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ICT and Social and Criminal Justice Mini Track Introduction

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1. Introduction

This minitrack is part of the track Information Technology, Social Justice, and Marginalized Contexts. The focus of this minitrack is to open an evident space for research related to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in understanding and promoting social and criminal justice.

Social justice is the belief that everyone deserves fair and equal treatment. ICT and Social justice research refer to studies about actions that promote equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal treatment as well as studies that the use of ICT that uncover social injustice.

The guiding principles of social justice are human rights, access to basic elements such as food, water, shelter, safety, education, and opportunities, equal participation in decision-making, and equity to reduce systemic barriers to ensure every individual is treated fairly and equitably.

Criminal justice is an umbrella term that refers to the laws, procedures, institutions, and policies at play before, during, and after the commission of a crime. Criminal justice has two central ideas: Suspects, convicted criminals, and victims of crime all have certain rights. Criminal conduct should be prosecuted and punished by the state following set laws.

So why is justice part of our remit as IS researchers? Walsham (2005) says that ICTs are involved in the way that we as individuals carry out our work and leisure activities, in the way that we organize ourselves in groups, in the forms that our organizations take, in the type of societies we create, and thus in the future of the world. ICTs are thus deeply implicated in criminal and social justice, as information systems inscribe our understanding of the world and our attendant prejudices. We know, for instance, that algorithms embedded in AI can amplify racism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination.

For this minitrack, we accepted four cutting edge papers. They range from the use of social media for social justice, the notion of animal stakeholders in information systems development, the role of IS in energy transitions, and a data driven approach to social justice.

The first paper in the session, 'Enacting Social Justice in Socially Disadvantaged Neighborhoods on Social Media: A Case Study of the Swedish Police' by Lindstrom et al., is a fascinating case study of how social media becomes an actor in the relationship between the Swedish Police and marginalized communities and the quest for social justice.

The second paper in the session, 'Cleaning our Plates: Information Systems Contributions Toward Animal Liberation', by Julia Stachofsky, is a unique paper using representation theory that urges us to consider animals as stakeholders in information systems development. A research agenda for IS and animal liberation is put forward.

The third paper in our session, by Martin Brennecke, 'Towards Social Justice in Energy Transitions: An Information Systems Perspective,' again breaks new ground in IS by proposing a research framework for energy social justice. This paper, which uses natural language processing (NLP) for a literature review, reveals how other disciplines grapple with social justice in energy and builds on that review for IS colleagues.

The final paper, by Kohli et al., 'Bending the Arc of the Moral Universe: Leveraging Data for Accountable Justice for Transition Age Youth', proposes a data-driven approach to criminal justice. It proposes a unique perspective on data and justice, allowing us to see how data is integral to social justice as a whole. Again, this paper creates space for us to think about the unique contribution IS can make to social justice.

2. References

Walsham G (2005). Development, global futures and IS research: a polemic. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 14, 5-15