

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

The Summer 2027 issue of the Journal of *Country Studies* has been released with a novel approach in the realm of academic publishing. In this issue, we have taken a step beyond geographical and linguistic borders to open a new window onto global knowledge. From now on, English-language articles in this journal will be published with a Persian abstract, and Persian-language articles will be published with an extended English abstract or the full article in English. This strategic change is a significant step toward the internationalization of the journal and the provision of a platform for scholarly dialogue between Iranian researchers and the global scientific community. Undoubtedly, this path will come with its challenges, but we are determined, with the support of esteemed authors, reviewers, and readers, to transform *Country Studies* into a reputable reference for the exchange of new ideas in the field of area studies and international affairs.

The current issue comprises a valuable collection of original research, each opening a new window onto a better understanding of the complexities of the contemporary world. With an interdisciplinary approach, these articles emerge from diverse geographical and cultural contexts and cover topics ranging from local development and geopolitical conflicts to technological transformations and environmental challenges.

The first article in this issue, titled "Rural tourism and inclusive local development in Goa, India: A multidimensional assessment of economic and social impacts", written by Apurva Sweeten Bandodcar, Jyoti Sunil Naik, and Filipe Rodrigues e Melo, addresses a critical issue in development policy. This research reveals developmental disparities between coastal and inland regions of Goa and demonstrates how aggregated state-level statistics obscure local dualities. The findings of this article, emphasizing the correction of methodological errors, have direct implications for inclusive tourism policymaking.

Next, the article "Intervention, influence, and resources: Foreign actors and strategic convergence in the Angolan civil war", by Shalini Singh, and Nagalaxmi M Raman, offers a strategic look at one of contemporary Africa's most complex conflicts. By analyzing the role of external actors and their strategic convergence, this research provides a theoretical framework for understanding proxy conflicts during the Cold War era. Understanding these dynamics remains essential for analyzing ongoing conflicts in various regions of the world today.

In the digital age, the article "Social Networking Sites (SNSs): A blessing or a curse for tertiary-level students in Bangladesh", by Abu Sayed Md. Nazmul Haider, examines the dual impacts of modern communication technologies. Adopting a descriptive-analytical

approach, this research shows that social networks, beyond their intrinsic nature, are contingent technologies whose value depends on usage patterns, digital literacy, and institutional support; a finding worthy of consideration for educational policymakers across all developing nations.

In the emerging field of technology governance, the article "AI governance in financial systems: A PGCC and emerging markets convergence framework for accountability, sovereignty, and operational control", written by Hasan Mohamed Husain Alaali from Bahrain, analyzes one of the most challenging contemporary issues. The author, by proposing a framework for the convergence of AI governance, addresses the fundamental question of how financial systems in different regions can balance accountability, national sovereignty, and operational control in the age of artificial intelligence. Given the global focus on AI regulation, this article holds significant strategic importance.

Supriya Agrawal, Mohit Kumar, Pravin Agrawal, and Himanshu Rastogi, in the article "Beyond the tax net: The real effects of GST on India's fiscal landscape", examine one of the largest tax reforms in India's history. This review study analyzes the real consequences of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system beyond its purely revenue dimensions. Given recent developments in trade policies and India's efforts to reduce taxes to boost domestic demand, a deep understanding of the economic effects of this tax system is doubly important.

In the field of environmental studies, the article "Technology costs, renewable energy development, innovation, and CO₂ emissions in Central Asia and the South Caucasus", co-authored by Amir Mohammad Esmaeili Korani, Otabek Kasimov, Mirzohidjon Mukhammadaliyev, and Qazikhan Musakhanov, investigates the factors affecting carbon emissions in a strategic region. By emphasizing the role of technology costs and innovation, this research addresses a topic consistent with, and complementary to, similar findings regarding the positive impact of tourism on carbon emissions in the absence of clean energy adoption.

Arina A. Surkova, in her article "Economic security through trade policy: A multi-indicator framework for regional economic blocs in Greater Eurasia", offers a novel framework for measuring economic security at the macro-regional level. This article is particularly valuable for researchers in the field of international political economy, especially given the current fundamental transformations in the global economic order.

Furthermore, the article "Climate change-induced livelihood shifts and adaptation strategies among the Oraon Indigenous community in Northern Bangladesh", by Md Sobur Hossain, Nishat Tasnim, and Md Zahidul Islam, portrays the human face of climate change. Focusing on indigenous and vulnerable communities, this

research demonstrates how climate change has transformed their livelihoods and what strategies they have adopted to adapt to this crisis. This article reveals a slice of the harsh reality that many communities around the world are grappling with.

Finally, the article "Trust and climate action in banking: Evidence from 340 banks across 33 countries", by Le Hoang Vu, falls within the domain of finance and sustainable development. By analyzing extensive data from banks around the world, this research examines the role of trust in shaping climate actions within the banking system. At a time when the role of the financial sector in combating climate change is becoming increasingly prominent, the findings of this article hold particular significance.

In conclusion, I extend my sincere gratitude to all esteemed authors, reviewers, and colleagues who contributed to the publication of this issue. I hope that the collection of articles presented here will receive the attention of the academic community and pave the way for novel and applied research in the field of country studies. I highly recommend these articles to all researchers, policymakers, and those interested in developments across various regions of the world. Undoubtedly, a deeper understanding of these societies will bring us closer to a more just and peaceful world.

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