



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

— — — — —
on the topic

**ADDRESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC
DISPARITIES IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY**

13th conference

ABSTRACTS
PROCEEDINGS



**MASARYK
INSTITUTE
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CTU IN PRAGUE**

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INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

We are pleased to present to you the collection of abstracts of the 13th conference *Regional Development between Theory and Practice*, which is held this year with the subtitle *Addressing Socio-Economic Disparities in Times of Uncertainty*. The conference aims to bring together academia, policymakers and practitioners in finding answers to the challenges posed by periods of uncertainty, whether in the form of economic shocks, societal changes or environmental risks. The main theme of this year's event is the issue of socio-economic inequalities, their deepening in turbulent times and the search for ways to sustainable and inclusive development of regions. We believe that the contributions contained in this collection will bring inspiration, new knowledge and impulses for further research and practical application in the field of regional development.

The conference is divided into five sections:

1. Spatial dimension of regional development

Section guarantor: doc. Ing. arch. Vladimíra Šilhánková, Ph.D. et Ph.D.

The following topics will be discussed in the section:

- Strategic planning and territorial development strategy
- Housing and real estate market
- Brownfield regeneration
- Transport in the regions, including electromobility and micromobility
- Regional development in rural area

2. Economic dimension of regional development

Section guarantor: doc. Ing. Tomáš Macák, Ph.D.

The following topics will be discussed in the section:

- Competitiveness of regions and strengthening economic development
- A company in a regional environment
- Investment activity of the region and in the region
- Management and development of territorial self-governing units
- Addressing socio-economic disparities in times of uncertainty

3. Environmental dimension of regional development

Section guarantor: Mgr. Michael Pondělíček, Ph.D.

The following topics will be discussed in the section:

- Sustainable development and its perspectives
- Impacts of climate change and adaptation
- Challenges of environmental policy
- Climate and energy security
- Environmental impacts of the war in Ukraine

4. Social dimension of regional development

Section guarantor: doc. Ing. Lucie Plzáková, Ph.D.

The following topics will be discussed in the section:

- Social dimension of regional development
- Demographic situation and population changes
- Governance
- Tourism and its impacts

5. Innovation and managerial aspects of regional development

Section guarantor: doc. Ing. Marek Jemala, Ph.D.

The following topics will be discussed in the section:

- Regional innovation systems, collaborative space and competition
- Networks, clusters, science parks and networking in regions, moderating and supporting roles of regional innovation mediators
- Regional management, proposals of regional policies for the creation of regional innovation systems
- Regional entrepreneurship, promoting regional innovation efficiency and sustainability
- Universities and the institutionalization of regional innovation: a focus on smart specialization and collaboration
- Digital economy, new technologies, perspectives of regional innovation systems

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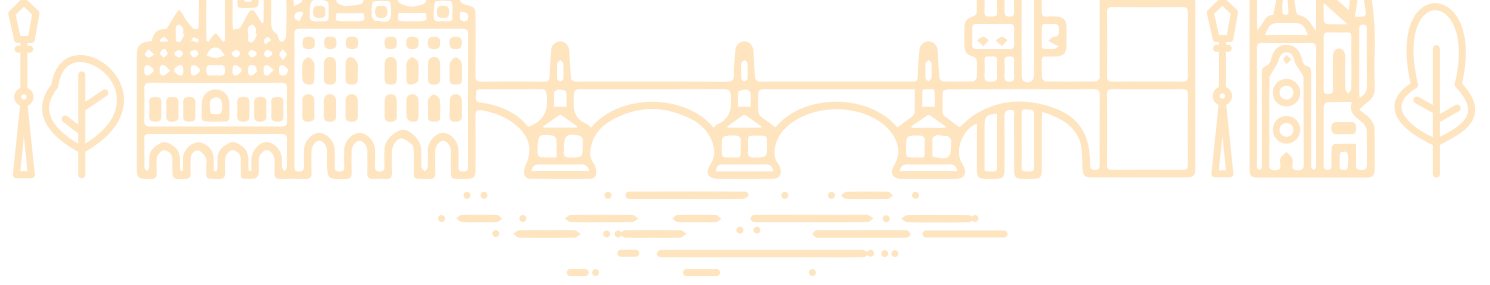
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Section 1

SPATIAL DIMENSION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RECREATION-LED MILITARY BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES IN CITY PERIPHERIES



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Abstract

Although remilitarisation activities are increasing throughout Central Europe, they are not currently associated with reusing abandoned military areas that emerged after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and 1990. Therefore, military brownfields remain remnants of the significant militarisation that characterised the bipolar world of Central Europe from 1945 to 1990. Many of these military areas are located on the outskirts of cities, creating artificial access barriers for residents and visitors. However, their previous closure to the public protected them from commercial activities and allowed nature to thrive. Despite this, few studies have explored their potential for recreational or tourist activities. Thus, this presentation addresses the issue of redeveloping military brownfields on the edges of cities for recreational purposes, integrating landscape protection and public greenery with public or private use. Moreover, the presentation initiates a discussion on the roles of the public and private sectors in the developmental trajectories of these sites, specifically designed for recreational activities. Therefore, we explore the paths and outcomes of military brownfield regeneration on the edge through a recreation-led approach. Using text analysis and interviews with stakeholders and key actors, two case studies in Milovice- Mladá and Bělský les in Ostrava support the decisive role of public sector administration in initiating and directing strategies for planning military brownfield redevelopment. This ensures equality of access for the public and protects public interests by preserving the natural values of these abandoned areas. However, the presentations also reveal that private and public recreation-led redevelopment has limitations, particularly concerning their openness or closure to the public and their commercial use's environmental and social implications. Therefore, this study advocates for further research and conceptualisation of military brownfield redevelopment on city peripheries and rural areas, where recreational purposes align with sustainability and landscape protection.

Key words

Milovice, military brownfields, Ostrava, recreation, urban peripheries

NON-PRICE BARRIERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTROMOBILITY WITH AN ASPECT OF REGIONAL DISPARITIES



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Abstract

One of the tools for meeting the EU's climate goals is to replace the emission fleet at national level through a smart system of support and removal of barriers with a fleet structure dominated by zero-emission vehicles. The replacement of the vehicle fleet must take place in parallel both at the company level and at the household level. The research is focused on identifying non-price barriers in order to find out what are the most important non-price barriers to faster/more dynamic development of electromobility, what policies the Czech Republic has in place to meet its climate goals in the transition to zero-emission mobility, and what is the degree of consistency between the applied policies and the identified barriers and whether there are or how significant regional disparities are. To answer the questions and achieve the research goals, a combination of methods is used, namely the focus group method for expert identification of barriers and the method of questioning in the form of a questionnaire survey. A survey was conducted on a representative sample of 400 respondents; the questionnaire was constructed as a combination of closed and open questions. The obtained data were processed using selected statistical methods. This was followed by an analysis of national policies, and finally an analysis of the consistency of the identified barriers and existing national policies. The output is the identification of gaps in the setting and structure of national policies to support the development of zero-emission mobility.

TRANSFORMING UNDERUSED PUBLIC SPACES THROUGH EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE: THE CASE OF THE ISTOG MARKETPLACE



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Abstract

This paper explores sustainable approaches to the transformation of public spaces through ephemeral architecture. Focusing on the case of the marketplace in Istog, Kosovo, the study proposes a model of revitalization for an underutilized urban area with high social and historical value. By introducing temporary and modular structures combined with local materials, the intervention aims to recover public space for people, while preserving its former identity and enhancing collective memory. The methodology combines site-specific analysis, community-based design, and urban theories focused on human-scale and place identity. The results highlight how temporary interventions can support inclusive development, social cohesion, and spatial flexibility in uncertain urban conditions.

Keywords

Public Space, Ephemeral Architecture, Urban Revitalization, Community Engagement, Territorial Development

THE EFFECT OF COGNITIVE BIASES AND EMOTIONS ON PLANNING PROCESSES



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Abstract

The planning discourse rarely focuses on emotions felt by people who are expected to remain neutral, such as planners, public servants, and project managers, and on cognitive biases that may affect both the emotions and the decision-making throughout the whole planning process. This paper discusses how the rational considerations as well as emotional assumptions and irrational cognitive biases of key people shaped one particular planning process, especially during a crisis. Particular attention is paid to the team members' expectations, the effect of emotions and cognitive biases on information processing, decision-making, and judgment, and the rationalisation of emotions during inquiries. The case study shows that cognitive biases and emotions played a great role in what was happening and shaped respondents' long-term interpretations of events.

Key words

Planners; Emotions; Cognitive bias; Decision-making; Judgment; Expectations

ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE DRAWING OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RETAIL FROM THE ERDF AND ESF IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



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Abstract:

This paper presents, through exploratory data analysis (EDA), the use of financial resources from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund to support the development of the retail sector in the Czech Republic during the programming periods 2014–2020 and 2021–2027. The research focuses on the regional distribution of financial support and analyses the volume of funds drawn, including the efficiency of program financing across different regions. The supported projects fall under the Operational Programmes Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness, Technologies and Applications for Competitiveness, and Employment. Thematically, they focus on information and communication technologies, business support, research, employment and social services, as well as environmental protection and climate change. The recipients of support include large retail chains (e.g., Albert, BILLA, Lidl, Kaufland, Penny Market), consumer cooperatives, and small and medium-sized enterprises. The paper also incorporates a spatial analysis of regional development, enabling a deeper understanding of regional disparities in the allocation of financial support. The analysis provides insights into regional differences in the scope of support, characteristics of the recipients, and thematic focus of the projects, showing how European funds contribute to the modernization and increased competitiveness of the retail sector in the Czech Republic.

Key words:

retail sector, European funds, European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund

SPATIAL COHERENCE AND URBAN REGENERATION: THE ROLE OF MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE IN SKOPJE'S CULTURAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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Abstract

Sociocultural factors shape the urban landscape of the city of Skopje, where museum architecture is essential in defining cultural identity and urban renewal. Through this research, we examine strategies for how museum architecture supports spatial coherence in Skopje by strengthening social integration, urban identity, and sustainable regional growth. The target of the study is the existing museums in the city of Skopje, as they are cultural institutions that have gone through different historical and socio-political phases, reflecting the social crisis of the Republic of Macedonia and at the same time are obliged to promote cultural coexistence. While previous research has focused more on the specific characteristics of museums in Skopje, in this research we focus on reimagining museums as agents of change, expressing their potential to unite diverse cultural identities and to strengthen social connections by relying on multidisciplinary and heterotropic architectural frameworks. The findings highlight the need to integrate urban assets in the vicinity of each museum in Skopje to revitalise urban areas as dynamic actors of urban transformation. The research also addresses a critical gap and proposes innovative approaches for the inclusion of cultural institutions within the urban planning process, while simultaneously underlining the key role of museums in shaping the urban fabric of Skopje, promoting civic engagement and advancing the growth of urban sustainability.

Key words

Museum Architecture, Spatial Coherence, Skopje Urban Regeneration, Cultural Identity, Sustainable Development

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS FOR THE FUNCTIONING AND DEVELOPMENT OF POST-SOCIALIST CITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES



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Abstract:

The article presents specific economic, social, and spatial conditions of post-socialist cities, comparing them with development models characteristic of Western European cities (welfare state model). Particular attention is given to historical and structural factors that continue to influence the functioning and adaptability of these cities. Subsequently, the authors identify major contemporary challenges facing European cities, such as globalization, digitalization of the economy, population ageing, linear economic models, and climate change. Among these, population ageing and adaptation to climate change are analyzed in detail. The core part of the paper consists of a critical review and evaluation of development strategies adopted by selected post-socialist cities (Kraków, Warsaw, Prague, Vilnius, Bratislava), enriched by comparisons

with a Western European city (Berlin). The authors focus on assessing the proactive and reactive approaches taken by local governments to contemporary challenges. In the concluding section, an original evaluation of public policies and social involvement effectiveness is presented, providing key recommendations for the further development of post-socialist cities.

Keywords

Post-socialist cities, Urban development, Urban strategies, Contemporary challenges, Public policies

FROM STRATEGIC CITY PLANS TO REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT – TOOLS AND PROCESSES



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Abstract:

Strategic planning is becoming an increasingly important tool for managing urban development. Urban strategies determine what should happen in cities in the future and why, and real estate development creates the appropriate spaces to enable the implementation of these strategies. The relationship between urban strategies and contemporary real estate development remains a key but still under-researched area of urban development. The current linkage between these two spheres is not direct. Between the city's strategic plan and the implementation of real estate development there is a wide range of instruments, including spatial planning documents, thematic concepts, methodologies and legislation. This paper will present a map of these instruments, their role in the different stages of the process, the degree of their strategic level and their links with key actors. It will also include a comparison with foreign approaches, especially from the European context.

Key words:

Urban governance, Strategic planning system, Planning tools, Planning processes, Stakeholders

ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF URBAN STRUCTURES ON THE PRICE OF HOUSING REAL ESTATES: CASE STUDY FROM CENTRAL EUROPE



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Abstract:

The aim of the research was to evaluate the impact of urban structures on the prices of housing real estate based on an analysis of selected urban structures. This hypothesis was verified in a set of twelve large cities in the Czech Republic as a country which has the most dynamic residential real estate market of the European union for several years. The chosen period for the work was the year 2019. From the point of view of housing structures, four types were important for the research. The highest prices of residential units can most often be found within the structure of medieval city core and within the structure of contemporary developers' dwelling projects. According to the research, it is therefore possible to confirm that urban structures have an impact on real estate prices.

Key words:

real estate prices; housing; urban structures; the Czech Republic

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AS AN ACTOR OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT – THE CASE OF SUBURBANIZATION IN SLOVAKIA



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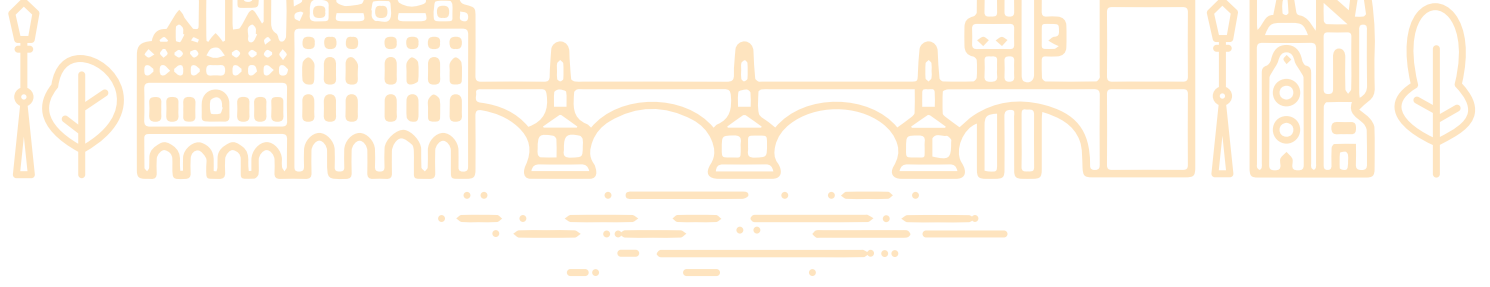
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Abstract

One of the key spatial development processes currently unfolding in Slovakia is suburbanization – in simple terms, the migration of people from cities to rural areas in the hinterlands of larger urban centers. When this process occurs on a large scale and in an uncoordinated manner, it brings numerous negative consequences for both the core cities and the surrounding rural municipalities. These impacts manifest across various dimensions – social, demographic, economic, environmental, and territorial – all of which are closely interlinked and mutually influential. At a certain stage of spatial development, the hinterlands of most major cities inevitably undergo suburbanization, making the process difficult to halt entirely. However, international experience shows that suburbanization can be regulated, and its negative aspects mitigated to improve the living conditions and quality of life of residents, as well as to promote sustainable settlement development. Based on research conducted in municipalities affected by this phenomenon, the paper highlights selected challenges linked to suburbanization, as well as the opportunities and limitations local self-governments face in managing and influencing this process.

Key words

Suburbanization, Local self-government, Local development, Urban-rural relations, Slovakia



Section 2

ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

CIVIL SERVANTS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCED TRAINING AS A MEANS OF STRENGTHENING CORPORATE CULTURE



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Abstract

The authors examine the impact of civil servants' professional development and advanced training on the strengthening of corporate culture. This study aims to assess how education and training for civil servants within executive authorities contribute to enhancing corporate culture. It includes an analytical review of modern approaches to corporate culture, emphasising its significance for the efficient functioning of public administration. The paper analyses contemporary trends in the modernisation of the Ukrainian civil service in line with European standards, with a focus on reforms in the professional training system, competency development, and the integration of digital technologies. The study utilises empirical data on civil servants' organisational culture, competencies, and levels of professional training. It identifies key directions for developing corporate culture through educational programmes, including the promotion of shared values, enhancement of professional competencies, strengthening of teamwork, encouragement of innovation, and fostering of integrity in public administration. The authors note that there is currently no specific course dedicated to the development or enhancement of corporate culture among civil servants.

Keywords

Corporate culture, Civil service, Professional training, Advanced training, Human resource management, Reforms

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY OF SLOVAKIA'S PUBLIC DEBT COMPARED OVER TIME AND INTERNATIONALLY



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Abstract

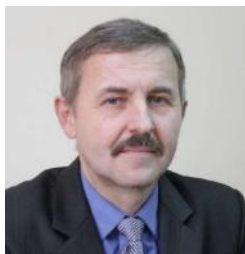
The paper focuses on the analysis of the development of public debt of the Slovak Republic and its comparison within the European Union countries. Based on a time series analysis, the main trends in Slovakia's debt are presented. In the framework of the international comparison, the Slovak public debt is assessed in the context of the Visegrad Four countries and other EU

Member States. The paper also includes a cluster analysis, which allows grouping countries on the basis of static indicators (debt level, interest costs, GDP per capita, fiscal balance) and dynamic variables reflecting the evolution of debt. The results point to a gradual deterioration of Slovakia's fiscal position and a growing need for consolidation of public finances in order to keep debt at a sustainable level. The analysis also underlines the importance of a combination of fiscal discipline and economic growth to preserve the credibility of the state in financial markets. This article is a part of the solution of the project VEGA 1/0255/25 Mapping the financial performance of local self-government.

Key words

Public Debt, Fiscal Sustainability, European Union, Cluster Analysis

IMPACT OF STANDARDIZATION AND CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ON PRINCIPLES OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE



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Abstract

The main goal of the contribution is to show how, in the conditions of a market economy, the effectiveness of work on standardization, certification, and implemented management systems is manifested both in the process and in the results of the activities of specific business entities of various forms of ownership, in all areas: in scientific research and design work, in production, circulation (sales), operation, and disposal of products. The paper aims to present the results that the structure of exports in recent years is dominated by agriculture, metallurgy and services (including gas transit revenues). Such statistics confirm the need for certification of products and services, as well as management systems in general. It is known that the export of services, light industry products and agribusiness requires certification of quality management systems, environmental management systems, HACCP and (or) integrated systems.

Key words

Market economy, Business entity, Export of services, Product certification, Environmental management

DISPARITIES IN REGIONAL RECOVERY PATTERNS: THE CASE OF CITY TOURISM



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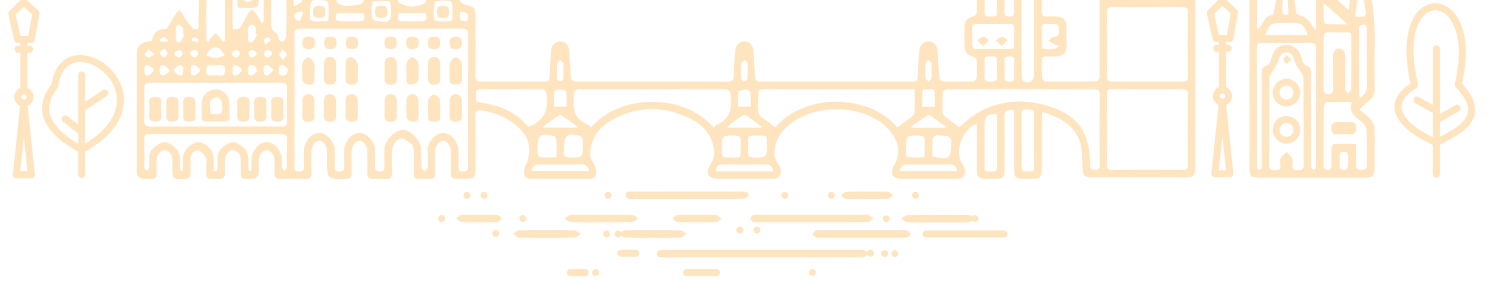
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Abstract

Cities play a key role in the spread of globalisation through transport and travel. Cities are also at the forefront of globalisation, which on the other hand makes them very vulnerable in crisis situations. With these painful experiences from several crisis since 2019, questions about the resilience of cities/destinations and their supporting factors became a key topic in the academic and practical discussion. In response to this call, this study will contribute to identifying the critical resilience factors for overcoming tourism crises in cities/destinations. Using an econometric approach covering European capitals, the study analyses how factors such as economic diversity, social support and education levels influence tourism recovery, measured by changes in resident and non-resident overnight stays. The results show that the size of the tourism sector, the degree of diversification, social support systems and education levels have a significant impact on the differences in recovery patterns.

Keywords

Urban tourism, Resilience, COVID-19 recovery, Recession, Diversification



Section 3

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

STRATEGY AND CHALLENGES OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN THE DIMENSIONS OF SELF-GOVERNING REGIONS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



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Abstract

The contribution introduces the components of the environment, points out environmental pressures and risks. It does not neglect environmental health, which is conditioned by the environment. Within the framework of environmental policy, it emphasizes the greatest environmental problems and challenges. The green economy supports environmental sustainability, quality of life. It is focused on the Environmental Policy Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2030 and introduces the Recovery and Resilience Plan as a global vision for Slovakia. The strategy represents a key framework for sustainable development and protection of natural resources at the regional level. Within the framework of the Environmental Policy Strategy, we introduce the principles and objectives of environmental policy and a group of sector-oriented priorities. The task of the European Union's environmental policies is to ensure that by 2050, citizens of the European Union can live in a healthy environment. Individual self-governing regions face diverse environmental challenges - from air pollution and waste management to biodiversity protection, and therefore it is important that their approaches are not only coordinated but also adapted to the specifics of the local environment. Based on an analysis of economic, social and environmental impacts, we present the environmental strategies of the self-governing regions of the Slovak Republic, as well as the roles and responsibilities of local governments in addressing a polluted environment.

Key words

Environment, Environmental policy, Local government, Recovery plan, Green economy, Quality of life

SELECTED DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CAPITAL CITY OF PRAGUE AND ADAPTATION TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



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Abstract:

The paper will deal with selected larger development areas in the capital city of Prague and their possible ways of adaptation to the effects of climate change and at the same time evaluate the available documents on Developments from the point of view of prevention against the impacts of climate change. Selected development areas in Prague are the Rohanský ostrov, Žižkov Freight Station and Bubny – Holešovice Zone, which are already under construction. The method will be a comparison of physical conditions in all listed development areas in the capital, evaluation of the probable effects of climate change on construction in the area. Finally, a comparison of the expected effects of climate change will be made with plans for development in these locations from the point of view of adaptation to the impacts and development of the sites in the future. The study will work with models and documents for individual areas for development and with the expected impacts of climate change on new city districts. The output of the paper will be an evaluation of how the available adaptation and prevention tools have been used to increase the comfort of residents in the planned parts of the city, at the same time it will be examined whether the safety of the inhabitants will be increased and a good contemporary standard of housing will be ensured. A complementary output will be how the city, city district or developers have contributed or could have contributed to the outputs in the field of adaptation to climate change. The study prepared as an article will provide insight into the preparation of buildings and locations for housing in accordance with the requirements for adaptation of cities to climate change and will also point out the use of possibilities for predicting the situation in the future.

Key words:

adaptation of settlements, climate change, blue-green infrastructure, urban development, brownfield

SMART CITIES AND THE IMPACT OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF CITIZENS

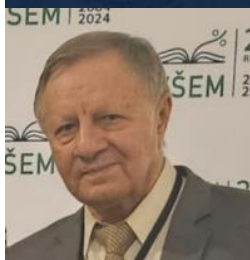


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Abstract

The main objective of the contribution is to define the concept of circular economy, to point out the needs and reasons for the emergence of circular economy as a response to acute environmental problems in cities and municipalities. Intelligent i.e. smart technologies create possibilities for solving changes that municipalities and cities face as a result of urbanization and population growth. However, this solution is only possible in cooperation with legislation that will respond quickly and professionally to ongoing changes. The next part of the article is devoted to the growing environmental problems that smart municipalities and cities can solve by implementing innovative solutions in the field of waste management and circular economy. The article therefore focuses on the analysis of the basis for the use of innovative solutions in the field of waste management and circular economy by territorial self-government entities using the example of the Slovak Republic. Based on the current legal regulation, it defines the

essence of territorial self-government and analyzes the possibilities, means and procedures of municipalities and cities in implementing environmental smart solutions.

The research part of the paper is devoted to the evaluation of the use of digitalization in environmental protection in selected eight smart cities in Slovakia in two regions: the Prešov region and the Košice region. The detailed analysis of the published documents is also an inspiration for other cities on how they can improve their operations in the field of smart cities.

Key words

Circular economy, Environmental problems, Urbanization, Innovation, Modernization, Self-government, Regulations, Administrative agreements, Municipality, Environment, Smart city

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF WASTE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH: A PRISMA-GUIDED SYSTEMATIC REVIEW



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Efficient waste management is an important part of sustainable development and one of the pillars of the circular economy. This paper uses the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology to identify and analyse key trends, approaches and research directions in waste management, offering a comprehensive view of the issue through the lens of academic literature. The literature search was conducted in the Web of Science database, and 37 studies meeting the specified criteria were selected. The VOSviewer tool was used to visualize citation links, key terms and subject headings. The analysis showed that the dominant themes in the current literature are planned behaviour, waste management, barriers - attitudes - determinants - perceptions, food waste, consumption and circular economy. Linkages between topics in order to outline key hypothetical relationships between and accross domains and variables are discussed in the paper.

Key words

Waste management, Sustainable development, PRISMA model, Systematic literature review



Section 4

SOCIAL DIMENSION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

UNDERSTANDING BRAIN DRAIN: THE EXODUS OF YOUNG TALENT



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Abstract

This study examines the brain drain phenomenon in the Moravian-Silesian region, where the outflow of highly skilled professionals has critical economic and social implications. The investigation identifies both push factors, such as limited local employment prospects and deteriorating quality of life, and pull factors, including attractive opportunities abroad, which together contribute to a significant loss of intellectual capital. By integrating empirical evidence on migration tendencies and the socio-economic conditions in the region, the article proposes comprehensive policy strategies aimed at talent retention, including improvements in working conditions, investment in local innovation infrastructure, and enhanced cooperation among public institutions, businesses, and academia. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the brain drain dilemma in the Moravian-Silesian region context and offers actionable recommendations for reversing these trends while promoting sustainable regional development.

Key words

Brain drain, Youth, Smart city, Socio-economic conditions, Quality of life, Generation Z

DEMOGRAPHICS TRENDS AND REGIONAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



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Abstract

Demographic trends and regional social development are closely intertwined, as population changes influence the availability of workers, skill composition, and economic productivity in different areas. The paper aims at demographic trends and the aging population, which challenges regional labor markets and local public administration. The theme focuses on the aging population and best practices for integrating migrants into the local society and the labor market. Methods are firstly, analyzing secondary sources, e.g., the Web of Science and Scopus databases, Eurostat, and Czech Statistical Office, and secondly, utilizing results from qualitative research done in 2023 among Ukraine migrants employed in the Czechia. The results cover recommendations for reskilling/upskilling to address workforce competencies and support migrants' integration. The discussion can include the implications of an aging population on workforce shortages, increased human resource diversity, and skill gaps.

Key words

Aging population, Labor market, Migrants, Competencies

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL AND LEGAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL DISPARITIES IN REGIONS



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Abstract

The article focuses on analysing the role of Social and Legal Protection of Children in addressing socio-economic disparities in the Czech Republic. The aim is to identify the key factors influencing the effectiveness of intervention measures in regions with higher levels of social and economic inequalities. Based on qualitative and quantitative research, the article primarily examines the approach of Social and Legal Protection of Children (SPOD) workers, collaboration with other stakeholders within regional support frameworks, and approaches to ensuring the long-term stability of the family environment, particularly in the area of alternative care. The research findings suggest that the effectiveness of SPOD work is strongly influenced by regional specifics, including the availability of professional services and financial resources. Major issues include a shortage of professionals, staff turnover, regional differences in access to family support, and inter-departmental cooperation problems. The paper concludes with recommendations for more effective systems of Social and Legal Protection of Children and alternative care, with a focus on reducing socio-economic disparities in regions.

Key words

Social and legal protection of children, Socio-economic disparities, Regional development, Alternative care, Intervention measures

THE SUGAR HERITAGE OF THE PILSEN REGION AND ITS IMPACT ON TOURISM



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Europe and the Czech lands were at the forefront of beet sugar production for almost 200 years. The introduction of sugar beet cultivation meant fundamental land use changes in the river floodplains and in their immediate flat surroundings here. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the production of sugar from sugar beet was one of the most important branches of Czech industry. From more than 380 sugar factories are in this moment in operation only six (seven). The current post-industrial period bears traces of the gradual decline of this industry, which is exacerbated by the decay of unused industrial sites converted into brownfields. The paper tries to present the historical-geographical aspects of the sugar-making tradition with its impact on the cultural landscape and tourism of the Pilsen region to a broad lay and professional public. The territory has enough natural resources for the cultivation of sugar beet, however, the change in the use of the landscape resulted in a complete suppression of the sugar-making tradition. The transformation of the immediate surroundings of the landscape is documented at 5 original sugar factories in Pilsen, Lužany, Rokycany, Domažlice and Prádlo.

Key words

Sugar, Cultural sugar landscape, Historical development, Landscape heritage, Pilsen region, Identification

THE ROLE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF AGEING IN THE REGIONS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



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Abstract

The article describes the current demographic situation in the Slovak Republic. It points to several disproportions in the health status of the population in the Slovak Republic compared to other countries of the European Union, to intervention activities aimed at improving the quality of life of seniors and older people. It introduces local government as a key actor and its competences in the field of social services for seniors. It focuses on the demographic consequences of the expected population development in Slovakia with an emphasis on the social system within the Community Plan and the Concept of Social Services Development. Local governments play a key role in ensuring accessible social and health services, supporting community life, accessibility, as well as in creating an environment that takes into account the specific needs of the aging population. The demographic situation as the main pillar of the social dimension of regional development and demographic trends as a significant regional dimension play a significant role in regional development. The article points out the goals of strategic documents in the context of the necessary provision of sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life of older people in all regions of the Slovak Republic. Population aging represents the main challenge for the development of social services. The aim of the article is to present the development trajectory of social services in Slovakia with an emphasis on the Strategic Framework for the Development of Social Services by 2030 in the Slovak Republic (personal sustainability, quality, accessibility, financing). To point out regional disparities within self-governing regions, to identify the use and satisfaction of seniors with residential social services.

Key words

Seniors, Aging, Demography, Local government, Social services, Regional development

DIGITAL BRANDING STRATEGIES FOR MARGINALIZED TOURISM DESTINATIONS



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This research examines whether digital branding can meaningfully contribute to reducing socio-economic disparities in marginalized tourism destinations. Despite the growing importance of digital marketing in tourism, there remains limited understanding of its potential to address regional inequalities. This study explores how digital branding provides visibility for underrepresented regions or for developing regions that are already recovering from problems, enables targeted messaging, creates storytelling opportunities, and facilitates community involvement in tourism development processes. The goal of this research is to explore the impact and value of digital branding strategies in reducing socio-economic disparities in selected regional mid-tier tourism destinations through comparative analysis. The methodology employs content analysis of strategic tourism documents, comparative analysis of digital branding approaches across selected destinations, and case studies of tourism areas that have implemented digital branding initiatives. This mixed-methods approach provides both broad insights and specific contextual understanding of digital branding's impact on regional development. The findings suggest that for digital branding to successfully address regional disparities, it should be part of a comprehensive strategy that also includes infrastructure development, capacity building, and policies that ensure tourism benefits are distributed equitably throughout local communities.

Keywords

digital branding, residents, socio-economic disparities, tourism destination, visitors.

ENHANCING TEAMWORK VIA COLLABORATIVE SPACES IN EDUCATION: PERCEPTIONS FROM STUDENTS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



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This research aims to explore the use of collaborative spaces in the Czech Republic, focusing on their perception and use by students. While these spaces are generally designed to promote collaboration, teamwork, and innovation, it is essential to understand how they are used, the genuine interest in this new tool, and, eventually, what obstacles prevent their optimal adoption. Through a methodology based on a survey of users and more than one hundred twenty responses, this study identifies the barriers to using these spaces, such as lack of information, associated costs, or other negative perceptions. Furthermore, recommendations will be made to improve the attractiveness of these environments, notably through targeted awareness initiatives and adjustments in the layout of the spaces. This research's results will enrich the debate on the importance of collaborative spaces in higher education in the Czech Republic. They will provide insights for the managers of these spaces to attract a more significant number of students.

Keywords

Collaborative spaces, Teamwork, Learning environment, Inclusivity, Educational institutions, Czech Republic

MOBILITY OF RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF ČELÁKOVICE



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Abstract

The City of Čelákovice is located in the Central Bohemian Region in the ring around the Capital of Prague in the Prague Metropolitan Area. The strongest transport flows of commuting and outgoing residents are with Prague. This results are from the Census data, housing and apartment data, directional and transport survey and geolocation data of mobile operators. These flows will be partly affected by the newly built road bypass and in the future, especially the construction of a high-speed line with the Prague-East Terminal near the village in Nehvizdy. The most discussed topics are parking spaces and public transport. Čelákovice is an ideal location that can be presented as a city of short distances and emphasis must be placed on the preferences of pedestrians and cyclists when moving within the city. The main document for optimizing transport systems and solving key problems is the Mobility Concept of the City of Čelákovice (2020).

Key words

Čelákovice, doprava, geolokační data, mobilita, přepravní proudy

INVESTMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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Early childhood education not only supports the individual development of children but also has a broader impact on the economic, social, and cultural development of regions. Education during early childhood provides children with essential cognitive and social skills that are crucial for their future education and professional life. Children who have access to quality early education are more likely to succeed in primary school, secondary school, and later in the labor market. High-quality preschool education therefore contributes to the development of an educated and skilled workforce, which is a key factor in the economic growth of a region. Investing in early childhood education helps reduce regional disparities, improve employment rates, build stronger communities, and enhance the overall quality of life in the regions. Low participation rates of preschool-age children in early childhood education are most often due to two main reasons: (i) the absence of kindergartens or a lack of available places in them, and (ii) the low participation of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. A lack of knowledge and information about the specific characteristics of (un)availability of kindergartens, and the nature and causes of low enrollment of preschool-aged children, often leads to the low effectiveness of programs aimed at increasing participation in early childhood education. The aim of this paper is to identify regions suitable for directing interventions and funding to support early childhood education. The goal is to evaluate the spatial differentiation of access to early childhood education based on a regional typology of municipalities, and to identify potential factors influencing this variability. Key findings reveal significant regional disparities in preschool participation. The results show that children's participation in early education is influenced not only by insufficient kindergarten capacity but also by differing demographic, social, and economic conditions. The knowledge gained is useful for planning early childhood education. It highlights the need for targeted interventions and spatially differentiated educational policies to improve access to preschool education.

Key words

Pre-primary education, Cluster analysis, Regional types of availability, Kindergarten, Targeted interventions, Slovakia

PARTICIPATION IN URBAN AGRICULTURE IN THE NITRA REGION



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The aim of the paper is to identify the factors leading to the involvement of residents of the Nitra Region in urban agriculture activities. Emphasis is placed on uncovering the influence of objective barriers as well as other personal characteristics of the residents. Special attention is given to the residents of the city of Nitra, as the largest urban center in the region. The analysis is based on 131 responses from a survey addressed to the residents of the region's cities. The results show that a significant factor in participating in urban agriculture is an individual's involvement in community activities, highlighting the potential for developing community-oriented urban agriculture initiatives. Participation in urban agriculture is significantly higher in the city of Nitra. Paradoxically, however, for Nitra residents, lack of information about such activities represents an important barrier to participation.

Key words

Urban agriculture, Community activities, Participation, Alternative food networks

IMPACTS OF EU REGULATION ON SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION RENTALS ON TOURISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



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Abstract

Text of the abstract in English. Short-term accommodation rentals influence tourism not only in the Czech Republic but also in the European Union. This paper examines the legal framework of EU regulation concerning short-term accommodation rentals and its impacts on tourism in the Czech Republic. Therefore, the paper analyzes Regulation (EU) 2024/1028 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on the collection and sharing of data relating to short-term accommodation rental services and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724, 1 as well as other European Union regulations pertaining to the regulation of tourism. Emphasis is placed on the transposition of these regulations into the legal order of the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the paper addresses related national legislation concerning the regulation of tourism in the Czech Republic. Compliance with the legal regulations related to tourism in the Czech Republic should thus have a positive impact on the provision of such services, particularly through online platforms.

Key words

Short-term accommodation, Tourism, Online platform, Local legislation, EU legislation

WILL DIGITALIZATION INCREASE THE QUALITY OF CARE PROVIDED IN SOCIAL SERVICES?



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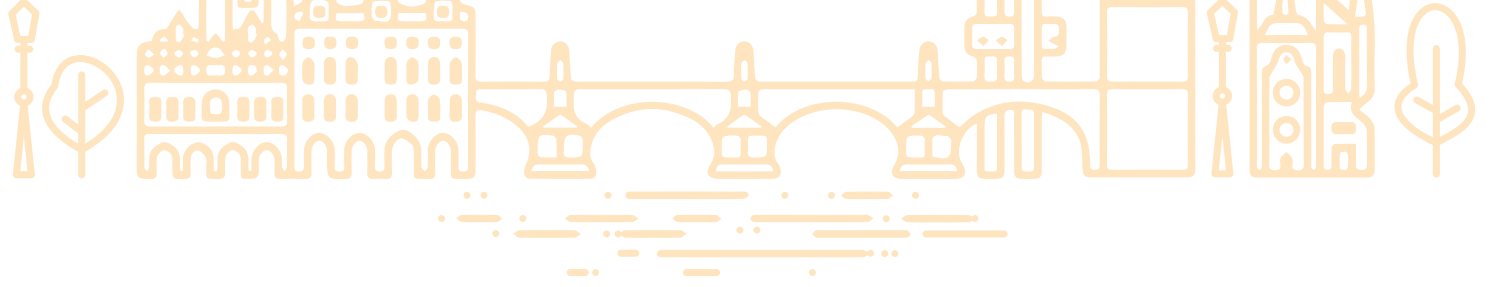
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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to evaluate whether the use of digitalization and modern technology will increase the quality of social services in a selected sample of social service providers. Increasing the availability of modern technology is one of the means to improve the quality of social services provided. The paper discusses the different tools of digitalization implementation and examples of good practice in the Czech Republic and abroad. The research conducted focused on the implementation of virtual reality technology in residential social services. The research showed that the most frequent forms in the introduction of modern technologies include electronic registration of clients, digitalization of the service request process, assistive technologies or shared integrated systems. A major barrier to the introduction of modern technologies is human potential.

Key words

Social services, Innovation, Virtual reality, Modern technologies, Digitalisation



Section 5

INNOVATION AND MANAGERIAL ASPECTS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

CLUSTERS AS A PLATFORM FOR FIRMS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS COLLABORATION: THE CASE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



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Clusters are built around links between firms, research, and training institutions, providing fertile ground for accelerating research toward innovation. The previous papers argued that links between firms and universities/research institutions are rather keen on the collaboration between firms and research institutions themselves, neglecting the role of cluster organisations as a catalyst for R&D activities. Therefore, the rationale behind this paper is reflected in the need to investigate how firms in the cluster organisation platform build links with universities and research institutions. Hence, the paper focuses on the collaboration between business and research in the quadruple helix. Thus, the cooperation among members of a national ecosystem for R&D in the Czech Republic. The paper focuses on activities, factors conditioning collaboration, and models of cooperation that occur in practice regarding stakeholder engagement in B2R and R2B. The research design is based on empirical qualitative analysis of primary data gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with cluster managers and research institutions. Secondly, a questionnaire survey among researchers reflected on motivation, sources, and forms of collaboration. The results identified that the primary motivation for B2R and R2B in Czech clusters is savings of R&D costs through access to public research funding, the sharing and transfer of state-of-the-art knowledge and cutting-edge technologies. In contrast to cluster managers, researchers consider the most crucial motive the opportunity to expand their networking, especially in terms of attracting research projects and thus funding further research, including directly generating additional income. The results implied that it is necessary not only to invest in R&D projects alone, but also to find a path to optimise the decision-making structures of research institutions, including universities,

respecting their autonomy. Therefore, the study provides a deep understanding of the determinants of effective collaboration between B2R/R2B within the cluster organisations.

Key words

Business and research collaboration, Cluster collaboration platform, Collaboration models, Cluster organisation

BASIC CONDITIONS FOR CREATION OF A SIMPLE EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR THE RECONVERSION OF BROWNFIELDS INTO RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUSTAINABILITY: SELECTED FUNDAMENTAL EVALUATION ELEMENTS



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Abstract

The conversion of brownfields into residential buildings remains a relevant topic in the context of sustainability. For responsible and sustainable brownfield redevelopment, it is essential to determine at least tentatively, during the early stages of planning whether a particular conversion direction is viable, or to identify what further interventions and investments may be necessary. Due to the need for an evaluation system, the design of individual partial evaluation elements was initiated. This need is also supported by a review of professional literature, which revealed that the topic of sustainability evaluation is addressed by only a limited number of studies. The added value and primary aim of this work is therefore to present and preliminarily specify the first basic elements of an evaluation system, designed primarily for conditions in the Czech Republic. However, the system is conceived as open and adaptable, allowing for the subsequent modification or replacement of evaluation elements to enable assessment of other types of reconversion projects, both in the Czech Republic and abroad. Given the scope of the system, it has been simplified to focus exclusively on the reconversion of brownfields into residential developments. For initial orientation, systems such as BREEAM, LEED, CASBEE, SIPRIUS, DGNB, GREEN STAR, SBTool, and GRI Standards can be considered inappropriate, potentially restrictive, only partially reflective of local Czech conditions, applicable only post-implementation, or too time- and cost-intensive. Nevertheless, familiarity with these tools, along with a review of professional literature and an analysis of selected projects, has contributed to defining the initial evaluation elements for a future, simplified evaluation system.

The summary and initial evaluation of these elements are by no means final. Further evaluation of projects will provide feedback for refining the elements and the evaluation process itself. This article forms part of a dissertation, one of whose primary objectives is to develop a simple system for evaluating brownfield reconversion.

Key words

Reconversion; Brownfield; Sustainability; Residential buildings; Evaluation system

INNOVATION IN SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES: A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE



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Abstract:

Regional development in an era of dynamic socio-economic change and predicted demographic indicators faces the challenge of responding effectively to the needs of an ageing population, increasing inequalities in access to care and demands for personalised services. As an integral component of regional care systems, social and health services play a key role not only in ensuring the quality of life of vulnerable groups, but also in promoting social cohesion and economic resilience of regions. The aim of this paper is to pertract innovative trends in social and health services and identify their implications for regional development. We also focus on the analysis of selected examples of good practice, reflecting on the success factors for the implementation of innovations such as the digitalization of services, the development of community-based and mobile forms of care, the participation of beneficiaries and the integration of different levels of governance. The paper also highlights barriers at regional level, including fragmentation of funding or lack of qualified staff. The conclusion emphasises the need for strategic planning of innovations in line with regional development goals, the promotion of interprofessional cooperation and the active involvement of communities in service design, and also suggests recommendations for practice.

Key words:

Innovation, Socio-health services, Regional development, Quality of life, Integrated care, Digitalisation, Social inclusion

DIGITAL READINESS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN THE REGIONS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS



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Abstract

The digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a key factor in regional competitiveness, innovation capacity, and economic sustainability. The aim of this paper is to analyze the level of digital readiness of these enterprises in selected regions of the Czech Republic, with consideration of regional disparities. The research is based on a primary survey conducted among businesses in seven regions, selected to represent less developed, moderately developed, and highly developed areas.

The survey examines the use of key ICT tools (ERP, CRM, BI), barriers to digitalization, access to IT competencies, and planned investments. Additionally, the results are compared with publicly available data. The goal is to identify regional differences, key barriers to digitalization, and to formulate recommendations for regional and national innovation policy.

The paper includes a statistical evaluation of the collected data, providing an empirically grounded view of the relationship between digital readiness and regional economic development. The analysis results will highlight how various regional factors influence the degree of digitalization and the barriers hindering the development of digital technologies. This overview can serve as a basis for targeted interventions aimed at supporting the digital transformation of enterprises in regions with lower levels of economic activity.

Key words

Digital transformation, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), digital readiness, ICT adoption, regional development

WHO ARE WE PLANNING FOR? MUNICIPALITIES, CITIES AND THE CHALLENGE OF RETAINING THE YOUNG GENERATION



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Abstract

The paper was written within the framework of the Czech Technology Agency's project "Young people as actors in the future development of towns and cities" (project no. TQ01000007), which deals with the topical and strategically important topic of the position of young people in the development of Czech towns and cities. The aim of the project is to comprehensively understand young people's (aged 18-40) perceptions of living in different types of settlements, their preferences in terms of housing and how they relate to the place where they live. We pay particular attention to issues of participation - the extent to which and how young people are involved in local decision-making, civic activities or community life. At the same time, the project also looks at the other side of the "equation" - that is, it examines how municipalities and cities actively approach the young generation as potential development actors. What tools and measures do they use to make themselves attractive to young people, how do they involve them in decision-making processes, and whether they manage not only to retain young people but also to attract them back after, for example, study or labour migration. The paper is based on a representative survey of young people in the Czech Republic (N = 1000) conducted in 2024, as well as a nationwide survey of municipal representatives (N = 567). Combining both perspectives - the young people's perspective and the municipalities' perspective - allows not only to identify current barriers, but also to look for inspiring examples of good practice and to propose concrete recommendations for public policy.

Key words

Young people; Local development; Strategic planning; Czechia

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS: LEGAL PRECONDITIONS FOR A SMART REGION



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Abstract:

The digital transformation of public administration is a key element in the modernization of public authority at the regional and municipal level. This paper explores the legal framework for the digitalization of self-governing regions and municipalities in the Czech Republic, focusing on Act No. 12/2020 Coll., on the Right to Digital Services, and related legislation in administrative, constitutional, and information law. The paper examines how digitalization contributes to good governance principles such as transparency, efficiency, and public participation, while also identifying legal and practical challenges, particularly for smaller municipalities with limited capacities. Emphasis is placed on the legal responsibilities of local governments to provide digital services and on the risks related to legal uncertainty, data protection, and equal access. Using the legal-dogmatic method and selected case studies from Czech regions and cities, the paper offers recommendations for legal and institutional reforms supporting the development of “smart regions.” These are seen as essential for reducing socio-economic disparities and ensuring accessible, legally certain digital public services in times of uncertainty.

Key words:

Digitalization, Governance, Legal Framework, Municipalities, Smart Regions

DIGITALISATION OF RURAL AREAS: THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



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Abstract

The present paper examines the role of local authorities (municipalities) in addressing socio-economic disparities in rural areas through strategic digitalisation initiatives. Focusing on the Czech Republic, it explores how municipalities are using digital infrastructure development to combat digital exclusion, a growing challenge that affects community vitality and regional competitiveness. The present study analyses the strategies adopted by local governments in 90 rural municipalities to promote digital inclusion and foster digital entrepreneurship. It emphasises the potential of these initiatives to stimulate economic growth, strengthen community ties and attract investment, while acknowledging the organisational and technological challenges associated with the digital transition.

Key words

Digitalisation, Rural areas, Digital divide

INNOVATION IN THE SPA INDUSTRY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAK REPUBLIC



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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to evaluate the types of innovations applied in spa enterprises in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. Data collection was carried out using an electronic questionnaire survey using the CAWI method. The chi-square test of independence was used to verify the relationships between two categorical variables. The Likert scale was also used to assess the measurement of respondents' attitudes in the questionnaires. Spa enterprises introduced various types of innovations in the period 2018–2022. These were product innovations related to an improved or new product, technical and technological innovations (new technologies, appreciation of long-term tangible assets), organizational innovations (change in organizational structure) and marketing innovations (introduction of new modern methods of communication and marketing towards customers). The type of innovations introduced varied, usually with regard to external influences, with the Covid-19 pandemic having a major impact on innovations in spa enterprises in 2020 and 2021. Of the benefits of innovations, economic benefits are most often mentioned. The motivating factor for implementing innovations is increasing the competitiveness of spa enterprises and introducing new technologies. Product innovations are perceived by spa enterprises as the most beneficial.

Key words

Czech Republic, Innovation, Slovak Republic, Spa enterprise, Spa industry, Tourism

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