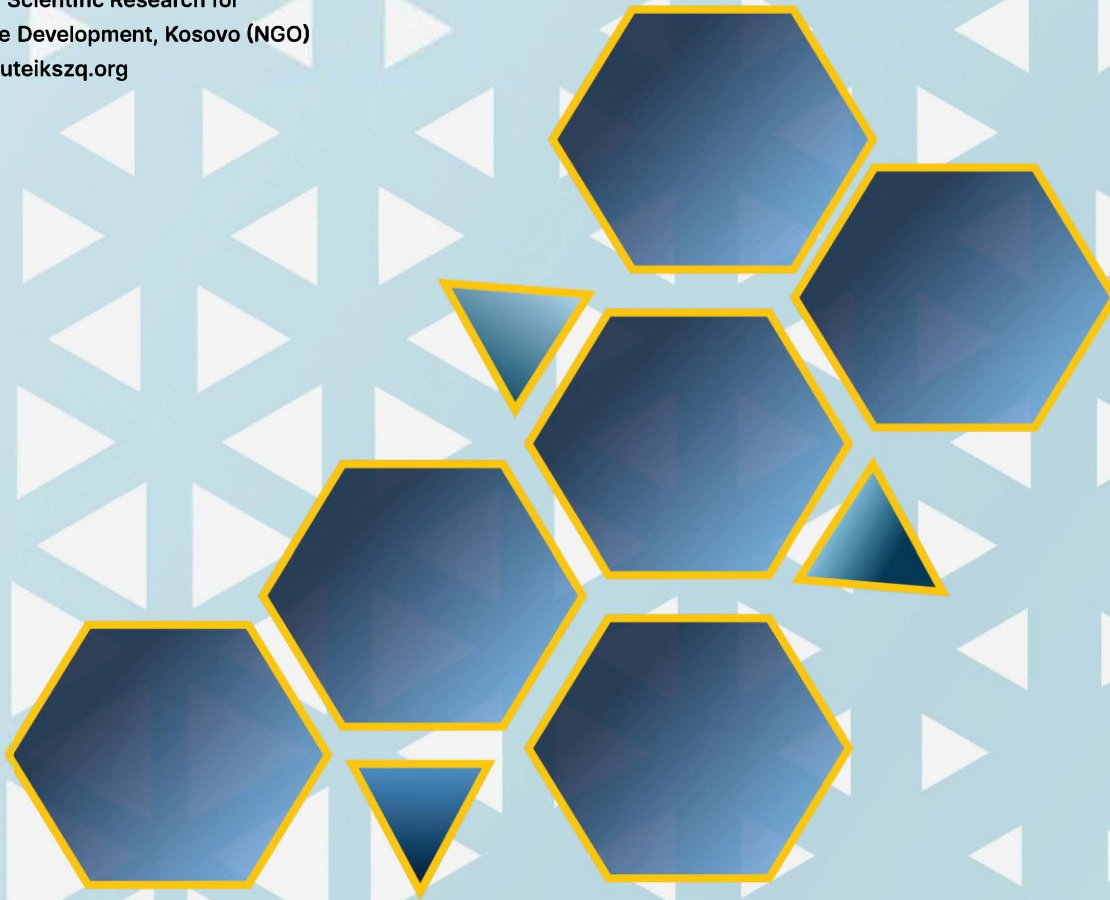




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# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

## 1ST INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**"Demographic Transition in 2050 and Regional Policies" in cities and territories of  
the developing world.**

**Editors**

**Prof. Dr. Armand Krasniqi**

**Prof. Dr. Tuzin Baycan, Prof. Assoc. Dr. Marinela Krstinić Nižić,**

**Prof. Ass. D. r Filipos Ruxho**

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**University “Haxhi Zeka” of Peja, Kosovo,  
Institute of Scientific Research for Sustainable Development, Kosovo.  
Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Kosovo  
in cooperation with  
Department of Applied Economics, University of Oviedo, Spain.  
Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey.  
Department of Regional and Economic Development, Agricultural University of Athens, Greece.  
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija, University of Rijeka, Croatia.**

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**Editors:**

**Armand Krasniqi, University Haxhi Zeka of Peja, Kosovo  
Tuzin Baycan, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey  
Marinela Krstinić Nižić, University of Rijeka, Croatia  
Filipos Ruxho, University Haxhi Zeka of Peja, Kosovo**

**1<sup>st</sup> INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

# Book of Abstracts

In cooperation with:





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## **BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY AND CRYPTOASSETS**

**Fernando TEIXEIRA**

Instituto Politécnico de Beja, Smart Cities Research Center,  
Portugal, [fernando.teixeira@ipbeja.pt](mailto:fernando.teixeira@ipbeja.pt)

**Susana PESCADA**

Universidade do Algarve, Cin Turs - Research Center for Tourism,  
Sustainability and Well-being, Portugal, [spescada@ualg.pt](mailto:spescada@ualg.pt)

**Válter MACHADO**

Instituto Politécnico de Beja,  
Portugal, [valterfilipemachado@gmail.com](mailto:valterfilipemachado@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

Blockchain systems have introduced new approaches and tools to complement or replace existing financial systems. This study presents a decentralized P2P financing model as an alternative. We structured dP2P for various Beta currencies based on exchange rate variations. The results showed that dP2P is strongly influenced by significant exchange rate fluctuations. However, dP2P's viability was confirmed through its stabilization compared to individual Fiat currency exchange rates. This stabilization aligns with the understanding that investment in developing countries standardizes the effect of capital cost, return rate, and credit availability to the private sector, as demonstrated in FDI studies. Foreign interest in investing is inversely proportional to market volatility due to risk aversion and uncertainty, leading to decreased private investment. This perspective aligns with the goal of balancing the crypto asset as a foreign investment stabilizer compared to solely using the national currency.

**Keywords:** Decentralization, crypto assets, Fiat currency, dP2P financing, blockchain, sustainability.

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## **PERCEIVED AND DESIRED IMAGES OF SOCIETY: HOW UNEQUAL ARE OUR SOCIETIES?**

**Associate Professor Ligita ŠARKUTĖ**

Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

[ligita.sarkute@vdu.lt](mailto:ligita.sarkute@vdu.lt)

**Professor Algis KRUPAVIČIUS**

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

[algis.krupavicius@mruni.eu](mailto:algis.krupavicius@mruni.eu)

In today's world, understanding how people perceive and envision their societies is crucial. The main objective of this article is to explore the imagined – perceived and desired – types of society through comparative analysis. The study focuses on 23 countries that participated in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) on social inequality in 2009 and 2019. This research aims to answer key questions such as: What is the gap between perceived and desired types of society? How do these perceptions relate to different macro socioeconomic and political conditions? And how are individual assessments influenced by sociodemographic and attitudinal factors? The lack of research on these questions highlights the significance of this study. Its novelty lies not only in the cross-national comparison of societal perceptions but also in linking these perceptions to human and social capital, well-being, and subjective identities. The findings reveal that while most societies are perceived as socially unequal, the majority of people still aspire to live in more just societies in the future.

**Keywords:** Unequal, societies, inequalities

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## **DEPOPULATION AND BEYOND: THE LEFT BEHIND AREAS OF EUROPE**

**Ana VINUELA,**

Professor of the Department of Applied Economics

University of Oviedo, Spain

[avinuela@uniovi.es](mailto:avinuela@uniovi.es)

### **Abstract**

Depopulation in certain regions of Europe has led to severe socioeconomic challenges, leaving many areas isolated and struggling with diminished public services, economic stagnation, and cultural erosion. This paper examines the causes and impacts of depopulation in Europe's "left-behind" areas, focusing on rural, mountainous, and post-industrial regions that have been most affected by population decline. The study investigates factors driving depopulation, including aging demographics, migration to urban centers, and structural economic shifts. It further explores the consequences for local communities, such as reduced labor markets, declining infrastructure, and limited access to education and healthcare. Through case studies and policy analysis, the paper discusses strategies for revitalization, including sustainable development initiatives, incentives for youth retention, and the promotion of digital and green economies. The findings underscore the need for targeted policy interventions to revitalize these areas and suggest collaborative approaches that combine local knowledge with regional and EU-level support to foster resilience in depopulated regions.

**Keywords:** Depopulation, Left-Behind Areas, Rural Decline, Europe, Socioeconomic Challenges, Regional Policy, Revitalization, Sustainable Development, Aging Demographics, Migration Patterns

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## EVALUATING AI-BASED INTELLIGENCE

**Proessor Petraq PAPAJORGJI**

European University of Tirana, Albania

[petraq@gmail.com](mailto:petraq@gmail.com)

Since the early days of artificial intelligence (AI), the need to evaluate its performance has been noticed. Alan Turing proposed a well-known procedure called the "Turing test." According to Turing, an AI-based system will pass the test if a human judge cannot distinguish between it and the human interlocutor.

AI has evolved tremendously in recent years, and the Turing test needs to be extended to accommodate modern AI-based systems. This study proposes a new procedure to evaluate AI performance. A Mind Genomics-based survey was designed to study education-related issues. Researchers and an AI-based system implemented the same experiment twice. Both surveys were presented to willing participants. The obtained results were compared to see whether there were differences between the two approaches. The index of divergent thought (IDT) was used to evaluate both performances.

The study shows that AI could be used interchangeably to reach results similar to those of human researchers.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, interlocutor, Genomics-based

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## **SUSTAINABLE CITIES AS CARRIERS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CROATIA**

**Marinela Krstinic NIZIC**

Associate Professor, University of Rijeka,

Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Croatia

[marikn@fthm.hr](mailto:marikn@fthm.hr)

The issue of sustainable development in Croatian cities has recently gained importance under the influence of demographic trends, geographical conditions and economic activities in cities. While cities pose numerous challenges, these issues must also be addressed in a regional context. Moreover, urban problems cannot be completely decoupled from regional concerns.

Urban management and development face significant hurdles when it comes to creating jobs and achieving economic growth without jeopardising the integrity of the environment and the availability of resources. Many cities in Croatia, especially on the coast, are known as tourism hotspots, with tourism being the main economic driver. Therefore, this summary will use secondary data to analyse whether tourism can indeed serve as a catalyst for comprehensive regional development and make these areas places worth living in.

In an era characterised by rapid economic, sociological and cultural changes, the management of tourism destinations requires the identification and definition of effective models, methods and strategies for regional development. The concept of a destination requires integrated management involving all key stakeholders. Given negative demographic trends, underdeveloped urban networks and economic challenges, it is clear that national policy should prioritise urban areas that are lagging behind the national average.

The research findings shed light on the state of sustainable development in Croatian cities and show that the influx of tourists contributes to economic growth, sustainability and population retention. More developed cities should lead by example when it comes to attracting and retaining citizens through sustainable practises. Analysis of the ten most developed cities shows that they all have comprehensive development strategies, including those centred on tourism. Conversely, cities facing development challenges often have strategies that have been developed in collaboration with neighbouring municipalities, demonstrating positive cooperation.

Building sustainable cities is critical to promoting an integrated approach that improves citizen engagement with the city and protects the environment. Many elements of natural ecosystems are linked to the social, economic, cultural and political systems of cities and form a unified framework. Therefore, increasing the efficiency of all urban services, including public and municipal services, is crucial for improving overall economic and regional efficiency and ensuring a better quality of life for citizens.

**Keywords:** regional development, sustainable cities, tourism, Croatia

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## **DETECTING GEOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS IN THE EU'S INTERREGIONAL FLOWS: A MULTILAYER HIERARCHICAL APPROACH**

**Dimitrios TSIOTAS**

Department of Regional and Economic Development, School of Applied Economics and Social Sciences, Agricultural University of Athens, Greece. [tsiotas@aua.gr](mailto:tsiotas@aua.gr)

*Corresponding author*

**Vassilis TSELIOS**

Department of Economic and Regional Development,  
Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, Greece.

[v.tselios@panteion.gr](mailto:v.tselios@panteion.gr)

### **Abstract**

Interregional flows are fundamental to developing Europe's macroeconomic structure, and their study offers critical insights into the mechanisms driving regional disparities and stimulating regional growth. This research contends that interregional connectivity significantly shapes the spatial pattern of economic development. In addition, it argues that the configuration of interregional linkages within the EU's geographical landscape reflects the degree of socioeconomic and territorial integration, thereby motivating a more targeted policy approach to European Cohesion.

Drawing on data from the ESPON (2023) database – including NUTS II interregional flows of goods and services (FGS), capital (FC), people (FP), and knowledge (FK) – this study constructs a multilayer interregional network model to identify geographical patterns in EU flows. It examines the extent to which variations in these interregional flows across the European Union (EU) correlate with regional disparities. Utilizing hierarchical clustering, statistical methods, and complex network analysis, the proposed model identifies patterns of hierarchy and similarity both within and across the various types of interregional flows. The objective of the research is to develop a methodological framework for integrated modeling of EU interregional connectivity, assess the contribution of each flow type to overall EU market functionality, and evaluate the level of cohesion within the EU's geographical space. The multilevel methodological framework begins by categorizing the 41 interregional variables into four thematic groups (FGS, FC, FP, and FK) and applies Hierarchical Clustering Analysis in clusters of

3 up to 7, both to the aggregated dataset and within each interregional flow type individually. Subsequently, a series of Chi-Square tests assess the association between the aggregate flows' groupings and the specific thematic categories of interregional flows. A meta-analysis then identifies (NUTS II) regions exhibiting stable and commuter memberships across groupings (to detect potential "sensitivity zones" within the EU's interregional flow map) and evaluates the role of nationwide regions within the graph model of the European interregional market.

The findings initially highlight the EU's relative success in promoting territorial cohesion in the flow of people. They further illustrate varying levels of each flow type's contribution to the market as a whole, with capital flows prevailing and knowledge flows are lagging. The analysis also reveals differing degrees of cohesion in interregional flows, distinguishing regions such as Germany, the United Kingdom, the "blue banana" corridor, the coastal areas of Central and Western Europe, and regions in Eastern Europe. Additionally, it shows that the participation of nationwide regions in the European interregional market has a decentralizing effect, impacting both geographical distribution and economies of agglomeration, and reinforcing centrifugal forces that support EU regional development.

While the EU's progress towards regional development appears promising, evidence suggests that "borders still matter", providing economic geographers and policymakers with an empirically grounded approach for modeling and evaluating spatial economic integration. Beyond its methodological and empirical contributions, this research equips policymakers with an actionable framework, enabling the development of targeted EU policies based on identified "success stories", cross-border collaboration opportunities, and integration gaps, as revealed through quantitative analysis of Europe's interregional space.

**Keywords:** flows of goods and services; flows of capital; flows of people; flows of knowledge; EU patterns of regional development

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## SDG'S AND REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

**Filipos RUXHO**

Professor Assistant, Faculty of Agribusiness,

University “Haxhi Zeka”, Peja, Kosovo

[filipos.ruxho@unhz.eu](mailto:filipos.ruxho@unhz.eu)

### **Abstract**

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has set an ambitious agenda for regions to address critical social, economic, and environmental challenges through sustainable development frameworks. This paper explores how regional strategic planning can effectively incorporate the SDGs to enhance resilience, drive inclusive economic growth, and promote social equity. The research examines existing frameworks and strategies used in various regions, focusing on case studies that highlight successful SDG integration in regional policy-making. By analyzing the role of local governments, inter-sectoral partnerships, and community participation, the paper provides insights into overcoming obstacles such as funding limitations, governance barriers, and data gaps. The findings reveal that well-aligned strategic planning can accelerate SDG achievement by fostering adaptive, evidence-based policies that meet the unique needs of each region. This study ultimately offers policy recommendations for enhancing sustainable regional development and maximizing SDG impact through strategic planning processes.

**Keywords:** Regional Strategic Planning, Sustainable Development, Policy Integration, Community Engagement, Local Governance, Socioeconomic Resilience, Environmental Sustainability, Regional Policy, Strategic Partnerships

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## **RECOVERY AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE TERRITORY’S DOCUMENTARY CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Kreshnik BELLO**

Professor, European University of Tirana, Albania

[kreshnik.bello@uet.edu.al](mailto:kreshnik.bello@uet.edu.al)

### **Abstract**

The preservation and enhancement of documentary cultural heritage are crucial for sustaining national identity, historical continuity, and cultural diversity. This study focuses on Albania's efforts to recover, preserve, and promote its documentary cultural heritage, which includes archives, manuscripts, historical records, and other documentary assets that reflect its rich history and cultural legacy. Through an analysis of Albania’s heritage policies and recent initiatives, the paper discusses challenges such as resource limitations, technological constraints, and the risk of cultural erosion. It highlights successful strategies for preservation, digitalization, and public engagement, including collaborative projects with international organizations, local institutions, and communities. The findings emphasize the importance of modernizing archival practices, enhancing digital access, and fostering public awareness as pivotal steps to safeguard Albania’s documentary heritage. This paper contributes to understanding how Albania can serve as a model for other countries aiming to protect and enhance their cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Preservation, Heritage Enhancement, Archival Practices, Heritage Policy, Cultural Sustainability

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## **CITIES, REGIONS AND DIGITAL TRANSITIONS: DIGITAL DIVIDE REFLECTIONS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISPARITIES IN TÜRKIYE**

**Tüzin BAYCAN,**

Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning,  
Istanbul Technical University,  
[tbaycan@itu.edu.tr](mailto:tbaycan@itu.edu.tr)

### **Abstract**

The digital divide has become a significant factor in exacerbating regional development disparities, particularly in emerging economies like Türkiye. This paper examines the role of digital transitions in shaping economic and social inequalities between urban and rural regions, focusing on the disparities in access to digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and technology-driven economic opportunities. Analyzing Türkiye's regional digitalization patterns, the study identifies key obstacles to digital equity, such as infrastructure gaps, limited investment in digital skills, and uneven adoption of digital tools across sectors. Through case studies of selected Turkish cities and rural areas, the paper assesses the impacts of these disparities on local economies, labor markets, and social inclusion. The findings highlight the need for policies that promote digital inclusivity, such as increased investment in rural connectivity, targeted digital education programs, and incentives for regional digital innovation. Ultimately, this paper calls for a more equitable digital transition to support balanced regional development and bridge Türkiye's urban-rural divide.

**Keywords:** Digital Divide, Regional Development, Türkiye, Digital Transitions, Urban-Rural Disparities, Digital Infrastructure, Digital Literacy, Socioeconomic Inequality, Regional Policy, Technology Access.

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