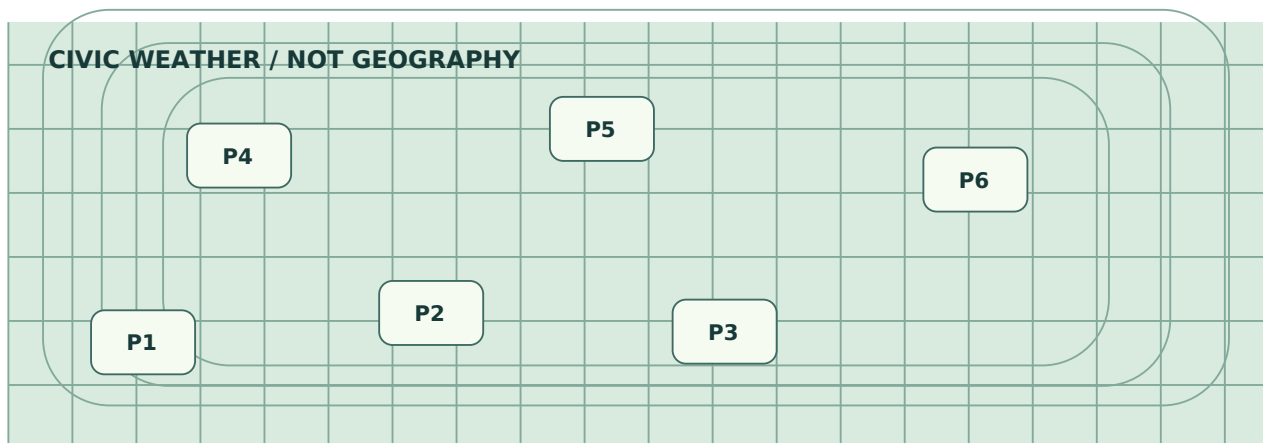


THE WEATHER OF THE UNSAID

Field guide to silence, social expectations,
gossip, and uncertain evidence.

An illustrated companion to three fictional communities and a transparent, replayable local simulation. No one is scored. No hidden truth is revealed.



Safety of interpretation

A public statement can improve clarity while undermining privacy. A pause can protect someone while leaving a question unresolved. There is no universally correct action here—and this guide offers no interpersonal, clinical or legal advice.

PLAY: tabooweather.sahilverse.online

HOME: sahiltayal.com

Begin with four sentences.

A small conversation can produce four kinds of statements. Confusing them makes the weather look like evidence.

Observation

“The shared meeting ended without a question about the missing item.” This can, in principle, be checked against a record of the meeting.

Interpretation

“The group was afraid of disagreement.” This may be plausible. It is not established by the absence of a question.

Social expectation

“People believe asking about the missing item would be regarded as disloyal.” This describes a belief about others’ expectations, not necessarily what those others privately want.

Consequence

“A participant must plan with incomplete information.” Here we examine the uneven burden of uncertainty without assigning a secret motive.

Evidence hygiene

The same phrase can migrate from “I wonder” to “everyone knows” without acquiring new evidence. Mark the point where it changes status.

Field question: Which statement could be independently checked, and which would require asking another person for a voluntary explanation?

Inside the weather machine.

Seven invented indices range from 0 to 100. They are editorial variables, not psychometric scales, climate measurements or empirical social parameters.

Response	Pressure	Wind	Gossip	Flash	Visible	Belong	Safety
Ask	−5	+6	−2	0	+9	−3	−2
Verify	−7	−5	−12	−3	+15	−4	+4
Disclose	−15	+11	+5	+18	+18	−12	−12
Pause	−2	−7	−2	−5	−2	+5	+5
Boundary	−4	−8	−6	−2	−1	−9	+12
Silent	+12	−3	+6	−2	−8	+5	+3

The columns represent pressure, repetition wind, gossip fragments, public lightning, visibility, belonging, and safety. Each turn adds +2 pressure. Feedback: gossip above 45 adds 3 wind; lightning above 45 subtracts 2 belonging; visibility above 55 subtracts 2 gossip. Values clamp to 0–100. An Ask spends one fictional hour, like every normal turn; Verify spends three hours in total. There are always eight choice turns.

Initial norm adjustments:

Private/harmony: pressure +12, belonging +9, visibility −8, safety +6. Early/open: pressure −7, wind +7, visibility +9, safety −5. Agreed process: pressure +3, gossip −4, visibility +2, belonging −3, safety +7. Cases add +4 pressure and +3 fragments for each successive case index.

A replay seed selects harmless description variants only. It does not randomize facts or numerical effects. Code, rules and comparison are local and transparent.

The unlabelled envelope.

A fictional annual gathering. An envelope labelled “For later” appears in a shared kitchen. A faded mark points toward a decision about a jointly held home.

Six residents: Mara (organiser), Ivo (archivist), Sela (new arrival), Nuri (caretaker), Paz (relative), Toma (witness).

Known in the fiction

- A sealed envelope was left on a shared table.
- The outside label is ambiguous.
- Nobody has permission to open the envelope.

An assumption moving through the room

Perhaps the envelope explains an earlier disagreement. Nothing confirms its purpose, contents, audience or authorisation.

Who pays for incomplete information?

Sela joined the gathering later than the others. Speculation circulates in a history Sela does not share. Asking questions might increase Sela’s context while also pressuring those who regard the envelope as private.

Reframe: Verification here need not mean opening or publishing the envelope. It might only involve checking what permissions exist, or acknowledging that permission has not been given.

A private prompt: Can an unresolved object be preserved without treating curiosity as permission?

The revised rota.

At a fictional cooperative studio, a roster changes. An unattributed screenshot begins circulating with a speculative caption.

Six residents: Ari (coordinator), Bela (worker), Cem (worker), Dara (planner), Elo (liaison), Finn (new hire).

Known in the fiction

- The shift roster changed.
- The reason is not publicly recorded.
- No one consented to share private accommodations.

An assumption moving through the room

Some participants infer favouritism from a visible difference in shifts. Whether an accommodation, scheduling mistake or ordinary rotation occurred is not settled.

The structural question

An organization can be responsible for explaining the fairness of a process without disclosing a worker's private information. The design tension is not "privacy or truth," but what can be made auditable and by whom.

Counterpoint: Psychological safety is not guaranteed by a demand that everyone speak. A process can offer a protected place to ask questions without making personal stories compulsory.

A private prompt: What would count as procedural transparency while leaving private circumstances private?

The silent festival rule.

A fictional arts circle no longer lists a performance that used to appear in its lantern festival. No written rule has been adopted.

Six residents: Uma (elder), Rell (performer), Kavi (organiser), Noa (new member), Tevi (volunteer), Luz (historian).

Known in the fiction

- The program no longer lists the performance.
- No written rule is available.
- Participants describe different histories of the omission.

An assumption moving through the room

Several people guess that one absent member requested the change. The available evidence does not support attributing the decision to that person.

Why norms complicate the story

A custom may feel as binding as a written rule, especially when no one is sure whether others would tolerate a change. But “many people expect this” is a separate claim from “many people privately approve of this.”

Counterpoint: Publicly naming the situation may make the expectation legible while unfairly shifting attention toward an absent person. Procedural clarity can be valuable even when causes stay unknown.

A private prompt: Whose permission is missing from the debate about what “everyone” wants?

The four-column ledger.

The strongest report can be the one that refuses to turn an interpretation into a fact. This worksheet is intentionally hypothetical.

01 / WHAT WAS OBSERVED?

Write only what a fictional witness could perceive directly. Include who made the observation and when.

02 / WHAT WAS INTERPRETED?

Write at least two plausible accounts. Label what additional evidence each would require.

03 / WHAT IS EXPECTED?

Separate what people do, what people think others do, and what people think others approve.

04 / WHO HOLDS THE COST?

Name the fictional person asked to live with less information, the person whose privacy might be exposed, and the one who can change the procedure.

Boundary: This exercise is not a request to catalogue the secrets, motives or personal history of identifiable people. Invent an event if you would rather keep real experiences private.

Same choices, different air.

Path dependence, in this instrument, means that initial expectations change the conditions through which later actions pass. It is not a forecast of any community.

The three norms

- Keep harmony / private: stronger starting belonging, weaker visibility, higher pressure.
- Discuss early / open: increased visibility and wind, lower initial safety.
- Follow process / procedural: somewhat safer and slower to spread fragments, with reduced belonging.

The controlled comparison

Record eight actions, then replay the same exact sequence across all three baselines. The simulation does not reveal any secret; you can see only how initial conditions and feedback rules alter the invented indices. In particular, the feedback thresholds make some sequences diverge non-linearly.

What comparison cannot tell you

No characters independently update beliefs in this toy; there is no demographic model, empirical estimate, or mechanism for consent beyond the framing. The word “safety” means a fictional indicator, not actual safety. The comparison therefore exposes design choices, not truths about group psychology.

Look twice: If a visible increase in clarity coincides with lower belonging, neither variable alone settles whether a decision was fair. Ask what information was legitimate to seek and whose consent mattered.

Try it: play with ASK → ASK → VERIFY → PAUSE → BOUNDARY → SILENT → VERIFY → ASK. Compare all three norms and explain any differences without evaluating yourself.

Expectations are not mind-reading.

Use these publications to strengthen distinctions; do not borrow their authority to validate the simulator's invented values.

[Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy — Social Norms \(2023 revision\) ↗](#) — Empirical vs normative expectations; an entry point for shared rules and conditional compliance.

[Andrighetto & Vriens \(2022\) — Research agenda ↗](#) — The authors argue for more empirically grounded mechanism-based accounts of norm change.

[Legros & Cislighi \(2020\) — Mapping the literature ↗](#) — Review of disagreements about definitions, persistence and norm-change mechanisms.

[Bicchieri, Lindemans & Jiang \(2014\) — Diagnosis ↗](#) — Demonstrates why measuring an observed practice is not enough to explain beliefs.

[Prentice & Miller \(1993\) — Pluralistic ignorance ↗](#) — Empirical study of mistaken assumptions about peers' attitudes; a challenge to apparent consensus.

Two reading questions

- Does the study ask what people actually do, what they believe others do, or what they believe others want?
- What setting and research design permit its conclusions—and which new setting would need fresh evidence?

Scholarly honesty: Sources differ in assumptions and evidence. The toy model is a pedagogical metaphor with disclosed arithmetic, not a contribution claiming empirical validation.

Rumour, voice, and protection.

Different literatures illuminate different problems; a single citation should not be asked to carry every lesson.

[Merlino, Pin & Tabasso \(2023\) — Debunking Rumors ↗](#) — Formal model of false and true messages; verification has incentives and costs.

[Pennycook & Rand \(2021\) — Psychology of Fake News ↗](#) — Review of why misleading information may be believed or shared, including inattention.

[Edmondson \(1999\) — Psychological Safety ↗](#) — Study connecting team psychological safety with learning; context-specific, not advice to confront.

[Bénabou & Tirole \(2011\) — Identity, Morals, Taboos ↗](#) — A theoretical account of incentives and identity behind beliefs and taboos.

[DiFonzo & Bordia \(2007\) — Rumor, Gossip and Urban Legends ↗](#) — Conceptual comparison of three often-conflated forms of social circulation.

Before you generalise

- Does a model assume a particular network?
- Does the paper measure people or infer mechanisms?
- Would silence be protective or harmful in a different context?

Research sources are available through the links above. The named papers are not endorsements of Sahilverse or the simulator.

An annotated route through Sahilverse.

These are thematic neighbours rather than evidence for our fiction. Some sources are live; archive dossiers stay explicitly labelled.

[What Is Taboo? — LIVE ESSAY ↗](#) — The essay that motivates inquiry into culturally prohibited topics.

[The Hearsay Department — LIVE ↗](#) — Follow the transformation of ambiguous accounts into institutional reports.

[The Reciprocity Atlas — LIVE ↗](#) — A parallel instrument for separating events from inferred motives.

[The Unfinished Weather — LIVE / COUNTERPOINT ↗](#) — Weather as a generative aesthetic ecosystem, not as social measurement.

[Feedback, Please — LIVE ↗](#) — A destination for precise, nonperformative disagreement.

[Reciprocity Is Not Telepathy — ATLAS ROUTE ↗](#) — Currently resolves to an atlas shell; an individual essay is not verified.

[Consent — COMPLETE DOSSIER / ARCHIVE ONLY ↗](#) — A catalog reference; not represented as a verified independent website.

[COMPLETE — LIVE ATLAS ↗](#) — The wider index for provenance, relationships and related worlds.

Link status reviewed 26 October 2026. Sites may later change; an atlas route may not expose a dedicated public document in its present form.

Leave the weather open.

The last page is not a score. It is a note about the quality and limits of the instrument you held.

1 / What just happened?

Eight local choices changed seven invented indices. A seeded narrative variant gave the ledger texture. No hidden facts were discovered, nobody was diagnosed, and no ethical decision was automated.

2 / What remains uncertain?

Each fictional community still lacks information. Different people bear different costs from silence, publicity, delay, verification and boundaries. The final table cannot tell you which costs real individuals would accept.

3 / What came from where?

Archive: linked COMPLETE dossiers only. Remix: the weather idiom and cross-genre connections. Original: the case situations, field essays, illustrations, worksheets and response narratives. Simulation: fictional numerical effects, openly documented, not calibrated.

4 / Choose a door

[Return to the observatory ↗](#) — Replay the same eight choices with a different starting expectation.

[Explore COMPLETE ↗](#) — Browse the documented field atlas and project dossiers.

[Main universe ↗](#) — Return to the canonical Sahil Tayal website.

Keep this sentence.

Weather can make a pattern visible; it cannot give you ownership over another person's story.

An honest unanswered question is still an honest result.

Sahil Tayal / Sahilverse • Field edition v2, 26 October 2026