Il giornale indipendente del CdL in Economia e Commercio

# CLEC MAGAZINE

*YOUNG WRITERS FOR WORLD ECONOMIC CHALLENGES*

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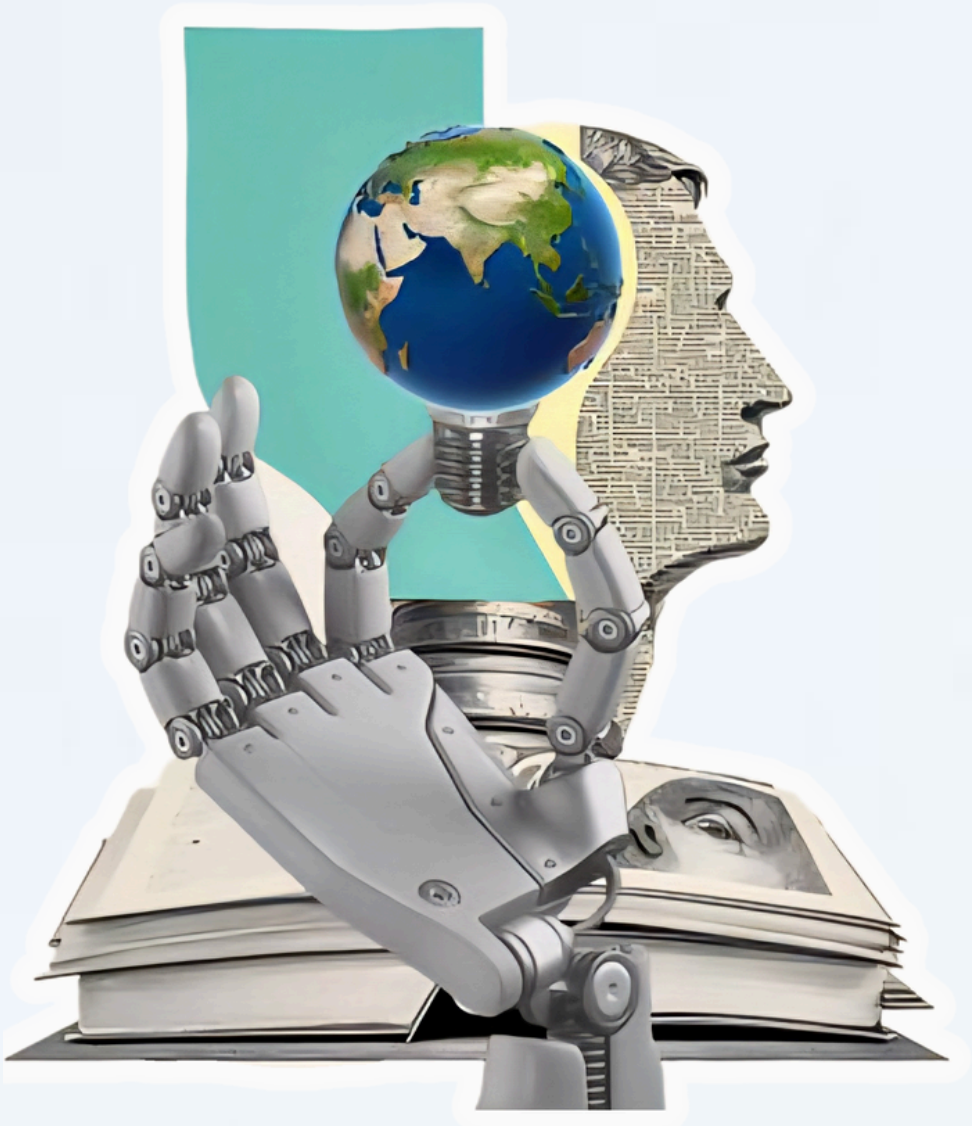
## L'INTELLIGENZA ARTIFICIALE NEL GIORNALISMO:

### LA SFIDA DELL'ETICA E DELLA FIDUCIA



## INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR SERGIO NISTICÒ:

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# INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR SERGIO NISTICÒ: THE REPRESENTATIVE OF UNICAS WITHIN EUT+

Sergio Nisticò is Professor of Economics and has served as Rector's Delegate (Vice Rector) for International Relations since 2021. In this role, following an initial phase of analysis of the European Universities Initiative (EUI) launched by the European Commission in 2019, Professor Marco Dell'Isola, Rector of the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, appointed him in October 2022 to lead an internal working group to explore the possibility for UNICAS to join the EUI. The group's task had to interact with Professor Timothée Toury, Secretary General of the European University of Technology (EUt+), which at the time was preparing its application for the 2023 call to enter the second phase of the Initiative while incorporating a ninth member.

This interaction proved successful: the eight Rectors of EUt+ selected UNICAS as the new member from among several European universities including a number of prestigious Italian institutions seeking to join the alliance. The proposal of EUt+, named ACCELERATE, has been awarded with a striking appraisal of the European Commission and EUt+ is now recognized and regularly invited in Bruxelles as one of the success stories of the EUI, now constituted by 65 Alliances including all most important European Higher Education Institutions. Professor Nisticò currently serves as the Principal Representative of UNICAS within EUt+, sharing responsibility for coordinating the alliance's complex and demanding activities with the Project Manager, Monica Fragnoli, who is well known to readers of CLEC Magazine in her capacity as Head of the Didactic Secretariat of the Economics, Business, and Management programmes of the Department of Economics and Law.

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**Could you briefly introduce the EUt+ Alliance and its main objectives for students and researchers?**

EUt+ is an alliance of nine European universities dedicated to creating a single, integrated institution: the European University of Technology. Our shared ambition is for each member to serve as a national campus within this unified European framework. The alliance includes:

- Université de Technologie de Troyes (France)
- *Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena (Spain)*
- Technical University of Sofia (Bulgaria)
- Riga Technical University (Latvia)
- Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences (Germany)
- Cyprus University of Technology (Cyprus)
- Technological University Dublin (Ireland)
- University of Cassino and Southern Lazio (Italy)
- Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (Romania)

The mission of EUt+ is to combine academic and research excellence with human development. The aim is to empower students and researchers to become leaders capable of addressing global climate, societal, and economic challenges. This is achieved by integrating advanced technological skills with social responsibility, inclusion, and cultural awareness, a uniquely european approach that directs innovation toward fostering human wellbeing. This ambitious vision is supported by approximately 400 academic and administrative staff members working collaboratively across borders to transform this project into a tangible daily reality for our academic communities.

**What concrete study opportunities does EUt+ currently offer to students (e.g. joint programmes, mobility schemes, short courses)?**

The core of our student-centered activities is organized under Work Package A3 of the ACCELERATE proposal, which focuses on European Curricula Structure and Student Mobility. The activities are organized under three main tasks, offering three primary pillars of opportunity:

TA3.1: Transition Towards European Curricula

TA3.2: Semester Physical Student Mobility Between Partners

TA3.3: Work-Based Learning (Traineeships and Internships)

The work done within all these three tasks have already generated concrete opportunities for our students.

TA3.1: Our Rector, Marco Dell'Isola, recently signed an agreement authorizing the issuance of the EUt+ certificate. This certificate is awarded concurrently with the national degree and serves as official recognition of a student's international mobility and academic achievements across EUt+ campuses. The list of the requirements to get the certificate is available here.

TA3.2: To simplify semester-long

'clusters" of study programs. These clusters feature pre-defined automatic recognition agreed upon by all participating program coordinators. Students can use a dedicated mobility tool to select courses that are guaranteed to be recognized across the different partner universities within their cluster in each semester.

TA3.3: Students have the opportunity to apply for internship positions across the nine campuses. These placements include both work-based traineeships and high-level research experiences within all participating EUt+ laboratories.

Let me also mention the opportunities offered by Short-Term and Faculty Mobility.

The first are offered by Blended Intensive Programs (BIP): UNICAS students can participate in these short-term mobility formats, which serve as an accessible entry point to semester-long international experience; a pathbreaking opportunity for UNICAS students.

The second relates to the teacher mobility program: following an initiative by UNICAS, faculty members are also moving across campuses. For instance, Professor Jegors Fjodorovs (Riga Technical University) has taught at UNICAS, and Professor Heiko Rochholz (Hochschule Darmstadt) is scheduled to teach modules in Global Economy and Business in the coming semester; another pathbreaking opportunity to enjoy diversity and richness of teaching methods for our students. The combination of students' and teachers' mobility is a clear sign that the challenging construction of a European University is on the right way.

**How can students benefit academically and professionally from studying within an EUt+ partner university compared to traditional exchange programmes?**

The creation of a true European University, spread across nine campuses throughout Europe, is fostering a strong sense of belonging among academic and administrative staff, as well as among student representatives. This shared identity translates into a genuine commitment to welcoming students from EUt+ partner institutions into the local academic community, an experience that is difficult to replicate within traditional exchange programmes. Moreover, the automatic recognition of credits within EUt+ significantly reduces the uncertainty associated with partial or delayed recognition, an issue that unfortunately still arises in traditional Erasmus mobility schemes. Finally, the opportunity to obtain an EUt+ certificate alongside the national degree potentially evolving into a European Degree, which the European Commission plans to introduce from mid-2026 represents a further and substantial advantage compared to traditional exchange programmes.

**Are there specific opportunities within EUt+ for early-career researchers or doctoral candidates? Could you give a few examples?**

Yes, EUt+ offers a wide range of concrete opportunities for early-career researchers and doctoral candidates, primarily through Work Package A5 (Research and Research-Oriented Education) of the ACCELERATE proposal. This work package involves around forty researchers from the nine partner universities and aims to create a genuine European Research Area within EUt+. WP A5 is structured around four tasks:

TA5.1: Common Research Strategy and Roadmap

TA5.2: Research Institutes

TA5.3: Research office

TA5.4: Graduate Research School

Together with WPA3, WPA5 is one of the areas where EUt+ is clearly distinguishing itself from other European university alliances, and UNICAS is playing a key role in this process. Within TA5.1, partners are defining a common research strategy that coordinates each university's strong links with Technology Transfer and Third Mission activities directed toward their local territories (developed within WPA6) at the European level. This coordination strengthens EUt+'s role in disseminating research outcomes, guided by the principles of open science and human-centred innovation. Importantly, EUt+ researchers including those at an early-career stage can now formally display a double affiliation, signaling both their home institution and their membership in the European University of Technology. The UNICAS Academic Senate has recently encouraged researchers to adopt this practice, and major international research repositories, such as Scopus, now recognise EUt+ as a research institution an important asset for the careers of young researchers.

Significant progress is also being made within TA5.2, where thematic EUt+ research groups and institutes are already active. These structures substantially increase success rates in applications for European research funding, offering further support to early-career researchers. In this context, a new EUt+ Research Group on Business, Economics, and Technology is currently being established. All nine partners have committed substantial human resources from their local research offices to TA5.3, which aims to create a shared European research office responsible for identifying funding opportunities and supporting researchers throughout the entire application and project lifecycle. Finally, within TA5.4, EUt+ is developing common Doctoral and Graduate Research Schools, which represent one of the most attractive opportunities for students interested in pursuing a research-oriented career. As a concrete example, one of our PhD students is currently completing a doctorate under a cotutelle agreement with the Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena.

**How does EUt+ support interdisciplinary learning and research across different European institutions?**

This question brings me back to my first meetings with Timothée Toury, Secretary General of EUt+, when we discussed how UNICAS a comprehensive, generalist university could fit within what initially appeared to be a predominantly polytechnic European alliance. From the very beginning, Timothée emphasised what we have since experienced in practice: interdisciplinarity is one of the core features that EUt+ aims to embed across its educational course catalogue, as well as within its research groups and institutes. In this respect, UNICAS was expected to play and has indeed played a significant role.

It is therefore no coincidence that the first EUt+ Research Institute to be established was the European Culture and Technology (ECT) Lab. This institute represents genuine research "mosaic," bringing together philosophers, historians, engineers, artists, and scholars from the social sciences and humanities to discuss and propose solutions inspired by Europe's human-centred intellectual tradition to the many societal challenges we are likely to face in the near future.

I would also like to highlight UNICAS's proposal to launch a sort of Manifesto on Business, Economics, and Technology, designed as a permanent interdisciplinary forum in which legal scholars, economists, and business experts regularly engage with engineers working on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. These technological frontiers promise significant gains in human well-being through productivity growth and the reduction of low-skilled and low-paid jobs; at the same time, they pose serious risks in terms of rising inequalities and poverty. Europe and EUt+ in particular aims to develop its own space and agenda to address these challenges through interdisciplinary dialogue and research.

**How does the EUt+ Alliance contribute to building a truly European academic experience for students and researchers?**

A truly European academic experience is already taking shape. Applications for Erasmus mobility are steadily increasing, in parallel with the growing number of mobilities directed toward EUt+ partner institutions. An increasing number of European students are now attending our engineering courses, and the forthcoming launch of the Bachelor cluster in Business, Economics, and Technology will further enrich our international environment by bringing together European peers with diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. This experience will be further strengthened by the arrival of teaching staff from EUt+ partner universities, as well as by the growing number of Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) being organized

across the alliance. However, the most significant innovation in the academic experience will stem from new forms of teaching, the adoption of innovative pedagogical approaches, and the ongoing effort to adapt and redesign the course catalogue in order to prepare future generations to address emerging societal and technological challenges. While this transformation is undoubtedly complex, EUt+ is at the forefront of this endeavor and benefits from clear and strong recognition by the European Commission.

**What advice would you give to students or young researchers who are interested in getting involved in EUt+ initiatives? I would offer three simple pieces of advice**.

First, visit the dedicated EUt+ section of the UNICAS website to get an overview of the many activities we are developing together with our partners. Second, get in touch with Antonio Rossi and Luigi Lo Mastro, who have been selected by the Students' Associations as the UNICAS representatives on the EUt+ Student Board. Third, feel free to contact either Monica Fragnoli or myself by email to share your interests, ideas, proposals, or any questions you may have. Student involvement is essential to move forward with such a challenging and ambitious endeavor.

# THE HIDDEN ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF OUR DIGITAL REVOLUTION

## BY ALESSANDRO VITTIGLIO

**Our digital lives feel weightless, but the infrastructure behind them is not. Data centers, AI systems, and electronic devices carry a staggering environmental toll, consuming enormous amounts of energy and water while generating massive amounts of e-waste that are difficult to recycle. This article explores the hidden costs of our cloud-based world and asks a crucial question: can technological progress coexist with environmental sustainability, or will we keep pretending the cloud has no weight until it's too late?**

Every time we stream a video, ask an AI chatbot a question, or scroll through social media, we participate in what seems like a weightless, virtual world. But behind the screens is a physical infrastructure of data centers, undersea cables, and electronic devices that bears a deep environmental toll-one that threatens to undermine our climate goals even as technology promises solutions to our most pressing challenges.

According to the International Energy Agency, global electricity consumption by data centers is expected to more than double between 2024 and 2030, reaching 945 terawatt-hours (TWh) by the end of the decade, which is roughly equivalent to Japan's entire annual electricity consumption today. This is largely due to artificial intelligence, which is changing not only how much energy we consume but also how we work and communicate. Currently, AI accounts for approximately 15 percent of data center power usage; however, by 2030, this figure is

expected to reach 35-50 percent, according to the IEA's Energy and AI analysis.

According to the IEA Executive Director, Dr. Fatih Birol, AI represents one of the most significant developments in the energy sector today; however, policymakers and markets still lack adequate tools to fully assess its wide-ranging impacts. His words underscore a troubling reality: we have built a digital economy at a faster pace than we can measure its costs.

The energy demands are staggering, but water consumption tells an equally alarming story. According to an IEA report on Energy and AI, an average 100-megawatt data center consumes approximately 2 million

1. INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA), "ENERGY DEMAND FROM AI – ENERGY AND AI – ANALYSIS" HTTPS://WWW.IEA.ORG/REPORTS/ENERGY-AND-AI/ENERGY-DEMAND-FROM-AI
2.CARBON BRIEF, "AI: FIVE CHARTS THAT PUT DATA-CENTRE ENERGY USE – AND EMISSIONS – INTO CONTEXT" (SEPTEMBER 2025) HTTPS://WWW.CARBONBRIEF.ORG/AI-FIVE-CHARTS-THAT-PUT-DATA-CENTRE-ENERGY-USE-AND-EMISSIONS-INTO-CONTEXT/

liters of water per day. Data centers consume approximately 560 billion liters annually, with estimates rising to around 1,200 billion by 2030 as tech firms build bigger facilities stocked with advanced AI computing chips that run hot. All this water-intensive cooling is going on precisely where resources are most in shortage.

More than 160 new AI data centers have sprouted across the United States in the last three years, concentrated in places where competition for scarce water resources is intense, as documented by Bloomberg's analysis. Communities from Chile to the Netherlands have staged protests, while Uruguay took the unusual step of temporarily revoking Google's authorization for a planned 200 million USD facility after citizens took to the streets, concerned about local water supplies.

Beyond energy and water, the digital revolution generates mountains of physical waste. The world produced a record 62 million tonnes of electronic waste in 2022, an 82 percent increase from 2010, according to the UN's Global E-waste Monitor 2024. This will reach 82 million tonnes by 2030, yet only 22.3 percent of e-waste was properly collected and recycled in 2022. The world's generation of electronic waste is rising five times faster than documented e-waste recycling, according to the UN report. Each discarded smartphone, laptop, and server contains valuable materials, copper, gold, and rare earth



3. PEW RESEARCH CENTER, "US DATA CENTERS' ENERGY USE AMID THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BOOM" (OCTOBER 2025) PEWRESEARCH.ORG/SHORT-READS/2025/10/24/WHAT-WE-KNOW-ABOUT-ENERGY-USE-AT-US-DATA-CENTERS-AMID-THE-AI-BOOM/
4. BLOOMBERG, "THE AI BOOM IS DRAINING WATER FROM THE AREAS THAT NEED IT MOST" (MAY 2025) BLOOMBERG.COM/GRAPHICS/2025-AI-IMPACTS-DATA-CENTERS-WATER-DATA/
5. UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (UNITAR), "GLOBAL E-WASTE MONITOR 2024: ELECTRONIC WASTE RISING FIVE TIMES FASTER THAN DOCUMENTED E-WASTE RECYCLING" (MARCH 2024) EWASTEMONITOR.INFO/THE-GLOBAL-E-WASTE-MONITOR-2024/ UNITAR.ORG/ABOUT/NEWS-STORIES/PRESS/GLOBAL-E-WASTE-MONITOR-2024-ELECTRONIC-WASTE-RISING-FIVE-TIMES-FASTER-DOCUMENTED-E-WASTE-RECYCLING
6. RCR WIRELESS NEWS, "IEA SAYS: AI TO DOUBLE ELECTRICITY DEMAND FROM DCS BY 2030" (APRIL 2025) RCRWIRELESS.COM/20250411/ENERGY/AI-ELECTRICITY-DCS-2030-IEA

elements, but 62 billion USD worth of recoverable natural resources were left unaccounted for in 2022, squandered in landfills or informal recycling operations that release toxic substances into communities. The contradiction is stark: the same technologies we develop to combat climate change-from renewable energy optimization to climate modelling, themselves contribute significantly to environmental degradation. Data centers draw power from grids still heavy on fossil fuels, with natural gas supplying over 40 percent of electricity for US data centers as of 2024, according to research from Pew Research Center. There are, however, ways forward. Microsoft has announced plans to deploy designs that achieve zero-water evaporation cooling, which would conserve more than 125 millionliters annually per data center
Tech companies are increasingly signing renewable energy purchase agreements, while innovations in liquid cooling and chip efficiency promise to reduce both energy and water consumption. Some data centers are strategically relocating to regions with abundant clean energy. Germany's Energy Efficiency Act will impose a binding requirement for data centers to source power exclusively from renewable sources starting in 2027, a standard that others may well follow.
The solution is not renouncing technological progress but rather insisting on transparency, accountability, and sustainable design from the outset. As Fatih Birol said, «AI is a tool, potentially an incredibly powerful one, but it is up to us, our societies, governments, and companies on how we use it.». It is possible for the digital revolution to coexist with ecological sustainability, but only if we acknowledge its hidden costs and commit to minimizing them. After all, the cloud is not weightless, and the longer we act, the heavier its burden will grow.

7. SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, "DATA CENTERS WILL USE TWICE AS MUCH ENERGY BY 2030" (APRIL 2025) SCIENTIFICAMERICAN.COM/ARTICLE/AI-WILL-DRIVE-DOUBLING-OF-DATA-CENTER-ENERGY-DEMAND-BY-2030/
8. S&P GLOBAL COMMODITY INSIGHTS, "GLOBAL DATA CENTER POWER DEMAND TO DOUBLE BY 2030 ON AI SURGE: IEA" (APRIL 2025) SPGLOBAL.COM/COMMODITY-INSIGHTS/EN/NEWS-RESEARCH/LATEST-NEWS/ELECTRIC-POWER/041025-GLOBAL-DATA-CENTER-POWER-DEMAND-TO-DOUBLE-BY-2030-ON-AI-SURGE-IEA
9. REUBEKEUL L, OLLECH C., "ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT – NEW LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA CENTRES" (JUNE 21ST, 2023) DLAPIPER.COM/EN-QA/INSIGHTS/PUBLICATIONS/2023/06/TEIL-2-ENERGIEEFFIZIENZGESETZ--NEUE-GESETZLICHE-ANFORDERUNGEN-FUR-RECHENZENTREN

# MIND AND MARKETS: WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

BY BROOK HAYZGI WOLDEMICAEL

**The piece explores how modern youth contribute to maintaining economic balance. Good mental health boosts national productivity. High stress, however, can impact performance. It draws on examples from real-life situations and also incorporates insights from economic writings.**


The mental health of young people today drives factors such as productivity and innovation. It also fosters long-term economic strength.
Today's Young People Can Steady the Economy. The role of mental well-being in how economies perform. Economic stability sits at the top of what builds a strong nation. Thing is, economists these days see it differently Richard Layard one of the first economists to work on happiness, in a paper titled Mental health: the new frontier for labour economics (Layard, 2013), argues that mental health should be regarded as a "factor of production." He points out that mental illness is the single biggest influence on life satisfaction and has major consequences for employment, earnings, and educational success. In many advanced countries, mental disorders account for a large share of disability and absenteeism among working-age people [1].
A recent analysis by the McKinsey Health Institute (2022) finds that investing in mental health interventions globally could generate significant returns on human health and macroeconomic gains. The report notes that improving "brain health" could add trillions of dollars to global output by 2050 [2].
According to the OECD, as stated in its OECD (2021) "Fitter Minds, Fitter Societies" report, poor mental health imposes a large economic burden. Mental ill-health reduces productivity, lowers employment, and generates economic losses estimated at up to 4% of GDP in many advanced economies [3].



1. LAYARD, R. (2013). MENTAL HEALTH: THE NEW FRONTIER FOR LABOUR ECONOMICS. IZA JOURNAL OF LABOR POLICY, 2(2). HTTPS://LINK.SPRINGER.COM/ARTICLE/10.1186/2193-9004-2-2
2. MCKINSEY HEALTH INSTITUTE. (2022). PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH: THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CASE FOR BRAIN HEALTH. MCKINSEY & COMPANY.
3. OECD. (2021). FITTER MINDS, FITTER SOCIETIES: HOW BETTER MENTAL HEALTH POLICY CAN STRENGTHEN PRODUCTIVITY.

Today's economies rely heavily on skills such as handling digital information, problem-solving, language proficiency, and technical know-how. Young folks pick up changes in tech fast. They help form a workforce that gets things done. Investing in education and training for them attracts investors. That lifts productivity. It leads to steady growth in GDP. Unemployment drops, too.

Young people often lead in starting ventures. They take chances, twist technology in smart ways, and chase new market opportunities. This mixes up economic setups. Startups from youth create jobs. They bring new goods to the shelves. Competition heats up. All that builds toughness against economic hits. Places with a lot of young businesses start bounce back quicker from shocks.

In many growing countries, young people often opt for informal work. When they shift to formal jobs, they pay taxes. They use digital banking too. Governments get more cash from this. They spend it on healthcare, education, and infrastructure, including roads. A steadier economic setup grows from there.

Youth push digital changes forward. Things like mobile banking, online shopping, and work from afar cut costs on deals. They open markets wider. National output improves. Small outfits get support. Economies stand better against worldwide jolts.

Mental health extends beyond the individual. It acts like an economic asset. Groups with strong mental states tend to perform better in classes, jobs, and when introducing new ideas, as well as when joining the economy.

Solid mental conditions build focus, creative sparks, and solid choices. Workers in good shape mentally produce more. They mess up less. Energy stays high. In the fact sheet Mental health at work (WHO, 2024), the World Health Organization states that globally "an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety," amounting to about US $ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity In its European-region work, WHO links mental illness among working populations (e.g. depression, anxiety) to "productivity losses and economic burdens," underscoring that poor mental health is not only an individual and social issue, but also an economic one [4]. The McKinsey analysis broadens the lens: mental-health investment is not only a company-level or individual-level issue, but also a macroeconomic issue. Investing in mental health at the societal level can yield large returns in aggregate economic output and productivity over time. For every dollar invested in mental care, four dollars are returned in output gains. When youth feel mentally tough, they add real value to companies and groups [5].

Creative work thrives with emotional steadiness. Many big hits in innovations start with youth. Think digital apps, green tech, AI tools. Good mental health gives the

4.WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. (2024, SEPTEMBER 2). MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK. HTTPS://WWW.WHO.INT/NEWS-ROOM/FACT-SHEETS/DETAIL/MENTAL-HEALTH-AT-WORK

5.MCKINSEY & COMPANY. (N.D.). PRIORITIZING HEALTH: A PRESCRIPTION FOR PROSPERITY. HTTPS://WWW.MCKINSEY.COM/INDUSTRIES/HEALTHCARE/OUR-INSIGHTS/PRIORITIZING-HEALTH-A-PRESCRIPTION-FOR-PROSPERITY

boldness and far-sighted views that fuel it. Nations investing in mental health services see more business starts. Tech moves ahead faster there.

Mental steadiness helps learning stick. Students with good mental health tend to show up more in classes. They concentrate harder. Grades climb. This fosters a skilled workforce.

They hold up the economy for years. Experts in education economics say a mentally fit youth group points to growth way down the line. Good mental health strengthens how young people learn and perform. Research shows that students with strong psychological well-being exhibit better focus, higher attendance, and improved grades. Recent evidence also reinforces the strong link between youth mental health and academic outcomes. A study published in BMC Public Health (Bai et al., 2024) finds that good mental health substantially improves academic performance by supporting stronger learning adaptation and higher self-efficacy [6]. Similarly, a longitudinal Chilean study showed that early mental well-being predicts higher academic performance years later (Murphy et al., 2015). These findings indicate that mentally healthy youth develop stronger skills, which later translate into a more capable and productive workforce.

Good mental health pushes growth. The flip side brings losses, wobbles, and social messes.

Stress, worry, and burnout lead to missing work or showing up but not being fully there. Budgets for governments get stretched. Countries with lots of stress see bills rise for hospitals, talks with counselors, social help. Money shifts away from schools, roads, and economic development.

Mind stress cuts drive and involvement in economic work. Youth with depression or ongoing stress often quit school. They end up without jobs or in shaky ones. Poverty sticks around. Crime rises. Politics get unstable. All that hurts economic progress.

Stress kills the urge to take risks. Young groups feeling down or squeezed by money start fewer outfits. They chase less new paths. Innovation weakens. Economic mixes slow. Reliance grows on old areas.

Global evidence shows that youth mental health directly affects economic performance. We have many confirmations about the relationship between mental health and economics. For example, in South Korea, intense school pressure and long working hours reduce innovation



6. BAI, X., LI, Y., CHEN, S., ET AL. (2024). YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THE ROLE OF LEARNING ADAPTATION AND SELF-EFFICACY. BMC PUBLIC HEALTH, 24, ARTICLE 1157

and productivity, costing billions in stress-related absenteeism South Korea. Research by the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (KIHASA) shows that extreme academic pressure and long working hours reduce innovation and productivity, costing the economy billions in reduce innovation and productivity, costing the economy billions in stress-related absenteeism [7]. In contrast, Finland invests in school counseling, stress management, and emotional support, thereby boosting academic performance and workforce readiness, which in turn supports a stable economy. Ethiopian adolescents are growing up in a complex economic environment. Until recently, they benefited from declining poverty rates and increasing access to education, especially in urban areas, where poverty fell to 15% by 2016 compared with 26% in rural regions. However, rapid population growth—doubling since 2000 to about 127 million in 2024, and slow expansion of non-agricultural sectors have limited livelihood opportunities for this large and increasingly educated youth population. As a result, many young people struggle to access stable work. In 2021, the World Bank estimated that 18% of Ethiopians aged 15–24 were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), with young women (25%) significantly more affected than young men (10%).Similarly, the Ethiopian case illustrates how youth economic opportunities intersect with mental health. Analysis by Presler-Marshall et al. (2024) reveals that, despite rising educational levels, many young people continue to struggle to access stable employment. In 2021, 18% of Ethiopian youth (15–24) were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), with young women disproportionately affected [8]. Programs that integrate mental-health support with livelihood training significantly improve engagement and productivity. Furthermore, in relation to this program, combining mental health support with skills and business training enhances engagement and productivity, demonstrating that fostering mental well-being is both a social and economic priority (Chang, Hong, Cho, 2012) [9].

Youth today matter a ton for keeping economy steady. They shape what's next with their output, fresh ideas, formal sector roles. Mental well-being counts just as much. Strong mental health lifts output, innovation, school success, lasting builds. Weak spots lead to losses, job gaps, and social instability. Nations funding youth mental health through schools, community efforts, and easy access to care build stronger economies.

7.KOREA INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS. (N.D.). REPORTS ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS, PRODUCTIVITY, AND MENTAL-HEALTH BURDENS IN SOUTH KOREA. SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA: KIHASA.
8. PRESLER-MARSHALL, E., JONES, N., BAIRD, S., YADETE, W., ENDALE, K., HAMORY, J., DAS, S., & WOLDEHANNA, T. (2024). ETHIOPIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: EVIDENCE FROM GAGE ROUND 3 DATA. GENDER AND ADOLESCENCE: GLOBAL EVIDENCE.
9.CHANG, S.-M., HONG, J.-P., & CHO, M. J. (2012). ECONOMIC BURDEN OF DEPRESSION IN SOUTH KOREA. SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY AND PSYCHIATRIC EPIDEMIOLOGY, 47(5), 683–689. HTTPS://PUBMED.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/21526429

# THE HIDDEN COST OF "CHEAP": ARE WE PAYING MORE FOR SHORT-LIVED GOODS?

BY DANAYT GIRMAY GEBRESILASSIE

**Every purchase we make, from a €5 t-shirt to a €0.80 chocolate bar carries an invisible price. These items might seem like great deals, but behind their low price tags lies a story we rarely see: one of environmental damage, unfair labor, and massive waste. This article explores the concept of "true cost accounting" a way of measuring the full impact of the things we buy, not just in euros, but in the toll they take on people and the planet.**

Imagine if every price tag came with a second line showing the real cost: the pollution, deforestation, and human suffering tied to that item. True cost accounting is a growing global movement that seeks to reveal the hidden impact of what we consume. Drawing on initiatives led by Nikolaj Lykke Viborg, in collaboration with Birgit Winkle and WWF Denmark [1], this approach highlights how transparency, ethical business models, and informed consumer choices can reshape the future of sustainable consumption. But numbers and models only tell part of the story. To truly understand the destructive cost of cheapness, we need to look at where it's most visible– an industry that thrives on overproduction and disposability.

Fast fashion brands like SHEIN make the issue of blind consumption painfully clear. Known for churning out trendy clothes at rock-bottom prices, the company releases thousands of new styles every day estimates put the number between 2,000 and 10,000 new styles daily [2]. This creates a tidal wave of short-lived garments. A full outfit might cost only €15, but many of these pieces are worn once or twice before ending up burned or buried in landfills. An environmental cycle of creation and destruction. Studies show the fashion industry is now one of the world's top polluters, with SHINE's own emissions reportedly rising sharply [3]. Behind the scenes, workers in some supplier factories face long hours under poor conditions: CNN business reports indicate they sometimes work up to 75 hours a week [4].

So while that €5 shirt may feel like a bargain, the real price includes pollution, low wages, and waste. If those hidden costs were added up, experts estimate that a shirt could actually be worth €50 or more.



1. VIBORG, N. L. (2024). TRUE COST ACCOUNTING CAMPAIGN. COLLABORATION WITH BIRGIT WINKLE AND WWF VERDENSNATURFONDEN (WWF DENMARK) (HTTPS://WWW.WWF.DK).
2. CHAPMAN T. (2025). SHEIN AND FAST FASHION'S SUPPLY CHAIN PROBLEM. SUPPLY CHAIN, JANUARY 14 (VIBORG, N. L. (2024). TRUE COST ACCOUNTING CAMPAIGN. COLLABORATION WITH BIRGIT WINKLE AND WWF VERDENSNATURFONDEN (WWF DENMARK) (HTTPS://WWW.WWF.DK).
3. JESSEN J. (2025). WHAT IS THE REAL COST OF SHEIN'S US$15 OUTFITS?. SUSTAINABILITY MAGAZINE, JANUARY 14 (HTTPS://SUSTAINABILITYMAG.COM/ARTICLES/WHAT-IS-THE-REAL-COST-OF-SHEINS-15-OUTFITS).
4. COOBAN A. (2024). SHEIN PROMISED TO TACKLE OVERWORK. A NEW REPORT CLAIMS 75-HOUR WEEKS ARE STILL COMMON. CNN, MAY 13 (HTTPS://EDITION.CNN.COM/2024/05/13/BUSINESS/SHEIN-75-HOUR-WEEKS-INVESTIGATION).

Other industries are just as guilty of hiding the damage. Chocolate might taste sweet, but its main ingredient, cocoa, often comes from farms in West Africa that destroy rainforests and threaten biodiversity, while Palm oil, found in instant noodles, snacks, and makeup, has fueled deforestation in Southeast Asia, putting animals like the Sumatran tiger in danger. Even our smartphone carries hidden consequences: cobalt used in batteries is often mined in African regions where extraction damages the land and shrinks the habitats of endangered animals such as rhinos [5]. These environmental and social costs don't show up on our receipt but they are real, and they are growing.

To achieve lasting change, companies must adopt regenerative practices, restoring ecosystems, supporting fair wages, and minimizing waste. Governments can encourage this shift by enforcing stronger transparency laws. If businesses were required to show their environmental and social impact, shoppers could make more

informed, ethical choices. Imagine seeing a label that says not just "organic" or "sustainable," but exactly how much water, energy, and labor went into making it.

It's easy to feel powerless, but as consumers, we have more influence than we think. Every time we choose to support brands that pay workers fairly and source materials responsibly, we send a message. When we ask questions, read labels, and share what we learn, we help shift demand away from harmful practices and toward ethical ones.

Nothing we buy is truly "cheap" if it comes at the expense of people or the planet. True cost accounting helps uncover the hidden side of consumption, challenging us to rethink what value really means. By demanding transparency and making informed choices, we can turn everyday purchases into acts of responsibility. As campaigns like those by Nikolaj Lykke Viborg and WWF Denmark remind us, let every price tell the full story. That's the future of shopping.

5. CAO X., SHARMINA M., CUÉLLAR-FRANCA R. M. (2024). SOURCING COBALT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO FOR A RESPONSIBLE NET-ZERO TRANSITION: INCENTIVES, RISKS AND STAKEHOLDERS. RESOURCES POLICY, 95.

# L'INTELLIGENZA ARTIFICIALE NEL GIORNALISMO: LA SFIDA DELL'ETICA E DELLA FIDUCIA

DI GIANMARCO BUONO

**L'IA sta trasformando il giornalismo, supportando scrittura, fact-checking e analisi dei dati, aumentando l'efficienza e il risparmio di tempo. Ma solleva sfide etiche e sociali, tra cui disinformazione, bias e perdita di fiducia del pubblico. Molti lettori chiedono trasparenza sull'uso dell'IA e linee guida etiche chiare. Formazione, comunicazione trasparente e codici etici condivisi sono essenziali per un'integrazione responsabile dell'IA.**

Negli ultimi anni l'intelligenza artificiale ha cominciato a insinuarsi in modo sempre più pervasivo nelle redazioni: non più solo come strumento per automatizzare i resoconti finanziari o sportivi, ma anche come co-autore, fact-checker, assistente nella scrittura. È una rivoluzione silenziosa che promette efficienza e risparmio di tempo, ma che al contempo alimenta timori legati alla qualità, alla disinformazione e alla perdita della fiducia del pubblico.

L'adozione dell'IA nel giornalismo rappresenta un'opportunità concreta: grazie ai modelli di linguaggio si possono generare bozze di articoli, sintetizzare interviste, trascrivere audio e produrre analisi dei dati in pochi secondi. Questo consente alle redazioni di liberare risorse umane per inchieste più complesse o temi a forte impatto.

D'altra parte, l'automazione non è priva di costi. Non si tratta solo di un problema tecnologico, ma di una sfida etica e sociale.

Un dato emblematico arriva da un sondaggio del Pew Research Center [1]: se circa quattro adulti statunitensi su dieci (41%) affermano che l'intelligenza artificiale scriverebbe un articolo di cronaca in modo meno efficace rispetto a chi lo fa per lavoro, il 19% afferma che l'intelligenza artificiale scriverebbe un articolo meglio dei giornalisti. Un altro 20% afferma che farebbe più o meno lo stesso.




1. HTTPS://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/SHORT-READS/2025/04/28/AMERICANS-LARGELY-FORESEE-AI-HAVING-NEGATIVE-EFFECTS-ON-NEWS-JOURNALISTS/

E se la maggior parte degli utenti resta scettica, pochi usano realmente chatbot per informarsi: secondo un'analisi Pew del 2025 [2], solo un adulto statunitense su dieci afferma di ricevere notizie spesso (2%) o occasionalmente (7%) da chatbot basati sull'intelligenza artificiale come ChatGPT o Gemini. Un ulteriore 16% lo fa raramente. La maggior parte degli americani (75%) afferma di non ricevere mai notizie in questo modo.

A questo si aggiunge un problema cruciale: la trasparenza. Molti lettori non sanno se dietro un articolo ci sia un uomo o un modello di intelligenza artificiale. Secondo una ricerca dell'Università del Minnesota [3], circa la metà degli intervistati afferma che le etichette sull'uso dell'IA sono essenziali, anche quando giornalisti e redattori sono tenuti a verificare le informazioni generate dall'IA. Allo stesso modo, il 58% afferma di volere che gli editori stabiliscano chiare linee guida etiche sull'uso dell'IA prima di sperimentarla nelle proprie redazioni, ma solo un quinto degli americani afferma di pensare che le organizzazioni giornalistiche non dovrebbero mai utilizzare l'IA in nessuna circostanza. È una richiesta ragionata: la fiducia nel giornalismo è fragile e potrebbe essere ulteriormente erosa se gli algoritmi scrivessero senza supervisione umana.

Non meno critico è il tema della disinformazione. L'UNESCO mette in guardia contro la capacità dell'IA di amplificare bias culturali, generare disinformazione e produrre contenuti falsi difficili da distinguere da quelli reali [4].

Ecco perché, l'integrazione responsabile dell'IA nel giornalismo non può basarsi solo su efficienza e risparmio: deve essere un progetto culturale, editoriale e regolamentare. Serve una governance interna nelle redazioni, con linee guida chiare sull'uso dell'IA, obblighi di fact-checking su ogni contenuto generato e una valutazione costante degli errori. I redattori non devono solo "accettare" l'IA, ma imparare a collaborare con essa criticamente.

In parallelo, bisogna comunicare ai lettori cosa sta succedendo: etichette visibili ("Generato con l'assistenza dell'IA", "Scritto con supporto IA"), trasparenza sui processi editoriali e apertura al dialogo con il pubblico su limiti e potenzialità. Solo così si può contrastare la sfiducia che i sondaggi mostrano in modo così netto.

Inoltre, è indispensabile investire nella formazione dei giornalisti. Non basta insegnare a usare gli strumenti, bisogna allenare il pensiero critico, la capacità di individuare false evidenze e di correggere i "buchi" nell'informazione generata automaticamente.

Infine, serve un'azione più ampia: associazioni di giornalisti, istituzioni internazionali e organizzazioni per la libertà di stampa devono elaborare codici etici condivisi sull'IA, promuovendo standard globali che garantiscano responsabilità, trasparenza e rispetto della verità.

2. *HTTPS://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/SHORT-READS/2025/10/01/RELATIVELY-FEW-AMERICANS-ARE-GETTING-NEWS-FROM-AI-CHATBOTS-LIKE CHATGPT/#:~:TEXT=ABOUT%20ONE%2DIN%2DTEN%20U.S.,NEVER%20GET%20NEWS%20THIS%20WAY.*

Se affrontata con serietà, l'intelligenza artificiale può davvero rappresentare una leva per rendere il giornalismo più capace, rapido e versatile. Ma se ignoriamo le insidie, rischiamo di costruire una realtà informativa in cui il rumore aumenta, la fiducia cala e il valore di una voce umana autentica diventa ancora più prezioso. L'IA non è il nemico del giornalismo: può essere un potente alleato a patto che lo vogliamo governare, e non subire.



3.HTTPS://HSJMC.UMN.EDU/NEWS/2025-04-24-REPORT-NEWSROOMS-LOOK-INNOVATE-AI-AMERICANS-REMAINSKEPTICAL-AND-DISTRUSTING#TRANSPARENCY
4.HTTPS://WWW.UNESCO.ORG/EN/ARTICLES/NEW-UNESCO-REPORT-WARNS-GENERATIVE-AI-THREATENSHOLOCAUST-MEMORY

# WHY YOUR AVOCADO IS MORE "INTERNATIONAL THAN YOU THINK"

## BY GIOVANNI PATRIARCA

**When you pick up an avocado at the grocery store, you may think of it as entirely harvested by a farmer, placed on the shelf of a retail store and ready to be consumed; however, the reality is quite different: that avocado has traveled thousands of kilometers, passed through multiple industries and touched by dozens of hands before reaching your basket: welcome to what we call "globalized mode of food provisioning".**

What path does an avocado, and food more in general follow in today's interconnected world before landing on our plates?

Contrary to popular belief, the farmer is not the first step of this "food supply chain", but the so-called "input industry", given that the farmer needs to be provided with seeds, irrigation systems, fertilizers, infrastructure, the right amount of funding and so on.

Within the farming activity, the avocado is grown and sold to manufacturers, where the processing phase begins. This is the step where "differentiation" takes place; in other words, more and more features and services are added to the commodity, which justify a higher price: not only avocados; you may think of salad, where lettuce is grown by the farmer, washed by an industry, packed and mixed by another one until it reaches our grocery stores).

Avocados are then distributed through complex logistic systems, traveling thousands of kilometers, placed on the shelf of a local retailer, consumers; although it's fair to keep in mind that food is perishable, in the sense that if improperly handled, it can cause diseases: think, for instance, of fresh cheese and fresh milk.

What are the economic implications? First of all, let's start by saying that the farmer wishes to sell the product at the highest possible price, but the manufacturer wishes to purchase it at the lowest possible price; however, everything depends on what we know in neo-institutional economics as "bargaining power", which is the contractual power held by the parties. A high number of small size and fragmented family-farms characterize the farming sector, leading farmers to be price takers, forcing them to sell their products at a given market price.

actually the culmination of a complex, We observe a rising demand for "convenience food", which are products with services incorporated, such as ready-to-eat pasta, frozen pizza, and soups, etc. Nowadays, people seem to have less and less time, and instead of spending one hour cooking, they purchase these products ready to be consumed in a few minutes.

The consumption "away from home" has dramatically increased over the last 20 years, and by that we mean that people eat much more at restaurants, or at the University canteen, fast foods and so on, which indeed benefits the food industry.

Therefore, the next time you reach for a ready-made meal or a perfectly ripe avocado, consider the invisible journey that brought it to you. What seems like a simple purchase is actually the culmination of a complex, global process that involves farmers, manufacturers, distributors, and economic forces far beyond the supermarket shelf.

Understanding this supply chain does not mean giving up convenience, but it does mean becoming a more conscious consumer. By recognizing who adds value and who is left behind, we can begin to ask more informed questions about fairness, sustainability, and the future of food. Because in a world where your avocado might be more global than your last vacation, awareness is the first step toward change.



1. BARNARD F.L., AKRIDGE J.T., DOOLEY F.J., FOLTZ J.C., YEAGER E.A. (2016). AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT, NEW YORK, ROUTLEDGE.
2. AGRIFOOD MONITOR ELABORATIONS BASED ON ISTAT AND EUROSTAT DATA (AGRIFOODMONITOR.IT/EN/FOOD-CONSUMPTION/)

# HOW LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHAPE THE WORKPLACE

BY NILOUFAR CHERAGHNOORANI

**In a world where we are moving toward international workspaces more and more and everyday interactions are so effortlessly global, the ability to communicate effectively and connect with others depends heavily on language skills, which are an essential part of exchanging information, especially from behind a desk.**

In a time when diversity is celebrated and welcomed in our communities, we can all agree that a single lingua franca cannot satisfy our need to communicate as deeply or with genuine understanding. Translation can never fully capture the true meaning behind the words or the sense of connection that comes from immersing in that culture through words. Learning a new language means a lot more than just memorizing new vocabulary; it means getting lost in a new culture and a new way of thinking. Now that's something a translation can never do. Today, intercultural skills are a serious and recognized qualification in the modern world. When you work in a service-oriented market, the information exchange and inter-linguistic communication become highly important. Language skills turn into an essential part of your job since the exchange of data and ideas lies at the very heart of it. In non-English speaking countries learning how to speak the international language is a key step towards setting yourself apart from other candidates for promotions, higher salaries or even helping your company stand out in a competitive market.

An interesting report from Pearson shows the disconnection between business requirements and their linguistic support: although 85% of employees agree that the chosen language for international business is and will always be English, along with 9 out of 10 employees who want their company to provide corporate language training, in reality, only a third of businesses offer it. The percentage of employees unable to express themselves fully with limited English is 72% while only 10% are okay with expressing their talents with imperfect language skills. In general, a company's personnel are more likely to be satisfied working for companies

1. OECD(2023). SKILLS FOR A RESILIENT GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION: BRIDGING LANGUAGE BARRIERS – LANGUAGE SKILLS IN INFORMATION-RICH SOCIETIES. OECD PUBLISHING. OECD SKILLS OUTLOOK 2023 | OECD
2. BRITISH COUNCIL IPSOS MORI (2013). CULTURE AT WORK: THE VALUE OF INTERCULTURAL SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE. BRITISH COUNCIL. CULTURE AT WORK | BRITISH COUNCIL
3. CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT (2016). ENGLISH AT WORK: GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS. ENGLISH-AT-WORK-FULL-REPORT.PDF

providing language training compared to others.

Language holds power. The English language in particular has a global power and influence that has helped UK grow and preserve its position across different sectors such as art, academia, and business. Having a common language in a business deal builds understanding and, most importantly, trust.

Just imagine how you feel making a deal with someone when you don't fully understand them. Knowing that "I don't know" means "later "for one person, while "maybe later" means "never" for another, and never forget to avoid the number 4 when negotiating with a company in China, it can make a world of difference in a negotiation.

So what do we mean when we talk about intercultural skills? It could mean the ability to understand phrases that cannot be fully explained in other languages. It could mean seeing the different viewpoints, understanding context, or even understanding context, or evenviewing the world through someone else's eyes. Above all, it's the respect you put in achieving and trying to understand that matters the most.

Organizations that lack these abilities face higher risk of miscommunication and potential damage to their reputation. On the other hand, those who invest in language and culture training are often rewarded with better teamwork, stronger working relationships, and smoother communication across borders.

There is a gap between industries that are unable to connect with the global market, and the opportunity to bridge this gap by providing the right training and encouraging people to pursue language learning, thereby closing the cultural divide. Companies can open doors to new opportunities, new markets, and better cooperation. And let's be honest, wouldn't you trust someone a little more if they know exactly how to say your favorite curse word?



4. BRITISH COUNCIL (2013). THE ENGLISH EFFECT: THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH, WHAT ITS WORTH TO THE UK AND WHY IT MATTERS TO THE WORLD. BRITISH COUNCIL. ENGLISH-EFFECT-REPORT-V2.PDF
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6. BUSINESS FORUM FOR MULTILINGUALISM (2008). LANGUAGE MEAN BUSINESS: COMPANIES WORK BETTER WITH LANGUAGES. EUROPEAN COMMISSION. LANGUAGES MEAN BUSINESS - PUBLICATIONS OFFICE OF THE EU
7. PEARSON (2024). HOW ENGLISH EMPOWERS YOUR TOMORROW: THE LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT OF LEARNING ENGLISH ON YOUR CAREER AND BEYOND. PEARSON. GSE-RESEARCH-GLOBAL-REPORT-EN.PDF

# THE INVISIBLE HAND OF LAW

BY FANUEL YEMANE HAILU

**One day, I was hurrying across the street and stepped forward without noticing the red light. For a moment, I wondered how a simple colour could stop cars, control movement, and keep strangers safe. It struck me that this ordinary signal represents something far greater: the invisible structure that allows society to function. Without rules like these, daily life would collapse into disorder. That brief moment made me realize how deeply law shapes our environment, often without us noticing it.**

Thomas Hobbes famously argued that without law, humans would return to a "state of nature," where life is chaotic and guided by self-interest. According to Hobbes, it is only through a common authority and shared rules that safety and cooperation become possible. Yet Hobbes is not the only voice in the debate. Thinkers like John Locke believed humans are capable of cooperation even without strong authority, and Rousseau went further, suggesting that people are naturally good and corrupted only by society. Modern social science also adds nuance: while humans often cooperate, cooperation tends to break down in environments without clear rules or enforcement. These contrasting views show that the necessity of law is not a settled question but a rich debate, which makes examining it even more important.

Concrete examples reveal why laws matter. Traffic rules, for instance, are not arbitrary; they save lives. According to the European Transport Safety Council, countries that implemented stricter speed limits and better traffic light enforcement saw up to a 30% reduction in road fatalities. Historical cases also show the dangers of weak legal systems. When the Somali central government collapsed in 1991, the absence of strong institutions led to decades of instability, violence, and lack of basic services. Similarly, environmental regulations around air pollution have significantly reduced health risks in cities worldwide; London's Clean Air Act, for example, lowered airborne pollutants by over 50% within a decade. These examples illustrate that laws are not abstract constraints as they directly shape public safety, health, and stability.

To clarify the focus of this essay: I argue that the essential role of law is to create predictable order that allows individuals to live together safely. Not every law is perfect, and not every rule is convenient, but the existence of a shared structure gives society something impossible to achieve through individual action alone: trust. When people stop at red lights, respect contracts, or follow environmental regulations, they are acting on a collective agreement that allows millions of strangers to coexist without constant conflict.

This does not mean law replaces moral responsibility; rather, it supports it. Social norms and customs influence behaviour, but without formal rules, these norms often fail under pressure. Law provides the framework within which social cooperation becomes reliable, not just hopeful. It turns intentions into predictable actions and protects individuals from the consequences of others' impulses.

A red light is a simple example, but it represents the broader truth: laws operate quietly in the background, coordinating actions that would otherwise clash. They do not eliminate freedom; they make meaningful freedom possible by ensuring that one person's choices do not endanger another's.

In conclusion, the invisible hand of law is what transforms human interaction from uncertainty to stability. By blending authority, cooperation, and shared responsibility, law creates a world where trust can exist among strangers. The real value of law is not only that it prevents chaos but that it enables society to function with confidence, fairness, and safety. Recognizing this helps us appreciate the rules we often overlook because it is often the simplest laws, like a red light, that reveal how much order depends on structures we rarely stop to see.



1. OECD(2023). SKILLS FOR A RESILIENT GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION: BRIDGING LANGUAGE BARRIERS – LANGUAGE SKILLS IN INFORMATION-RICH SOCIETIES. OECD PUBLISHING. OECD SKILLS OUTLOOK 2023 | OECD
2. LOCKE, J. TWO TREATISES OF GOVERNMENT (1689).
3. ROUSSEAU, J.-J. THE SOCIAL CONTRACT (1762).
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6. WHO. AMBIENT AIR POLLUTION REPORT (2016).

# TURNING UP THE VOLUME: AN ECONOMICS STUDENT'S JOURNEY FROM ETHIOPIA TO THE WORLD

## BY NOLAWIT BERHANU

**A single inspiring moment, seeing Zaha Hadid on television, shaped my perspective as an economics student from Ethiopia. It reflects how creativity, resilience, and cultural identity influence economic thinking in developing countries. This is my personal experience of the broader question of how economics can be both analytical and imaginative.**

It was 6 a.m. in Addis Ababa, and the rest of my family was still asleep. The quiet hour before the city woke up had become a ritual for me a moment to think, dream, and breathe. The TV was on, more out of habit than interest. Most days, it's just background noise. But on this particular morning, something changed. The woman on the screen was unlike anyone I'd seen before. Her voice was steady, her words bold. I turned up the volume.

It was Zaha Hadid, an architect, visionary, and the first woman to receive the Pritzker Architecture Prize. She spoke about her journey through challenges, expectations, and innovation. I didn't know much about architecture at the time, but something about her struck me. She wasn't just talking about buildings. She was talking about creating something where nothing existed before. About refusing to accept limitations. That moment stayed with me not because I wanted to become an architect, but because I began to see the world in a different light.


Growing up in a country where architecture, like economics, is often seen through the lens of survival, I had limited exposure to contemporary design or high-level economic theory. But Ethiopia is also a place of quiet brilliance. Visiting the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela brought that to mind. Eleven churches, carved out of a single rock in the 12th century, still stand as places of worship today. No steel, no modern machinery, just vision, perseverance, and belief. It made me wonder: how can we apply that same creative resilience to today's economic challenges?

I've come to see economics not only as a tool for analysis but also as a tool for design. We design policies, systems, and structures that affect lives. And if we do it with care, those systems can reflect the needs, dreams, and culture of the communities they serve.

When I had the opportunity to travel abroad for the first time to Dubai, I expected to be wowed by skyscrapers. And I was. But the moment that truly transformed me

happened at ground level, in the Dubai Miracle Garden. There, among carefully arranged patterns of flowers, I experienced how design could touch emotion. For a short time, the world outside faded away. That space was built to feel, not just function.

As I study development economics, I think more and more about this intersection: data and empathy, policy and culture, numbers and human stories. I'm particularly interested in how developing nations can create innovative yet affordable solutions, designed not to imitate the West but to reflect their own identity and needs.

Sometimes, change begins in the smallest of moments. For me, it started with an early morning, a quiet house, and the decision to turn up the volume.

# We are pleased to introduce our new director: Professor Houyem Demni

Houyem Demni is Assistant Professor of Statistics at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio (UNICAS). She obtained a double PhD degree in 2021, jointly awarded by UNICAS and the University of Tunis, and subsequently held a two-year Postdoctoral Research Fellow position in Statistics. Her academic path at UNICAS began in 2018 through the Erasmus+ mobility program, when she joined the Department of Economics and Law as a visiting PhD scholar. This experience marked a turning point in her career and laid the foundations for a long-term academic collaboration with UNICAS.

Her teaching activities have included courses in Statistics and Statistical Learning and Data Mining, taught in English in the Bachelor's programs in Economics and Business and Economics with Data Science, as well as in the Master's program in Global Economy and Business. She also teaches Statistics in Italian in the Bachelor's programs in Economia e Management del Made in Italy and Ingegneria Gestionale. In addition, she has delivered doctoral and seminar courses within the Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility program on Statistical Learning Methods, Unsupervised Learning and Network Analysis at the University of Tunis and the University of Carthage.

Her research interests include nonparametric statistics, directional statistics, robust statistics, and supervised and unsupervised learning. Her research profile has been strengthened through international experience as a Visiting Scholar in Czech Republic in 2019 and in Belgium in 2025. She was awarded twice a Research Fellowship from the Flemish Research Foundation (FWO) and carried out a research visit at the prestigious KU Leuven in 2025. A second visit within the Robust Statistics and Data Analysis group is planned for 2026.

# Acknowledging a Chapter of Leadership

*We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Professor Cinzia Di Palo for her invaluable guidance, dedication, and supervision of CLEC Magazine. Her continuous support, professionalism, and commitment have played a crucial role in the magazine's growth and quality. We truly appreciate all the time, effort, and care she devoted to this project, and we wish her every success in her future endeavors.*

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***N.15 issue***

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