policy

Welcome to the 2025–26 academic year at the Division of Public Policy (PPOL), HKUST! Whether you are a returning member of our community or joining us for the first time, I extend my warmest greetings and enthusiasm for the opportunities that await us. As we stand on the cusp of a new chapter, I must share that by the time you read this newsletter, I will have stepped down as Head of PPOL after four remarkable years, making this message both a welcome and a farewell.

Leading PPOL has been an extraordinary privilege. Our talented faculty, dedicated staff, and brilliant students have transformed the Division into a vibrant hub for interdisciplinary policy research and education. Over the past four years, we have amplified our research impact, enhanced our academic programs, and deepened our engagement with local and global communities. Notably, in May 2025, PPOL proudly hosted the AUA Asia Pacific Public Policy Network Conference for the third time in five years, reinforcing our leadership in regional policy discourse. The creativity, resilience, and commitment of our PPOL community have been a constant source of inspiration.

I am delighted to highlight several faculty achievements this year:

- **Professor Alex He has been promoted to Full Professor and received the prestigious Humanities and Social Science Fellowship from the Research Grants Council.**

- **Professor Pengyu Zhu has also been promoted to Full Professor.**

- **Dr. Yatang Lin (50% Economics, 50% PPOL) has earned promotion to Associate Professor with substantiation.**

- **Research Assistant Professor Nicole Ludovice secured a General Research Fund (GRF) award.**

- **Professors Alex He and Kira Matus each received additional GRF awards, bringing our Division's total to three this year—the highest of any Division within AIS.**

Our students have also excelled. Notably, MPP students Li Yueqing, Li Haixin, and Chen Shumin participated in the Project Competition on Designing Safety, Health, and Well-being at Work in the Digital Age, organized by the Hong Kong Occupational Safety & Health Council. Their proposal was shortlisted for the global finals at the ILO Youth Congress during the Osaka World Expo, where they proudly represented Hong Kong and won the competition.

Summarizing my four years as Head of PPOL in a few sentences is a task beyond even the most skilled wordsmith. If my contributions do not speak for themselves, words alone cannot fill the void. Many factors influenced my decision to conclude this chapter, rooted in a deeply personal reflection. With grace and humility, I am ready to pass the leadership baton to those who will shape the next phase of PPOL's journey.

I am confident in PPOL's bright future, grounded in our intellectual rigor, collegial culture, and shared commitment to addressing real-world challenges through policy-relevant work. I am profoundly grateful for the collaborations and friendships forged during my tenure, which I will carry forward. I encourage each of you to approach this academic year with curiosity and dedication. Your contributions are vital to PPOL's mission. Thank you for allowing me to serve this remarkable community. I look forward to witnessing the Division's continued success.

Achievements and Grants

ACHIEVEMENTS

GRANTS

ACHIEVEMENTS

Prof. Naubahar SHARIF

Prof. Naubahar SHARIF Reappointed to Membership of the Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) Expert Group

The Division of Public Policy at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) is proud to announce that Professor Naubahar Sharif has been appointed to the membership of the Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) Expert Group. This appointment reflects his expertise and contributions in the field of public policy, particularly in innovation and technology, and underscores his ability to provide valuable insights on strategic and long-term policy issues.

Professor Sharif is a Professor of Public Policy at HKUST, with a Ph.D. from Cornell University (2005). His research interests span science, technology and innovation (STI) policy in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area, automation in China, and the Belt and Road initiative, aligning closely with the focus areas of the CEPU Expert Group. He is a dedicated educator, having received multiple teaching awards at HKUST, including the Interdisciplinary Programs Office's Teaching Excellence Award (2020) and the School of Humanities and Social Science Best Teacher Award (2009 and 2016). His research has made a notable impact, with his work being featured as a sole-authored "impact case study" for HKUST's 2020 Research Assessment Exercise, and he frequently contributes opinion pieces to local newspapers and appears in local media.

The CEPU Expert Group, established by the Government on 30 May 2023 with 56 members from diverse backgrounds including business, finance, professionals, think-tanks, and academia, aims to provide expert views and new ideas to the CEPU on various topics. It is organized into three streams: Economic Advancement, Social Development, and Research Strategy, with a one-year term ending on 29 May 2024. The CEPU, operational since 28 December 2022, focuses on in-depth studies of Mainland and global developments, forward-looking research on strategic issues, coordination of the Chief Executive's Policy Address, and support for policy formulation, among other key functions.

Professor Sharif's appointment to the CEPU Expert Group is a testament to his profound knowledge and experience in public policy, especially in innovation policy. The Division of Public Policy at HKUST celebrates this significant appointment and looks forward to his continued contributions to bridging academic research and public policy, both through his role in the Expert Group and his ongoing work in academia.

Congratulations, Professor Sharif, on this well-deserved appointment!

Prof. Kira MATUS, Prof. Alex Jingwei He and Dr. Nicolo LUDOVICE Awarded the General Research Fund (GRF)

Prof. Kira MATUS

Dr. Nicolo LUDOVICE

Prof. Alex Jingwei He

The Division of Public Policy (PPOL) is delighted to announce that three of its distinguished faculty members have been awarded the General Research Fund (GRF) by the University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong.

The UGC is a prestigious body that supports and promotes research excellence in higher education institutions across Hong Kong. Each year, the UGC receives a significant number of applications, making the competition intense and the selection process highly rigorous. Securing a GRF is a notable achievement that reflects the quality and impact of the research conducted by our faculty.

Congratulations to Prof. Kira Matus, Prof. Alex Jingwei He, and Dr. Nicolo Ludovice on this remarkable accomplishment! This recognition not only highlights their individual excellence but also underscores that PPOL has become the best-performing division within the Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS) this year.

Prof. Alex Jingwei He Awarded the Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship

Prof. Alex Jingwei He

We are thrilled to announce that Prof. He, Professor of the Division of Public Policy and Acting Director of the Institute for Public Policy, has been awarded the Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS) 2025-26 from Hong Kong's Research Grants Council (RGC), recognizing his academic excellence, contributions to policy research, as well as social and economic applications.

With this fellowship, Prof. He will receive HK$669,200 to support his research project "Understanding China's Huge and Complex Health Policy Reform: A Governance Approach". This project aims to contribute to scholarly knowledge on health policy through an integrative interdisciplinary approach. It examines China's complex health policy reforms initiated in 2009, which impact 1.4 billion people. Traditional analyses often focus on health economics, leading to a narrow understanding that overlooks the vital roles of governance and political economy. By highlighting these aspects, this project provides a more comprehensive understanding of health policy reforms in a country of continental scale.

The HSSPFS was first launched in 2012/13. It aims at granting extended time-off and supporting funds to outstanding investigators with a proven track record of research and publication under the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel to enable them to focus on research work and writing. Each year, the HSSPFS awards a maximum of 10 fellowships.

This recognition adds to Prof. He's growing accolades, including his recent appointment by the WHO's Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies to lead a regional consortium focused on digital health innovation, and the IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025, among others.

Congratulations, Prof. He, on this well-deserved recognition! Your contributions are invaluable to our division and the field of public policy.

Prof. Alex Jingwei He Receives the IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025

Prof. Alex Jingwei He

The Division of Public Policy (PPOL) is proud to share that Professor Alex Jingwei He has been awarded the Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025 by the International Public Policy Association (IPPA).

Professor He is the first Chinese scholar to receive this prestigious honour since the award's establishment in 2021. He has been recognised for his significant scholarly contributions to health policy, policy design and innovation, population ageing, and social policy, with a particular emphasis on advancing public policy in developing country contexts.

The award will be officially presented at the 7th International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP) to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in July 2025.

This recognition underscores PPOL's continued commitment to excellence in public policy research and its global impact.

Dr. Fangxin Yi
Awarded th 2025–26
Lincoln Institute China Program
International Fellowship
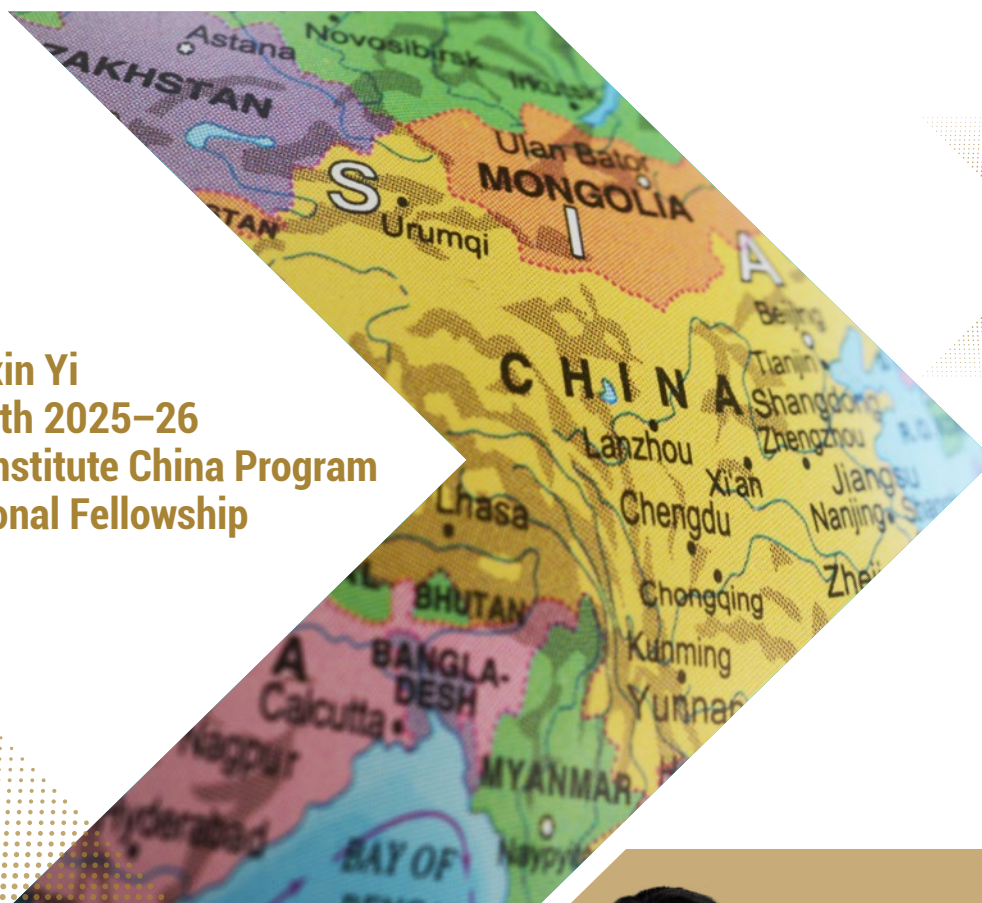
Dr. Fangxin Yi

The Division of Public Policy proudly announces that Dr. Fangxin Yi has received the 2025–26 Lincoln Institute China Program International Fellowship for her research titled "Fiscal Decentralization and the Strategic Embedding of Land-Centered Urbanization: Three Decades under the Tax-Sharing System."

Her project was recognized among the top initiatives addressing urban and fiscal policy challenges in the recently announced 2025–2026 International Research in China program.

This prestigious fellowship supports outstanding scholars researching urban development, land policy, and fiscal governance in China. It fosters academic excellence and provides resources and networks to enhance understanding of China's complex systems.

The fellowship promotes interdisciplinary research on sustainable urbanization and fiscal decentralization, bridging academic knowledge and practical policymaking for better urban governance in China and beyond.

Congratulations, Dr. Yi, on this remarkable accomplishment!

Dr. Fangxin Yi Leads Team to Win 2025 Best Publication Award from the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSPA)

Dr. Fangxin Yi

We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Fangxin Yi led an international research team in a three-year project that conducted a large-scale field experiment involving over 20 million residents in Chengdu, examining the impact of participatory budgeting on behavioral change. This work, which explored the effectiveness of participatory mechanisms at scale, was published in Nature Human Behaviour and received the 2025 Best Publication Award from the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSPA) globally.

The 2025 Best Publication Award from the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSPA) recognizes an outstanding scholarly contribution that advances the rigorous application of behavioral and social science to policy and practice. BSPA is a globally recognized interdisciplinary organization dedicated to promoting evidence-based policymaking by bridging the gap between research and real-world impact. This prestigious award highlights the association's commitment to fostering research that is not only methodologically sound but also highly relevant to pressing societal challenges.

Congratulations, Dr. Yi, on this well-deserved recognition! Your contributions are invaluable to our division and the field of public policy.

GRANT

LEADING FACULTY
Naubahar SHARIF

PROJECT TITLE

Bottom-Up Dragons: How China's Borderland SOEs are Reshaping the Go Global Strategy in Southeast Asia

Prof. Naubahar SHARIF

FUNDING AGENCY
the Li & Fung Supply Chain Institute

AMOUNT AWARDED
HK$150,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
This research examines how China's borderland state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are reshaping the "Go Global Strategy" through a bottom-up approach, focusing on three Yunnan province SOEs' infrastructure and energy investments in Southeast Asia. The study investigates how these local SOEs have leveraged geographical proximity, cultural ties, and local government connections to successfully compete with central SOEs in neighboring markets. The research challenges conventional understanding that central government SOEs dominate overseas investments, demonstrating how China's "Go Global Strategy" has evolved to incorporate diverse implementing agents, suggesting a more nuanced model of Chinese state capitalism where local actors play pivotal roles in expanding China's economic influence abroad.

On Going Projects

LEADING FACULTY	FUNDING AGENCY	PROJECT
Prof. Naubahar Sharif	Beat Drugs Fund Association, Narcotics Division, Security Bureau	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 (2024 – 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)
	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)
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)
	RGC - General Research Fund	Towards 1.5C Lifestyles: What motivates sustainable consumption choices in Hong Kong? (2022 – Now)
Prof. Raul Lejano	HKUST Faculty Start-up Funding	Determinants of Pro-Environmental Behavior (2024 – Now)

LEADING FACULTY	FUNDING AGENCY	PROJECT
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)
	Chief Executive's Policy Unit – Public Policy Research Funding Scheme	Enhancing the implementation of "One University, Two Campuses" and mutual recognition of academic qualifications: A mixed-methods study (2025-Now)
Prof. Alex Jingwei He	RGC – General Research Fund	Local Government Innovation under Political Recentralization in Contemporary China: A Two-stage Sequential Study (2024 – Now)
	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)
Prof. Masaru Yarime	Social Science Research Council (SSRC), United States	Data Governance for Innovation for Sustainable Smart Cities: A Comparative Analysis of Japan, the United States, and China (2024 – Now)
	UKinSPIRE Award, University of Kentucky, United States	How the Governance of Standards and Geopolitics Shape Competition in the Global Economy (2024 – Now)
	Global Engagement Funds, University College London	Delayed retirement and mass feedback in China (2025-Now)
	HKUST Li & Fung Supply Chain Institute	Public Perspectives on Personal Data Use for Personalized Covid-19 Advice (2022 - Now)
Prof. Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin	Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies, HKUST	Using Machine Learning with Gamma Spectrometry to Verify Subcritical Tests

Scholarly Showcase

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY
SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY
ECONOMIC POLICY

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

Jack Linzhou Xing, **Naubahar Sharif**. "A processual approach to skill changes in digital automation: The case of the platform economy in the service sector." *Research Policy* (54), 2025.

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.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The article introduces a "processual approach" to analyze skill changes due to digital automation, specifically in the context of the platform economy within the service sector. It examines how automation impacts the skills of workers in conventional taxi services compared to ride-hailing platforms. Through empirical case studies, the authors argue that rather than replacing skills, automation repositions and refocuses them, as workers adapt to algorithmic judgments and manage unpredictable events. The study highlights the importance of understanding the nuanced interplay between technology and human agency in skill development, particularly in service work.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should establish skill-related standards through collaborative analysis with platforms and workers, ensuring these standards are incorporated into algorithmic rules. Additionally, promote transparency in algorithmic operations and conduct regular audits to empower frontline workers and enhance their skill development opportunities.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The article examines the implications of generative AI models in qualitative research, focusing on their potential risks and the need for regulatory solutions. Through qualitative analysis, including interviews with researchers and a review of existing AI policies in various countries, the authors identify key risks affecting reviewers, researchers, and research respondents. These risks include data integrity issues, biases, lack of transparency, and privacy concerns. The study highlights the necessity for a regulatory framework that can manage these risks effectively while promoting the responsible use of generative AI tools in research. The findings suggest that current policies may not adequately address the unique challenges posed by generative AI, emphasizing the importance of tailored interventions.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To mitigate risks associated with generative AI in qualitative research, establish clear regulatory frameworks mandating transparency, bias audits, and accountability measures. Encourage collaboration between researchers and regulatory bodies to ensure ethical standards and effective oversight in the use of AI technologies.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

Lejano, Raul P., and Wing Shan Kan. Interpretive Approaches to Policy Analysis: Hermeneutics for Our Times. *Springer Nature*, 2025.

Capano, Giliberto, **Alex Jingwei He**, and Sean McMinn. "Riding the tide of generative artificial intelligence in higher education policy: an Asian perspective." *Journal of Asian Public Policy* (2025): 1-15.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This book introduces advanced students and researchers to interpretive methods for analyzing public policies. It highlights several real-world policy situations where a lack of interpretive focus limits analysis and hinders effective policy responses. The authors advocate for an integrative perspective that allows dialogue between interpretive and positivist approaches. This integrative approach enhances the understanding of data while uncovering hidden ideological and normative foundations. By emphasizing the importance of context and meaning, the study aims to enrich policy analysis and improve decision-making processes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The authors recommend adopting an interpretive framework in policy analysis to foster deeper policy insights and foster engagement with policy actors. This approach can reveal diverse perspectives and underlying ideologies, leading to more effective and contextually relevant policy solutions.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study examines the integration of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in higher education policy within an Asian context, particularly focusing on the challenges and opportunities it presents. It reviews ten articles that analyze the effects of GenAI on teaching, learning, and research, emphasizing the diverse educational landscape in Asia. The authors highlight the dual nature of GenAI, showcasing its potential to enhance personalized learning and streamline administrative processes while also raising concerns about ethical issues, equity, and the risk of diminishing critical thinking skills. By synthesizing findings from various perspectives, the paper proposes actionable strategies for policymakers to effectively navigate the integration of GenAI in higher education, ensuring that its benefits are maximized while mitigating associated risks.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should develop comprehensive guidelines for the responsible integration of GenAI in higher education, emphasizing equity, ethical practices, and capacity building. Collaborative frameworks should be established to ensure inclusive access to GenAI resources and promote continuous adaptation to evolving educational needs.

Jingwei He, Alex, Zhuoni Zhang, Pritish Anand & Sean McMinn. "Embracing generative artificial intelligence tools in higher education: A survey study at the Hong Kong university of science and technology." *Journal of Asian Public Policy* (2025): 1-25.

Soares, Ian Varela, **Masaru Yarime**, and Magdalena M. Klemun. "Estimating GHG emissions from cloud computing: sources of inaccuracy, opportunities and challenges in location-based and use-based approaches." *Climate Policy* (2025): 1-19.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study investigates students' behavioral and perceptual experiences with ChatGPT at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). By surveying 680 students, it evaluates the frequency of ChatGPT usage, intentions for future use, and perceptions regarding its impact on learning outcomes and career development. The research also examines variations based on demographic factors such as gender, age, discipline, and campus location. The findings reveal significant usage patterns and positive perceptions among students, highlighting the role of AI literacy in enhancing engagement with generative AI tools.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Universities should integrate AI literacy into their curricula, ensuring all students benefit from AI tools like ChatGPT. Targeted training programs should address demographic disparities to promote equitable access and effective use of these technologies.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The paper investigates the challenges and inaccuracies in estimating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from cloud computing, focusing on the discrepancies between location-based and use-based accounting methods. It highlights four main sources of estimation risks, particularly the geographical separation between cloud operations and usage. The study emphasizes the need for accurate emissions accounting frameworks to ensure responsible climate action. By proposing a use-based emissions attribution model and identifying policy interventions such as stricter reporting rules, eco-labeling, and carbon border adjustments, the authors aim to enhance the accuracy of GHG emissions reporting for cloud services.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To improve GHG emissions accounting in cloud computing, implement stricter reporting standards, promote eco-labeling for transparency, and establish carbon border adjustments to address discrepancies between carbon exporters and importers. These measures will enhance the accuracy and accountability of emissions reporting.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

Yoshino, Miyana, Benjamin Sadlek, **Masaru Yarime**, Adnan Ali. "Knowledge absorption pathways for eco-innovation: an empirical analysis of small and medium-sized enterprises in the European Union." *European Journal of Innovation Management* 28.2 (2025): 426-453.

Lejano, R.P., and Kan, W.S. "Conjectures on a relational turn in policy studies." *Policy Sciences* 58, 385–401 (2025).

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study examines the factors influencing the adoption of proactive eco-innovations (EIs) among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in resource-intensive sectors across the European Union (EU). By utilizing a national innovation system (NIS) perspective, the research analyzes determinants at three levels: micro (environmental awareness), meso (external collaboration and intra-industry agglomeration), and macro (economic complexity, trade openness, and government R&D). Data from a survey of 6,188 SMEs revealed that while public awareness and economic complexity positively influenced proactive EI adoption, external collaboration and sectoral agglomeration had a negative impact. The findings highlight the importance of understanding external knowledge absorption processes in promoting eco-innovation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should enhance public awareness and support for R&D while reconsidering the role of external collaborations in eco-innovation strategies. Tailored policies that foster a conducive environment for proactive EIs can help SMEs effectively transition towards sustainable practices.

FOCUS OF STUDY

In this conceptual piece, the authors lay the groundwork for a relational "turn" in policy studies, which involves analyzing how policy emerges from the "working and reworking of relationships among policy actors". As discussed, the roots of the relational approach are found in earlier work on implementation, street-level bureaucrats, practice, and network governance. This semi-review discusses some strong theoretical assumptions found in relational sociology and other fields. It then ends with some baseline propositions that most (or all) policy scholars can begin with as they consider how relational approaches can further their own research.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The authors recommend more widespread use of a relational perspective on policy phenomena, as it can help explain what otherwise appear as anomalies in policy design and implementation. Practitioners and researchers alike can benefit from understanding the role of relationality in the life of policy.

Zhu, Jing, Debra F. Laefer, **Raul P. Lejano**, Peter Gmelch, Evan O'Keeffe, Kshitij Chandna. "From 2D to 3D: Flood risk communication in a flood-prone neighborhood via dynamic, isometric street views." *Progress in Disaster Science* (2025): 100419.

Laefer, Debra F., Evan O'Keeffe, Kshitij Chandna, Kim Hertz, Jing Zhu, **Raul Lejano**, Anh Vu Vo, Michela Bertolotto, Ulrich Ofterdinger. "Low-Cost, LiDAR-Based, Dynamic, Flood Risk Communication Viewer." *Remote Sensing* 17.4 (2025): 592.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study examines the integration of national climate policy in Ethiopia, particularly focusing on the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) policy introduced in 2011. It analyzes the progress and barriers to Climate Policy Integration (CPI), emphasizing the need for coordinated actions across various sectors. The research highlights the challenges posed by siloed institutional cultures and fluctuating governance structures, which hinder effective policy implementation. Through qualitative methods, including document analysis and interviews with key informants, the study reveals that while there has been some advancement in integrating climate goals into development policies, significant obstacles remain. These include inconsistent policy framing, competing economic priorities, and inadequate climate finance. The findings stress the importance of a stable governance framework and enhanced cooperation among policy actors to foster a holistic approach to climate policy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Ethiopia should restore the environmental ministry's status to facilitate better climate policy coordination and ensure consistent funding and scientific expertise. Additionally, an organized information-sharing framework is essential to enhance collaboration and reduce inconsistencies across climate policies.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The study focuses on developing a low-cost, LiDAR-based flood risk communication viewer that enhances public understanding of flood risks through dynamic, three-dimensional visualizations. It addresses the limitations of traditional 2D flood maps, which often fail to effectively convey the severity and dynamics of flooding. By utilizing high-resolution point clouds and advanced algorithms, the proposed method enables hyper-local, geometrically accurate representations of flood scenarios, including variations in water color, texture, and motion. The research highlights the need for improved risk communication strategies, particularly in urban areas prone to flooding, and demonstrates the effectiveness of 3D visualizations in engaging community members and facilitating better evacuation and preparedness decisions.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The authors recommend adopting 3D visualization tools for flood risk communication to replace traditional 2D maps. This approach should be integrated into public awareness campaigns to enhance understanding and compliance with evacuation orders, especially in vulnerable communities.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

Yang, Liang, **Yan Xu**, and Pan Hui.
"Framing metaverse identity:
A multidimensional framework for governing digital selves." *Telecommunications Policy* 49.3 (2025): 102906.

Huang, Linus Ta-Lun, Gleb Papyshev, and **James K. Wong**. "Democratizing value alignment: From authoritarian to democratic AI ethics." *AI and Ethics 5.1* (2025): 11-18.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The metaverse, as an emerging digital ecosystem, is redefining the boundaries between physical and virtual realities, offering both challenges and opportunities for societal and personal growth. This study contributes to metaverse governance discourse by proposing a multidimensional framework for understanding and regulating Metaverse Identity, defined as a user's digital self encompassing personal attributes, data footprints, social roles, and economic elements. The framework introduces two guiding principles: Equivalence and Alignment, emphasizing coherence between digital and real-world identities to enhance accountability and legal clarity, and Fusion and Expansiveness, advocating for creative, inclusive identity expression beyond traditional constraints. These principles address key governance challenges, including identity interoperability, privacy management complexities, risks from deepfakes, and identity fragmentation.

By bridging theoretical gaps, this study offers a foundation for future research and strategies to guide the ethical and inclusive evolution of the metaverse.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should develop adaptive governance frameworks that balance regulatory oversight with flexibility in identity expression. These frameworks must address challenges such as privacy, interoperability, and ethical risks while safeguarding mental health, fostering inclusivity, and encouraging innovation to ensure a fair and forward-thinking metaverse ecosystem.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This paper addresses the critical issue of value alignment in AI systems, highlighting two main challenges: ensuring that AI understands human values and determining which values should be prioritized. It critiques existing approaches like reinforcement learning with human feedback (RLHF) and Constitutional AI for their lack of transparency and inclusivity, which can result in biased outcomes reflecting only dominant perspectives. The study proposes a Dynamic Value Alignment approach that enhances users' moral and epistemic agency, allowing them to exert greater control over the values that guide AI behavior. By modeling moral reasoning as a dynamic process, this framework aims to democratize AI ethics, ensuring that a diverse array of human values are represented in AI systems.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should promote the adoption of the Dynamic Value Alignment approach in AI development, ensuring that value selection processes are transparent, inclusive, and participatory. This will help mitigate biases and enhance accountability in AI systems, reflecting a broader spectrum of human values.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Döme, Viktória, Weronika Cycak, and **Kira JM Matus**. "Variations in innovation strategies for sustainable development: Sustainable innovation policy instrument mixes of ten small OECD countries across five sectors." *Research Policy* 54.6 (2025): 105234.

Bimir, Mathias Nigatu, and **Kira JM Matus**. "From silos to joined-up government? Examining national climate policy integration in Ethiopia." *Climate Policy* (2025): 1-13.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The article analyzes variations in sustainable innovation strategies among ten small OECD countries across five sectors: agriculture, water, health, energy, and manufacturing. By synthesizing a dataset of 1,722 policy interventions from 2008 to 2020, the authors assess how different governments use policy mixes to support innovation aimed at sustainable development. The study highlights distinct strategies, such as Nordic countries' emphasis on coordinated market economies and targeted R&D funding, contrasting with Israel and New Zealand's focus on direct firm support. The findings reveal gaps in innovation policy, particularly in production support and technology adoption across sectors, indicating a need for more comprehensive strategies to achieve sustainability objectives.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Governments should align innovation strategies with concrete implementation plans, emphasizing support for production facilities and technology adoption across all sectors. Additionally, fostering public-private partnerships and enhancing collaboration can ensure effective scaling of sustainable innovations, ultimately contributing to long-term economic and environmental goals.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This article examines Climate Policy Integration (CPI) in Ethiopia, focusing on the progress and barriers since the adoption of the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) policy in 2011. Through qualitative case analysis, including interviews and document reviews, the study explores how climate goals are integrated into various policy sectors and the challenges posed by silo institutional cultures. It identifies the importance of cross-sectoral governance structures and the influence of political leadership in framing climate policy. While there has been progress in policy integration, issues such as unstable governance, inadequate climate finance, and competing economic priorities hinder effective implementation. The study emphasizes the need for coordinated information sharing and stable institutional frameworks to enhance CPI.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Ethiopia should restore the environmental ministry to ministerial status to strengthen climate policy coordination. Additionally, establishing a robust information-sharing framework among policy actors can enhance collaboration, reduce inconsistencies, and promote effective implementation of climate goals across sectors.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Kobashi, Takuro, Eric Zusman, Makoto Taniguchi, **Masaru Yarime**. "Facilitating a carbon neutral transition in Kyoto: Initiatives on rooftop photovoltaics integrated with electric vehicles." *Technology in Society* 80 (2025): 102774.

Evans, James P., Davide Cassanmagnago, Tathagata Chatterji, Andrew Irvin, Banjamin Jance IV, Cathy Oke, Massamba Thioye, Gregory Patrick Trencher, Elvira Uyarra, **Masaru Yarime**. "Grand challenges in sustainable cities: urban innovation for global climate and sustainability goals—from policy agenda to research needs." *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities* 7 (2025): 1568701.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The paper explores the potential for integrating rooftop photovoltaics (PVs) with electric vehicles (EVs) in Kyoto, Japan, to facilitate a carbon-neutral transition. It synthesizes technical, economic, and qualitative analyses to assess the "SolarEV City Concept," which aims to use EVs as batteries to enhance energy storage and support urban decarbonization. The study highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration and governance in overcoming barriers to implementing this niche technology. It identifies challenges such as land constraints, population decline, and the need for supportive policy frameworks while emphasizing the role of local initiatives, like the Kyoto Miraimon Project, in driving these transitions.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To facilitate the "PV + EV" integration, policymakers should promote collaborative governance frameworks that engage multiple stakeholders, streamline regulatory processes, and incentivize investments in renewable energy technologies, ensuring equitable access and community involvement in the transition to carbon neutrality.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The paper examines the role of urban innovation in achieving global climate and sustainability goals. It highlights the need for cities to lead in innovation to address local challenges while contributing to broader sustainability objectives. The authors define urban innovation as a collaborative process involving diverse stakeholders in cities. They emphasize the importance of a systems approach to governance, scaling successful initiatives, and building capacity for innovation. The paper also addresses the disparities in urban innovation practices between the Global North and South, advocating for inclusive and equitable strategies that consider local contexts and knowledge systems. It outlines a research agenda focused on understanding urban innovation processes and their effectiveness in driving transformative change.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To enhance urban innovation, policies should promote inclusive governance, support scaling of successful initiatives, and foster capacity building through collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring that local needs and knowledge systems are prioritized.

Gietel Basten Stuart, and Rachel Snow. "Capitalizing on Population Dynamics 30 Years on from the International Conference on Population and Development." *Studies in Family Planning* (2025).

Wen, Xianglan, Huimin Li, **Xiaofan Zhao** & Xiu Yang. "Mapping socioeconomic spatiotemporal transition and its contribution to carbon emissions in China." *Climate and Development* (2025): 1-14.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This article examines the demographic challenges and opportunities arising from the changing population dynamics in the context of the 30th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). It highlights significant issues such as rapid growth in sub-Saharan Africa, aging populations in other regions, and the need for policies prioritizing human rights and sustainable development. The authors argue that addressing root causes, such as gender inequality, education access, and reproductive rights, is crucial for managing demographic transitions. They emphasize that effective policies should be inclusive and tailored to the unique contexts of each region, fostering resilience and well-being. The study re-evaluates the principles of the ICPD, advocating for a shift from numerical population targets to a focus on individual empowerment and sustainable development.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Governments should implement inclusive, rights-based policies that promote gender equality, improve access to education and healthcare, and support reproductive rights. Tailoring demographic policies to local contexts is essential for fostering resilience and achieving sustainable development goals.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study analyzes the transformation of China's carbon emission patterns from 1995 to 2020, focusing on the spatial restructuring of population distribution, economic activity, and energy systems. Using an extended KAYA model, the research quantifies the synergistic effects of these shifts on carbon emissions. Key findings indicate that population migration to the south increased emissions by 336.02 Mt, while the southwest shift of economic activities led to a slight rise of 11.46 Mt. Conversely, the westward relocation of energy production resulted in a reduction of 32.23 Mt. The study emphasizes that successful carbon reduction strategies in China must consider the interconnections between demographic shifts, industrial relocation, and energy system changes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To enhance China's dual-carbon strategy, policymakers should implement regionally differentiated climate governance that harmonizes population mobility, industrial shifts, and energy layouts within a cohesive framework, ensuring effective carbon management and emissions reduction.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Chow Jeffrey, Tianle Liu, Coco Dijia Du, Rui Hu, Xun Wu. "From research to policy recommendations: A scientometric case study of air quality management in the Greater Bay Area, China." *Environmental Science & Policy* 165 (2025): 104025.

Cologna, Viktoria; Meiler, Simona; Kropf, Chahan M.; ... & **Tyrala, Michael** (as member of the TISP Consortium). (2025). "Extreme weather event attribution predicts climate policy support across the world". *Nature Climate Change* 15: 725-735.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study investigates the dynamics of air quality research in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) of China, focusing on how institutional factors influence scientific contributions to environmental policy. Utilizing a scientometric meta-analysis of 687 scientific publications, the research examines the role of various funding sources and author affiliations in shaping policy recommendations. Key findings indicate that English-language articles from Hong Kong are more innovative in their policy proposals than Chinese articles, which tend to entail greater mainland government involvement and caution in recommendations. The study highlights the importance of understanding the interplay between scientific research and policy, particularly in a region characterized by distinct governance structures under the "One Country, Two Systems" framework.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To enhance the scientific robustness of air quality management, policymakers should foster greater collaboration between scientists and government agencies while ensuring that independent experts are included in the research process. Encouraging transparency and grassroots initiative in scientific inquiry and policy advocacy will lead to more innovative environmental policies.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This article examines how subjective attribution of extreme weather events to climate change influences public support for climate policies worldwide. Using data from over 71,000 individuals across 68 countries, the authors combine large-scale climate risk modeling with global survey results. The study finds that while objective exposure to extreme weather rarely predicts policy support, subjective attribution—people believing that climate change intensified recent events—is a robust and consistent predictor of support for five key climate mitigation policies (e.g., carbon taxes, sustainable energy, forest protection). These effects vary across event types and regions, underscoring the psychological and perceptual dimensions of environmental policy engagement.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers and climate communicators should prioritize increasing public understanding of the link between climate change and extreme weather events. Communication strategies should aim to enhance subjective attribution, especially in areas where awareness is low. This may involve Integrating climate attribution science into public messaging and educational campaigns, promoting transparent and localized communication about weather–climate links, and collaborating with media outlets to frame extreme weather as "teachable moments" that reinforce the reality and urgency of climate change.

Such efforts can strengthen public support for ambitious climate policies, especially in the Global South where exposure is high, but attribution remains underexplored.

Delina, L., Fuerzas, I., Dulay, M. J., **Ludovice, N.P.**, Tam, K. K., & Salamanca, A. "Affective relationships as nonmaterial capital assets in resilience building in the rice-terraced cultural landscapes of the Philippine Cordillera." *Applied Geography* 175: 103631.

Ludovice, Nicolo Paolo P. "Dairying Dependence: Industrialization and Ecological Change During the Postwar Philippines." Halo-Halo Ecologies: The Emergent Environments Behind Filipino Food. *University of Hawai'i Press*. 73-88.

FOCUS OF STUDY

Natural hazards and socioeconomic risks, including pandemics, necessitate robust resilience-building efforts. While physical infrastructure and financial resources are critical, the importance of intangible assets, particularly affective capacity, is often overlooked. This paper highlights affective capacity as an essential intangible asset for fostering resilience among Indigenous rice farmers in Mayoyao and Hungduan, UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the northern Philippines. The research identifies various hazards impacting the geological and socioeconomic conditions of these farmers, generating cascading risks that require proactive resilience measures. Natural hazards like changing weather patterns and demographic challenges, such as an ageing population and youth outmigration, significantly affect these communities. The study emphasises the role of affective relationships in underpinning both inherent and acquired resilience. Indigenous rice farmers leverage their affective capacities through a well-established network of social capital derived from extended family ties and local community connections. This capacity is strengthened by semi-formal organisations, such as farmer groups and credit unions, which provide essential knowledge and access to financial resources. Additionally, farmers engage their affective capacities through rituals and ceremonies, reflecting the importance of emotional bonds with the spiritual world in resilience-building. State institutions must actively support these relationships to enhance adaptive capacities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policy must recognize that resilience and innovation are not merely technical achievements but are deeply rooted in the shared experiences and affective ties of communities. By valuing local knowledge, nurturing communal bonds, and integrating diverse perspectives, governance can foster forms of preparedness and sustainability that are both adaptive and inclusive. In this way, policy becomes not just a tool of administration, but a means of imagining and sustaining new solidarities across time and place.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This book chapter examines the rise of canned evaporated milk and its subsequent impact to the ecologies during the postwar Philippines. Initially used as an infant food during the American colonial administration, the evaporated milk was also popular amongst children and adults. Against the backdrop of a newly-independent country in 1946, the development of a stronger local dairy industry was seen as an exercise of economic independence. By using a multiscalar analysis, this paper argues how the expansion of the evaporated milk production intensified ecological change on the national, domestic, environmental, and nutritional levels. It traces the development of the local dairy industry with the establishment of the first milk processing plants. The promotion of the evaporated filled milk, which included the use of coconut oil as substitute to butterfat cream, permitted more households to afford milk. Ecological consequences of dairy intensification include the introduction of animal breeds and plant species, new animal and plant diseases, expansion of plantations to inland forests, use of synthetic chemicals as pesticides, and the nutritional imbalance in infants. In doing so, the paper also considers issues surrounding the global dairy food regime and their impact on environmental, animal, and human health.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To build a more resilient and sustainable food system, policymakers should encourage local innovation in dairy and food production while remaining attentive to the ecological costs of industrial practices. Investing in technologies and policies that support local producers, protect environmental resources, and reduce reliance on imports can help cities balance food security with ecological responsibility. Societies can make more informed choices about what they consume and how it is produced by recognising the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and public health concerns.

SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

Naubahar Sharif, Wenjin Chen, Mengyuan Niu, Zhiming Cheng. "As I know, there is nothing there for our people": unmasking mental health literacy and help-seeking attitudes among ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. *Journal of Asian Public Policy*, 1–16 (2025).

Cruz, Christian Joy Pattawi, Kira Matus, and Stuart Gietel-Basten. "The extent of use of surveys in policymaking: the case of Hong Kong." *Evidence & Policy* 20.3 (2024): 261-282.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The article investigates mental health literacy (MHL) and help-seeking attitudes among South Asian ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, particularly elderly individuals. It highlights their limited understanding of mental health issues, shaped by cultural beliefs and systemic barriers. Through qualitative interviews with 28 South Asian elders and caregivers, the study reveals misconceptions, stigma, and familial reliance in recognizing and addressing mental health problems. It emphasizes the complex interplay between ethnic factors and health system interactions, illustrating significant challenges ethnic minorities face in accessing mental health services.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Enhance mental health education programs tailored for ethnic minorities, utilizing digital platforms and community partnerships to reduce stigma and improve service accessibility. Focus on culturally sensitive resources and training for healthcare providers to better support diverse populations.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study investigates the extent to which surveys are utilized as evidence in policymaking in Hong Kong. By analyzing Legislative Council documents related to 569 bills enacted from 2000 to 2022, the research finds that approximately 25% of these bills employed surveys as evidence, with significant variation across 18 policy areas. Health services emerged as the sector with the highest use of surveys. The study reveals that surveys are primarily employed to enhance understanding of policy issues, yet critical aspects such as data collection methods, sample sizes, and response rates are often overlooked in legislative discussions. These findings underscore the limited integration of survey evidence into policymaking processes in Hong Kong, reflecting challenges inherent in its unicameral legislative system and colonial legacy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To enhance the use of surveys in policymaking, legislative bodies should establish guidelines that emphasize the importance of methodological transparency, including data collection methods and representativeness, to strengthen the role of survey evidence in policy formulation.

Gauthier, Anne H., and **Stuart Gietel Basten**. "Family policies in low fertility countries: Evidence and reflections." ***Population and Development Review*** 51.1 (2025): 125-161.

Marois, Guillaume, **Stuart Gietel-Basten**, and Wolfgang Lutz. "The Demographic Race between India and China." ***Population Research and Policy Review*** 44.4 (2025): 44.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This article investigates the impact of family policies on fertility rates in low-fertility countries, emphasizing the diverse approaches taken by different nations. It reviews existing literature, tracing historical developments and examining various methodologies. The authors categorize family policies into cash benefits, work-related leave schemes, and childcare provisions, analyzing their effectiveness in influencing fertility. While cash benefits show mixed results, work-related leave schemes and childcare support generally have a positive effect. However, the authors note that the success of these policies is often limited and context-dependent, highlighting the need for a broader understanding of family policies beyond merely increasing fertility rates. The article calls for a holistic approach that considers gender equality, work-life balance, and overall family well-being as integral components of effective family policy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Governments should adopt comprehensive family policies that prioritize gender equality, work-life balance, and access to quality childcare, rather than solely focusing on increasing fertility rates. Tailoring these policies to local contexts will enhance their effectiveness in supporting families.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This article explores the demographic competition between India and China, particularly in light of India's recent status as the world's most populous country. It examines how demographic factors, such as age, education, and labor force participation, influence economic potential. The authors argue that while India's younger population may offer a demographic dividend, it faces significant challenges in educational attainment and female labor force participation. In contrast, China, despite its declining population, benefits from higher educational levels and labor force participation rates. The study emphasizes that human capital development, rather than mere population size, will be crucial in determining the future economic standings of both countries over the next several decades.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

India should prioritize substantial investments in education and initiatives to enhance female labor force participation. By addressing these areas, India can harness its demographic potential and ensure sustainable economic growth in the coming decades.

SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

Xiaodong Chen, Ding Li & **Pengyu Zhu**. Long-term impacts of historical education policy on wages in China: insights on over-education. *Humanities Social Scicence Communication* 12, 959 (2025).

Zhizhao Li, **Pengyu Zhu**, Yuqing Guo, **Jeffrey Chow**. "Pandemic-era behavioral changes and post-pandemic persistence in the high-density urban context of Hong Kong." *Cities* 162 (2025): 105940.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study examines the long-term impacts of China's historical Imperial Examination System (IES) on contemporary wage structures. By analyzing historical Jinshi density data and its correlation with modern wages, the research reveals that regions with a higher prevalence of educational success through the IES show significant wage increases for current workers. The findings highlight how cultural norms and education investments influence economic outcomes, suggesting a persistent legacy of the IES on human capital and labor market dynamics.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To harness the historical benefits of the Imperial Examination System, policymakers should focus on enhancing educational access and quality in historically underserved regions. Investments in educational infrastructure, teacher training, and vocational programs can promote skill development. Additionally, implementing targeted welfare programs can mitigate the impact of past educational disparities, ensuring equitable opportunities and fostering economic growth across all prefectures.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study examines the behavioral changes of Hong Kong residents during the COVID-19 pandemic and the persistence of these changes in the post-pandemic era. It analyzes shifts in telecommuting, transportation, dining habits, shopping practices, and internet usage through a representative survey conducted in 2022, with a follow-up in 2023. The findings reveal that while some behaviors, like online meetings and digital payments, have persisted, telecommuting has declined significantly post-pandemic. The research highlights the unique context of Hong Kong as a high-density urban environment, emphasizing how local factors influence behavioral adaptations amidst global health crises.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should focus on enhancing public transportation and creating flexible workspace designs to accommodate evolving work patterns. Continued investment in digital infrastructure is essential to support sustained online engagement and resilience in future urban challenges.

Zhu, Pengyu, Jianqi Li, and Zining Wang. "Identifying functional agglomerations and urban centers using open-source data and machine learning: Framework, applications and planning implications." *Journal of Urban Management* (2025).

Li, Qingyin, Rong Wu, and **Pengyu Zhu**. "Quality or quantity of urban greenery: Which matters more to mental health? Evidence from housing prices in the Pearl River Delta." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 263 (2025): 105438.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study investigates the relationship between urban agglomerations and centers in Guangzhou using open-source Point of Interest (POI) data and machine learning techniques, particularly k-means clustering. It aims to identify distinct urban functional features and their interactions, moving beyond traditional density-focused methods. By analyzing a comprehensive dataset, the research reveals 63 agglomerations and 11 urban centers, emphasizing the multifunctional nature of urban spaces. The findings provide insights into urban planning, land use, and transportation strategies, highlighting the importance of integrating various urban functions to enhance efficiency and sustainability.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Urban planning policies should prioritize the development of multifunctional spaces that accommodate diverse urban activities. Enhancing public transit accessibility and promoting inter-agency coordination can significantly improve urban efficiency and sustainability, addressing the needs of various communities within the metropolitan area.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study investigates the effects of urban greenery (UG) quality and quantity on mental health, particularly in the context of housing prices and homeownership. By analyzing data from 1,309 participants in the Pearl River Delta, it reveals that the quality of green spaces significantly enhances mental health through neighborhood ties and place attachment, while quantity affects mental health primarily through place attachment. The findings indicate that renters benefit more from high-quality UG than homeowners, especially in wealthier neighborhoods, highlighting the intricate relationship between urban greenery, mental health, and socioeconomic factors.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Urban planners should prioritize enhancing the quality of green spaces, particularly in tenure-mixed neighborhoods, to promote mental health equity and mitigate health disparities linked to housing prices.

SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

Chen, Xiaodong, **Yatang Lin**, and **Pengyu Zhu**. "The impact of rainfall on productivity: Implications for Chinese manufacturing." *Journal of Comparative Economics* (2025).

Shi, Todd Yuda, and **Alex Jingwei He**. "Subnational policy entrepreneurs in action: a systematic quantitative review." *Journal of Public Policy* (2025): 1-27.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study investigates the impact of rainfall on productivity within the Chinese manufacturing sector, utilizing a comprehensive dataset that combines climate data with micro-level data from over half a million firms. It identifies significant negative effects of extreme rainfall on productivity, particularly for labor-intensive and low-tech firms, as well as those in wetter regions. The research highlights three primary channels for productivity loss: reduced labor availability, disruptions in agricultural inputs, and transportation challenges. Additionally, the study explores potential adaptation strategies, such as investment in infrastructure and insurance, and projects future output losses due to increased rainfall extremes under various socioeconomic scenarios.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Policymakers should prioritize investments in infrastructure, like anti-flood dams and improved drainage systems, to mitigate the adverse effects of extreme rainfall on manufacturing productivity. Additionally, promoting adaptive strategies, such as insurance and flexible operational practices, can enhance resilience against climate variability.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This paper systematically reviews the literature on subnational policy entrepreneurship, focusing on the role of local government officials in driving policy changes. Analyzing 64 articles, the study identifies key characteristics, motivations, and strategies of local policy entrepreneurs. It highlights the diversity in policy sectors, forms of entrepreneurship, and outcomes across different administrative levels. The findings reveal that local policy entrepreneurs often work collectively and are motivated by a commitment to local issues, the desire to fulfill administrative tasks, and empathy for community needs. The study emphasizes the unique challenges faced by these entrepreneurs, such as limited resources and authority, which shape their strategies and impact on policy innovation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To enhance local policy innovation, support mechanisms should be established that empower subnational policy entrepreneurs. This includes providing resources for teamwork, facilitating inter-agency collaboration, and integrating local insights into broader policy frameworks to ensure effective implementation and community engagement.

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*.

Anderson, Warwick, Kari Lancaster, Sonja van Wichelen, Seye Abimbola, Rachel A Ankeny, Lukas Engelmann, Lyle Fearnley, Tamara Giles-Vernick,Benjamin Hegarty, Freya L Jephcott, **Nicolo P Ludovice**, Janet Roitman, Jacob Steere-Williams, Mark Stoove, John Noel Viaña, Catherine Waldby, Rachel Yang. "Epistemic preparedness." *BMJ Global Health* 10.6 (2025).

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study investigates cross-boundary policy entrepreneurship in China's health regulatory reform, emphasizing how local innovations can influence national policy. By analyzing a case in Ningxia, it explores the coalition of local government, corporate actors, and public hospitals that catalyzed the development of internet hospitals. The research highlights the motivations and strategies of various policy entrepreneurs, including issue framing, coalition building, and venue shopping. It reveals that while local innovations can lead to significant policy changes, the process requires navigating complex bureaucratic environments and aligning local initiatives with national objectives. The findings underscore the importance of collaborative efforts across sectors in addressing contemporary health challenges.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To enhance policy innovation, governments should foster cross-boundary collaborations among local, corporate, and healthcare sectors. This includes creating supportive regulatory frameworks that enable the scaling of successful local initiatives to national policies, ensuring that innovations effectively address community health needs.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This paper explores the concept of "epistemic preparedness" in the context of global health, particularly concerning infectious disease outbreaks. It critiques traditional preparedness strategies that emphasize microbial surveillance and healthcare infrastructure, arguing for a broader understanding that incorporates ecological and sociological dimensions. The study identifies three key areas of concern: data collection and sharing, outbreak modeling, and the spatiotemporal framing of interventions. By addressing these issues, the authors advocate for a more inclusive approach to preparedness that integrates insights from social sciences and health humanities, moving beyond the limitations of current "crisis technologies." This reconceptualization aims to enhance the effectiveness of responses to future outbreaks by fostering equity and inclusivity in public health policy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To strengthen our response to future pandemics, policy must move beyond technical fixes and embrace a broader, more inclusive approach to knowledge. This means valuing insights from social sciences, humanities, and affected communities alongside biomedical expertise, ensuring that preparedness strategies reflect the full complexity of society and environment. By diversifying who counts as an expert and how we understand health threats, we can build more equitable, effective, and trusted public health systems.

SOCIAL AND URBAN POLICY

Ludovice, **Nicolo Paolo P**. "Horses, Doping, and the Relationalities of Care at the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club, 1969–1971." *Society & Animals* 1.aop (2025): 1-18.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This article investigates the relational dynamics between humans and horses within the horse-racing context at the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club (RHKJC) during the late 1960s. By analyzing doping cases from 1969 to 1971, the study highlights the institutional and episodic aspects of care that underpin these relationships. The RHKJC, as a significant regulatory body in postwar Hong Kong, faced severe allegations of horse doping, which involved over 50 horses and resulted in a fatality. The research emphasizes that caring for horses extends beyond the racetrack, requiring comprehensive infrastructures and relationalities. It situates these dynamics within the broader socioeconomic changes in

Hong Kong during the 1960s, advocating for the inclusion of animals and their care in the historical narrative of the region.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Contemporary policies on animal welfare in sports should recognize that doping is not only a technical violation but also reflects deeper relationships of care, trust, and responsibility between humans and animals. Regulators should foster transparent, collaborative environments where trainers, veterinarians, and officials work together to prioritize the well-being of animals. By valuing both ethical care and scientific oversight, modern policy can better protect animals while respecting the complex bonds that shape their lives.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Sharif, **Naubahar**, and Athar Mansoor. "The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor: Game Changer or Chinese Colonialism?" *The China Quarterly* (2025): 1-20.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The article examines the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) within the context of China's Belt and Road Initiative, analyzing its potential to transform Pakistan's economy through infrastructure development and investment. It discusses contrasting perspectives, with proponents viewing CPEC as a "game changer" while critics fear it could lead to a form of economic colonialism. Through interviews with stakeholders and documentary analysis, the authors argue that while CPEC offers substantial opportunities for economic and social benefits, significant challenges such as governance issues, transparency, and the risk of dependency on China may hinder its transformative potential. Ultimately, the CPEC is framed as a complex socio-economic development plan rather than a simple colonial endeavor.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To maximize benefits from the CPEC, Pakistan should prioritize transparency, enhance local governance, and ensure equitable distribution of gains. Additionally, fostering technology transfer and building local capacities will be essential for sustainable economic growth and reducing dependency on external influences.

Masaru Yarime. "Ishiba cites tariffs, inflation fight for staying on." *RTHK's news programme, Hong Kong Today*, 21 July 2025.

Zhu, Pengyu, Yulin Wang, and **Yatang Lin**. "Unravelling regional inequality: the heterogeneous impact of China's Great Western Development Program." *Regional Studies* 59.1 (2025): 2438319.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The article analyzes the political and economic challenges facing Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba after his ruling coalition's defeat in the upper house elections. Central to the analysis is the declining public confidence in the government's economic policies, particularly amid rising consumer prices, tariff tensions with the United States, and debates over a proposed sales tax cut. A key focus is placed on expert commentary from Masaru Yarime, Associate Professor at the Division of Public Policy at the University of Science and Technology, who identifies economic policy dissatisfaction and political instability as core concerns shaping Japan's current governance crisis.

Yarime emphasizes that the election results signal widespread public discontent, especially among younger voters, and reflect growing doubts about the government's ability to manage inflation, social welfare burdens, and external trade pressures. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its partner Komeito now lack a majority in both chambers, complicating policymaking in what Yarime describes as a "very uncertain political landscape."

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To restore political stability and public trust, the Japanese government should prioritize inclusive policy dialogue, particularly on economic reforms, and address intergenerational concerns by engaging younger voters. Transparent and responsive governance—especially in managing inflation, trade relations, and fiscal sustainability—will be essential in navigating Japan through a volatile political and economic period.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This paper examines China's Great Western Development Program, aimed at fostering economic growth in underdeveloped western provinces. Using a regression discontinuity design and night-light data, the study finds that the Program resulted in a 1.3–1.7% increase in annual output growth in the western region. However, the benefits were primarily observed in areas with better initial endowments, leading to increased inequality within the treatment group. The research highlights the need to assess both the intended and unintended effects of such policies on regional inequality.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To enhance the effectiveness of development programs, policymakers should target investments more strategically, focusing on regions with weaker initial endowments to ensure equitable growth and reduce regional disparities.

Conferences and Events

PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES 2024-25

2025 AUA ASIA PACIFIC PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK (AP-PPN) CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC POLICY

SEMINAR ARCHIVE

Public Policy Dialogue Series 2024-2025
Think Asia, Think GBA: Hong Kong's regional strategy and positioning

On April 2025, the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and the Education University of Hong Kong co-organized a pivotal event in their Public Policy Dialogue Series titled "Think Asia, Think GBA: Hong Kong's Regional Strategy and Positioning." The seminar convened distinguished scholars and policy experts to examine Hong Kong's evolving role amid global geopolitical shifts, deepening GBA integration, and growing questions surrounding its comparative advantage.

The event was moderated by Associate Professor Fox Hu Zhiyong from EdUHK, who presided over the sessions and stimulated thought-provoking dialogue among the speakers.

Professor Anthony Cheung, a veteran in public administration and former Secretary for Transport and Housing, opened the seminar with a strategic reflection on Hong Kong's regional positioning amid shifting global dynamics. He outlined a series of critical questions confronting the city: How should Hong Kong navigate the growing geopolitical divide between China and the West? Is its legal and institutional system—historically aligned with global norms—still sustainable? Can Hong Kong remain irreplaceable in the face of competition from Singapore, Shanghai, and Shenzhen? Emphasizing Hong Kong's hybrid identity as both a Chinese city and a global node, Professor Cheung argued that its core strengths lie in its people, location, and institutional system. However, he warned that a static mindset could erode these advantages, and called for a proactive repositioning strategy that leverages the Greater Bay Area and the rise of Asia more purposefully within the broader context of global realignment.

A central theme of the seminar was the complex interplay between Hong Kong's internal constraints and external realignments, which has complicated its pursuit of a coherent regional strategy. As the global trading system fragments and geopolitical rivalries deepen, Hong Kong faces diminishing room for maneuver, especially amid increasing reliance on the Chinese market. Discussions highlighted the asymmetries within the Greater Bay Area—ranging from divergent institutional systems to mismatches in economic scale, planning norms, and labor costs—that pose structural barriers to effective integration. Speakers also examined the risks of over-specialization, noting that the hollowing out of Hong Kong's industrial base has limited its capacity for innovation and exposed its economy to sector-specific vulnerabilities. While the GBA offers new opportunities, particularly in innovation and services, the consensus was that Hong Kong must first reinforce its economic distinctiveness to engage meaningfully with regional partners.

The seminar featured thought-provoking presentations from esteemed speakers, including Asst Professor Brian Wong, Professor Donald Low, Dr. James Wang Jixian, and Professor Lui Tai-lok. Collectively, they offered multifaceted analyses of the structural dilemmas and strategic blind spots that confront Hong Kong's regional reinvention. Professor Wong advanced a "3Ds" framework—Dare to Dream, Diversify, and Differentiate—arguing that institutional

reform and narrative innovation are crucial for sustaining the city's global distinctiveness. Professor Low examined the risks of over-specialization and industrial hollowing, warning that without economic diversification, Hong Kong's resilience will continue to erode. Dr. Wang approached the discussion from a comparative institutional lens, highlighting how Hong Kong's value lies in its carefully constructed "comparative environment," which risks being diluted amid fragmented regional integration. Professor Lui offered a critical perspective, questioning whether Hong Kong truly understands regional demand and whether it possesses the capacity to reposition itself meaningfully beyond legacy roles such as finance.

The event concluded with a recognition that Hong Kong's future hinges on more than geographic advantage or historical identity. What is needed, the speakers agreed, is a renewed commitment to institutional adaptability, policy experimentation, and strategic humility. By integrating insights from diverse disciplines and fostering candid debate, the seminar underscored the need for Hong Kong to move beyond slogans and engage seriously with the substance of regional relevance.

Overall, this event provided a timely and vital platform for dialogue, shedding light on the challenges and possibilities of redefining Hong Kong's position in a rapidly transforming regional and global order.

2025 AUA Asia Pacific Public Policy Network (AP-PPN) Conference on Public Policy

On May 22-23, 2025, the AUA Asia-Pacific Public Policy Network (AP-PPN) Conference, hosted by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)'s Division of Public Policy and co-organized by the Asian Universities Alliance and United Nations Academic Impact, gathered global scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to explore its core theme: "The Future Directions of Public Policy: Harnessing AI and Data Science for Governance, Public Health, and Sustainable Urban Habitat in Asia". Against the backdrop of Asia's rapidly evolving policy landscapes, marked by diverse regulatory approaches, technological disparities, and unique socio-political dynamics, the conference delved into how technological advancements can address emerging challenges—such as AI-driven ethical dilemmas, public health crises, and urbanization pressures—while fostering responsible and equitable development across the region. It served as a pivotal platform for exchanging insights from parallel sessions, keynote speeches, and roundtable discussions, aiming to bridge gaps in governance, On May 22-23, 2025, the AUA Asia-Pacific Public Policy Network (AP-PPN) Conference,

hosted by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)'s Division of Public Policy and co-organized by the Asian Universities Alliance and United Nations Academic Impact, gathered global scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to explore its core theme: "The Future Directions of Public Policy: Harnessing AI and Data Science for Governance, Public Health, and Sustainable Urban Habitat in Asia". Against the backdrop of Asia's rapidly evolving policy landscapes, marked by diverse regulatory approaches, technological disparities, and unique socio-political dynamics, the conference delved into how technological advancements can address emerging challenges—such as AI-driven ethical dilemmas, public health crises, and urbanization pressures—while fostering responsible and equitable development across the region. It served as a pivotal platform for exchanging insights from parallel sessions, keynote speeches, and roundtable discussions, aiming to bridge gaps in governance, align policies with local needs, and leverage collaborative strategies to unlock the transformative potential of AI and data science for Asia's future.

AI Governance and Ethical Considerations

The conference addresses the challenges of regulating artificial intelligence (AI) globally. Prof. Benjamin Cashore from the National University of Singapore emphasized AI's dual nature concerning "super wicked problems" like climate change. He argued that governance frameworks must promote innovation while ensuring safeguards to prevent societal harm.

Dr. Liu Yunxia from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) presented findings on deepfake regulation in China, Europe, and the U.S., highlighting the need for "adaptive governance models" that leverage blockchain for source verification. She stressed the importance of collaboration among governments, digital platforms, and civil society in navigating AI regulation complexities. Prof. Sharif Naubahar, also from HKUST, drew from science fiction to illustrate how fictional narratives can inform ethical policymaking and help avoid digital disparities.

AI in Urban Development and Sustainability

Sessions focused on urban renewal and smart city initiatives. Prof. De-Troullioud-De Anversin from HKUST discussed green building technologies in Hong Kong, presenting a framework that aligns technical, economic, and social criteria with local sustainability goals. His case studies showed that a contextualized approach could reduce carbon emissions in residential buildings by 20-30%.

Prof. Wilson Wong from the Chinese University of Hong Kong spotlighted AI's role in urban infrastructure, citing Jakarta's air quality monitoring system as an effective model for real-time pollution tracking. He cautioned that the efficacy of such technologies depends on equitable access to prevent exacerbating urban-rural divides.

Public Health and AI-Driven Interventions

AI's application in public health emerged as a key theme, covering pandemic response and healthcare equity. Dr. Li Alvin from HKUST shared research on AI-powered early warning systems for infectious diseases, which can predict outbreak hotspots 2-3 weeks in advance, improving preparedness. Prof. Kira Matus emphasized the need for ethical AI in healthcare, advocating for transparency to address algorithmic biases affecting vulnerable populations.

Social Equity and Technological Inclusion

Session C1 tackled the digital divide, revealing that socio-economic factors hinder rural students in India from accessing digital learning. Dr. Dey Motti called for targeted policies to bridge this gap. Discussions also addressed the impacts of algorithmic management on gig workers, proposing regulatory reforms for fair compensation and oversight.

The 2025 AUA AP-PPN Conference concluded with critical insights into leveraging AI and data science for governance, public health, and urban development. Key takeaways emphasized adaptive governance for disruptive technologies, balancing innovation with ethics through multi-stakeholder collaboration. For public health, data-driven solutions and equitable access to AI tools emerged as vital. In urban contexts, context-specific tech integration—like Hong Kong's green building frameworks and Jakarta's air quality systems—highlighted sustainability's link to local needs. Addressing digital divides and regulatory gaps across Asia remained pressing. The conference underscored that inclusive, transparent policymaking, drawing on global and regional experiences, is key to harnessing technology for equitable, sustainable development in Asia.

Seminar Archive

Mr. Ian VARELA SOARES
PhD in Public Policy

Mitigating Cloud Computing Emissions at the National Level: Policy Responses and Carbon Accounting Methods for Carbon-Efficient Cloud Infrastructure Governance

In this study, he presented his dissertation on cloud emissions and ICT infrastructure. He argues that current location-based carbon accounting fails to capture the global nature of cloud service consumption. Through case studies of six data center hubs, he proposes a consumption-based framework and highlights discrepancies in emission responsibility. He also identifies four sources of estimation of risk and recommends policy tools—stricter accounting rules, eco-labeling, and carbon border adjustments—to ensure more accurate and equitable cloud emission governance.

Prof. M Ramesh
UNESCO

Chair of Social Policy Design in Asia, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.

President, International Public Policy Association.

Transforming Primary Care in Singapore: Addressing Systemic Challenges

In this talk, Prof. M Ramesh discussed Singapore's primary care system, examining its governance, provision, financing, and payment structures. He argued that fragmented coordination and weak government influence over private providers—not just funding or efficiency—explain the system's challenges despite strong health outcomes. Realigning incentives and strengthening governance, he suggested, are key to building a more effective primary care model.

Dr. Xingchi Shen
Associate Professor at the School of International and Public Affairs, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Effects of Rooftop Solar on the Distribution Grid: Evidence from Connecticut

In this research, Dr. Xingchi Shen presented findings from a study on the impact of distributed solar generation on electricity distribution feeders in Connecticut. Using proprietary installation-level data, he shows that each additional kilowatt of solar reduces peak feeder load by 0.11 kW, though a modest 3.6% rebound effect appears in non-summer months. He argues that while solar can defer some distribution investments, the resulting economic value—typically under $3 per MWh—falls short of justifying the higher cost of distributed solar relative to utility-scale alternatives.

Dr. Masahiro Sato
Associate Professor at the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, Tohoku University

Generative AI for Economic Policy Analysis

In this talk, Dr. Masahiro Sato explored how generative AI, particularly large language models (LLMs), can revolutionize the analysis of textual data in economic policy research. He argues that traditional methods like text mining and qualitative analysis fall short in capturing the complexity and context of texts such as news, regulations, and financial documents. Generative AI offers a transformative alternative, enabling more systematic and nuanced approaches to studying monetary and fiscal policy.

Mr. Tom Fletcher

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Tsinghua Global Vision Lecture – The Future of The International Humanitarian System

Prof. Germa Bel

Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Universitat de Barcelona, and Director of the Institute of Research on Applied Economics (IREA-UB).

Five Decades of Reforms for Local Public Services Delivery in the West

In this seminar, Prof. Germa Bel examined shifts in local public service delivery. He argues that while late 20th-century reforms focused on privatization, modest results led to new strategies in the 21st century, including intermunicipal cooperation, corporatization, and remunicipalization. After decades of reform, a hybrid model—combining governmental and market elements—has become the dominant approach to managing local public services.

Prof. Andres de Castro Garcia

Associate Professor in International Relations and Security Studies at Spain´s largest public university, UNED.

Multipolarism and its effect on global relationships

In this talk, Prof. Andres de Castro Garcia analyzed the current multipolar world order, focusing on the rising competition among the U.S., China, and Russia. He argues that Trump's second term accelerates global shifts, weakening the transatlantic alliance amid conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine. The discussion explores Trump's expansionist aims toward Greenland, Canada, and the Panama Canal, and the EU's struggle for unity, constrained by Franco-German rivalry—examined through the lens of International Relations theory.

Prof Alicia García Herrero

Chief Economist for Asia Pacific at French investment bank Natixis

Independent Board Member of AGEAS insurance group Senior Fellow at the European think-tank BRUEGEL

Senior Follow at the East Asian Institute (EAI) of the National University Singapore (NUS)

Adjunct Professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)

Advisor to the Spanish government on economic affairs.

Where does China stand in key emerging technologies compared to the US and the EU: An analysis of patents in AI, quantum and Semiconductors

In this talk, Prof Alicia García Herrero presented an analysis of global technological competition using large language models. She argues that by assessing patent data—adjusted for relevance—we can rank the US, China, and the EU in key critical technologies. The study also examines spillover speeds and firm-level dominance within each region, concluding with policy implications for all three major economic blocs.

Student Hub

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

PHD THESIS PRESENTATION

Student Achievement

PPOL Students Won Prize at OSHC Project Competition

We are delighted to share that three students from the Master of Public Policy (MPP) Program of the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) at HKUST—LI Yueqing, CHEN Shumin, and LI Haixin—have achieved outstanding success in the recent Project Competition organized by the Hong Kong Occupational Safety & Health Council (OSHC).

Their innovative project stood out among entries from over 30 international teams, earning them the top prize and the honour of representing Hong Kong at the OSAKA EXPO 2025. Their proposal has already been showcased at the Expo, offering a global audience a glimpse into the policy innovation and talent fostered at HKUST.

The team was formally recognized at the OSHC Awards Ceremony held on May 29, 2025.

This remarkable achievement reflects their creativity, teamwork, and commitment to public policy solutions with real-world impact. We are incredibly proud of their success and look forward to seeing their continued contributions on the international stage!

MPP Study Trip to Tencent (Shenzhen)

MPP (Master of Public Policy Program) students from the Division of Public Policy, HKUST visited Tencent Headquarters in Shenzhen. Led by Prof. Alex Jingwei He, they explored digitally empowered innovations in elderly care and social services.

From the contributions of enterprises in elderly care innovation from a public welfare perspective to the impact of AI in healthcare business from a commercial standpoint, and Tencent's practices in supporting youth education, the sharing sessions by experts from Tencent provided students with a multifaceted view on social and policy issues. During the interactive session, students actively discussed potential regulatory and ethical issues related to AI products, as well as the implementation methods and pathways of corporate public welfare projects. These sessions further enhanced their understanding of theoretical knowledge and its application in the real world. Look forward to more enrichment activities soon!

Participation in Career Talk at HKUST (Guangzhou)

Students from the Division of Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) recently participated in a Career Talk at HKUST (Guangzhou). Co-hosted by the Entrepreneurship and Public Policy Thrust of the Social Hub at HKUST (Guangzhou), the Division of Public Policy at HKUST, and the Career Development Association of HKUST (Guangzhou), the event focused on exploring career development in international organizations.

Guest speakers included advisory experts from the Global Sustainable Development Goals and Youth Leadership Development Center, consultants from the Asian Development Bank, and students with internship experiences at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). They shared their work experiences in international organizations and offered valuable career advice. During the Q&A session, Professor Xun Wu from HKUST (Guangzhou) and Professor He Jingwei from HKUST guided students in engaging discussions with the guest speakers, delving deeper into career pathways in international organizations. The students also took a campus tour, which helped enhance their understanding of the International Public Affairs (IPA) Thrust and its programs.

Excursion to Tap Mun

The Master of Public Policy program recently organized a refreshing excursion to Tap Mun Island on April 12, 2025. This scenic outing brought together students and faculty members for a day of connection, exploration, and relaxation beyond the classroom.

As participants journeyed to the tranquil island, they enjoyed breathtaking coastal views, sampled local delicacies, and took in the rich natural and cultural heritage of Tap Mun. The trip provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen bonds within the MPP community while taking a well-deserved break from academic life.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who joined us for this memorable experience—and we look forward to more exciting adventures ahead!

PHD Thesis Presentation

Ms. NIU, Mengyuan

Aging and Mental Well-being among Ethnic Minority Elderly in Hong Kong: A Culturally Ecological Perspective

Mr. VARELA SOARES, Ian

Mitigating Cloud Computing Emissions at the National Level: Policy Responses and Carbon Accounting Methods for Carbon-Efficient Cloud Infrastructure Governance

News and Upcoming Events

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S POLICY UNIT (CEPU) VISITS THE DIVISION OF PUBLIC POLICY PPOL

FACULTY INSIGHT

PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) visits The Division of Public Policy PPOL

The Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) recently visited the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) at HKUST, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between government and academia. During the visit, discussions revolved around innovative policy solutions and research initiatives aimed at addressing pressing societal challenges. Both parties explored potential partnerships to leverage academic expertise in shaping effective governance and informed decision-making. The meeting highlighted the critical role of research in developing policies that respond to the evolving needs of society, aiming for a more responsive and adaptive public service. This engagement marks a significant step towards bridging the gap between theory and practice in public policy.

Faculty Insight

Professor Alex Jingwei He Receives the 2025 IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award

We are proud to announce that Professor Alex Jingwei He, Associate Professor at the Division of Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, has been awarded the prestigious IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025.

Professor He is the first Chinese scholar to receive this distinguished honor since the award's inception in 2021. He was recognized for his outstanding scholarly contributions in the fields of health policy, policy design and innovations, population aging, and social policy, with particular emphasis on advancing public policy research and practice in developing and transitional economies.

He will be officially presented with the award at the 7th International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP7), to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, this July.

We extend our warmest congratulations to Professor He for this remarkable achievement and his continued dedication to impactful and globally relevant public policy research.

HKUST-Led International Research Team Publishes in Nature Human Behaviour

An international research team led by Dr. Fangxin Yi from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has published a significant study in Nature Human Behavior, examining the political and psychological effects of participatory approaches in centralized regimes. The three-year project focused on a large-scale intervention in Chengdu, China, involving nearly 8,000 participants.

Using a randomized controlled field experiment, the study assessed the impact of participatory budgeting on civic attitudes and political behaviors. Participants in the treatment group, who deliberated on local budget allocations, showed significantly higher civic engagement and satisfaction with the central government compared to the control group. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing insights into civic attitudes amid restrictions and uncertainty.

Remarkably, the study found that participatory mechanisms did not lead to political cynicism or dissatisfaction. Instead, the intervention enhanced perceptions of government responsiveness, civic pride, and regime legitimacy. These findings challenge the notion that democratic innovations are incompatible with centralized governance and suggest that structured participatory approaches can positively influence citizen attitudes.

The authors recommend that centralized regimes institutionalize participatory methods to improve governance responsiveness and strengthen citizen-state relations. By embedding these mechanisms within existing political structures, governments can foster civic empowerment, enhance public trust, and improve the legitimacy of their governance frameworks.

Ballots, Backlash, and Budget Woes — Prof. Masaru Yarime's view on Japan's Political Gridlock After Upper House Elections

Professor Masaru Yarime from the Division of Public Policy at HKUST provides critical insight into Japan's deepening political uncertainty following Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's election setback. In the wake of the ruling coalition's failure to secure a majority in the upper house, Yarime highlights how public dissatisfaction—especially with economic management—is reshaping Japan's political dynamics.

He notes that the government's current policies, particularly regarding inflation and fiscal responsibility, have alienated many voters, including younger generations. According to Professor Masaru Yarime, the election results reflect not only policy discontent but also a loss of faith in the administration's ability to navigate complex domestic and international pressures, such as tariff negotiations with the United States and debates over the sales tax rate.

Professor Masaru Yarime warns that the fragmented parliamentary landscape will make it increasingly difficult for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner Komeito to push forward any coherent agenda. The lack of majority in both chambers, he argues, heightens the risk of policy paralysis just as Japan faces mounting socio-economic challenges.

Professor Yarime's analysis suggests that without a strategic policy reset and genuine public engagement—especially on economic reform and intergenerational equity—Japan's leadership could struggle to regain stability or deliver effective governance.
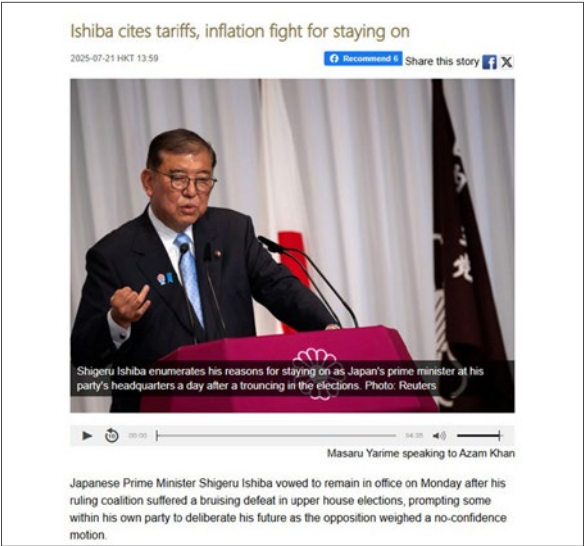
Cheap Drones, Big Threats: How Small Tech Is Reshaping Global Security — Prof Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin's view

Professor Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin from the Division of Public Policy at HKUST offers a timely and thought-provoking analysis in his recent op-ed, highlighting how Ukraine's dramatic drone assault on Russian strategic bombers has redefined modern warfare. The operation—code-named "Spider's Web"—involved dozens of low-cost, first-person-view drones penetrating deep into Russian territory, striking at nuclear-capable aircraft across multiple airbases.

He argues that this unprecedented attack illustrates a turning point in global security. No longer confined to powerful states, the ability to damage nuclear deterrence infrastructures can now be achieved by actors using commercially available, AI-assisted drones costing less than US$1,000 each.

His commentary warns that such asymmetric capabilities threaten the fragile balance of strategic stability. As drones become more accessible to both smaller states and non-state actors, the risks of accidental escalation—including nuclear conflict— grow alarmingly real.

Professor Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin calls for urgent international cooperation to regulate drone technology, likening the need for control over existing frameworks for small arms. Without decisive action, the unchecked spread of cheap drones could undermine decades of global arms control efforts and heighten the danger of future crises.

VVA Catalyst To Restructure The Economy —Prof Donald Low's View

Professor Donald Low, a respected academic in public policy, emphasizes the importance of strategic economic reforms for Hong Kong's future. The budget for the financial year 2025-26, presented by Financial Secretary Paul Chan, highlights significant shortcomings in addressing structural economic challenges. Focused on cost-cutting to reduce the persistent budget deficit, this approach is inadequate given the city's lackluster recovery post-COVID-19, where growth has lagged behind regional competitors like Singapore.

With external pressures such as trade tensions and inflation, expectations for a rapid economic turnaround are unrealistic. Rising health and social expenditures will likely exceed any savings from austerity measures, underscoring the need for a comprehensive reevaluation of Hong Kong's revenue system.

The government must shift from reliance on land sales to a diversified tax base, potentially including a Goods and Services Tax (GST) and wealth taxes. Viewing the current budget crisis as an opportunity, Hong Kong can undertake necessary reforms to foster a more resilient and equitable economy, ensuring sustainable growth in the years to come.

Program Admissions

PROGRAMS	REQUIREMENT	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 2026 For applicants from Hong Kong: 30th June 2026
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 2026 For applicants from Hong Kong: 30th June 2026
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 2026 For applicants from Hong Kong: 31st May 2026

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

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