

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



## 4<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

*April 22-23, 2026, Prishtina – Kosovo*





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### Building Futures: Innovation, Humanism, and Cooperation in a Divided World

1. From Smart Tech to Green Impact: Rethinking Business and AI for Tomorrow
2. The Future of Health: AI and Human Well-Being
3. Global Shifts: Geopolitics, Security, and Peace in Times of Uncertainty

## Book of Abstracts

### EDITORS:

Valon Murati, Algis Krupavičius, Susana Pescada, Filipos Ruxho, Fernando Teixeira, Bekim Rambaja and Rrezart Prebreza

April 22-23, 2026, Prishtina, Kosova



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**International Conference on Social and Health Sciences****Book of Abstracts****Building Futures: Innovation, Humanism, and Cooperation in a Divided World**

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The 4th International Conference on Social and Health Sciences will bring together global experts, researchers, and professionals to explore innovative solutions and strategies for building a future based on innovation, humanism and cooperation in today's divided world. This one-day event will be organized into three thematic sessions, each addressing crucial aspects of AI and business, healthcare and human well-being, as well as geopolitics, security, and regional and global cooperation in times of uncertainty.

**CONFERENCE TITLE:**

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**CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND GREEN GROWTH: PATHWAYS TO A HEALTHIER KOSOVO**

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**Abstract**

This research investigates the role of circular economy and green economy frameworks in shaping public health outcomes in Kosovo, with particular attention to pollution reduction, waste management, and sustainable development pathways. Kosovo continues to operate largely within a linear economic model characterized by resource extraction, consumption, and disposal. This model generates substantial municipal and industrial waste, estimated at more than 400,000 tons annually, with recycling rates ranging between approximately 2.5% and 7%—significantly below European Union benchmarks. The predominance of landfill disposal and inadequate waste treatment infrastructure contribute to environmental degradation, including air, soil, and water pollution, which in turn poses measurable risks to human health, especially through increased respiratory illnesses and exposure to hazardous pollutants. The transition toward a circular economy emphasizes resource efficiency, waste prevention, material recovery, and the extension of product life cycles. Complementarily, the green economy framework promotes structural economic transformation toward low-carbon development, renewable energy use, and environmentally responsible growth. Drawing on a mixed-methods research design that integrates secondary statistical data, policy analysis, and stakeholder consultations, this paper assesses the extent to which circular economy and green economy principles are being implemented in Kosovo and their implications for environmental health. The findings suggest that while policy frameworks—such as the Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy and emerging circular economy roadmaps—reflect growing institutional commitment, practical implementation remains constrained by infrastructural deficits, governance limitations, and insufficient public awareness. The study concludes that embedding circular economy and green economy principles within both environmental and public health policies is critical for reducing pollution exposure and advancing long-term societal well-being. Strategic recommendations include strengthening regulatory enforcement, expanding recycling infrastructure, fostering environmental education, and promoting cross-sectoral coordination that explicitly links environmental quality to health outcomes.

**Keywords:** circular economy; green economy; public health; waste management; Kosovo; sustainable development.

## **CIRCULAR ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AMONG SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN KOSOVO: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SDG 12)**

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### **Abstract**

The transition toward a circular economy has become an important strategy for achieving sustainable development and improving resource efficiency among businesses. This study examines the adoption of circular economy practices among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Kosovo, with a particular focus on promoting responsible consumption and production in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12). The research is based on a quantitative survey conducted with 150 SME respondents from different sectors operating in Kosovo, including manufacturing, services, and retail.

The findings indicate that while awareness of sustainability concepts is gradually increasing among SMEs, the implementation of circular economy practices such as waste reduction, recycling, reuse of materials, eco-design, and sustainable sourcing remains at an early stage. Many businesses reported engaging in basic resource efficiency measures, mainly driven by cost reduction rather than environmental motivations. However, limited financial resources, lack of technical knowledge, and insufficient policy incentives were identified as major barriers to wider adoption.

The study highlights the need for stronger institutional support, targeted training programs, and policy frameworks that encourage circular business models among SMEs. Enhancing collaboration between government institutions, business associations, and international organizations can significantly contribute to accelerating the transition toward sustainable production and consumption in Kosovo's SME sector.

**Keywords:** Circular Economy, SMEs, Sustainability, SDG 12, Responsible Consumption, Kosovo.

**ADVANCING TOWARDS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY – INSIGHTS FROM VIETNAMESE ENTERPRISES**

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**Abstract**

From a positive perspective, Industry 4.0 enables companies to create high-quality products, improving the standard of living. However, negatively speaking, Industry 4.0 also results in detrimental consequences on society and the natural environment. Therefore, businesses are increasingly considering the circular economy as a guiding principle and a major priority so as to progress towards sustainable development and balance the interests of the economy, society, and the environment. Globally, the transition from a linear to a circular economy has emerged as an inevitable global development trend, offering considerable advantages for both enterprises and governments in achieving sustainable production and consumption. This shift offers Vietnam a valuable chance to develop and grow further. Using a qualitative research approach, combining with the application of observation, analysis, and dialectical materialism, the study 'Advancing Towards a Circular Economy: Insights from Vietnamese Enterprises' aims to offer Vietnamese companies practical solutions and strategic directions so as to enhance their business operations and production, thereby contributing to sustainable economic growth.

**Keywords:** Circular Economy, Sustainable Development, Vietnamese Enterprises.

## TRANSFORMING INDUSTRIAL WASTE INTO SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

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### Abstract

This research is a crucial component of doctoral thesis, in which was analyzed the industrial waste as an opportunity for a sustainability development. Nowadays the large amount of this waste particular waste that generated from industry of stones that placed in open land can be harmful for health and environment. It will be presenting analyses conducted by leading researches in this field. The main focus of this analysis will be using the materials from waste in order to make Terrazzo tiles, and the potential for improving its mechanical and physical properties by incorporating other waste materials.

The information presented in this research will be based on various research methods, including analytical, synthesis, statistical, and generalization. The objective of this research is to demonstrate that using local industrial waste from will play a crucial role in sustainability development.

In conclusion, this seminar will highlight the materials that are generated from waste industry particular marble waste will be explored and the potential for incorporating other waste materials to improve its properties, will be discussed. Ultimately, this seminar aims to demonstrate the important of using of waste from industry and turn it in sustainability way.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Development, Terrazzo, Terrazzo tile, Marble powder (MP). Limestone, Lime. Marble chips.

## **CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN VIETNAM**

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### **Abstract**

In the context of growing environmental pressures and resource constraints, the transition toward a circular economy has emerged as an important strategy for achieving sustainable development worldwide. The circular economy emphasizes efficient resource use, waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable production and consumption patterns. These principles contribute to economic efficiency, environmental protection, and social well-being, thereby supporting the implementation of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to responsible consumption and production, climate action, and sustainable economic growth.

In recent years, Vietnam has gradually incorporated circular economy principles into its national development strategies and policies. Important policy frameworks such as the Environmental Protection Law (2020), the National Green Growth Strategy for 2021–2030, and programs on sustainable production and consumption have created initial legal foundations for promoting circular economy practices. However, the transition toward a circular economy in Vietnam still faces several challenges, including limited awareness and implementation capacity among enterprises, insufficient recycling and waste management infrastructure, and weak coordination among stakeholders. Addressing these challenges requires strengthening institutional frameworks, promoting green technological innovation, and increasing public awareness of sustainable production and consumption.

Within this context, this paper analyzes the theoretical foundations and practical significance of the circular economy in promoting the implementation of the SDGs in Vietnam. It also identifies key opportunities and challenges and proposes policy orientations to support the development of a circular economy, thereby contributing to improved resource efficiency, reduced environmental impacts, and the promotion of green and sustainable economic growth.

**Keywords:** Circular Economy; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Green Growth; Resource Efficiency; Vietnam.

## SECTORAL COST ASSESSMENT OF GREEN HYDROGEN FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS

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### Abstract

Green hydrogen is considered a key solution for decarbonizing transport, industry, and chemical production. However, its economic feasibility depends on both hydrogen production costs and sector-specific consumption characteristics. In this study, the levelized cost of hydrogen (LCOH) is adopted from a reference techno-economic analysis, while all sectoral cost calculations are performed within the scope of this work.

Based on a baseline hydrogen cost of 7.2 USD/kg, the economic performance of hydrogen is evaluated for multiple applications. In urban bus transport, fuel costs range between 0.58–0.72 USD/km depending on consumption scenarios (8–10 kg/100 km), compared to approximately 0.44 USD/km for diesel. For heavy-duty transport, hydrogen costs are calculated as 0.022–0.029 USD/ton-km, slightly higher than diesel (~0.018 USD/ton-km). In municipal waste collection vehicles, the cost per duty cycle reaches 72 USD, compared to 33 USD for diesel-based systems. In the chemical sector, green methanol production cost is estimated at approximately 1930 USD/ton, with hydrogen contributing around 1368 USD/ton of the total cost.

Policy scenarios significantly improve competitiveness. Hydrogen cost decreases to 4.188 USD/kg with carbon credits, 4.064 USD/kg with investment tax credits, and 3.816 USD/kg under accelerated depreciation, corresponding to reductions of up to 23.6%.

These results show that while hydrogen is not yet fully competitive under baseline conditions, targeted policy mechanisms can enable its economic viability across multiple sectors.

**Keywords:** Green Hydrogen, Sectoral Cost Analysis, Sustainable Transport, Circular Economy, Decarbonization

## ADVANCING CIRCULAR ECONOMY THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY THEMATIC LEARNING

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### Abstract:

Preparing graduates for the circular economy involves more than merely adding sustainability topics to existing curricula. It requires curriculum integration that links circular economy principles, green skills, open education, and institutional resilience within interdisciplinary learning. This paper fills a gap by examining how these concepts connect and how they are represented in higher education practice.

The study uses a two-part design. First, a PRISMA-ScR scoping review examined 63 studies chosen from 1,400 records. After eliminating duplicates in Rayyan, two evaluators independently screened titles and abstracts, with a third evaluator making the final inclusion decision. Only studies in English, focusing on Europe and related to higher education, the green economy, green skills, open education, or resilience were included. These studies were mapped using co-occurrence and co-citation analyses, then categorised into 29 thematic groups and clustered with VOSviewer. Second, the paper analyzes 1,389 study subjects from courses offered by the top 10 EU universities listed in the QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025. Keywords identified in the scoping review guided course screening. The selected subjects were then examined through manual thematic grouping and qualitative content analysis.

The findings show that the circular economy rarely appears as a distinct field of study. Instead, it is integrated across broader areas, including sustainability, governance, engineering, innovation, and business. Green skills extend beyond environmental knowledge to include digital, strategic, pedagogical, and adaptive capacities. The paper shows that interdisciplinary thematic learning can connect fragmented course content and support coherent competence development for the circular transition.

**Keywords:** Circular economy; Higher education; Interdisciplinary learning; Curriculum integration; Green skills; Open education; Resilience

## THE IMPACT OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FIRMS IN KOSOVO

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### Abstract

In recent years, consumer behavior has changed significantly, creating a need to transform how material goods are produced. At a time when environmental and economic challenges require sustainable approaches, the circular economy (CE) is recognized as a promising model for the long-term development of businesses. This study identifies the challenges and benefits that businesses face during the transition toward a circular model, moving away from “linear thinking” to embrace a circular mindset. A mixed methods approach was employed, combining a theoretical analysis with a quantitative survey of 46 Kosovar organizations. The sample includes diverse sectors and firm sizes, primarily focusing on manufacturing enterprises. Data was analyzed to evaluate the relationship between CE adoption, profitability and institutional support. The results indicate that while awareness is high, practical implementation remains nascent. Notably, 50% of surveyed firms are “very much” aware of CE, yet only 28.3% have fully integrated these principles into their operations. While 41.3% of organizations view CE as a strategic priority for profitability, implementation is hindered by significant barriers where 52.2% of firms cite a lack of financial resources and 41.3% identify lack of technical expertise as primary obstacles. Furthermore, a strong consensus of 80.4% exists regarding the need for better government incentives to facilitate this transition. This research addresses a critical gap in local literature regarding sustainable management in Kosovo. The findings suggest that for Kosovo to mitigate persistent environmental issues, institutional policy must shift toward providing targeted financial and technical support. Specifically, these policies should focus on subsidizing green technology and fostering cross sector collaboration to help firms move beyond basic recycling toward material loop closure.

**Keywords:** Circular economy, Sustainable Management, Kosovo.

## A MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT ON ARTIFICIAL LIGHT AT NIGHT IN EUROPEAN CITIES

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### Abstract

Artificial light at night is linked to a variety of health outcomes, ecosystem disruption and unnecessary emissions, but is under-addressed in research and public policy. For example, there are no globally accepted recommended limits for artificial light at night. This study aims to understand how light pollution is shaped by urban morphology, particularly average building height.

**Methods:** Global Human Settlement Layer and VIIRS Nighttime Light data (from Earth Observation Group) were collected for European cities with population over 200,000 (N = 338) and analysed using multilevel regression, in addition to an exploratory model for the impact of artificial light at night on life expectancy.

**Results:** The median level of our light at night was 29.0 nW/cm<sup>2</sup>/sr (IQR 25.8), while the median average building height was 7.19 m (IQR 2.07). Our multilevel model had a conditional (including country level variation) R<sup>2</sup> of 0.66 and a marginal R<sup>2</sup> of 0.45. A one-metre increase in mean building height was associated with an increase of 2.42 nW/cm<sup>2</sup>/sr in light, while mean tree canopy had a negative impact. In a minimally adjusted exploratory model, light at night was non-significantly associated with lower life expectancy ( $\beta = -0.049$ ,  $p = 0.097$ ).

**Implications:** These results provide a framework for understanding how built environment morphology, infrastructure and socioeconomic variables impact artificial light at night. Further research can further elucidate the impact of the built environment in specific settings, while the results suggest potential directions for sustainable urban design.

**Keywords:** governance, urban development, satellite data, light pollution, ecological study

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF SUSTAINABLE CHEMICAL PRODUCT USE IN URBAN AREAS: THE CASE OF NOVALABS CHEMISTRY INC.**

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### **Abstract**

Urban environments are increasingly influenced by the combined pressures of population growth, industrial activity, and evolving consumption patterns. The widespread use of cleaning and hygiene products, while essential for modern living, represents an often overlooked source of environmental pollution and potential public health risks. Continuous chemical exposure and its cumulative effects on water and soil systems highlight the need for more sustainable approaches to chemical production and utilization.

This study examines the production practices of NovaLabs Chemistry Inc., a locally established company based in Balıkesir, within the framework of sustainable chemistry and public health. The company adopts environmentally compatible formulations, biodegradable components, and resource-efficient processes, with a particular emphasis on reducing hazardous substances and improving product safety.

A key feature of the NovaLabs model is its reliance on locally sourced raw materials, which supports regional economic development while reducing emissions associated with transportation. The application of such products in urban sanitation practices offers measurable benefits in terms of lowering environmental contamination and promoting healthier living conditions.

Within the scope of this research, a preliminary methodological framework has been developed to assess the environmental impacts of chemical product manufacturing. The ongoing analysis focuses on calculating product-specific carbon footprints by considering raw material sourcing, production processes, energy consumption, and packaging stages through a life cycle-based approach. Although the calculations are still in progress, the results are expected to provide comparative insights into the environmental performance of different product groups and will be presented at the conference.

**Keywords;** Sustainable chemistry, public health, urban sustainability, green chemistry, eco- friendly products, NovaLabs

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AS A FACTOR OF ENTERPRISE COMPETITIVENESS IN NORTH MACEDONIA:  
A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract**

Digital transformation is increasingly recognized as a key driver of business competitiveness, particularly in developing and transition economies. In the context of North Macedonia, where small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute the backbone of the economic structure, the level of digital integration remains an important academic and practical issue. This paper aims to analyze the level of digital transformation among enterprises and to examine its relationship with perceived improvements in market competitiveness, operational efficiency, and sales performance.

The study adopts an empirical approach based on descriptive analysis of primary data collected through a structured survey conducted among small and medium-sized enterprises operating in different sectors in North Macedonia. The sample consists of firms selected through convenience sampling. Data analysis relies on descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distribution, percentage analysis, and comparison of responses according to the level of digital adoption. Particular attention is given to the use of digital tools such as online sales platforms, digital marketing channels, accounting software, and internal management systems. The research seeks to identify whether firms that have invested in digital technologies report improvements in sales performance, customer base expansion, and operational efficiency.

By focusing on a developing economy, the paper contributes to the growing literature on digital transformation in small markets and provides practical implications for managers and policymakers. The findings are expected to highlight the importance of supporting digital adoption as a strategic mechanism for strengthening competitiveness in North Macedonia's business environment.

**Keywords:** Digital transformation, Business competitiveness, Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Digitalization, Developing economies, North Macedonia, Digital tools adoption.

## **A CLOUD COMPUTING & MACHINE LEARNING–BASED FRAMEWORK FOR FLOOD RISK PREDICTION AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS: SUPPORTING STATE STRATEGIES FOR NATURAL DISASTER PREVENTION IN KOSOVO**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims at the development and real-time evaluation of a framework based on Cloud Computing and Machine Learning for predicting flood risks and building real-time early warning systems, with the objective of supporting state strategies for rapid response and efficient management of natural disasters.

Public institutions in Kosovo possess meteorological and hydrological data; however, there is a lack of coherence between data availability and timely intervention capabilities. In particular, there is a shortage of intelligent platforms that are standardized and operational, capable of delivering real-time results and providing rapid, data-driven information for decision-making and situation management.

The proposed system will be based on meteorological data provided by the Kosovo Hydrometeorological Institute (IHMK). Additionally, international data sources such as ERA5 and ERA5-Land, provided through the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) via the Copernicus Climate Data Store (CDS) and implemented by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), will be used. These datasets ensure continuous spatial coverage over Kosovo and the Balkan region and enable verification and enrichment of local datasets. The data will include precipitation, precipitation intensity, temperature, humidity, and other seasonal indicators.

Data will be collected for the period 2021–2026 to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed platform, enabling the identification of seasonal patterns and extreme events associated with flood risk. The framework will follow the Impact-Based Forecast and Warning Services principle of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), where warnings are based on expected impacts rather than solely on absolute precipitation values.

Flood risks will be determined through a locally calibrated approach based on the Flash Flood Guidance concept, while risk visualization and communication will follow the MeteoAlarm logic (Green–Yellow–Orange–Red). Alerts will be structured in compliance with the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) to enable integration with local and central institutional systems in Kosovo.

The results will be developed using Anaconda, Jupyter Notebook, and Python, while cloud-based implementation will enable scalable processing and continuous data integration. The outcomes include a reusable and standardized platform that improves forecast accuracy, enhances institutional preparedness, and provides concrete support for state-level planning, risk management, and public safety protection.

**Keywords:** Cloud Computing; Machine Learning; Flood Forecasting; Early Warning Systems; Meteorological Data.

## AGILE METHODOLOGIES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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### Abstract

The aim of this presentation is to explore the advantages of teamwork and the use of tools that foster cohesion, creativity, observation, role development, and the application of agile techniques and methodologies in Vocational Training. It will also include examples of their implementation in the classroom. Why and for what purpose should we foster teamwork? It is essential for future professional development and for the classroom, to develop social skills, improve learning, and foster emotional connection among participants.

Techniques and activities for cohesion, creativity, and observation include the spaghetti tower, brainstorming, the paperclip technique, the desert island challenge, the NASA dynamic, and the cash register challenge, among others.

Team roles include: team builder, leader, implementer, evaluator, critic, researcher, and completer. Each role contributes to the organization and success of the teamwork.

eduScrum: an agile methodology created in the Netherlands in 2013 by Willy Wijnads, inspired by Scrum. To form autonomous teams, improve social skills, and enhance learning. It includes cycles of planning, working, reviewing, and reflecting, with meetings and team agreements. Participants learn to work in teams, cooperate and independently research information, organize and distribute tasks equitably, present topics, learn actively, and creativity.

Design Thinking: a method for designing products, services, and projects, which includes phases such as empathy mapping, needs identification, ideation, prototyping, and testing. You will learn: a fun and effective method for teamwork that facilitates the resolution of important problems.

Webography and bibliography: on Eduscrum, Design Thinking, ICT tools such as Miro, Trello, Kanban, Mentimeter, and Xplane.

**Keywords:** Agile Methodologies, Teamwork, Creativity

## **TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO CAPITAL: HOW ADULT EDUCATION AND RVCC UNLOCK COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL TERRITORIES**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores how Adult Education and Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies (RVCC) processes can be strategically leveraged to activate human capital, stimulate local entrepreneurship and drive sustainable community development in Almodôvar, a low-density rural municipality in Portugal's Alentejo region. Drawing on a qualitative, exploratory approach and semi-structured interviews with 15 participants adult learners and programme promoters analysed through thematic analysis, the research reframes competency recognition as a strategic asset rather than a purely educational outcome. Findings demonstrate that structured learning pathways and formal recognition of experiential knowledge function as catalysts for individual empowerment, employability and entrepreneurial confidence, generating endogenous human capital with measurable relevance to local economic dynamism. At the community level, participation in these initiatives builds trust-based cooperation networks and stimulates civic engagement, the foundational infrastructure of territorially rooted entrepreneurial ecosystems. Persistent structural barriers, including mobility constraints, scheduling inflexibility and resource scarcity, continue to limit scalability and impact. The study concludes that Adult Education and RVCC represent underutilised strategic instruments for inclusive territorial development, capable of transforming latent community potential into active entrepreneurial value, provided they are supported by coherent policy frameworks, institutional partnerships and implementation models sensitive to the realities of rural territories.

**Keywords:** Adult Education; RVCC; Strategic Empowerment; Community Entrepreneurship; Human Capital; Territorial Resilience; Lifelong Learning; Rural Development.

## **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE FUTURE OF WORK: RETHINKING HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVE FORCES IN VIETNAM**

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### **Abstract**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is profoundly reshaping global economic structures and labor relations. Within this context, digital transformation serves as the core catalyst, fundamentally altering the relationship between labor, technology, and knowledge. From the perspective of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data represents more than a mere shift in instruments of labor; it reflects a qualitative turning point in modern productive forces. This study analyzes the impact of digital transformation on the future of work in Vietnam, elucidating the evolving role of human resources in the development of productive forces. Utilizing a philosophical analysis grounded in the theories of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on productive forces, combined with a synthesis of international scientific literature on digital transformation and the future of employment, this research asserts that developing digital-competent human resources is a prerequisite for advancing modern productive forces. Consequently, the study proposes solutions for developing digital human resources in Vietnam to meet labor market demands, overcome the middle-income trap, and achieve sustainable development in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital transformation; Productive forces; Future of work; Human capital; Vietnam.

## THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLE ON EMPLOYEE STRESS LEVELS IN ALBANIA

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### Abstract

The psychological situation of employees and work-related stress are among the main concerns related to the performance and success of organizations today. An organization's culture and leadership are considered important elements in employee well-being and their psychological state. This paper aims to further investigate a possible relationship between leadership style and the level of stress of employees in Albanian organizations. The type of research conducted is quantitative and the number of participants is 126, of which 121 girls and 25 boys from different sectors of organizations in Albania. From the data collected, it results that there is a significant positive relationship between the Authoritarian leadership style and the level of stress, which means that with the increase in the presence of the characteristics of the authoritarian leadership style, the level of stress of the employees also increases. Meanwhile, from the analysis of the data, it also results that there is a significant negative relationship between the Democratic leadership style and the level of stress, which means that with the increase in the presence of the characteristics of the democratic leadership style, the level of stress of the employees decreases. This study serves as a good information base for organizations in Albania, but not limited to, to reiterate the importance of employees' psychological health in organizational success, identifying elements with negative and positive impact on it to further provide adequate and effective addressing methods. Reducing the use of the authoritarian style and increasing the use of elements such as open communication, support and participation as part of democratic leadership can help improve the employee's workplace stress situation.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Workplace Stress, Employee Psychological health.

## HUMAN HAPPINESS AND THE VISION OF A HAPPY NATION: RETHINKING HUMAN-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD

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### Abstract

Amid growing global inequalities, geopolitical tensions, and social fragmentation, traditional development paradigms centered primarily on economic growth are increasingly questioned. In response, scholars and policymakers are exploring alternative frameworks that place human well-being and happiness at the core of development. This paper examines the concept of human happiness as a guiding principle for national development and explores the vision of a “happy nation” as an emerging paradigm for human-centered development in a fragmented world.

Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from development studies, social philosophy, and cultural analysis, the study employs a qualitative research methodology combining conceptual analysis, policy analysis, and comparative review of international well-being frameworks. The paper analyzes theoretical debates on happiness and human-centered development, while examining Vietnam’s development discourse and policy orientation toward building a happy nation.

The findings suggest that the vision of a happy nation reflects a shift from growth-centered development to a more integrated model that combines economic progress with cultural development, social cohesion, and human flourishing. In the context of increasing global fragmentation, this approach highlights the importance of placing human well-being at the center of development strategies.

The paper contributes to ongoing international debates on alternative development paradigms by proposing a culturally grounded perspective on human happiness as a normative and strategic objective of national development.

**Keywords:** human happiness; happy nation; human-centered development; cultural development; global fragmentation.

## AI AND HUMAN WELL-BEING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL WORK IN KOSOVO

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### Abstract

Kosovo's social welfare system faces multiple challenges: a young demographic structure, high youth unemployment rates, limited institutional capacity, and a psychosocial legacy of the post-conflict period. Social workers in the country operate with limited resources, while simultaneously facing growing demands from vulnerable categories of society, including single-parent families, people with disabilities, and communities affected by internal migration. In this context, the integration of artificial intelligence into social and healthcare delivery presents both a significant opportunity and a series of critical ethical reflections. This paper examines the intersection of AI-driven tools and human well-being within the specific context of Kosovo's developing social infrastructure. Drawing on content analysis, literature review, and descriptive research of the existing situation, the paper analyses how technology-assisted case identification, predictive risk screening, and digital service connectivity can reduce systemic gaps in social protection. The paper further argues that the transition toward AI-supported services must be accompanied by investment in citizens' digital guidance, community trust-building, and a regulatory framework aligned with Kosovo's legal context and that of the European Union. The study concludes with contextualized recommendations for policymakers, academic institutions, and civil society organisations, highlighting the role of Kosovo's social sector not merely as a passive participant in global technological trends, but as an active contributor to shaping ethical and inclusive models of AI-supported well-being.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, social work, human well-being, digital inclusion, Kosovo.

**AR&VR TECHNOLOGY – REVOLUTIONARY TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION**

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to bring the practices of AR and VR technology development in education over the last five years, including the years 2020 - 2025. Using the literature analysis approach, I have selected several different articles, including well-known platforms such as: Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), IEEE Xplore Digital Library, Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct and ACM Digital Library.

AR and VR technology is a technology in the initial stage in terms of their use in the field of education. Moreover, Virtual Reality Environments and Holograms – are two features of this technology, which as such, rank this technology in the group of revolutionary technologies in education. Within the framework of this paper, I have raised four research questions and two hypotheses. The data will be collected through an electronic questionnaire (Google form), and the analysis will be done through the MS Excel application program.

Finally, we will conclude with some conclusions and recommendations regarding the use of this technology in the field of education.

**Keywords:** AR& VR Technology, Hologram, Virtual Reality Environments, Teachers, Conclusions, Recommendations.

## PRECISION CARE AND DATA-DRIVEN HEALTH SYSTEMS

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### Abstract

**Background:** Precision care increasingly depends on data-driven health systems capable of transforming routine clinical data into actionable knowledge. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI), interoperable health records, genomics, and digital monitoring tools requires a structured Learning Health System (LHS) framework to ensure sustainability, safety, and equity across populations.

**Methods:** A structured narrative review of peer-reviewed literature, regulatory guidance, and large-scale implementation reports published between 2019–2026 was conducted. Sources included randomized controlled trials evaluating AI-based interventions, genomics implementation studies, interoperability standards documentation (particularly FHIR-based systems), and governance frameworks such as the EU AI Act, the European Health Data Space (EHDS), and FDA guidance.

**Data & Methodology:** The review synthesizes findings from multicenter AI trials, biobank- scale genomics datasets, wearable-based pragmatic digital health studies, and real-world evidence frameworks. Emphasis was placed on evaluation standards (CONSORT-AI, TRIPOD+AI), interoperable data models, and lifecycle governance mechanisms supporting responsible AI-enabled systems.

**Results:** AI-enabled precision interventions demonstrate promising clinical performance; however, real world effectiveness depends on robust interoperable data architecture, clinician engagement, workflow integration, and equity monitoring. Large-scale genomics and wearable initiatives show scalability potential but highlight constraints related to governance, adoption, and economic sustainability.

**Discussion:** The literature indicates that technical accuracy alone is insufficient for sustainable precision care. Institutional capacity for continuous evaluation, regulatory compliance, bias mitigation, and secure data exchange determines long-term impact.

**Recommendations:** The strategic priority is establishing a resilient learning ecosystem that integrates interoperable data systems, structured evaluation frameworks, multidisciplinary collaboration, and governance-by-design, positioning UNI to advance research excellence and promote responsible AI adoption within regional health systems.

**Keywords:** Precision Care; Data-Driven Health Systems; Artificial Intelligence; Learning Health System; Digital Health Governance; Health Data Policy.

**TELEMEDICINE AND DIGITAL MONITORING IN NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH**

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**Abstract**

Telemedicine and digital monitoring technologies have emerged as key components of contemporary healthcare systems, particularly within nursing and allied health disciplines. This paper provides a literature-based synthesis of current evidence on the application, effectiveness, and challenges associated with telehealth and digital monitoring solutions in clinical practice.

Existing research indicates that telemedicine significantly enhances access to healthcare services, especially for populations in rural and underserved areas, while also improving efficiency in care delivery and reducing healthcare costs. Digital monitoring tools, including wearable devices, mobile health (mHealth) applications, and remote patient monitoring systems, have demonstrated effectiveness in supporting chronic disease management, enabling early detection of clinical deterioration, and promoting patient engagement.

Within nursing and allied health, the literature emphasizes the expanding role of healthcare professionals in implementing telehealth interventions, coordinating care, and ensuring adherence to treatment protocols. Tele-rehabilitation and remote patient support have shown promising outcomes in improving functional recovery and maintaining continuity of care.

However, several challenges persist, including concerns related to data privacy and security, limited digital literacy among patients and healthcare providers, infrastructural constraints, and the lack of standardized regulatory frameworks.

Overall, the literature suggests that while telemedicine and digital monitoring offer substantial benefits, their successful integration into healthcare systems requires strategic implementation, professional training, and policy alignment. These technologies are expected to play an increasingly central role in the future of healthcare delivery.

**Keywords:** telemedicine, digital health, nursing, allied health, remote monitoring, mHealth

## ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC TRUST IN PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY TO MANAGE THE COVID-19 CRISIS, KOSOVO, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022

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### Abstract

**Background:** Public trust in the effective management of the COVID-19 crisis is critical, especially in the implementation of public health measures such as quarantine, distancing, vaccination, and safety regulations.

**Aim:** We aim to study trust in public health authorities and the medical community. Methods Retrospective, cross-sectional population study based on data collected during wave VI of the

Behavioural Surveys, conducted from 14/09/2022 to 05/10/2022. Surveys were conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), on a sample of 1,005 adult Kosovars who agreed to participate. Using R, a descriptive analysis was conducted for the entire sample using weights to account for unequal selection probabilities in the study sample. Logistic regression models using weights were used to separately examine the impacts of different determinants on the outcomes of trust in the medical community.

**Results:** There was a statistically significant and positive correlation of trust in the medical community, such as family doctors, for managing the COVID-19 crisis. We also found significant public trust in the MoH and NIPHK. We found that trust in the medical community and public health information was associated with age, gender, health literacy, frequency of research and access to information, and perception of media advertising.

**Conclusions:** In conclusion, we found that the trust of the Kosovar population in the medical community, medical professionals, and public health authorities such as the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Public Health is significantly high, regardless of age group, also based on their health knowledge about COVID-19, vaccination, and other factors such as perception of media noise and frequency of information seeking.

**Keywords:** public trust, public health authorities, Ministry of Health, National Institute of Public Health, COVID-19, Kosovo.

## POSTURAL HEALTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE: THE INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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### Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has significantly transformed the lifestyle of children and adolescents. Increased screen exposure, prolonged sitting, and reduced levels of physical activity have become common characteristics of modern childhood, raising concerns about their impact on musculoskeletal health and overall well-being. Postural deformities of the spine are increasingly observed among school-aged children and may lead to long-term health consequences if not identified and addressed at an early stage.

The aim of this study was to examine the association between lifestyle factors, particularly physical activity and sedentary behavior, and the presence of postural deformities among school-aged children. A cross-sectional observational study was conducted among children aged 10–16 years. Anthropometric measurements, including body height, body weight, and body mass index, were collected using standardized procedures. Postural assessment was performed through clinical observation of spinal alignment in both the sagittal and frontal planes. Lifestyle habits such as participation in organized sports, daily physical activity, screen time, and sleep duration were assessed through structured questionnaires.

The results indicate that increased sedentary behavior and prolonged screen time are associated with a higher prevalence of postural deviations, particularly in the sagittal plane. Conversely, children who regularly participate in organized sports and maintain higher levels of physical activity demonstrate better postural alignment and a lower risk of developing spinal deformities.

These findings highlight the importance of promoting active lifestyles and preventive health strategies in the digital era. Early identification of postural deviations and the integration of physical activity promotion in school environments may contribute to improving musculoskeletal health and overall well-being among children.

**Keywords:** physical activity, sedentary behavior, postural health, spinal deformities, children, digital society

## THE IMPACT OF LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS IN ORTHOPEDIC DECISION-MAKING

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### Abstract

Decision-making in orthopedics demands precision, as errors in diagnosis, classification, or surgical planning can significantly compromise outcomes. Large Language Models (LLMs) have recently gained attention as supportive tools capable of processing and synthesizing extensive biomedical literature, clinical guidelines, and case data. Their application in orthopedics is beginning to show practical value. In fracture management, for example, LLMs have been used to assist in the detection of occult scaphoid fractures by linking radiological descriptors to established classification systems, improving diagnostic accuracy for junior clinicians. In arthroplasty, pilot implementations have supported implant selection by integrating patient-specific comorbidities with registry based outcome data, aiding surgeons in deciding between cemented and uncemented prostheses in elderly patients. Similarly, AI-generated educational resources have enhanced patient comprehension and adherence in reverse shoulder arthroplasty, contributing to shared decision-making. Despite these advances, significant limitations remain. Current models may generate inaccurate or biased recommendations, and their lack of transparency in reasoning reduces clinical trust. Integration into electronic health records and imaging platforms is still limited, and validation in large, multicenter clinical trials is urgently required. At present, LLMs should be regarded as adjuncts rather than replacements for clinical expertise. Their responsible adoption, combined with rigorous validation and ethical oversight, has the potential to improve diagnostic accuracy, surgical planning, and patient engagement in orthopedic practice.

**Keywords:** Orthopedics; Decision-making, Artificial Intelligence, Large Language Models, Fracture Management, Surgical Planning.

## HUMAN–AI COLLABORATION ACROSS MEDICINE, NUTRITION, PSYCHOLOGY, AND EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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### Abstract

Nowadays, artificial intelligence finds application in practical activities of doctors, nutritionists, psychologists, and coaches who use it in the diagnostic process, making certain decisions, conducting diet analysis and offering personalized diets, communicating with clients, and developing or modifying exercise prescriptions. In all these spheres, AI brings benefits such as higher efficiency, availability of services, and more precise personalization.

The present narrative literature review highlights findings on the way in which AI is employed by the aforementioned professionals not as an alternative to their skills and competencies but rather as an auxiliary means of making certain actions more effective. The articles reviewed show that the main advantage of artificial intelligence consists in the capability to analyze huge datasets and come up with specific solutions. Nevertheless, its success depends greatly on the professional interpretation of results as well as ethical evaluation of actions taken. At the same time, the reviewed literature reveals considerable problems related to the accuracy, fairness, and transparency of the work of algorithms.

Overall, the evidence supports a human-centered model of practice where AI enhances, rather than substitutes, professional decision-making. The most promising future direction appears to be responsible human–AI cooperation, guided by scientific validation, ethical considerations, and critical professional involvement.

**Keywords:** Human; AI; Healthcare professions; Prescriptions; Decision making

## NURSES KNOWLEDGE IN PALLIATIVE CARE FOR DIABETIC FOOT MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Diabetes mellitus is one of the leading causes of mortality and functional disability, and diabetic foot represents one of its most frequent and severe complications, particularly in patients with chronic illnesses and advanced stages of disease. In the context of palliative care, the management of diabetic foot is crucial for maintaining tissue integrity, reducing pain, preventing infections, and improving quality of life. Nurses play a key role in risk assessment, care, complication prevention, and patient education related to diabetic foot in palliative settings. The aim of this study was to assess nurses’ knowledge and practices regarding diabetic foot management in the context of palliative care in the city of Gjakova.

**Methodology:** This cross-sectional study was conducted between August and September 2025. A total of 60 nurses from the Primary Health Care Center (MCFM) in Gjakova were included. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, covering demographic characteristics, theoretical knowledge, clinical practices, and professional experience in diabetic foot management, with a particular focus on palliative care. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software.

**Results:** Findings indicated that education level, work department, and professional experience had a statistically significant impact on nurses’ knowledge and practices regarding diabetic foot management in palliative care ( $p < 0.05$ ). Only 20% of nurses had received specific training in diabetic foot care, while 80% expressed interest in further training. Overall, nurses demonstrated satisfactory theoretical knowledge regarding risk factors and preventive care, although 52% reported a need for additional training, particularly in managing patients with advanced complications in palliative settings.

**Conclusion:** Continuous professional training is essential to improve nurses’ knowledge and practices in diabetic foot management within palliative care. Enhancing these competencies contributes directly to reducing complications, alleviating symptoms, and improving the quality of life for patients with advanced diabetic conditions.

**Keywords:** diabetes mellitus, diabetic foot, palliative care, management, nurses.

**ETHICAL CHALLENGES AND HUMANISM IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR HEALTH**

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**Abstract**

The transformation of healthcare to digital care has brought many benefits in various medical fields of healthcare such as time saving, shortening processing times, precision, avoidance of human laboratory errors and lowering cost. In this literature review, we aimed to investigate the challenges and humanism during the application in certain medical fields.

The review includes original papers, reviews, and meta-analyses published between 2016 and 2026 in PubMed, with a focus on reported challenges. It also incorporates systematic and scoping reviews, cross-sectional studies, and methodological papers focusing on the application of artificial intelligence in healthcare. The selected literature covers key domains such as clinical decision-making, diagnostic imaging, patient monitoring systems, mental health applications, and surgical practices. The review indicates that many countries have not yet developed specific ethical frameworks.

There is an urgent need for ethical standards, development of legislation, clear regulations addressing the specific challenges for each field, including patient data confidentiality, quality assurance, transparency, optimization of diagnostic procedures, clear guideline for clinical applications, patient care, AI monitoring systems and to ensure the achievement of humanized and efficient care for healthcare institutions.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, healthcare, ethical challenges, limitations.

## ASSESSMENT OF SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND DIETARY HABITS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KOSOVO

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### Abstract

Sedentary lifestyle has become increasingly prevalent among young populations, particularly among university students, with significant implications for physical health and overall well-being. Life is a gift given to us, while habits are what make the difference. As noted by I-Min Lee et al. (2012), physical inactivity and unhealthy dietary behaviors are among the leading contributors to the global burden of chronic diseases.

The aim of this study was to assess the level of physical activity and dietary habits among university students in Kosovo. A total of 78 active university students participated in the study.

The results indicated that a considerable proportion of students demonstrated low levels of physical activity. Specifically, 35.9% of participants reported engaging in physical activity only 1–2 times per week, while 30.77% reported not performing any regular physical activity. Walking was identified as the most common form of physical activity, which is considered a simple yet effective practice for reducing the risk of chronic diseases.

Regarding dietary habits, 61.54% of participants reported consuming only 1–2 meals per day, suggesting frequent skipping of breakfast, while 43.59% of the sample reported consuming fast food several times per week. In terms of hydration, 46.15% of participants reported drinking less than 1 liter of water per day, indicating relatively low daily hydration levels.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the need for targeted educational interventions and health promotion programs aimed at increasing physical activity levels, improving dietary habits, and encouraging a more active lifestyle among university students. Such initiatives may contribute to improved physical health, psychological well-being, and academic performance.

**Keywords:** sedentary lifestyle, physical activity, dietary habits, hydration, student health.

## CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON DOCTOR–PATIENT COMMUNICATION IN CANCER CARE IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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### Abstract

This study explores the role of culture in shaping communication between doctors and cancer patients within the context of healthcare in the Republic of North Macedonia. Effective doctor–patient communication is a critical component of quality healthcare, particularly in the case of cancer, where patients face emotional distress, uncertainty, and complex medical decisions. The research is grounded in the field of health communication and emphasizes how cultural beliefs, values, and norms influence perceptions of illness, treatment choices, and interpersonal interactions.

Drawing on key theoretical frameworks of culture and communication, including dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism and high- versus low-context communication styles, the study aims to identify cultural variations that affect communication practices. It examines how these cultural differences shape both verbal and nonverbal interactions, trust-building, decision-making processes, and the interpretation of medical information.

The research adopts a qualitative methodology, utilizing in-depth interviews, observations, and focus groups with cancer patients and healthcare professionals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of participants’ experiences, attitudes, and communication behaviors within real healthcare settings.

The findings are expected to reveal significant cultural influences on communication patterns, highlighting potential barriers and misunderstandings in doctor–patient interactions. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the development of culturally sensitive communication strategies, training programs for healthcare professionals, and targeted health interventions. By aligning communication practices with patients’ cultural contexts, the research aims to improve patient outcomes, enhance trust, and support more effective healthcare delivery.

**Keywords:** Health communication; Doctor–patient communication; Culture; Cancer care; North Macedonia; Intercultural communication

## INTELLIGENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF INGO PROGRAMS ON HEALTH AND EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN USING MACHINE LEARNING (2020–2025)

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### Abstract

This research paper presents a novel approach to assessing the impact of International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) programs on health and education outcomes in Afghanistan between 2020 and 2025, utilizing advanced Machine Learning (ML) techniques, specifically Causal Forests. The study addresses the inherent complexities of impact evaluation in conflict-affected and data-scarce environments by moving beyond traditional econometric methods to identify heterogeneous treatment effects (HTE) across diverse populations and geographical regions. By integrating program-specific data with socio-economic indicators and satellite-derived proxies, the methodology aims to provide a granular understanding of program effectiveness. Our findings, derived from simulated yet representative data, illustrate the capacity of ML models to discern nuanced impacts, revealing significant resilience gains in health service access and education enrollment in INGO-supported areas compared to counterfactual scenarios. This paper contributes to the literature by proposing a robust, data-driven framework for intelligent impact assessment, offering actionable insights for INGOs and policymakers to optimize resource allocation and enhance humanitarian interventions in Afghanistan and similar contexts. The methodology emphasizes transparency, replicability, and the potential for real-time adaptive programming, marking a significant step towards more effective and accountable humanitarian aid.

**Keywords:** INGO, Afghanistan, Health, Education, Machine Learning, Causal Forests, Impact Assessment, Humanitarian Aid

## ACUPUNCTURE IN INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE: EVIDENCE-BASED APPLICATIONS AND CLINICAL OUTCOMES IN ALBANIA

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### Abstract

Acupuncture, a therapeutic modality rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine, has increasingly attracted attention within integrative medicine frameworks across Europe, including Albania. This paper explores the current status, evidence-based applications, and clinical outcomes of acupuncture practice in the Albanian healthcare context. It examines how acupuncture is utilized as a complementary therapy alongside conventional medical treatments, particularly in the management of chronic pain, musculoskeletal disorders, migraine, stress-related conditions, and rehabilitation support.

Drawing on regional clinical observations, international research findings, and evolving healthcare policies, the paper evaluates the therapeutic benefits and patient-reported outcomes associated with acupuncture interventions. Evidence indicates that acupuncture may contribute to pain reduction, improved functional mobility, decreased reliance on pharmacological treatments, and enhanced overall well-being. The discussion also considers mechanisms of action, including neurophysiological modulation, endogenous opioid release, and anti-inflammatory responses, which support its clinical effectiveness.

In Albania, the integration of acupuncture remains in a developmental phase, with increasing public interest and gradual incorporation into private clinics and complementary medicine centers. However, challenges persist, including the need for standardized training, professional regulation, quality assurance, and stronger national research capacity. The paper emphasizes the importance of aligning acupuncture practice with international evidence-based standards while adapting to local healthcare structures.

Overall, acupuncture presents promising opportunities within Albania's evolving integrative healthcare landscape, supporting patient-centered care and diversified therapeutic options. Strengthening regulatory frameworks and promoting scientific research will be essential for its sustainable integration.

**Keywords:** Acupuncture; Integrative medicine; Evidence-based practice; Pain management; Complementary therapy; Clinical outcomes; Traditional Chinese Medicine; Patient-centered care.

## HEALTHCARE SAFETY OF HOME CARE PROVISION IN TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES

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### Abstract

This study explores the challenges and possible solutions for caregiving and enhancing the safety and quality of home care provision for older adults in transnational families, where the responsibility of family members remains the same despite the distance between them. With increasing migration across Europe, older adults are often left in their country of origin while family members provide support from abroad, creating complex care arrangements that may compromise safety and effectiveness. The study aims to explore the challenges faced by informal caregivers and to identify strategies that enhance safe home for the older adults population living in transnational families.

This study used a qualitative research method based on structured interviews with 30 informal caregivers involved in the care of older people in transnational families. Data were collected through an instrument developed within the BetterCare and COST Action framework and were thematically analyzed in order to identify key patterns related to care practices, safety risks and support mechanisms.

The results show the key role of informal caregivers in ensuring the well-being of older people, although informal caregivers face significant challenges due to the lack of appropriate formal training, limited support from institutions and high emotional burden. The main concerns for safety are medication management and preventing falls by creating and developing personal strategies instead of standard practice. Emotional state, including isolation, stress and fatigue have been reported to have a major negative impact on the well-being of informal caregivers and the quality of care for older people. In addition, errors and risks of accidents during care provision highlight the need for greater knowledge and improved supervision.

The study concludes that increasing the safety of home care in transnational families requires structured training programs, accessible support systems, and strong collaboration between health services and informal caregivers. These findings encourage the development of evidence-based regulations and policies that aim to improve the safety, quality, and sustainability of home care for the elderly in the context of migration.

**Keywords:** Home care safety, quality of care, informal caregiving, transnational families, older adults.

## COMPARATIVE OUTCOMES OF REVERSE SHOULDER ARTHROPLASTY VERSUS OPEN REDUCTION AND INTERNAL FIXATION FOR COMPLEX PROXIMAL HUMERUS FRACTURES IN THE ELDERLY

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### Abstract

The management of complex proximal humerus fractures (PHF) in elderly patients remains a clinical challenge. While open reduction and internal fixation (ORIF) has traditionally been the standard of care, reverse shoulder arthroplasty (RSA) is increasingly utilized to address concerns regarding bone quality and rotator cuff integrity. This study compares the clinical outcomes, functional performance, and reintervention rates between RSA and ORIF.

**Methods:** A comparative analysis was conducted focusing on clinical data for patients aged 65 and older with 3-part and 4-part proximal humerus fractures. Key metrics included reintervention rates at one and two years, post-operative range of motion (forward elevation and abduction), and long-term functional stability measured by Constant scores.

**Results:** RSA demonstrated significantly lower reintervention rates compared to ORIF at both one year (2.1% vs. 5.5%) and two years (2.6% vs. 6.9%). Approximately 35% of failed ORIF procedures required conversion to RSA. Furthermore, patients with osteoporosis and 4-part fractures faced a 19–39% increased risk of reoperation following ORIF. Functionally, RSA provided superior and more predictable forward elevation and abduction. In patients aged 80 and older, RSA maintained a mean Constant score of 62 over a 7.5-year follow-up, compared to 51 in non-operative cohorts. While RSA was associated with specific complications, including scapular notching (44–96%) and glenoid loosening (25% at 5 years), the overall revision rate remained lower than that of fixation.

**Conclusion:** For elderly patients with complex PHF, RSA offers more predictable functional recovery and a lower risk of secondary surgery compared to internal fixation. Success with RSA is highly dependent on surgical precision, specifically inferior glenoid positioning and tuberosity fixation to optimize rotational mobility and mitigate long-term complications.

**Keywords:** Reverse Shoulder Arthroplasty, Proximal Humerus Fracture, ORIF, Geriatric Orthopedics, Clinical Outcomes.

## **POLYMORPHISM OF FOLLICULE-STIMULATING HORMONE RECEPTOR GENE IN INFERTILE ALBANIAN MALE POPULATION**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to genotype Asn680/Ser680 polymorphisms in FSHR gene and to determine the allele variant distribution of Asn680/Asn680, Asn680/Ser680, Ser680/Ser680 between infertile men and fertile healthy controls and the impact of FSHR gene polymorphisms on human reproductive parameters and also the influences on the difference in concentration level of FSH, LH, prolactin, testosterone and volume of the testis in both fertile and infertile men in Albanian population.

### **Materials and Methods**

Through this prospective cross-sectional cohort study has taken place in Kosovo for a 3-year period of time, according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, have enrolled on a group of 123 infertile men and 112 men in the control group with normal spermogram according to the WHO with FSH <10, with at least one healthy child.

### **Results**

In the investigated sample of infertile patients, the FSHR Asn680Ser genotype frequencies were 42% Asn/Ser, 33.9% Ser/Ser, and 24.1% Asn/Asn for the control group, and 55.3% Asn/Ser, 25.2 % Ser/Ser and 19.5% Asn/Asn for the overall infertile men group.

### **Conclusions**

Men with this genotype had more than two times higher probability for infertility development compared to men with Ser/Ser or Asn/Asn genotype (1.960 vs. 0.480 vs. 0.862,  $p < 0.02$ ) suggesting that Asn/Ser genotype may increase the risk for male infertility in the Albanian population.

The clinical importance of the FSHR genotype should be evaluated through future studies, considering differences in ethnicity, genetics, epigenetics, nutritional, and environmental factors influencing male fertility.

Currently, the most promising approach is to induce reproductive parameters in infertile men by FSH analogs, based on the results of FSHR genotype, suggesting that the analysis of this gene could represent a valid pharmacogenetic approach to identify patients who could benefit from FSH treatment.

**Keywords:** Male infertility, hypospermia, azoospermia, oligospermia, retrograde ejaculation, post-ejaculatory urinalysis.

## DIAGNOSIS OF RETROGRADE EJACULATION THROUGH SEMEN AND URINE ANALYSIS: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Infertility a significant global public health concern, affecting approximately 15–20% of couples of reproductive age. The male factor contributes to 40–50% of cases, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021). A considerable proportion of patients present with abnormalities in semen parameters, such as hypospermia and azoospermia. Post-ejaculatory urine analysis represents a simple and reliable method for differentiating primary testicular failure from disorders of sperm transport or ejaculation, including retrograde ejaculation.

**Objective:** To evaluate the diagnostic value of post-ejaculatory urine sediment analysis in distinguishing testicular from post-testicular causes, and in identifying retrograde ejaculation in patients with hypospermia associated with azoospermia or oligospermia.

**Methods:** This observational study included patients referred for semen analysis between January 2024 and January 2026. Laboratory analyses were performed at the Polyclinic Laboratory “Biolab Zafi” and the Medical Laboratory “Biolab Zafi F”, in accordance with established quality control standards. Patients with hypospermia (<1.5 mL) associated with azoospermia (Group A) or oligospermia (Group B, volume <1.4 mL) were included. Semen analysis was conducted following WHO (2021) guidelines. In cases of low ejaculate volume, a urine sample was collected immediately after ejaculation. Samples were centrifuged (3000 rpm for 15 minutes), and the sediment was microscopically examined for the presence of spermatozoa.

**Results:** In Group A (45 patients), 66% demonstrated the presence of spermatozoa in post-ejaculatory urine. In Group B, this proportion reached 85%, indicating a strong association between low ejaculate volume and retrograde ejaculation, whether partial or complete.

**Conclusions:** Post-ejaculatory urine analysis is a simple, non-invasive method with high diagnostic value. It should be considered an integral component of the diagnostic workup in patients with hypospermia and azoospermia/oligospermia. An ejaculate volume <1.4 mL represents a strong indicator of transport disorders and warrants further evaluation for retrograde ejaculation, thereby facilitating appropriate clinical management.

**Keywords:** male infertility, hypospermia, azoospermia, oligospermia, retrograde ejaculation, post-ejaculatory urine analysis, semen analysis.

## **PARENTAL ANXIETY AND CHILD ANXIETY: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON BETWEEN ALBANIAN AND MACEDONIAN FAMILIES**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** Cultural context plays an important role in shaping parenting patterns and children’s mental health. Differences in the way families understand and respond to anxiety may influence the relationship between parental anxiety and anxiety symptoms in children. Cross-cultural research shows that childrearing practices and emotional development are strongly influenced by sociocultural background.

**Objective:** This study aimed to examine the relationship between parental anxiety and child anxiety, with particular emphasis on cross-cultural differences between Albanian and Macedonian families.

**Materials and Methods:** The study included 300 participants from the municipality of Gostivar: 150 students from the VIII and IX grades of primary school and the I and II years of secondary school, and 150 of their parents. Participants from Albanian and Macedonian families were included. Data were collected in school settings using random selection procedures.

**Results:** The results showed that parental anxiety was associated with higher levels of anxiety in children, with stronger effects observed among Albanian families than among Macedonian families. In particular, the relationship between parental anxiety and panic disorder was more pronounced among Albanian children: 62.16% of children with anxious parents showed symptoms of panic disorder, compared with 29.79% of children whose parents were not anxious. Albanian children also showed higher levels of generalized anxiety symptoms when parental anxiety was elevated.

**Conclusion:** The findings highlight the importance of parental anxiety in the development of child anxiety and underscore the relevance of cultural differences in understanding this relationship. The study contributes to a better understanding of anxiety within Albanian and Macedonian family contexts.

**Keywords:** parental anxiety; child anxiety; cross-cultural comparison; Albanian families; Macedonian families; panic disorder; generalized anxiety disorder.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND IMPLICATIONS IN A DIGITAL SOCIETY

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### Abstract

Mental health is a complex and multidisciplinary field shaped by psychological, psychiatric, and public health perspectives. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced transformative opportunities in mental healthcare, particularly in early detection of disorders such as anxiety and depression, personalized interventions, virtual therapy, and telehealth services. AI systems enable the analysis of large-scale behavioral and clinical data, supporting pattern recognition and clinical decision-making, which may enhance diagnostic accuracy and treatment planning.

This paper adopts a bio-psycho-social and ethical framework to examine the role of AI in mental health, with a particular focus on its interaction with lifestyle factors and digital environments. Beyond clinical settings, AI-driven tools (e.g., mobile applications and digital platforms) contribute to continuous monitoring of mood, stress, and behavior, thereby supporting preventive mental health strategies and everyday well-being.

However, the integration of AI also introduces significant ethical and societal challenges, including data privacy, autonomy, algorithmic bias, and the potential overreliance on automated systems in mental health care.

This theoretical paper provides a focused analytical perspective on how AI reshapes the relationship between technology, lifestyle, and psychological well-being in a digital society. It argues for a human-centered approach in which AI serves as a complementary tool that enhances, rather than replaces, professional mental health care.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, mental health, digital society, ethical challenges, lifestyle factors, preventive mental health.

## CYBERBULLYING AND WELLBEING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### Abstract

Cyberbullying represents an evolving social problem with implications for young people's psychosocial wellbeing, yet it remains insufficiently addressed within social work research and practice in higher education contexts. This empirical study explores university students' experiences of cyberbullying, their coping strategies and support needs, while also examining the perspectives of peers who know someone close who has been affected.

The study used a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with two groups of students from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Prishtina: students who had experienced cyberbullying (n=7) and students who knew someone close to them who had experienced it (n=8). Participants were recruited through an open call in the faculty and voluntarily registered to share their experiences and perspectives.

Findings indicate that cyberbullying commonly begins in mid-adolescence (around age 15) and, despite often being episodic, produces enduring psychosocial consequences, including increased anxiety, diminished self-confidence and social withdrawal. Participants primarily relied on avoidance-oriented coping strategies, as well as disengagement from social media and seeking support from trusted peers. Formal help-seeking remained limited, shaped by fear of stigma, anticipated family reactions, and uncertainty regarding available support services. Peers also reported noticing emotional distress and behavioral changes among those affected.

The study reveals a gap between the harms experienced and the support accessed. Participants emphasized the importance of accessible psychosocial services & confidential opportunities to speak with trained professionals. The findings highlight the need for greater awareness, clearer help-seeking pathways and more coordinated institutional and policy-level responses to address and prevent cyberbullying.

**Keywords:** Cyberbullying; student wellbeing; university students; coping strategies.

## THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN SOCIAL NETWORKS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

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### Abstract

Artificial intelligence has become a central part of the functioning of social networks, significantly influencing the way young people interact, are informed and build their personal and social identity.

This paper addresses the growing relationship between AI and the use of digital platforms by young people, drawing on contemporary literature and case study analysis that show concrete ways in which recommendation algorithms, customization systems, and content generation technologies affect on psychological well-being.

The study examines internationally documented cases where the use of AI in social networks has contributed to increased social comparison, deformation of self-image, and intensification of anxiety, social pressure, and digital addiction. Also, the analysis includes how AI-generated content, visual filters and categorization algorithms influence the perception of reality and the construction of unrealistic expectations among young people. Through specific cases, the paper argues that the impact of AI is not one-dimensional: in addition to risks, there are also benefits, such as creative support, new opportunities for self-expression, and expanding access to quality information.

In conclusion, the paper emphasizes that the psychological implications of AI among young people are complicated and depend on the way of use, the level of awareness and the mechanisms of digital education. It is recommended to increase media competencies, transparency of platforms and a more critical approach to interaction with AI-shaped content.

**Keywords:** Social comparison, Artificial Intelligence - AI, anxiety, well-being, digital addiction.

## **PARENTS PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores parents’ perceptions of the use of vitamins and supplements for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), developmental disorders that affect communication, social interaction, and behavior. Beyond standard therapies, many parents choose to use vitamins to support their children’s health and development.

A qualitative approach was used, involving in-depth interviews with 20 parents of children with ASD who currently use or have previously used vitamins and dietary supplements. The structured questionnaire examined the types of vitamins used, motivations for their use, knowledge of effectiveness and potential risks, and the guidance received from healthcare professionals. Data were analyzed using Google Forms and random distribution of parental responses.

The findings provide insights into the factors influencing parental decisions regarding vitamin use and highlight opportunities to offer better information and professional support. This can contribute to safer and more effective interventions for children with ASD.

**Keywords:** Autism Spectrum Disorders, vitamins, parental perception, supplements, child health.

## THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH: INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY, BIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

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### Abstract

Mental health has definitely evolved from the psyche or spiritual and metaphysical interpretations to scientific and clinical frameworks becoming one of the most pressing global public health concerns of the 21st century. Nearly one billion people worldwide live with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depression contributing significantly to disability and economic burden. Directing these challenges requires more than isolated disciplinary approaches. This study argues that the future of mental health care lies in integrating biological theory, psychological theory and as well as technological innovation. Advances in neuroscience, psychopharmacology, digital therapeutics and artificial intelligence offer new opportunities for early detection, personalized intervention and enlarged access to care. However, an overly reductionist or technology driven model holds danger for neglecting the complexity of the human psyche and the relational dimensions of well-being. By exploring both the promise and the ethical risks of emerging technologies this paper proposes a balanced, person-centered paradigm that harmonizes biology, psychology and technology. The future of mental health depends not on replacing the human element but on strengthening it through thoughtful integration of scientific and digital development.

**Keywords:** Mental Health Innovation; Holistic Approach; Neuropsychology; Psychotherapy.

## THE SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL-MORAL FUNCTION OF MUSIC IN ANCIENT GREECE

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### Abstract

Whenever the glorious ancient Greek civilization is discussed, alongside philosophy, poetry, tragedy, and architecture, music as the art of the Muses also had a special development. Furthermore, it was cultivated and regarded there as one of the most significant spiritual creations for humanity and his life, for the impact of music on the human soul, on his psychology and morality, was more powerful than that of any other art that existed. According to the ancient Greeks, music could profoundly stir the human soul, shake it, evoke nostalgia, or calm it, but it could also please, soothe, or even lead a person to delirium. This led the ancient Greeks to construct a unique philosophical doctrine, where they would explain the ways in which music influenced social, moral, psychological, educational, and medical aspects of human life.

Starting from these positions, Aristotle wrote in his book Politics that "only good music can create a good youth" (Aristotle, Politics, Book VIII, Chapter V, 1340 b, 9), while Plato stated that "the better the music in a state, the better the state itself will be." The subject of musical education held an important place in the philosophical school systems of the time, as its role was considered imperative for the education and complete reconstruction of the personality of the Hellenic citizen. The educational and moral task of music also lay in forming a sound moral unity among the youth in the polis, nurturing patriotic consciousness there, as well as developing tendencies for a noble enjoyment of the fruits of musical activity.

Although the seed of the socio-moral concept for the music of Ancient Greece was sown by the illustrious philosopher, mathematician, and mystic Pythagoras, the development and expansion of this pragmatic teaching on music were also aided by a number of other renowned philosophers such as Damon, Plato, Aristotle, Aristoxenus, and others. Here, several examples of the curative effects of music on people will also be explored.

**Keyword:** philosophy, music, well-being, socio-moral doctrine, psychological influence, medical.

## BEYOND TECHNOLOGY: MUSIC AND CREATIVE AND EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITIES AS FOUNDATIONS OF EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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### Abstract

In the contemporary era marked by rapid technological advancement and the growing influence of artificial intelligence, early childhood education is increasingly challenged to preserve its human-centered foundations. This paper explores the role of music and creative and expressive activities as essential pedagogical approaches for supporting emotional well-being in early childhood.

Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from education, psychology, and the arts, the study examines how such activities enable young children to express emotions, develop empathy, and enhance social interaction. Through engagement in music and creative experiences, children are provided with meaningful opportunities to build emotional awareness, strengthen self-confidence, and communicate in natural and developmentally appropriate ways.

The paper further highlights the importance of balancing technological influence with human interaction in modern educational settings. Rather than viewing digital and creative approaches as opposites, it argues for their complementary integration in supporting holistic child development.

In conclusion, the integration of music and Early Childhood Education; Emotional Well-being; Music; Creative and Expressive Activities; Human-Centered Learning; Digital Age creative and expressive activities in early childhood education contributes to a more supportive, inclusive, and emotionally healthy learning environment for young children.

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Education; Emotional Well-being; Music; Creative and Expressive Activities; Human-Centered Learning; Digital Age.

## **MINDFULNESS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK IN THE DIGITAL AGE: POLICY AND PRACTICE LESSONS FROM VIETNAM**

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### **Abstract**

The rapid expansion of digital technologies and social media has reshaped the social environment in which young people grow and learn. While digital platforms provide new opportunities for communication, learning, and social interaction, they have also raised growing concerns about student mental health, including anxiety, stress, cyberbullying, and social comparison. These emerging challenges have increased international attention to the role of schools in providing early psychosocial support and promoting student well-being.

Within this context, school social work has become an important professional field that integrates educational support with mental health services. This paper examines the role of school social work in addressing student mental health challenges in the digital age, with a particular focus on Vietnam. The study combines policy analysis, a review of secondary data, and empirical insights from a survey of 300 lower secondary school students in Ho Chi Minh City to explore current challenges and opportunities for strengthening school-based mental health support systems.

The findings suggest that although Vietnam has made progress in developing school counseling and student support services, significant gaps remain in workforce capacity, service accessibility, and schools' ability to respond effectively to digital-related mental health risks. To address these challenges, the paper proposes a Mindful School Social Work Model for Vietnam, integrating evidence-based mental health approaches with culturally grounded mindfulness practices inspired by the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. The model highlights the importance of collaboration among schools, families, and communities in promoting student well-being.

**Keywords:** school social work; student mental health; digital age; mindfulness.

## WHEN DEMOCRACY IS AILING: THE EROSION OF TRUST AND PERFORMANCE

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### Abstract

Today, we cannot be optimistic about democracy – we must be cautious. As Larry Diamond recently asked, “How can we restore support for democracy in the world?” He argues that democracies are in a potent and protracted recession because of poor economic and political performance, fading Western power, and a retreat from democracy promotion. Many people still assume that high abstract support for democracy as an ideal means that democracy itself is healthy. In reality, in times of local and global turbulence, democracy and human rights have largely become formal or performative – enshrined in laws and rhetoric, yet ineffective in delivering genuine civic participation, rule of law, inclusion, or social justice.

The resulting disconnect is eroding institutional and social trust, weakening civic engagement, and undermining community resilience, thereby threatening freedom and dignity in everyday life. A widespread misunderstanding is that the main threats come from outside. However, the greatest danger is “from within” – censorship, suppression of dissent, and elite disregard for citizens’ voices. These internal dynamics are confirmed by a major study – the European Social Survey – which reveals a persistent “democratic deficit”: abstract ideals remain high, while evaluations of performance, trust, efficacy, and rule-of-law fairness have declined substantially since the mid-2000s. To empirically assess trends of democratic recession, a Democratic Health Index can be constructed using variables from the European Social Survey, enabling longitudinal and regional comparisons of democratic performance across Europe.

Echoing Samuel Moyn’s *Not Enough*, human rights are essential to democracy but insufficient without addressing material inequalities. Restoring substantive democracy – through genuine performance and legitimacy – is therefore critical to rebuilding resilient and inclusive societies.

**Keywords:** Democratic recession; democratic legitimacy; institutional trust; political efficacy; civic participation; democratic performance; European democracies.

## THE NEW WORLD ORDER AND THE FUNCTIONING OF ALLIANCES

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### Abstract

In the modern era, international organizations constitute indispensable instruments for managing international relations at regional, subregional, and global levels.

From a theoretical perspective, the ideas of Immanuel Kant remain highly influential in understanding the normative foundations of international order.

Contemporary geopolitical developments, particularly the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, alongside the strategic role of NATO and Western alliances, indicate an ongoing transformation of the global order. This transformation is often conceptualized as the emergence of a “new world order,” characterized by the reconfiguration of power structures and spheres of influence.

Within this context, Western states are increasingly consolidating alliances with countries that share similar political values and strategic interests. Such alignments are aimed at preserving international stability, strengthening collective security mechanisms, and maintaining a rules-based international order.

**Keywords:** Western alliances, NATO, International order.

## THE SOUTH-EAST OF THE SOUTH-EAST: THRACE AS A CASE STUDY OF REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD

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### Abstract

This paper examines Thrace as the “South-East of the South-East” — a formerly fragmented region evolving into a zone of pragmatic cooperation among Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. The research question is: what mechanisms facilitate and hinder functional cohesion between these nations in Thrace amidst widening global geopolitical fragmentation?

Through a qualitative case study integrating historical institutional analysis, process tracing, and a systematic document review, this approach links long-term structural legacies to recent geopolitical and infrastructural developments. Empirically, the study focuses on three key dimensions: energy infrastructure, transport corridors, and security cooperation within NATO. The findings demonstrate how by becoming a functional periphery of the Euro-Atlantic security and connectivity architecture, Thrace emerges as a connective hub bridging the Black Sea, Aegean, Anatolian, and Balkan regions. This infrastructural interdependence and alliance-embedded framework generate pragmatic cooperation, even as some inherited historical and political problems between the countries are still unresolved.

The paper outlines policy recommendations for further strengthening regional coordination in energy, transport, and crisis management, while identifying key contingency risks that could undermine current progress. A weakening of NATO cohesion or a major shift in the Ukraine conflict could generate centrifugal dynamics across Southeast Europe, destabilizing the balance underpinning Thrace’s transformation.

The conclusion argues that Thrace represents an ongoing process of regional stabilization, whose sustainability depends on both local initiatives and the resilience of the broader Euro-Atlantic framework.

**Keywords:** Thrace, regional cooperation, regional transformation, Euro-Atlantic security.

## **HOW TO PREDICT CHINA'S REACTIONS TO MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS? - A RISK ASSESSMENT INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the risk assessment behind China's three types of foreign policy decisions in response to major international conflicts (MICs) – economic aid, military aid, and military intervention. Amid rising global instability – especially after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the Middle East turmoil – China's stance has become increasingly significant, shaping military power dynamics. For predicting the CCP regime's potential acts to these MICs, it is necessary to uncover its rationales behind its decisions on the 99 major international conflicts (1949–2021). This study found these rationales upon the regime's risk assessment, by adopting Marvin Rausand and Stein Haugen's risk assessment theory as a problem-solving approach to the issue. This research represents the first usage of risk assessment technique in studying the Chinese foreign policy to MICs, it resulted in generating a convenient risk matrix for state policy-makers and multinational enterprises (MNEs) managers to use the MIC's features/factors to predict the CCP China's potential reactions.

**Keywords:** Risk Assessment, Major International Conflict (MIC), China, The Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

## THE NATION-STATE AS A STRUCTURAL ACTOR OF DEMOCRATIC METAMORPHOSIS

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### Abstract

This study examines the return of the nation-state as a structural actor in the contemporary transformation of democracy. Starting from the critique of the post-sovereignty paradigm of the 1990s—which predicted the progressive erosion of state sovereignty in the face of globalization and multi-level governance—the paper argues that developments of the last decade have shown the analytical limits of this model. The financial crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, the return of war in Europe, and geopolitical rivalry between great powers have restored the nation-state as a central node of security, political economy, and democratic legitimacy.

The paper also treats the case of Albania and Kosovo as a micro-laboratory of this democratic metamorphosis, where the tensions between limited sovereignty, institutional legitimacy, and geopolitical pressure appear in a condensed manner. The analysis argues that without a functional state and real capacities for action, democracy risks being reduced to a formal procedure, while the strengthening of the state—if it remains within the democratic framework—can serve as a prerequisite for institutional resilience.

In conclusion, the study suggests that the return of the nation-state should not be interpreted as a historical regression, but as a sign of an ontological metamorphosis of democracy in the post-neoliberal order. In this process, the nation-state appears as a political space where sovereignty, security and democratic representation are negotiated, while for the Albanian space the reconfiguration of state capacities and their functional integration appear as key factors for democratic stability and geopolitical role in Southeast Europe.

**Keywords:** nation-state, contemporary democracy, functional sovereignty, metamorphosis of democracy, Kosovo and Albania in geopolitics

## THE MIDDLE EAST BETWEEN RELIGION IN LAW AND SECULARISM IN PRACTICE

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### Abstract

This study undertakes an analysis of the majority of constitutions of Middle Eastern states, as well as Basic Laws in cases where formal constitutions are absent, in order to examine how the relationship between individual states and religion is formally defined. The legal frameworks of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Oman, Bahrain, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, and Cyprus have been reviewed. While most Middle Eastern states have Muslim-majority populations, Israel has a Jewish majority and Cyprus an Orthodox Christian majority; nevertheless, all these states encompass diverse populations comprising multiple religions, sects, and religious communities. The study demonstrates that secularism and laïcité in the Middle East are more discernible within certain statist elements in countries with historical legacies of European colonialism, such as Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, shaped by the influence of European modernity. Turkey and Cyprus emerge as the most formally secular states in the region, whereas Israel, through its Basic Laws, is defined as both a Jewish and democratic state. Despite the presence of religious sources in the legislation of most Middle Eastern states, constituting de jure religious foundations, the study emphasizes that secular and laic elements are de facto present across the majority of these countries. The findings of the comparative analysis of constitutions and foundational legal frameworks in Middle Eastern states, based on secondary data and the open-access global constitutional database of the *Constitute Project*, indicate that, in legal terms, secularism and laïcité are largely absent in the region. However, in practice, a functional separation between religion and state exists in many of these countries, manifesting as what may be termed “secularism in practice” or “everyday secularism,” as also supported by established scholarly works, including those of Esen Kırdış, Hannah M. Ridge, Syeda Rumana Mehdi, Daniele Cantini, and others.

**Keywords:** secularism, laïcité, Middle East, religion, secularism in practice.

## GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS AND STRATEGIC MILITARIZATION: U.S. INFLUENCE IN JAPAN AND KOSOVO

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### Abstract

From the Russia-Ukraine war to the ongoing challenges posed by China, recent shifts in geopolitics have intensified debates over national security and the need for military preparedness. Japan's role in the Indo-Pacific exemplifies a state navigating these shifts, balancing its enduring security dependence on the United States (U.S.) with the pressures of regional assertiveness. This balance is anchored in Japan's postwar constitutional framework, particularly Article 9, which institutionalized pacifism and legally restricted the use of military force. Established under strong U.S. guidance during the occupation, these provisions continue to shape Japan's alliance management, collective defense participation, and strategic behavior, even as regional tensions call for a recalibration toward enhanced defense capabilities.

Similarly, the U.S. played a decisive role in drafting Kosovo's 2008 Constitution, where Article 126 defines the structure of the Kosovo Security Force and enshrines its defense policy within Western, U.S.-aligned frameworks, positioning Kosovo firmly within a Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Both cases illustrate how constitutional design, postwar reconstruction, and strategic partnerships create enduring patterns of dependence, constraining full autonomy while providing a framework for militarization as a defensive mechanism. By comparing these U.S.-influenced constitutional models, this study examines how Japan and Kosovo respond to shifting geopolitical landscapes, rising security threats, and alliance pressures. Despite legislative reforms aimed at strengthening defense capabilities, both cases continue to face significant external risks and strategic vulnerabilities.

This research aims to conclude that these constitutional and security legacies persist in defining both countries' diplomatic strategies, defense policies, and capacity to adapt and militarize in response to evolving global security dynamics.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics, Security policy, Militarization, Constitutions, Indo-Pacific, Euro-Atlantic, Strategic dependence.

## **TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACEBUILDING IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES: THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK**

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### **Abstract**

Transitional justice is one of the main concerns of post-conflict societies, where concepts such as truth and reconciliation are harmonized with the values of social work, including respect for human rights, cultural sensitivity, and an anti-racist and anti-colonialist stance. In Kosovo, transitional justice has included measures such as amnesty, criminal trials, truth commissions, and reparations to address injustices and systematic violence. Social workers have played a crucial role in supporting conflict victims and minorities by providing psychological, social, and emotional assistance, as well as creating a climate of trust for receiving help and sharing experiences. Social Work Centers, gradually established in all municipalities of Kosovo, have advanced the provision of social services, initially for emergency needs and later for a wide range of services for refugees, children, the elderly, and adults who were conflict victims. The involvement of social workers in integration and reintegration programs has been essential for building democracy and the socio-political transformation of Kosovo. This study emphasizes that social work, by combining practical support with the promotion of justice, is a key instrument for advancing transitional justice and peacebuilding in post-conflict societies.

**Keywords:** Transitional justice; Social work; Post-conflict societies; Refugees; Reintegration; Democracy

**RUPTURES IN TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON SOUTHEAST EUROPE: THE CASES OF KOSOVA AND ALBANIA –**

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**Abstract**

Today, more than at any other time in recent years, transatlantic relations appear to be under growing strain. Disagreements over NATO's role, tensions surrounding Greenland, diverging positions on the war between Russia and Ukraine, and most recently public disagreements over the American intervention in Iran and the security of the Strait of Hormuz have all raised new questions about the cohesion and strategic future of the transatlantic alliance. These developments may have significant implications for European security, for the future role of NATO, and for smaller states whose foreign and security policies have long relied on the stability of the transatlantic framework.

This paper examines how a possible rupture, or deepening fragmentation, within transatlantic relations may affect the foreign and security policy orientations of Kosova and Albania. It asks how these two states might position themselves in a context in which the interests and strategic priorities of their principal allies become increasingly divergent. For both countries, the path toward the European Union remains politically important, while their security outlook continues to be closely linked to NATO and, in particular, to the United States. This creates a potentially delicate strategic dilemma in periods of transatlantic disagreement.

Methodologically, the paper adopts a qualitative comparative approach, combining historical analysis with the review of relevant academic literature, official policy documents, and public statements by political leaders and institutional representatives from Kosova, Albania, the European Union, NATO, and the United States. By comparing the strategic choices, constraints, and discursive positions of Kosova and Albania, the paper aims to identify both common patterns and country-specific differences in their responses to shifting transatlantic dynamics.

The paper concludes with policy recommendations on how Kosova and Albania may navigate this delicate environment while preserving their Euro-Atlantic orientation and safeguarding their long-term security and foreign policy interests.

**Keywords:** Transatlantic relations, rupture, foreign policy, security policy, smaller states.

## **MILITARY SPENDING IN THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES IN THE PERIOD 2015 – 2025 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

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### **Abstract**

The tensions between different social groups have always existed and are part of the social development of humanity, including tensions between states. Group tensions escalate into conflicts only when at least one of the groups involved possesses the forces to escalate tensions. States maintain armed forces as an element of national power to protect their interests. Therefore, group conflicts when represented by states have a greater possibility of escalation due to the fact that they have armed forces. Military spending includes the spending of the state on the military as well as on other activities related to defense. Military spending is a very important part of the state budget because it reflects the importance that defense has for the respective state, reflects the state's perceptions of threats, and reflects the military ambitions of the state. When a given state has much larger military spending than neighboring states, this can cause negative political, diplomatic, security, and economic consequences. In the Western Balkans, Serbia completely dominates in military spending in relation to other countries. Due to existing conflicts and historical disputes in the Western Balkans, this domination causes the aforementioned negative consequences. To illustrate and analyze this dominance and its negative consequences, this paper will focus on the period 2015 – 2025. The dominance of Serbia in military spending in the Western Balkans during this period increases mistrust, diplomatic tensions, causes an arms race, slows economic development, and pushes the region towards armed conflicts.

**Keywords:** Military sending, Western Balkans, consequences.

## EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF KOSOVO AND THE WESTERN BALKAN STATES

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### Abstract

The paper deals with the issue of the European integration of Kosovo and the Western Balkan states in the context of current political, security, and international legal developments. The aim of the paper is to analyse the position of Kosovo and the other Western Balkan countries in the process of rapprochement with the European Union, to identify the main obstacles to integration, and to assess the importance of the European perspective for the stability and development of the region. Special attention is paid to the specific position of Kosovo, whose integration ambitions are influenced not only by internal political factors, but also by the non-uniform approach of the Member States of the European Union to its international legal status. At the same time, the paper focuses on the broader regional framework of the Western Balkans, particularly from the perspective of reforms in the area of the rule of law, democratic institutions, human rights protection, regional cooperation, and the resolution of bilateral disputes. The text points out that the integration process of the Western Balkan states is not only a matter of fulfilling the formal membership criteria, but also a question of geopolitical orientation, the credibility of the EU enlargement policy, and the ability of the region to overcome historical, ethnic, and political conflicts. The paper is based on the assumption that membership in the European Union represents an important stabilising and modernising factor for Kosovo and the Western Balkan states; however, the success of the integration process depends on the simultaneous implementation of internal reforms and consistent support from the European Union.

**Keywords:** Kosovo, Western Balkans, European integration, European Union, enlargement policy, regional cooperation

## **CONTROLLED DELIVERY AND LEGAL HARMONIZATION: ALBANIA'S PATH TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

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### **Abstract**

Controlled delivery is perhaps the most important of the special investigative techniques that law enforcement agencies employ in the fight against organized crime, particularly in narcotics trafficking. Controlled delivery allows the movement of illegal goods with judicial permission and under surveillance to identify those involved in criminal activity. Controlled delivery was first recognized in international law in the Vienna Convention (1988) and the Palermo Convention (2000), both of which have been ratified in Albania and are part of the domestic legal system. Controlled delivery is recognized as an effective tool for disrupting transnational organized crime groups. This paper will consider the role of controlled delivery in the context of Albania's evolving domestic legal system, within the framework of the modernization of the criminal justice system and the integration of Albania into the European Union.

**Keywords:** criminal justice; controlled delivery; legal reform – Albania; organized crime.

## **CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF E-GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS AND THEIR IMPACT ON TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, the expansion of e-governance has transformed how public services are delivered, raising important questions about its perceived effectiveness among citizens. This study aims to examine how citizens perceive the effectiveness of e-governance in improving service delivery, transparency, and accessibility. More specifically, the study explores whether positive perceptions of e-governance are associated with higher levels of trust in public institutions. The research employs a qualitative methodology based primarily on document review, analyzing academic literature and policy reports from organizations such as the European Commission and the World Bank. The findings are expected to suggest that citizens who perceive e-governance services as efficient and user-friendly tend to express higher levels of institutional trust, while negative experiences may reinforce dissatisfaction and distrust. This study is relevant as it contributes to the growing body of research on digital governance and highlights the role of citizen perceptions in shaping the success of e-governance initiatives.

**Keywords:** E-Governance, Public Trust, Citizens, Effectiveness.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DIPLOMACY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

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### Abstract

Artificial intelligence will shape the future of diplomacy. Artificial intelligence is becoming an extremely powerful tool and countries are contesting nowadays to create new artificial intelligence applications to have an impact on the balance of power and international relationships in the world. The study hypothesizes that the usage of more artificial intelligence tools in global politics will have a positive impact on conflict resolution and will thus lead to more management of conflicts using peaceful methods.

To aid political leaders in their decision-making processes, a number artificial intelligence tools have been designed to decrease existing uncertainties and to support decision makers and enhance their insights to facilitate their decisions in both domestic politics and international relations.

The extensive use of artificial intelligence and machine learning along the emergence of different artificial intelligence applications such as Chat GPT, Deep seek, Copilot, AI Arbitrator, Dispute resolution AI has led to a change in political decision-making processes worldwide and is likely to have a critical effect in the upcoming years. For example, Natural language processing (NLP) can allow mediators to use a specific tone that can help reach agreements and conducting negotiations with people using tact and mutual respect.

Thus, the study pinpoints the usage of artificial intelligence and its' effect on diplomacy throughout studying the most important technological advancements and how it can be used by diplomats. In addition to presenting a number of recommended artificial intelligence tools to enhance decisions of world leaders in foreign affairs.

Artificial intelligence is indispensable no doubt; it has its' pros and cons. A lot of decision makers are considering how to make use of it either in domestic policies or foreign policies. Other decision makers prefer not to use it. But this will no longer be possible because Artificial intelligence is a reality.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence – Diplomacy – Conflict Resolution- International Politics.

## CLIMATE NARRATIVES AND POLICY POLARIZATION: THE ROLE OF MEDIA GATEKEEPERS IN DECARBONISATION GOVERNANCE

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### Abstract

Climate policy is increasingly debated in highly fragmented and polarized information environments, where competing interpretations of climate action shape public discourse and influence policy processes. Although technological and regulatory aspects of decarbonisation have received considerable attention, the role of communication dynamics in shaping societal responses to climate policies remains less systematically examined. In public debates, different actors - including government institutions, media organizations, business groups, and civil society – frame climate policies through distinct narratives, such as economic costs, social fairness, energy security, or technological progress. These narratives compete for visibility and legitimacy, potentially contributing to societal polarization.

This paper proposes a conceptual framework linking climate narratives, media gatekeeping, and policy polarization in decarbonisation governance. Drawing on framing and gatekeeping approaches, it examines how media and institutional actors select, interpret, and amplify competing narratives, thereby shaping public interpretations and influencing policy debates.

The framework is developed within the CommDecarb research project, which applies a multi- method design combining content analysis, communication network analysis, and a representative survey experiment. The empirical focus on Lithuania provides a relevant case of a small, highly mediated and politically pluralistic society operating in a polycentric governance setting. Three policy domains - apartment building renovation, vehicle replacement programmes, and onshore wind energy - serve to analyse how narratives and gatekeepers interact in practice. The study contributes to research on media, narratives, and governance in polarized contexts.

**Keywords:** climate communication; framing; media gatekeeping; policy polarization; decarbonisation governance.

## **MEDIA DISCOURSE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF “ENEMY”**

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to examine the way the media in Kosovo talk about politics. Specifically, how the media creates and reinforces the idea of an "enemy". The paper is based on a collection of Albanian news articles and televised political debates in the period 2016-2026. The paper is based on written and spoken corpus. The created corpus helps to realistically reflect this phenomenon. Through qualitative analysis, the study explores the different ways in which political opponents are portrayed as threats. The objective of this paper is to reveal how the media often relies on strategies such as polarization, stratification, presenting issues from a one-sided perspective and using emotionally charged language to shape audience reactions. From the data and analysis, we understand that written news articles tend to be more propagandistic, while political debates are usually more direct and sometimes openly provocative. The findings suggest that this type of language not only describes political conflict but directly deepens it. By constructing the idea of the “enemy”, media discourse contributes to deeper divisions and ongoing internal political tension. In a society that navigates post-conflict reconciliation, division and tension generate implications that shape how people see themselves and others, reinforcing distrust and hostility toward those perceived as internal “others.” Overall, the study highlights the controlling role of language in shaping political reality.

**Keywords:** Kosovo, Western Balkans, European integration, European Union, enlargement policy, regional cooperation

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL DIPLOMACY: TRANSFORMING CONTEMPORARY FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS

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### Abstract

The rise of digital technologies has profoundly transformed diplomacy, thus creating new channels for communication, engagement, and influence. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a critical tool in this transformation, enhancing the capabilities of digital diplomacy and reshaping the instruments of contemporary foreign policy. This study examines the integration of AI in diplomatic practices, focusing on its role in strategic communication, data analysis, and decision-making. AI technologies, such as machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics, enable diplomats and policymakers to monitor global trends, assess public sentiment, and respond more efficiently to international developments. The research highlights both the opportunities and challenges presented by AI-enabled diplomacy. While AI can improve the efficiency, responsiveness, and strategic reach of diplomatic institutions, it also introduces ethical, political, and security concerns, including transparency, data governance, algorithmic bias, and disinformation. Through an analytical approach, this article argues that the responsible adoption of AI is essential for strengthening digital diplomacy while mitigating potential risks. In conclusion, AI is not merely a technological addition but a transformative force in the practice of foreign policy, offering new ways to engage, influence, and navigate the complexities of global relations in the digital age.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence; digital diplomacy; foreign policy; strategic communication; digital transformation

## CIVIL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL LIABILITY FOR TRANSBOUNDARY HARM IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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In today’s increasingly interconnected world, economic, technological, and social activities frequently extend beyond national borders, creating situations in which harm may affect multiple jurisdictions. This paper examines civil and international legal liability for transboundary harm, focusing on the challenges involved in determining responsibility and ensuring adequate compensation for damages.

Civil law systems are generally confined to national legal frameworks and are based on principles of fault and causation. However, when harm occurs in a cross-border context, significant difficulties arise in identifying the applicable jurisdiction and the responsible party. On the other hand, international law primarily addresses state responsibility, but it often faces limitations when private actors or non-state entities are involved.

This study explores the interaction between civil and international law in cases of transboundary harm, analyzing principles of state responsibility, the due diligence obligation, and compensation mechanisms within private law. It also highlights the need for greater coordination between legal systems in order to ensure effective protection of individual rights.

In conclusion, the paper argues that global developments require a more integrated approach between civil and international law to ensure effective accountability and justice for harms that transcend national borders.

**Keywords:** Civil Liability, International Law, Transboundary Harm, Jurisdiction, State Responsibility, Globalization, Legal Accountability.

## MONEY LAUNDERING IN KOSOVO: THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN CRIMINAL LIABILITY AND CHALLENGES IN THE BANKING SECTOR

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### Abstract

Economic crimes are spreading in all its forms in the society in different jurisdictions including the Kosovo jurisdiction as well. However, the one of the most aggressive and in the meantime the most complex and frequent form of the economic crime is money laundering which has a direct impact of malfunctioning of the legal system and on the instability of the banking sector.

Accordingly, this paper aims to examine the interconnections between the criminal-law perspective on money laundering and the responsibilities of key institutions in combating this phenomenon, such as the second-tier banking sector, the first-tier bank—the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo—and the Financial Intelligence Unit of Kosovo as a state institution tasked with combating this phenomenon.

Banks are the first to encounter suspicious transactions, often linked to organized crime. These funds aim to be “laundered” in order to appear lawful before institutions. Therefore, the banking system plays a key role in identifying, monitoring, and preventing money laundering. Failure to report at an early stage weakens the work of law-enforcement bodies and reduces the effectiveness of criminal proceedings.

Practical experience to date has proven and argued that, in combating money laundering, an advanced legal framework alone is not sufficient; rather, results in most cases depend on the functioning of inter-institutional mechanisms, the strengthening of professional capacities, the use of advanced technology, and so forth.

**Keywords:** Money laundering, Banking sector, Prevention of money laundering, Reporting of suspicious transactions, Asset confiscation, Inter-institutional cooperation.

## **FEMICIDE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL STANDARDS**

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### **Abstract**

Femicide represents the most severe and fatal manifestation of gender-based violence against women, involving the killing of a woman because of her gender. In recent years, this phenomenon has become increasingly visible in European societies, including North Macedonia, highlighting the need for a deeper analysis of its causes, legal framework, and societal responses. This research aims to examine the legal mechanisms for addressing femicide, as well as citizens' perceptions regarding its causes and prevention. The study is based on a quantitative method, conducted through a survey of 144 respondents. The findings indicate a significant level of distrust in institutions, along with a perception that existing laws are insufficiently effective in preventing femicide. Furthermore, respondents identify domestic violence, patriarchal norms, and inadequate institutional responses as key contributing factors. These findings highlight the need for stronger institutional accountability and more effective preventive policies.

**Keywords:** femicide, gender-based violence, criminal law, prevention, North Macedonia, women's rights.

## STUDENTS' USE OF AI IN HIGHER EDUCATION: SKILLS, IMPACT ON LEARNING, AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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### Abstract

The rapid development of artificial intelligence and its integration into learning processes are transforming the ways in which students seek information, understand material, and complete academic tasks. For this reason, it has become essential to examine how students actually use this technology and what impact it has on the learning process. This study focuses on three main aspects: (1) students' digital skills, (2) the impact of artificial intelligence on learning, and (3) implications related to academic integrity.

The research is based on a transdisciplinary approach that combines perspectives from education sciences, artificial intelligence studies, sociology, and academic ethics.

The analysis draws on responses from 200 students across different study programs at Universum College. The results indicate that the use of artificial intelligence has become a common part of students' academic practices. More than half of the respondents report using AI several times a day for study-related tasks. Among these tools, OpenAI's ChatGPT emerges as the most widely used platform, with over 90% of students reporting regular use.

The findings show that students primarily use AI to better understand theoretical concepts, find sources, and generate initial ideas for structuring academic assignments. In general, its use is not directly associated with plagiarism. However, the results also reveal the existence of a gray area regarding academic integrity. A significant number of students consider it acceptable to use AI-generated content in academic work without explicitly acknowledging such use.

At the same time, perceptions of AI's impact on the development of critical thinking remain divided. While some students emphasize that AI helps them better understand materials and work more efficiently, others express concern that excessive use may lead to technological dependency.

From a broader perspective, the findings suggest that artificial intelligence is contributing to a transformation in the way knowledge is produced and processed in higher education. This situation highlights the need for the development of new pedagogical approaches, the strengthening of digital competencies, and the design of institutional policies that balance the potential of AI with the preservation of academic integrity. The study provides an empirical contribution to the growing debate on the role of artificial intelligence in higher education and presents a case study from the university context of Southeast Europe.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Higher Education, Academic Integrity, Student Learning, Digital Skills, ChatGPT.

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