



THE PILOT SURVEY OF ISSP 2024. POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND DIGITAL SOCIETIES.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been an increase in the use of technology in all areas of daily life, and one of the most important changes concerns the development of robotic technologies to serve daily activities. It has been observed by scholars that the evolution of robots has brought about effects on some social issues, such as welfare policies, legislation, as well as from an ethical point of view. The aim of the paper is to study voters' political attitudes towards digital societies issues, such as the impact of digitization on communication patterns and media consumption, Civic Engagement in the Digital Age and their attitudes towards artificial intelligence (AI), using the data from the pilot survey of ISSP 2024. Relying on the data of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2024 pilot data, we analyze public opinion on their behavior towards Inclusive Societies.

Keywords: digital, digitization, inclusive societies, ISSP.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital Society is a type of progressive society that has been formed because of the adaptation as well as the integration of advanced technologies in society and culture (Paul & Aithal, 2018). Digital Society mainly depends on Digital Economy which is one of the emerging concepts of economic development with proper support from digital tools and technologies and depends on information and digital products (Paul & Aithal, 2018). The growing importance of new technologies in society and their interaction has led to the development of the concept of Digital Society as a subject of study. Many universities internationally have created academic programs in order to study this topic in depth (Paul & Aithal, 2018).

Scholars from different disciplines have expressed interest in the question of whether and to what extent differences in Internet access and use of digital technologies create new inequalities and how existing inequalities change due to new technological developments. The 2000s saw a gradual increase in the number of research articles dealing with the so-called national and global digital divide (Hargittai, 2010; Robinson et al., 2015).

Initially, the digital divide approach was a simplistic study of the unequal distribution of Internet access (Eastin et al., 2015), which was observed as a binary distinction between those who had access to the Internet and those who did not (Mehra et al., 2004). This type of digital divide is referred to in the literature as a first-level digital divide (Scheerder et al., 2017).

In recent years, there has been an increase in the analysis of the second-level digital divide, i.e. differences in Internet use and skills, while scholars call for special attention to be paid to the third-level digital divide, in particular to better understand the effects of the first and second-level digital divide (E. Helsper, 2021). *"Many scholars have argued that digital divides should be approached more comprehensively, where not only Internet access, skills and use are considered, but also the consequences of Internet use (...)"* (Scheerder et al., 2017).

Based on data from a Eurobarometer survey (*Attitudes towards the Impact of Digitisation and Automation on Daily Life | Shaping Europe's Digital Future*, 2017), a digital divide can also be observed within Europe, which shows that this issue does not occur only in underdeveloped countries but also in more developed areas. In addition, according to other research, large differences are observed between age groups and groups with different levels of education (E. Helsper, 2021; Scheerder et al., 2017). Gender also plays an important role in less developed countries regarding Internet access, while in more developed countries the purpose of using the Internet appears to differ between men and women (E. J. Helsper, 2010).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The International Social Research Programme (ISSP) is an international collaborative research program on citizens' beliefs, attitudes, and behavior on issues related to the social sciences (Jutz et al., 2018). Each year, a specific topic is chosen to be researched, while the final decisions on the content of each questionnaire are made by the annual General Assembly with a majority (Scholz et al., 2017).

For example, in recent years research has been conducted on citizenship (Scholz et al., 2017), the role of government (Edlund & Lindh, 2019; Hadler et al., 2019), work orientations (Jutz et al., 2018), religion (Smith & Schapiro, 2021) and social networks (Hadler et al., 2020).

The ISSP research on "Digital Societies" was motivated by the investigation of a new intersection that has gradually emerged since the 1980s, due to the rapid development

of technology. Its content concerns people's access to the internet by dividing them into "privileged - non-privileged", the use of technologies depending on the identification of the area of residence as "urban - non-urban", as well as the inequalities arising from the above, creating conditions of polarization in today's societies.

In this context, the investigation of different aspects of the behavior and perceptions of individuals towards the progressively increasing digitalization of their daily life was promoted.

The topics that were included are drawn from the division of the "digital intersection" into three time periods during which it acquires a different content. The first period concerns computer ownership and Internet access placed in the early years of the 21st century. The second period examines the inequality governing the use of new technologies after 2005. The third period focuses on highlighting the negatives and positives arising from the progress of digitization from 2012 onwards.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

The main subject of study of the questionnaire is the effect of new technologies on society. The application of the specific questionnaire was carried out as a pilot and the observations noted during its administration to both the students and the volunteers was considered by the ISSP team during the planned implementation of the questionnaire in 2024.

In the first stage of the implementation of the specific research, the students of the compulsory course of Social Statistics, which is part of the undergraduate course of the Department of Political Sciences of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, were invited to fill in the relevant questionnaire and note their observations. At the same time, they were given the opportunity to add an additional member of their family, over 65, who does not have access to the internet. During the survey of the students, 278 questionnaires were filled in, of which 46 belonged to non-internet users and 232 to internet users. The survey was carried out from the end of December 2022 until the middle of January 2023 and the link of the questionnaire was made known to the students through the course's e-learning platform.

In the second stage of the implementation of this research, the volunteers who had declared, in previous years, that they wished to take part in the online surveys of the research group of the Department of Political Sciences of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, were invited to fill in the relevant questionnaire and mark their observations. During the survey of the volunteers, 1,617 questionnaires were completed exclusively by internet users. The survey was carried out from January 12 to 23, 2023 and the questionnaire link was made known to the volunteers by sending an invitation to the email they had registered through the address

elnes@polsci.auth.gr. All Greek citizens over 16 years of age were eligible to participate in the survey.

4. METHODOLOGY

The data from the pilot survey were collected using a mobile-friendly online survey, meaning that all decisions about the appearance of the survey would have been made with the aim of improving the survey completion experience for participants using mobile phones (smartphones) (Andreadis, 2015a, 2015b, 2020). Online surveys allow quick and above all low-cost surveys to be conducted and can "under certain conditions be a reliable alternative means for organizing and conducting social and political surveys" (Andreadis, 2010). With the use of online surveys, the researcher is given the possibility to send mass invitations to participate in each survey via e-mail, significantly reducing the time required for the successful completion of the survey (Andreadis, 2010). At the same time, the respondents submitted their answers on their computer by themselves, thus contributing to the collection of data in a short period of time and also avoiding possible mistakes when entering the data by the researcher (Andreadis, 2010; Andreadis & Kartsounidou, 2020).

Moreover, we have applied data cleaning methods based on the methodologies outlined by Andreadis (2014) to ensure data integrity in our study. These methods include the treatment of missing data through strategies such as imputation or case deletion, depending on the extent and nature of the missing values (Andreadis, 2014). We also emphasize the detection and correction of errors, such as typographical mistakes and inconsistencies in data entry (Andreadis, 2014). Additionally, we employ outlier detection using statistical techniques to identify and manage anomalous data points that could skew results. These data cleaning methodologies collectively enhance the reliability and accuracy of our data, thereby improving the overall effectiveness and trustworthiness of our analysis (Andreadis, 2014).

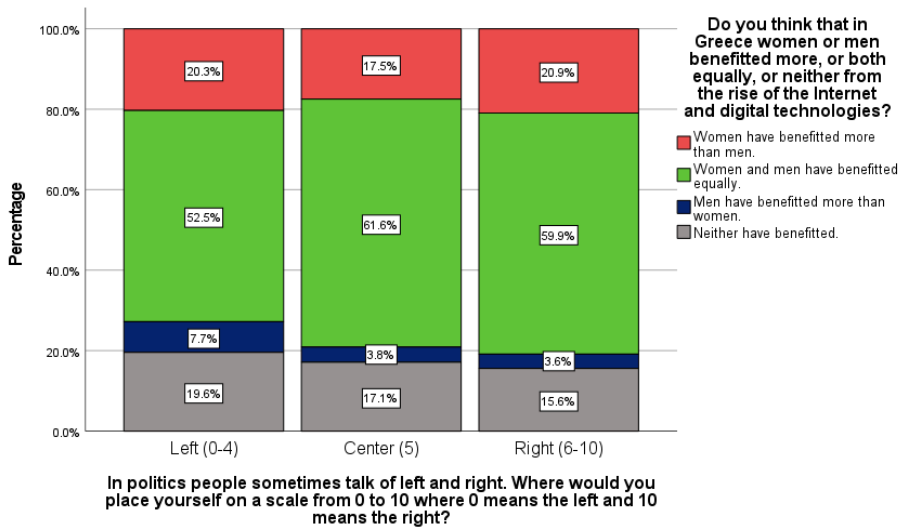
5. ANALYSIS

The overarching goal of the project Data for Inclusive Societies: Foes and Friends of Inclusiveness in contemporary Greece (DATIS) is to study the foes and friends of inclusive societies in contemporary Greece by implementing an innovative empirical research design. We are going to use items from ISSP 2024 in DATIS, which would allow, for the first time, data collection on inclusiveness on a large and comparative scale. The items from ISSP 2024 includes the perceived and experienced costs and benefits of digitization in different areas of life at the individual level. More specifically, we asked citizens whether they believe that in Greece women or men, the elderly or the young, the more or less educated, and the rich or the poor, benefited more, or both equally, or neither since the rise of the Internet and digital technologies.

Regarding the item "In politics, people refer to the left and the right. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means left and 10 to the right, where would you place yourself?", we

grouped the answers. More specifically, on the left we kept the answers from 0 to 4, in the center we kept 5 because there were enough answers, and on the right, we kept the answers from 6 to 10.

Figure 1. Benefits from digital technologies (gender)



After analyzing the crosstabulation between “In politics, people refer to the left and the right. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means left and 10 to the right, where would you place yourself?” and “In all countries, there are differences between social groups. Do you think that in Greece women or men benefitted more, or both equally, or neither from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies?”, we observe the following from Figure 1:

- Among those who identified themselves on the left of the political spectrum, 20.3% believe that women have benefited more from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies, 52.5% believe that men and women have benefited equally, and 7.7% believe that men have benefited more.
- For individuals who placed themselves on the right, 20.9% think that women have benefited more, 59.9% believe that both genders have benefited equally, and only 3.6% consider that men have benefited more.
- Those who identified as centrist showed that 17.5% believe women have benefited more, 61.6% believe men and women have benefited equally, and 3.8% believe men have benefited more.

Overall, the data reveals a consensus across the political spectrum that men and women have benefited equally from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies. Despite some variation, particularly in the percentage of those who believe women have benefited more, the belief that both genders have benefited equally is

predominant. This suggests a shared perception that the impact of digital technologies has been broadly equitable across genders, regardless of political orientation. Based on recent findings from the Gender Equity Index 2020 by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), disparities in digital skills, representation in high-technology sectors, and gender pay gaps within the ICT sector in Greece are evident (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024). Among Greeks aged 25-29, 46% of women possess above basic digital skills, compared to 37% of men in the same age group. However, in high-technology sectors such as science and engineering, women constitute only 21%, highlighting a significant gender imbalance similar to the EU average (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024).

According to EIGE's 2019 data, fewer women than men in Greece use computers daily, with a notable 16% gap. Additionally, women are less likely to engage in posting opinions on civic or political issues online or participate in online voting. Specifically, there is a gender gap of over 10% among youth who have recently engaged in activities such as online consultations, voting, or expressing opinions on urban planning issues or signing petitions (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019).

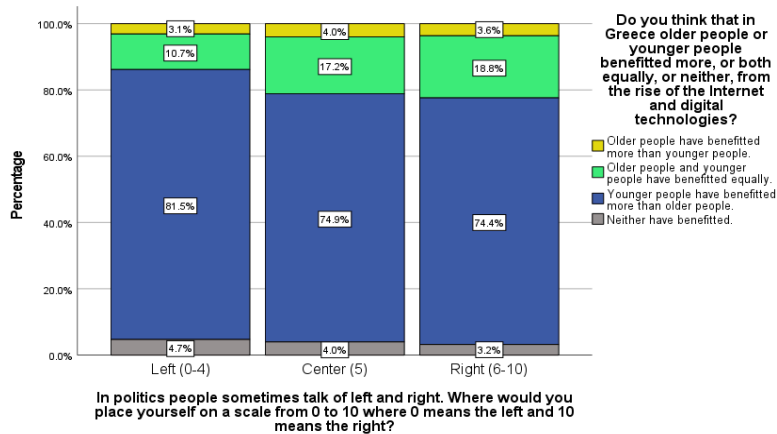
Table 1. Benefits from digital technologies (gender)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.793 ^a	6	.010
Likelihood Ratio	16.750	6	.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.396	1	.036
N of Valid Cases	1303		

In Table 1, which informs about the result of the independence test, we notice that the value of the test statistic is equal to 16.793, while the corresponding p-value is less than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. We reject the null hypothesis of independence of the two variables and conclude that there is an association between participants' stances on the left-right scale and their placement on whether men or women benefit from the rise of Internet and digital technologies. More specifically, the increased percentages of left-wing voters who believe that "Neither have benefited" and "Men have benefited more than women from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies" suggest a notable skepticism regarding the equitable distribution of benefits from digital advancements. This indicates that a significant portion of left-wing voters perceive that digital technologies have either not contributed to

societal benefits at all or have disproportionately favored men. This finding highlights a critical perspective within this political group, pointing to concerns about gender disparities in the digital era.

Figure 2. Benefits from digital technologies (age)



After conducting the necessary analysis in SPSS, a crosstabulation table was created to examine the relationship between the variable “In politics, people refer to the left and the right. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means left and 10 to the right, where would you place yourself?” and the variable “In all countries, there are differences between social groups. Do you think that in Greece older people or younger people benefitted more, or both equally, or neither, from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies?”. From Figure 2, the following observations were made:

- Among those who identified themselves on the left of the political spectrum, 81.5% believe that young people have benefited more than the elderly, 10.7% believe that both age groups have benefited equally, and 3.1% think that the elderly have benefited the most.
- For individuals who placed themselves on the right, 74.4% believe that young people have benefited more, 18.8% think that both young and old people have benefited equally, and 3.6% believe that the elderly have benefited more.
- Those who identified as centrist showed that 74.9% believe young people have benefited more, 17.2% believe both age groups have benefited equally, and 4% believe that the elderly have benefited more.

Overall, the data reveals a clear consensus across the political spectrum that young people have benefited more from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies. While there is some variation in the extent of this belief, with those on the left being slightly more convinced than those on the right or center, the dominant perception is that the technological advancements have predominantly favored the younger generation. This suggests a broadly shared view that digital technologies have disproportionately benefited the youth, regardless of political orientation.

Recent surveys and reports highlight that Greece faces significant challenges in digital skills across its population, especially among older individuals. According to a survey by Cedefop, Greece shows wider gaps in digital skills compared to other EU countries (Cedefop, 2018). Particularly concerning is the finding that many Greek employees, especially those aged 40-64, women, and individuals with lower education levels, do not perceive digital skills as necessary in their current jobs, contrasting with trends across the EU (Cedefop, 2018).

Furthermore, the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) indicates that Greece exhibits lower proficiency levels in problem-solving in technology-rich environments compared to the OECD average (OECD, 2016). These findings underscore Greece's lag in digitalization, as reflected in its low scores in the European Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The DESI measures various aspects of digital performance across EU member states, where Greece's performance consistently falls below the European average (*Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 | Shaping Europe's Digital Future*, 2020).

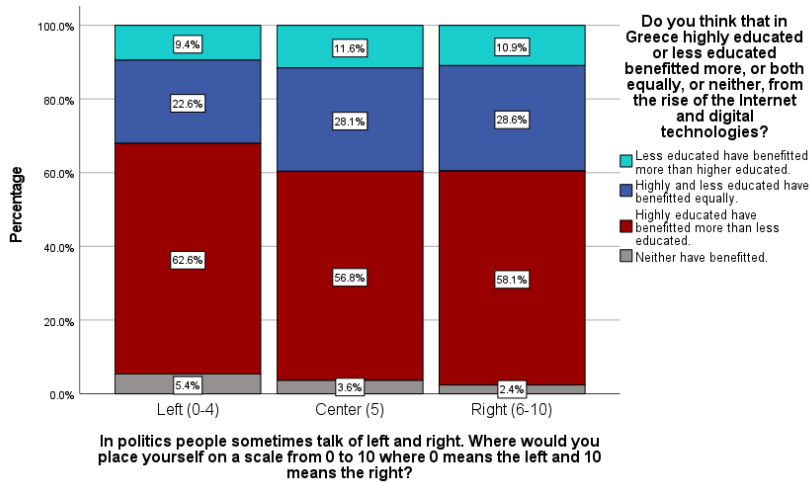
Table 2. Benefits from digital technologies (age)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.047 ^a	6	.009
Likelihood Ratio	17.398	6	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.593	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	1387		

In Table 2, which informs about the result of the independence test, we notice that the value of the test statistic is equal to 17.047, while the corresponding p-value is less than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. We reject the null hypothesis of independence of the two variables and conclude that there is an association between participants' stances on the left-right and their placement on whether the older people or the

younger people benefited from the rise of Internet and digital technologies. More specifically, it seems that more than four out of five left-wing citizens believe that younger have benefited more than the elderly.

Figure 3. Benefits from digital technologies (education)



After executing the necessary commands in SPSS, a crosstabulation table was generated to examine the relationship between variable “In politics, people refer to the left and the right. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means left and 10 to the right, where would you place yourself?” and variable Q79 “In all countries, there are differences between social groups. Do you think that in Greece the more or the less educated benefited more, or both equally, or neither, since the rise of the Internet and digital technologies?”.

From Figure 3, we observe the following:

- Among respondents identifying with the left of the political spectrum, 62.6% perceive that the more educated have benefited more significantly from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies, 22.6% believe that both the more and less educated have benefited equally, and 9.4% assert that the less educated have benefited the most.
- Among those identifying with the right, 58.1% opine that the more educated have reaped greater benefits, 28.6% believe that both educational groups have benefited equally, and 10.9% suggest that the less educated have benefited the most.
- Among respondents identifying as centrists, 56.8% consider that the more educated have gained more advantages, 28.1% believe both groups have

benefited equally, and 11.6% hold that the less educated have benefited the most.

Overall, the data indicates a consistent belief across the political spectrum that the more educated have disproportionately benefited from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies. Although there is some variation in the degree of this belief, with those on the left slightly more convinced than those on the right or center, the predominant perception is that the advantages of technological advancements have accrued more to the more educated. This suggests a broadly shared view across different political orientations that digital technologies have favored the more educated, highlighting a perceived disparity in the distribution of technological benefits based on educational attainment.

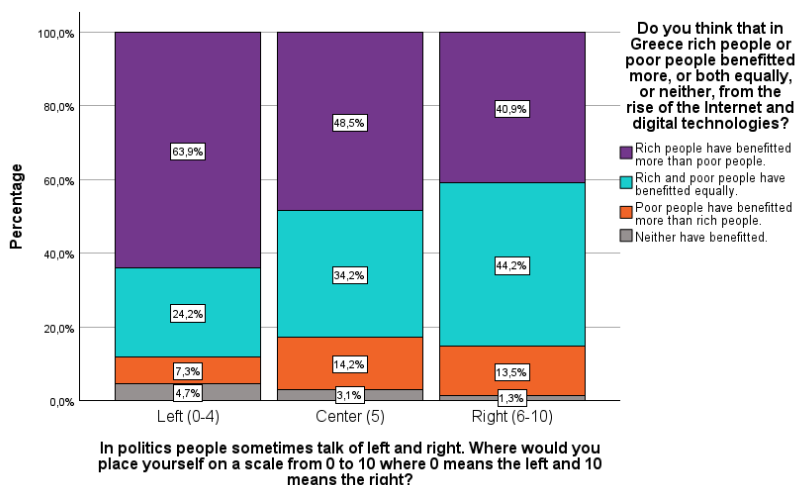
According to the Dystopia model, a significant segment of the population may remain marginalized in a knowledge-driven society (Cullen et al., 2007). This group often fails to grasp the full potential and benefits of advanced technology, primarily viewing the internet through the lens of entertainment rather than as a tool for broader societal engagement and personal development (Cullen et al., 2007). This perspective is particularly relevant for certain vulnerable groups such as young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), individuals with lower educational attainment, those living in poverty, and older adults. These groups are at risk of dual exclusion, facing barriers that limit their participation in and benefit from the opportunities offered by digital advancements (Cullen et al., 2015).

Table 3. Benefits from digital technologies (education)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.750 ^a	6	.047
Likelihood Ratio	12.989	6	.043
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.320	1	.007
N of Valid Cases	1354		

In Table 3, which informs about the result of the independence test, we notice that the value of the test statistic is equal to 12.750, while the corresponding p-value is less than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. We reject the null hypothesis of independence of the two variables and conclude that there is an association between participants' stances on the left-right scale and their placement on whether the more or the less educated benefited from the rise of Internet and digital technologies.

Figure 4. Benefits from digital technologies (rich-poor)



After executing the necessary commands in SPSS, a crosstabulation table was generated to examine the relationship between variable “In politics, people refer to the left and the right. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means left and 10 to the right, where would you place yourself?” and variable “In all countries, there are differences between social groups. Do you think that in Greece the rich or the poor benefited more, or both equally, or neither, since the rise of the Internet and digital technologies?”. Our sample data indicates that approximately 52% of individuals on the left reported low family income, whereas about 42% of individuals on the right reported high family income.

From Figure 4, we observe the following:

- Among those who identified themselves on the left of the political spectrum, 63.9% believe that the rich have benefited more than the poor from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies, 24.2% believe that both the rich and the poor have benefited equally, and 7.3% think that the poor have benefited the most.
- For individuals who placed themselves on the right, 40.9% believe that the rich have benefited more, 44.2% think that both groups have benefited equally, and 13.5% believe that the poor have benefited the most.
- Among those identifying as centrists, 48.5% believe that the rich have benefited more, 34.2% believe that both the rich and the poor have benefited equally, and 14.2% think that the poor have benefited the most.

Overall, the data reveals significant differences in perceptions across the political spectrum regarding who has benefited more from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies. A majority on the left perceive that the rich have disproportionately

benefited, reflecting a belief in an unequal distribution of technological advantages. Those on the right, however, are more inclined to believe that the benefits have been more evenly distributed between the rich and the poor, with a notable proportion even considering that the poor have benefited the most. Centrists fall somewhere in between, with a plurality still perceiving a greater benefit to the rich but with a substantial segment seeing equal benefits or greater advantages for the poor. These differences in perception likely reflect underlying socioeconomic statuses and ideologies within each political group, highlighting the nuanced views on the impacts of digital technologies based on economic strata and political orientation.

Based on insights from the paper "Digital Divide Issues in Greece: A Systematic Review," it is evident that Internet use and access play crucial roles in shaping socio-economic inequalities and contributing to the digital divide (Karatrantou & Panagiotakopoulos, 2023). The availability and affordability of Internet services are significant factors that affect disparities across various socio-economic indicators such as education, income levels, employment opportunities, social status, and urban versus rural residency (Karatrantou & Panagiotakopoulos, 2023).

Greece faces internal socio-political divisions between different ideological factions, notably between the left and the right. These divisions can exacerbate digital immaturity and readiness within society, potentially hindering efforts to bridge the digital divide effectively (Bikos et al., 2018; Gounopoulos et al., 2018; Stamati, 2020; Tsekeris et al., 2020).

Table 4. Benefits from digital technologies (rich-poor)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	79.311 ^a	6	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	80.753	6	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.094	1	<.001
N of Valid Cases	1326		

In Table 4, which informs about the result of the independence test, we notice that the value of the value of the test statistic is equal to 79.311, while the corresponding p-value is less than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. We reject the null hypothesis of independence of the two variables and conclude that there is an association between participants' stances on the left-right scale and their placement on whether the rich or the poor benefited from the rise of Internet and digital technologies. The findings

suggest that left-wing voters are increasingly perceiving inequalities in the benefits derived from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings suggest that left-wing voters are increasingly perceiving inequalities in the benefits derived from the rise of the Internet and digital technologies. Specifically, a growing number of these voters believe that neither gender has benefited or that men have benefited more than women. Additionally, there is a perception that younger individuals have benefited more than the elderly, the more educated have benefited more than the less educated, and the rich have benefited more than the poor. This perspective indicates a heightened awareness and concern among left-wing voters about various forms of disparities and the unequal distribution of technological advantages. This trend underscores the importance of addressing perceived inequalities and ensuring that the benefits of digital advancements are distributed more equitably across all demographics.

Furthermore, these perceptions reflect broader societal concerns about the digital divide and its implications for social justice and economic opportunity. The belief that digital technologies disproportionately benefit certain groups over others may fuel calls for policy interventions aimed at closing these gaps. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a more inclusive digital society where the benefits of technological progress are shared more broadly, thereby mitigating the risk of exacerbating existing inequalities.

More specifically, the analysis of the survey data reveals varying perceptions across different social groups and political orientations regarding the beneficiaries of the rise of the Internet and digital technologies. The consensus on gender benefits indicates that men and women are perceived to have benefited equally, showing an equitable distribution of technological advantages across genders. However, a clear consensus emerges that young people and the more educated have disproportionately benefited from technological advancements, highlighting a perceived generational and educational disparity in the distribution of these benefits.

In contrast, opinions on economic disparities reveal significant differences. A majority on the left believe that the rich have disproportionately benefited, reflecting concerns about unequal distribution. Meanwhile, those on the right are more likely to view the benefits as equally distributed between the rich and the poor, or even skewed towards the poor. Centrists hold views that lie in between, reflecting a blend of both perspectives.

These findings underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of perceptions surrounding the impact of digital technologies. They suggest that while some areas, such as gender, are seen as relatively equitable, other areas like age, education, and

economic status are perceived differently, with notable variations across the political spectrum. These insights highlight the importance of considering diverse viewpoints when assessing the societal impacts of technological advancements.

The preliminary findings of the pilot study indicate promising trends that warrant further exploration. Initial data suggest that the methodologies and instruments used are effective in capturing the key variables of interest. These early results provide a solid foundation and highlight potential areas for deeper investigation. As we continue to collect data for the main study, there is a significant opportunity to conduct a more comprehensive analysis. The expanded dataset will enable us to validate the pilot findings, refine our hypotheses, and draw more robust conclusions, thereby enhancing the overall impact of our research.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Τα τελευταία χρόνια παρατηρείται αύξηση της χρήσης της τεχνολογίας σε όλους τους τομείς της καθημερινής ζωής και μια από τις σημαντικότερες αλλαγές αφορά την ανάπτυξη ρομποτικών τεχνολογιών για την εξυπηρέτηση καθημερινών δραστηριοτήτων. Έχει παρατηρηθεί από μελετητές ότι η εξέλιξη των ρομπότ έχει επιφέρει επιπτώσεις σε ορισμένα κοινωνικά ζητήματα, όπως οι πολιτικές πρόνοιας, η νομοθεσία, καθώς και από ηθική άποψη. Στόχος της εργασίας είναι να μελετήσει τις πολιτικές στάσεις των ψηφοφόρων απέναντι σε ζητήματα ψηφιακών κοινωνιών, όπως ο αντίκτυπος της ψηφιοποίησης στα πρότυπα επικοινωνίας και την κατανάλωση των μέσων ενημέρωσης, η εμπλοκή του πολίτη στην ψηφιακή εποχή και οι στάσεις τους απέναντι στην τεχνητή νοημοσύνη (AI), χρησιμοποιώντας τα δεδομένα από η πιλοτική έρευνα του ISSP 2024. Βασίζόμενοι στα δεδομένα των πιλοτικών δεδομένων του Διεθνούς Προγράμματος Κοινωνικής Έρευνας (ISSP) 2024, αναλύουμε την κοινή γνώμη σχετικά με τη συμπεριφορά τους απέναντι στις Κοινωνίες Συμπερίληψης.

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